Grammar for writing: Academic language and the ELD Standards

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July, 2003

Final report for UCLMRI grant #01-02G-D, "Grammatical and discourse features of the target genres in California's English Language Development (ELD) Standards."

This report was supported by a grant from the University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute (UCLMRI). Opinions reflect those of the author and not necessarily those of the grant agency.

Abstract

This project analyzed the expectations for ELLs' (English language learners) writing development in California, based on the English Language Development Standards adopted by the California Department of Education (CDE, 1999a), in order to identify the grammatical and discourse features that can most effectively be taught at different grade levels and levels of language proficiency. Both the ELD Standards and the English-Language Arts content standards (CDE, 1999b) were examined to identify the text types, or genres, that students are expected to write at different grade levels and the goals for development of control of grammar addressed in both sets of standards.

The project found that teachers are provided with little information about grammar development and grammar topics that are useful for helping students write the mandated genres. In response to this, this report outlines "Pathways" into narrative and expository writing, ordering a set of genres in developmental sequences based on functional linguistic analysis, identifying grammatical and discourse-organizational features of each genre.

The report then uses two genres to demonstrate how a functional grammar approach can identify key issues for ELL writing development. Focusing on the role of verb phrases, noun phrases, and clause-linking strategies, it shows how analysis of verb type, verb tense, introduction and tracking of participants in the text, expansion of the noun phrase, and conjunctions and other linking items can reveal both the strengths and weaknesses in students' writing and help teachers identify a language focus for writing development that is relevant to the type of text assigned.

The report also draws larger implications from this work regarding the definition of proficiency and approaches to writing development. It argues that a focus on the genres expected, with information about the developmental paths that can lead students toward proficiency in those genres, provides the best basis for a focus on form and explicit attention to language features. Research to further develop this perspective is proposed.

Introduction

The official guidelines for teaching writing to English language learners in California are the state-approved standards. The overriding goal is that students meet the grade-level standards as specified for Reading and Language Arts in the English-Language Arts (ELA) content standards (California Department of Education, 1999b). In addition, English Language Development (ELD) Standards (California Department of Education, 1999a) provide guidance about the goals teachers should have for English language learners at different grade levels and proficiency levels.

The ELD Standards aim to "provide teachers with information they can use to ensure that English-language development is occurring appropriately for all students" (California Department of Education, 1999a:2) by stating criteria according to which teachers can document ELLs' progress. They are organized according to the "four skills," with standards for Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing that describe five levels of proficiency (beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced, and advanced) at four grade-level divisions (K-2; 3-5; 6-8; 9-12). The ELD Writing Standards are organized into two major sections: *Strategies and Applications* and *Conventions*. The *Strategies and Applications* section identifies the types of texts, and the *Conventions* section identifies the grammar and sentence structure that students should be learning to write at each grade and proficiency level. For example, students in grades 6-8 at the Intermediate level are expected to "Narrate a sequence of events and communicate their significance to the audience; Write brief expository compositions (e.g., description, compare and contrast, cause and effect, and problem/solution) that include a thesis and some points of support; Develop a clear purpose in a short essay using the rhetorical devices of quotations and facts appropriately; Write responses to selected literature that exhibit understanding of the text, using detailed sentences and transitions" (California Department of Education, 1999a:68). We see, then, that students are expected to learn to write a variety of text types at this level.

When it comes to grammar and sentence structure, however, teachers are given less guidance. The Standards at this level call for students to "Revise writing for appropriate word choice and organization with variation in grammatical forms and spelling; Edit and correct basic grammatical structures and conventions of writing"

((California Department of Education, 1999a:77). Little information is provided about the linguistic issues that teachers could address to enable students to improve their writing in English, with only vague reference to language features teachers could use in judging ELLs' progress (e.g., "Use more complex vocabulary and sentences appropriate for language arts and other content areas" (CDE, 1999a:70); "Use common verbs, nouns, and high frequency modifiers in simple sentences" (CDE, 1999a:66); "Edit and correct basic grammatical structures and conventions of writing" (CDE, 1999a:77).

A focus on systematic presentation of textual features is called for in the ELA Framework ("…structural features of text should be introduced systematically (i.e., from easy text structures to more complex)…" (CDE, 1999b:103), but the focus is on *types of texts,* or *genres*, rather than on grammatical structures. The types of texts students are called on to write become more complex as students progress through the grade levels, but little information is provided about the linguistic choices that would help students write these genres. In other words, teachers get little guidance concerning what they can do to focus on language in a proactive way as they teach students to write new types of texts.

Below we look at the kinds of texts that both sets of Standards call for, and identify "pathways" into writing the named genres. This enables us to relate the genres to research that describes them in functional linguistic terms. By identifying key linguistic features of the genres, we also identify grammar issues that teachers can address to enhance students' writing development. This report, then, suggests how a more clearly articulated perspective on language itself can be incorporated into teaching by focusing on the types of texts that the standards call for.

Pathways to academic writing

Language varies according to use, so looking at what is expected when students write different kinds of assignments can help us understand what kind of awareness of language would be beneficial to students' academic language development. Starting with the notion of genre, or text type, helps us think about texts as wholes and have a sense of the purposes of the writing assignment, as every assignment teachers give represents a genre or movement into a genre that is a valued way of writing in school.

The ELD and ELA standards both identify the key text types that students are

expected to write at different grade levels. Since the ultimate goal for ELLs is that they are able to work at grade level, we need to identify the key genres in both sets of standards. Tables One, Two, and Three show how the genres named in the ELA Standards relate to the genres called for in the ELD Standards at three grade level divisions: 3-5; 6-8; and 9-12.[1] These Tables show us which genres are considered most accessible to ELLs at different levels of proficiency.

Table One. Genres in the ELA and ELD Writing Standards Grades 3-5

ELA Genres	**Level at which this genre is introduced in the ELD Standards**
Narratives	**Beginning** ("Brief narratives and stories")
Responses to literature	**Early Intermediate**
Personal and formal letters	**Early Intermediate** ("Letter")
Expository	**Intermediate**
Summaries	**Early Advanced**
Persuasive letter or composition	**Early Advanced** ("Persuasive letter"); **Advanced** ("Persuasive composition")
Description	Not mentioned at this grade level in the ELD Standards
Explanation	Not mentioned at this grade level in the ELD Standards
Research Report	Not mentioned at this grade level in the ELD Standards
Information Report	Not mentioned at this grade level in the ELD Standards

Table Two. Genres in the ELA and ELD Writing Standards Grades 6-8

ELA Genres	Level at which this genre is introduced in the ELD Standards
Narratives	**Beginning** (“Brief narratives and stories”)
Expository composition	**Beginning** (“Simple compositions”); **Early Intermediate** (“Exposition”)
Description	**Beginning**
Comparison and contrast	**Beginning**
Job applications	**Beginning** (“Business forms”); **Intermediate** (“Job Application)
Responses to literature	**Early Intermediate**
Problem and solution	**Early Intermediate**
Technical documents	**Early Intermediate** (“Informational documents”)
Biography or autobiography	**Intermediate** (Fictional biographies; short stories); **Early Advanced** (autobiographies)
Information report	**Intermediate** (“Short essay or report”)
Personal/business letters, memos	**Intermediate** (Business letter); **Early Advanced** (Letter of inquiry); **Advanced** (Memorandum)
Persuasive composition	**Early Advanced**
Summaries	Not mentioned at this grade level in the ELD Standards
Explanation	Not mentioned at this grade level in the ELD Standards
Research report	Not mentioned at this grade level in the ELD Standards

Table Three. Genres in the ELA and ELD Writing Standards Grades 9-12

ELA Genres	Level at which this genre is introduced in the ELD Standards
Narrative, short stories	**Beginning** (“Brief narratives)
Expository composition	**Beginning** (“Simple compositions”) **Early Intermediate** (“Exposition, Short essay”)
Description	**Beginning**
Compare and contrast	**Beginning**
Job applications	**Beginning**
Literary responses and analysis	**Early Intermediate** (“Responses to literature”)
Technical documents	**Early Intermediate** (“Informational documents”)
Biography or autobiography	**Intermediate** (“Fictional biographies and short stories”)
Persuasive composition	**Intermediate**
Resumes	**Intermediate**
Research report	**Intermediate** (“Brief essay or report”); **Advanced** (“Research report”)
Reflective composition	**Early Advanced**
Analytical essay, argument	**Advanced** (“Analytical essay”)
Explanation	Not mentioned at this grade level in the ELD Standards
Historical report	Not mentioned at this grade level in the ELD Standards
Business letters, memos, minutes	Not mentioned at this grade level in the ELD Standards

Tables One, Two, and Three illustrate that not all the genres in the ELA standards are named in the ELD standards.[2] It is important that the text types ELLs work with will build their skills in writing the genres expected of their grade-level peers, so it is somewhat disconcerting to see that at all grade levels, the ELA Standards call for a greater variety of genres than the ELD Standards. For example, in the early grades, the ELD standards do not mention "description, explanation, reports." Other grade level comparisons show similar differences between what is expected of mainstream and ELL students. In order to prepare ELLs to write the full range of text types expected of their grade-level peers, recommendations related to writing development need to address the full range of genres set forth in the ELA Standards.

Research in functional linguistics has used the notion of "genre" to develop descriptions of different text types, specifying both the overall structure and organization of different genres as well as the grammatical features that are used to construct them (see, e.g., (Martin, 1989; Rothery & Stenglin, 1997)).[3] Genres can be named in different ways, but by analyzing the underlying expectations for the different types of texts students are to write we can develop descriptions of pathways into academic writing. These pathways identify key anchor genres. By learning these genres, students can get control of the linguistic features of different types of writing and can develop linguistic resources and strategies that will enable them to write the full range of text types called for in the Standards.

Drawing on functional linguistics research, Figure One presents "Pathways" into writing the genres in the Standards. A major conceptual distinction is made between two types of writing, *narrative* and *exposition,* based on research that indicates differences in the purposes and grammatical choices that are generally typical of these two modes. The sequence of text types within each mode begins with simpler forms and builds developmentally toward the most complex and advanced of the genres, suggesting three genres of narrative writing and three genres of expository writing that teachers can focus on to develop students' writing skills in the areas that the standards call for.[4]

Figure One. Pathways to Narrative and Expository Writing

Narrative Writing

(From Standards (CDE 1999a; b): Narrative, short story, biography/autobiography, response to literature)[5]

- **Recount**
  - **Purpose and Structure:** The "brief narratives and stories" expected of students at beginning levels in the early grades are likely to be recounts of personal experience or simple retellings of events in a story, a first step toward narrative writing. The events often involve one participant who is the main actor throughout the text, rather than the change in participant roles that is typical of more elaborated narratives. The events are organized according to temporal sequence. Descriptions are incorporated into recounts as students write about setting and characters. They may also compare and/or contrast the actions of participants in the recount. The writer may also add evaluation to the retelling of events, making a judgement about the significance of the events. Recounts also appear in text types such as friendly letters or responses to literature.
  - **Language Features:** *Action* and *saying* verbs to report events, *being* and *having* verbs with attributive adjectives to introduce description and evaluation (*It was green and black; it was a good story*)*; thinking/feeling* verbs (*I liked the story; I thought it was sad*) to report personal evaluation. Past tense. Noun phrases expanded with adjectives and prepositional phrases to introduce participants. Personal pronouns and articles to track participants in the text. Linking items to do with time and place (*then, next;* prepositional phrases of time and place).

- **Narrative**
  - **Purpose and Structure:** Narratives are more sophisticated than recounts. They focus on the action of participants in confronting problems, with a complicating action that results in an overall point to the story. Narratives have a typical structure of orientation (introducing characters in a setting and establishing a sense of time), complication (in the action), and resolution that brings the story to an end, often including the writer's evaluative comment. The pattern of participant roles changes, with more than one actor. Narratives may contain problem/solution or cause/effect structuring. Expressions of attitude or reaction indicate the significance of the events.
  - **Language Features:** A variety of verb types, including verbs of *saying* and *thinking/feeling* verbs to present characters' motivations and thoughts. A variety of verb tense choices enables the writer to report events as well as to make timeless generalizations and to set events in different time frames relative to each other. Dialogue is often included, during which the tense may change to the present or future. Noun phrases introduce and track a variety of participants in the narrative, and these are often expanded with adjectives, prepositional phrases, relative clauses and other embedding. Various conjunctive relationships, related to the stage of the narrative, present conditions, causes, and concessions that are functional for the problem-resolution aspect. Adverbs introduce information about

manner and express judgment about behavior. Sentences often begin with temporal phrases that mark passing time and help to structure the narrative. Sophisticated use of language is required to create a highly valued narrative, as students gain control of modal verbs, learn to incorporate more advanced conjunctive relations, and use more complex clause types.

- **Reflective Composition**
  - **Purpose and Structure:** A higher level of evaluative writing is expected as students mature and are able to reflect on the significance of the events in the narratives they have read or written. They need to develop interpretations of literature, citing the text and using a variety of rhetorical strategies. Students are expected to give their opinions and support them with evidence from the text, but also to go beyond the text to reflect more generally on the themes of the literature.
  - **Language Features:** Writing an interpretation of a piece of literature draws on similar linguistic elements and skills as writing argumentative or persuasive essays but also incorporates narrative structures as writers summarize a plot or present a series of events as evidence that supports an interpretation. In discussing literature, present tense is often used throughout, both in referring to events in the text (*Anna makes a difficult decision*) and to make general statements of truth. Tense shifts are also needed to contextualize events or provide background information. The language includes noun phrases that are generalized or abstract notions presenting truths or opinions, and adjectives and adverbs describe attributes of characters or events and build judgments. Transition phrases and more "academic" conjunctions help to structure texts, and contrastive conjunctions (e.g., *but, although, as a matter of fact,* etc.) are used to develop a perspective that contrasts with others.

<u>Expository Writing</u>

(from Standards (CDE 1999a; b): historical report, research report, information report, expository composition, explanation, persuasive composition, literary analysis, analytical essay, argument)[6]

❖ **Report**

- **Purpose and Structure:** Reports describe the way things are, typically focusing on classes of things rather than individuals. They relate a set of facts, using specific statements to back up general ones. They often include descriptions or use comparison/contrast structuring. Reports can be organized by taking a large phenomenon and dividing it into its component parts (e.g., *There are three branches of government…*) or by setting up class/subclass relationships (e.g., *There are many kinds of trees…*).
- **Language Features:** Reports typically use simple present tense with *being* and *having* verbs to describe characteristics and varieties, along with *action* verbs to describe activity. *Saying* and *thinking/feeling* verbs like *shows* or *means* are used to indicate the significance of the points made in the report. Reports often use noun phrases that are technical and that focus on generic participants, and noun phrases are often expanded with relative clauses and prepositional phrases. Conjunctions are mainly of cause and purpose rather than of temporal sequence. Language for defining, classifying, and comparing and contrasting is needed. The writing is in a relatively formal and objective style.

❖ **Explanation**

- **Purpose and Structure:** Explanations put forward a thesis and support it. They interpret and generalize to account for *how* or *why* things are as they are, and are typically organized using a logical, rather than temporal, approach, with organizational strategies that present causes and make judgments. Explanation relies on generalization, classification, and categorization to give reasons why a judgment has been made.
- **Language Features:** *Action* verbs and *being/having* verbs are frequent, along with passive voice. Nominal expressions name the points to be made, drawing on abstractions (e.g., *There are three reasons that…*). Consistent use of third person is typical. Rather than personal participants, it is events or happenings that often serve as agents (e.g., *The attack on Pearl Harbor brought the U.S. into World War II.*). Links are made from one part of the text to the next with cohesive ties (e.g., <u>*Another cause*</u> *of the Depression was…*) and with causal and consequential conjunctions and other markers of contrast, classification, and logical sequence. Students need to be able to make the grammatical shifts necessary for moving from general to specific and back again, and to introduce and defend thesis statements. Modality is used to presents claims as possibilities (*It is likely that…*). Subordination and condensation of information is achieved through nominalization and other strategies.

❖ **Persuasion**

- **Purpose and Structure:** Persuasive texts are expositions where the judgment that

is made must be argued for; often putting forward alternative explanations and arguing against them. Persuasive texts express opinions overtly. Responses to literature are often persuasive texts, where the writer needs to introduce a story or character and then describe and evaluate it. Arguments are also persuasive texts, where the writer needs to take a position and convince others to go along.

- **Language Features:** Modal verbs (e.g., *must, should*); along with impersonal presentation of suggestions and exhortations (e.g., *It is of great concern; It is obvious that…*) are used to express judgments. Argument text uses tense shifts (e.g., simple present tense when it is generalizing and past tense when referring to past events for exemplification).The noun phrases in persuasive texts are often generalized and abstract notions that present truths or opinions, and require an expanded vocabulary to describe attributes of characters or events. Actions are often changed into "things" to make the argument sound more objective and to help structure the text. In addition, transition phrases and more "academic" conjunctions are used, with a variety of conjunctive relationships providing arguments and counter-arguments. Contrastive conjunctions (e.g., *but, although, as a matter of fact,* etc.), for example, help develop an argument that contrasts with others.

The three narrative genres in the "Pathways" are related to the text types referred to in the Standards by terms such as *narrative, story, biography, autobiography,* and *short story*. All of these text types have in common that their purpose is to "give an account of something dealing with sequences of events and experiences" (CDE, 1999b:277). The least complex genre in the narrative pathway is the *recount*. Recounts are a first step toward writing narrative texts in which students just report a sequence of events. Evaluation is incorporated into the recount when the student makes a judgement about the events or his or her attitude toward the events. As students develop expertise in this type of writing, they are expected to incorporate elements of a "story grammar;" including plot, point of view, setting, characters, conflict or problem, attempts or resolution, twist or complication, and theme (CDE, 1999b:279); a full narrative with conflict and resolution. Even after students can write full narratives, they still need help writing *responses to literature* and *reflective compositions* that explore the significance of a narrative and attempt to persuade a reader about a particular interpretation of a literary text. Learning to write these three text types, then, *recount, narrative,* and *reflective composition*, gives students opportunities to develop the language skills they need to write all of the narrative text types that the Standards call for.

Exposition is a different type of writing that "is intended to set forth or explain" (CDE, 1999b:276). *Exposition* is referred to in the Standards by terms such as *report, research report, information report, analytical essay,* and *persuasive essay*. Such texts are common in different subject areas. Rather than retell events or create stories about people and events, expository genres describe, classify, define, explain, and argue. The first expository genre in the "Pathways" is the *report,* described here as a description of "how things are". As students mature and develop language proficiency, they are expected to write *explanations* that develop a thesis through supporting details and examples. Finally, *persuasion* appears at the higher grade and proficiency levels as the target for student writing development, as they make judgements and argue for a particular point of view.

For each of the "Pathways" genres, Figure One describes the purposes and overall structuring of the genre and then presents language features that are functional for constructing the genre, focusing on the use of verbs, noun phrases, and clause-linking

strategies. The notion here is that by developing students' ability to write the three kinds of texts in both narrative and expository modes, moving from the least to the more complex, teachers will address grade level standards in ways that are adapted to each student's proficiency level, with the proficiency level focused on the particular genre students are writing. For example, writing a recount builds students' skills toward writing a fuller narrative or a reflective composition, and writing a report prepares students for the more difficult explanation or persuasion. Students' abilities may vary according to mode, so some students may be working at a high level in writing a recount text but still be writing very incipient reports. Some text types specified in the Standards (e.g., *description, comparison/contrast, problem/solution, summary*) can be found in both narrative and expository writing, so grammatical recommendations for developing language for such text types are incorporated into both the narrative and expository "pathways." "Summaries" can be taught in relation to any of the narrative genres as well as with in connection with writing reports or other expository genres.

Grammar for different genres

Having developed pathways into the target genres, we then need to consider the role of grammar in writing these genres. Functional linguistics research helps us understand the linguistic challenges of these genres and enables us to incorporate the notion of 'development' in writing. ELL writing can be analyzed from this perspective to identify the linguistic resources students are using in their writing and the resources they still need to develop. Functional linguistics sees language not as a set of rules, but as a set of resources for making meaning (Halliday, 1994). So rather than focusing on students' errors, an approach based on functional linguistics sees language as a set of choices, and helps students think about the different choices they can make in their writing. These choices have to do with appropriateness to the context and are related to the genres that students are asked to write, as different grammatical options are functional for doing different kinds of things with language. We know, for example, that a science report is structured differently and makes different choices in terms of verb tenses and conjunctions than a story. By bringing this research on functional linguistics to an analysis of the genres mentioned in the Standards, we can see what elements of grammar can be fruitfully taught to students at different levels of English proficiency in ways that

can be applied right away to the kinds of writing tasks that they are expected to do at different grade levels.

The Pathways descriptions highlight grammatical features that are typical of each of the genres, focusing on types of verbs and verb tense, on how noun phrases identify and track participants in the text, and on how the overall organization of the text is signaled linguistically. This means that we can highlight the functional contributions of three kinds of grammatical structures: verb phrases, noun phrases, and clause-linking choices, and how they help a writer accomplish the purposes of a particular text type. In order to demonstrate how this approach works, below are two texts written by ELLs, which we can analyze in terms of the framework presented here.

The first text, the "field trip" text, was written by a fifth grade student after a trip to San Francisco:[7]

> Yesterday I go to the Exploratorium in San Francisco. We start at 7:30 in the morning. We ride on the chartered bus. In the chattered bus there have TV, and bathroom. When the bus start to go the TV are on and we watch the movie. On the way to San Francisco I saw many of the beautiful scenery, I wish I can take a picture of it. Then later the bus are ride on the bridge. Then I look out the window I saw a big I saw the Island. Then at 10:00 the bus are arrive to the Exploratorium. When I go down to the bus feel very cold. Then we line up and go into a room and there have a docent explain what things are in the Explorium. Then later we go out to the Exploritorium. I saw there are many kind of things. I have play run around that thing that are cover me and I run fast fast and the tornado are up. I have play basketball, bubbler, wheel, ride,…. Then at 2:30 we are going back to the bus and go back to school. This is the best field trip I had.

The second text, the "tiger" text, was written by a seventh grade student in her sheltered science class in response to the teacher's directive to write a short description of a picture she is looking at:

> The tiger is cover with orange fur's plus with black, white stripes over his body. and a pink nosies and two bright eyes. with a whisker and has one ears on his right, left side of his head and has a body like a cat but just bigger. and with a tail on the back.

Presented with texts like these, what should a teacher focus on to help these students improve their writing? The first step is to use the "Pathways" descriptions to

identify the genres these two student texts represent. Narrative writing presents a sequence of events that unfolds over time, so we can see that the fifth grade student's text is an example of a narrative genre, but one that is a simple recount of experience rather than a fully developed story with complication and resolution. As recounts retell events that unfold over time, they typically focus on individual participants and are organized according to temporal sequence. There is usually one participant who is the main actor throughout the text. They are characterized, then, by their use of personal pronouns and action verbs to talk about activities and the participants in the activities; frequent use of conjunctions, especially additive and temporal conjunctions, to link clauses; and use of the past tense. As students advance in this genre, they also typically draw some implications from the experience, report their feelings, or evaluate the experience, and for this purpose they need to make shifts from past to present tense for the presentation of timeless meanings which are not part of the recount of events. This is the goal, then, and below we look at the student's text in terms of how well she manages these linguistic features.

The second text is *expository* as the student attempts to describe the tiger in a picture she is looking at. Expository texts report, explain, and argue, calling on a different constellation of grammatical features than narrative. Instead of being presented in a temporal framework, exposition uses a logical framework that presents the phenomenon or argument in a more timeless way. Expository texts typically have a more authoritative voice, using the third person and technical language. The writer of the "tiger" text is clearly just beginning to grapple with the demands of expository writing, using a few short clauses to present descriptive phrases about the tiger. We can identify this as an incipient *report*.

Looking at the language features that we might expect in both of these genres, we can analyze the students' texts both in terms of what they are able to accomplish and in terms of what they still need to learn to write such texts effectively. We can do this by focusing on the verb phrase grammar, the noun phrase grammar, and the clause-linking strategies the students use.

Verb phrase grammar

Different kinds of verbs are functional for writing different kinds of texts. From a

functional linguistics perspective, we can identify four types of verbs that are relevant for writing the genres in the standards: *action, thinking/feeling, saying,* and *being/having* verbs.[8] Each of these types of verbs enables the writer to accomplish different kinds of things, and each has different grammatical properties (see Halliday, 1994, for more details on this). In general, *action* verbs enable the writer to tell about events, while *being* and *having* verbs construct relationships, definitions, and descriptions. *Thinking/feeling* verbs report on the 'inner world' of the writer, helping to embed evaluation, and *saying* verbs can construct dialogue or report on the words of others.

Let's look at the verbs the students have used in the example texts, focusing on the different types of verbs and the students' control of verb tense.

Recount

> Yesterday I **go** to the Exploratorium in San Francisco. We **start** at 7:30 in the morning. We **ride** on the chartered bus. In the chattered bus there **have** TV, and bathroom. When the bus **start to go** the TV **are** on and we **watch** the movie. On the way to San Francisco I **saw** many of the beautiful scenery, I **wish** I **can take** a picture of it. Then later the bus **are ride** on the bridge. Then I **look** out the window I **saw** a big I **saw** the Island. Then at 10:00 the bus **are arrive** to the Exploratorium. When I **go** down to the bus **feel** very cold. Then we **line up** and **go** into a room and there **have** a docent **explain** what things **are** in the Explorium. Then later we **go** out to the Exploritorium. I **saw** there **are** many kind of things. I **have play run** around that thing that **are cover** me and I **run** fast fast and the tornado **are** up. I **have play** basketball, bubbler, wheel, ride,…. Then at 2:30 we **are going** back to the bus and **go** back to school. This **is** the best field trip I **had**.

Report

> The tiger **is cover** with orange fur's plus with black, white stripes over his body. and a pink nosies and two bright eyes. with a whisker and **has** one ears on his right, left side of his head and **has** a body like a cat but just bigger. and with a tail on the back.

As Table Four shows, this recount uses mainly *action* verbs as the writer constructs the sequence of activities during the field trip. She uses one verb of *saying (explain)* to report what the docent told them, and some *being/having* verbs to give background information (*the TV **are** on*). We see the writer struggle with the existential form *there is,* sometimes failing to use it correctly (*In the chattered bus there have TV,*

there have a docent explain) but at other times constructing an effective sentence with it (*I saw there are many kind of things*). This structure is typically difficult for English learners, since it does not occur in many other languages, which make presentational statements like this in other ways. The variability with which this student uses this structure also shows how writers are uneven in their development. It can be useful to point out to them when they use a structure correctly so that they can see that they could also use it in other contexts where they are making errors.

Table Four. Verb types in recount text

Action	Thinking/Feeling	Saying	Being/having
go start ride watch take look arrive line up play run	saw wish feel	explain	have are

We noted above that this recount also has emergent attempts at evaluation, a feature that will move the writer toward the more complex narratives and reflective compositions that she will need to learn to write. The attempts in this text are constructed in clauses with verbs of *thinking/feeling,* used to introduce the writer's personal perspective explicitly. The grammar associated with verbs of *thinking/feeling* is different from the grammar of action verbs (for example, the verb can take a whole clause as a complement), making it difficult for students to learn to express these kinds of comments. For example, in stating what she *wished,* her grammatical resources are inadequate (*I wish I can take a picture of it*). The grammar of *wish* is difficult; in this context also requiring the correct form of the modal with past perfect *could have taken* in this case. When the student attempts to talk about how the weather felt when she got out of the bus, she also has difficulty (*feel very cold*). A teacher with students who write like this could help students expand their repertoires of *thinking/feeling* verbs and learn to use them in clauses that construct evaluation or commentary.

Expository text has different features. In exposition, *being/having* verbs are typical, as we see in the tiger text, where the writer draws on *being* and *having* verbs in simple present tense to describe the characteristics of the tiger. Simple present tense with *being* and *having* clauses is functional for writing this kind of text, as *be* and *have* in present tense can help develop the attributes of something (here, the characteristics of the tiger).

Verb tense is an obvious difference in these texts. Exposition, as we see here, typically uses present tense,[9] but may also shift to past tense to present examples of personal experience. Narrative texts, on the other hand, typically use past tense, but also include other verb forms to place events before the main time line or to present timeless generalizations. We see here how the writer of the recount text needs to develop past tense forms, which she uses only in the verb *saw*. She attempts a progressive form of *ride*, using *are*, to write about two things going on simultaneously; the bus driving across the bridge while she is looking out of the window. But she does not have the grammatical resources to do this effectively. The report writer, while using present tense forms appropriately here, is clearly limited in her vocabulary of verb forms.

Noun phrase grammar

Noun phrases introduce the "participants" in a text and enable the writer to track those participants, linking with what has already been mentioned. As student writing matures, they learn to expand the noun phrase so that it includes more information. Below we can examine these two functions of noun phrases in the example texts, reproduced below with noun phrases highlighted. (Note that noun phrases include modifying prepositional phrases (*black, white stripes over his body*) and clauses that act as noun complements (*a docent explain what things are in the Explorium*), as well as the relative clauses that are embedded after nouns (*the best field trip I had*)):

Recount

Yesterday **I** go to **the Exploratorium in San Francisco**. **We** start at 7:30 in **the morning**. **We** ride on **the chartered bus**. In **the chattered bus** there have **TV**, and **bathroom**. When **the bus** start to go **the TV** are on and **we** watch **the movie**. On **the way to San Francisco I** saw **many of the beautiful scenery**, **I** wish **I** can take **a picture of it**. Then later **the bus** are ride on **the bridge**. Then **I** look out **the window I** saw a big **I** saw **the Island**. Then at 10:00 **the bus** are arrive to **the Exploratorium**. When **I** go down to **the bus** feel very cold. Then **we** line up and go into **a room**

> and there have **a docent** explain **what things are in the Explorium**. Then later **we** go out to **the Exploritorium**. **I** saw there are **many kind of things**. **I** have play run around **that thing that are cover me** and **I** run fast fast and **the tornado** are up. **I** have play **basketball, bubbler, wheel, ride**,…. Then at 2:30 **we** are going back to **the bus** and go back to **school**. **This** is **the best field trip I had**.

> **Report**
>
> The **tiger** is cover with **orange fur's** plus with **black, white stripes over his body**. and **a pink nosies** and **two bright eyes**. with **a whisker** and has **one ears on his right, left side of his head** and has **a body like a cat** but just bigger. and with **a tail on the back**.

Introducing participants and linking with what has been mentioned already

Recounts focus on individual participants. The challenge for the student writer is to learn to introduce and track those participants through the text. The writer of the field trip text introduces herself as the first participant (*I*) but then continues with *we* without explicitly introducing who *we* refers to. The *I/we* alternation may be functional for her in this text, as the *I* statements typically present her personal perspectives, while the *we* statements construct the sequence of events in which all students participated, but her usage indicates that learning the forms of the pronouns is not enough; students need to work with such structures in the context of writing texts, not isolated sentences. Related to this, the student also does not use *it* to refer to noun phrases she has already introduced, except for one case with *scenery…it*. Here more development of pronoun use is needed. On the other hand, the student uses *This* at the beginning of the last sentence to introduce her evaluation of the event, using a demonstrative pronoun to make a cohesive link with what she has already written, a usage that will continue to be useful to her as she writes more complex texts.

The writer of the *tiger* text also has trouble tracking participants, as she introduces the tiger but then does not mention the tiger again, producing fragmented sentences that describe without renaming what she is describing. The renaming and tracking of a participant in a noun phrase is a linguistic skill that developing writers need lots of practice with. Expository writing often draws on determiners that introduce generic participants. The writer's use of *the* to introduce the tiger is, in this sense, very appropriate for a report text, even if, in this context of looking at a picture, her *the* may

refer to the specific tiger in the photo rather than to tigers in general. Articles are a difficult area of grammar for all English learners, and we see that the writer of the field trip text also struggles with this system of identifying and tracking participants in a text. She uses *the* instead of *a* to introduce some new noun phrases into the text (*the chartered bus; the movie; the Island*) and treats some non-count nouns as if they are count nouns in her use of quantifiers (*many of the beautiful scenery*). She does introduce indefinite nouns correctly in *Then we line up and go into a room and there have a docent explain,* indicating that this student may be ready to learn more about the article system in English grammar.

Expanding noun phrases

As students' writing matures, they need to learn to expand noun phrases to include more information in order to construct the more condensed texts of academic literacy. In these example texts, we can see three ways of expanding noun phrases: with adjectives, with prepositional phrases, and with relative clauses (adjective clauses). All of these are ways students can develop their writing by giving more information to define and describe the nouns they introduce.

The elaboration of concrete details is valued in narrative writing, so the expansion of the noun phrase through pre- and post-modification is important. The writer of the field trip text expands some noun phrases with prepositional phrases (*the Exploratorium in San Francisco*), but most prepositional phrases help set the time and place rather than expand noun phrases (e.g., *we ride on the chartered bus*). In addition, the prepositional phrases the writer uses to expand noun phrases are mainly those with *of* (*many of the beautiful scenery, many kind of things*). She uses only a few adjectives (*chartered bus; beautiful scenery*), although in the evaluation at the end she uses *the best field trip,* showing some familiarity with superlative forms. She attempts a relative clause: *that thing that are cover me,* where she has named an indefinite *thing* that needs to be explained, and in her last sentence (*the best field trip I had*). A teacher can build on this emergent use of relative clauses to help the student use this structure even more productively.

In expository writing, expansion of noun phrases is also important. In the tiger text, the student expands the noun phrases with adjectives and prepositional phrases:

white stripes over his body; a pink nosies and two bright eyes; one ears on his right, left side of his head (note the potential here to teach "an ear on each side of his head"); *a body like a cat but just bigger; with a tail on the back* . She also appropriately uses the comparative adjective *bigger* and the quantifiers *one* and *two*. She does not use relative clauses, so work on the expansion of noun phrases in the context of adding information about the tiger (e.g., *The tiger that I see in this picture*) would be valuable for this student.

Linking Clauses

The third area of grammar is clause-linking strategies. The focus is on how the student makes links from clause to clause, which helps us understand how she is organizing the text. Here are the texts again, with links highlighted:

Recount

> Yesterday I go to the Exploratorium in San Francisco. We start at 7:30 in the morning. We ride on the chartered bus. **In the chattered bus** there have TV, and bathroom. **When the bus start to go** the TV are on and we watch the movie. **On the way to San Francisco** I saw many of the beautiful scenery, I wish I can take a picture of it. **Then later** the bus are ride on the bridge. **Then** I look out the window I saw a big I saw the Island. **Then at 10:00** the bus are arrive to the Exploratorium. **When I go down** to the bus feel very cold. **Then** we line up **and** go into a room **and** there have a docent explain what things are in the Explorium. **Then later** we go out to the Exploritorium. I saw there are many kind of things. I have play run around that thing that are cover me and I run fast fast and the tornado are up. I have play basketball, bubbler, wheel, ride,…. **Then at 2:30** we are going back to the bus and go back to school. This is the best field trip I had.

Report

> The tiger is cover with orange fur's **plus** with black, white stripes over his body. **and** a pink nosies and two bright eyes. with a whisker **and** has one ears on his right, left side of his head **and** has a body like a cat but just bigger. **and** with a tail on the back.

When we look at the clause-linking strategies, we can see that both students need practice beginning their sentences in different ways and in using conjunctions to move from clause to clause. Narrative texts have their own organizational structure, in the retelling of events, and conjunctions of time and place indicate this structure. In the field

trip text, the student uses prepositional phrases and adverbs of time and place as well as temporal conjunctions (*when, then)* to structure her text.

In expository writing, students face other challenges, as the organizational structure is not provided by a sequence of events, but instead has to be organized by the writer. The tiger text has no overt organizational markers, simply consisting of a series of descriptive phrases about the tiger linked with *and* and divided into "sentences" without subjects or verbs, using the preposition *with* and periods to demarcate them. This student, then, needs help learning about the construct "sentence." As she does not yet control the grammar of the *being* and *having* verbs that are functional for this kind of text, she depends on the preposition *with* instead of verbs to move her text forward. All of the conjunctions she uses are coordinating conjunctions, making simple additive links within the text, sometimes drawing on the grammar of informal spoken interaction (*with orange fur's <u>plus</u> with black, white stripes*).

<u>Summary</u>

In looking at these students' texts, we have seen both the strengths and the weaknesses in the writing they have produced. By focusing on the language choices that are functional for writing the two different genres, we can identify where students are effectively drawing on the grammatical systems in English and where they need further development. The kinds of verbs and verb tenses they use indicate whether they are meeting the demands of the genres by writing about actions or relationships, and whether they are incorporating evaluation. The way they introduce participants in their noun phrases and track those participants through the text shows their control over systems of pronoun use, article choice, and cohesive reference. Expansion of the noun phrases through adjectives, prepositional phrases, and relatives clauses helps them incorporate more information into each clause and develop more academic ways of writing. Finally, looking at their sentence structuring and clause linking strategies by analyzing the conjunction choices and the ways they move in the text from clause to clause helps us see the overall organizational resources that they control and identify those they need to develop. This approach, then, enables us to see both where students already have control of English grammar and where they still need work, and allows us to identify key areas for attention to language choices and grammar development.

Defining proficiency and development

The two texts, above, highlight several issues that face teachers as they work with developing second language writers. First, there is often little relationship between students' grade level placement and their level of English language proficiency. Here, for example, the fifth grade student who wrote the field trip text seems to have better control of written English than the seventh grade student who wrote the tiger text. Second, an approach that focuses primarily on the 'errors' these students make is time consuming and difficult for the teacher. It is not always clear what the 'error' is, and correcting all the 'errors' is clearly not enough to make these effective examples of grade-level writing. For example, how would one correct the sentence *I have play run around that thing that are cover me and I run fast fast and the tornado are up?* This can't be done just by marking surface language; instead, the student needs to develop new ways of deescribing and recounting complex events in order to make her meaning clear for the reader who was not with her at the Exploratorium. Finally, the two texts show us that learning to write is not linear and incremental. It's not just a question of learning verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, and the other topics that ESL textbooks typically offer practice with. The students may use a structure effectively in one sentence and then make errors in attempting a similar structure in another context, as we saw with the existential *there is* construction in the recount text.

This suggests that while the five levels of proficiency described in the ELD Standards may be important for assessment purposes, but as pedagogical guidelines, the definition of levels of proficiency may have limited usefulness. Identifying levels of proficiency and measuring development in writing is difficult for many reasons.[10] When the focus is on errors in English grammar, research finds that students do not necessarily reduce the number of errors they make even when their writing shows obvious improvement in fluency and complexity (Casanave, 1994; Hinkel, 2002; McNamara, 1997; Schleppegrell, 2002; Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki, & Kim, 1998). A notion of "proficiency in general" is increasingly criticized, as learners clearly develop language abilities in particular contexts for particular purposes (Cummins, forthcoming; Gibbons, 2002; McNamara, 1997). So a learner who can write about his or her life experiences may have great difficulty writing a science report or an analysis of a literary text. In

addition, learners are rarely placed in classrooms strictly according to defined levels of proficiency, so most teachers work with heterogeneous groups, differing in terms of L1 literacy, experience with academic English, and other non-linguistic factors.

The identification of goals for linguistic development by proficiency level is also confounded by the nature of language itself. Different grammatical options are appropriate or effective for writing different kinds of texts, so associating a particular feature of grammar such as *relative clause,* for example, with a particular proficiency level ignores the fact that some relative clauses appear very early in students' English development (as in *the best field trip I had*), while other uses develop only in more advanced writing contexts. So rather than attempt to delineate specific levels of proficiency, we can instead look to the language itself to analyze the way linguistic structures vary according to use in different contexts, to show how complexity is realized in various grammatical structures and to link the use of those structures to particular genres that teachers can help students learn to write.

Students with primary language literacy are able to draw on their knowledge of academic language structure in their first languages as they learn English, and even at beginning levels, older students are able to incorporate more content and more advanced grammar features into their writing than younger students.[11] High school students have a greater level of cognitive development and ability to be analytical, and can be challenged to do more even at lower levels of proficiency. The ELD Standards seem not to take account of this, as the standards for Grades 9-12 are often identical to those for Grades 6-8. For example, while students in Grade 6-8 of Intermediate proficiency may find it challenging to "narrate a sequence of events," by high school students should probably be expected to be able to incorporate the conflict/problem and resolution aspects of narration, even at lower proficiency levels. The functional grammar perspective is able to recognize students' levels of cognitive maturity and challenge them to use more academic language choices in their writing, as a focus on the resources needed to write particular genres can respond to the different ways that younger or older students grapple with the different text types at different stages of development of English proficiency.

Even native English speakers continue their language development as they move into secondary school. The ELA standards seem not to recognize this, as they incorporate

the unrealistic expectation that grammatical development should be completed by the end of middle school, suggesting that by eighth grade, "*Students are expected to have mastered…grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling*" (California Department of Education, 1999b:168). The only new expectations beyond this level are in the development of sentence structure, as students are expected to *"…vary sentence types and sentence openings, use parallel structures appropriately, and indicate relationships between ideas by using such devices as subordination, coordination, and apposition"* (California Department of Education, 1999b: 168). But language development is an ongoing process, with each level of schooling presenting new challenges. Even native speakers would benefit from attention at the high school level to linguistic features of texts such as varied clause structure, nominalization, effective use of passive voice to structure texts, and incorporation of modality features that present the writer's stance. The lack of emphasis on grammar at the more advanced levels and higher grade levels in both the ELA and ELD Standards is unfortunate, as it is in the higher grades that students are able to focus more consciously on form and grammatical options. As demonstrated here, however, a functional grammar perspective offers an alternative, allowing us to identify the grammatical and discourse features that help construct the genres in the standards.

Conclusions

Increasingly, research in second language development suggests that a focus on form and attention to the linguistic features of texts is necessary for students to develop competence in advanced literacy tasks such as those expected at school (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Scarcella, 1996). In particular, the development of advanced literacy skills appears to require that students focus on the purposes and linguistic properties of the text types (genres) that they are expected to write (Belcher & Braine, 1995; Schleppegrell & Colombi, 2002). However, much instruction of ELLs in California schools is still influenced by theories of language acquisition that suggest that immersion in contexts of comprehensible input is sufficient for language development. For many teachers, the only available alternative to address issues of form is the inadequate traditional discrete point approach to grammar. This means that teachers have few useful resources for understanding how they can appropriately focus on form with ELLs as they

teach them to write. The functional grammar approach used here can provide teachers with a framework for looking at form that links grammar and context.

This project has identified some linguistic resources that enable students to write the target genres in the ELA and ELD Standards. Functional grammar is not about teaching grammar in decontextualized ways, doing exercises about subject-verb agreement or past tense endings.[12] Instead, it is focused on helping students get control of the resources that are available to them in the grammar for writing in the different ways that construct the text types set forth in the Standards. Students need to focus not just on grammatical accuracy but also on expanding their writing in various ways. Learning to use a wide range of verb types and the effective ways of using those verbs helps students write about the world of their experience and their inner thinking, as well as about the new knowledge they are learning at school. Expanding noun phrases enables the students to introduce and then write more about the participants in the text. Issues of run-on sentences and fragments can be addressed through a focus on how clauses are combined and linked.

The grammar of narrative writing becomes more difficult and complex as the types of texts expected also become more sophisticated. Adverbs are incorporated as students include information about how events happened and to express judgements. Modal verbs also play a role in indicating *necessity* and *possibility*. In expository writing, the noun phrase is often abstract, with expanded noun phrases consisting of nominalizations. Students need to develop a vocabulary of abstract nouns and develop relative clause grammar. They need to draw on verbs of *thinking/feeling* to show the significance of what they are writing; for example, when they have to say what something *means*. A wider vocabulary of conjunctions has to be developed as students learn to write explanations and persuasive texts that present different points of view. This report has been able to discuss only a few areas of grammar development. More research is needed to specify the grammatical features of the different genres students are asked to write at school and to identify lexical, grammatical, and discourse-organizational goals that teachers could work toward as they teach the different text types.

There are significant grammatical and discourse-organizational differences between informal, interactional language and the kind of language children encounter at

school (Schleppegrell, 2001, forthcoming). Academic language has particular features that need to be presented and practiced in formal ways, because it is not typically reinforced by the language used outside of the classroom, and because it is organized differently from the language of informal conversational interaction. Since many language minority students develop proficiency in English primarily through spoken interaction rather than through formal instruction, many students gain proficiency in oral English without being able to read and write the kinds of complex texts that are required of the secondary school graduate. In order to learn academic registers, they need to understand how different grammatical choices can help them write with greater authority and control. Students who have little access to incidental learning of academic registers need opportunities for explicit attention to the linguistic elements that make different texts the kinds of texts they are.

To learn English for academic purposes, students need opportunities to think about the way language is used in the different types of texts that they read and write. They need guidance about what makes a text the kind of text it is and they need to learn to organize and structure a text in ways that will be valued. If we do not teach language explicitly, then only the children who have access outside of school to opportunities to use language in the ways advanced literacy calls for will succeed. For English language learners, not focusing on language and teaching language means that they may not be able to develop advanced literacy skills.

In order to teach writing effectively, teachers have to be clear about the kinds of texts they are assigning and the grammar features that will be most functional for student writing of those kinds of texts. With an understanding of the linguistic features of academic writing tasks, teachers can help students use the grammatical resources available to them to expand and develop their writing skills. This focus on grammar can be contextualized within a framework in which teachers recognize the features of the kinds of texts they expect students to write and prepare students for writing by providing some kind of shared experience in the classroom through talk, action, reading, or some combination of these. Then, based on this shared experience, the teacher can help students understand the goals for the writing task and help them understand the shape the final texts are expected to take. With that understanding, teachers can also help students

learn to use the grammatical features that help them write in the ways that are valued at school.

Teaching grammar in the context of writing particular genres and looking at grammar in terms of what kinds of texts students are asked to write helps us identify the choices from the grammar that are useful for writing those texts. Seeing grammar as a set of choices from which students draw when they write helps us to move beyond just correcting errors and actually help students to expand their repertoire of grammatical forms. It enables us to be proactive and help students learn to write the different kinds of texts they are assigned. And it enables us to deal with the problematic issue of what constitutes a "level of development" in English language learning. It is very difficult to specify the particular grammatical problems students will have at different levels, because students' backgrounds are so different and what they bring to the writing task in terms of experience, first language literacy, and other factors are major influences in how they write. But if teachers are aware of the language features themselves; for example, the need to learn different types of verbs and the grammar that goes with them, or the need to help students expand their noun phrases, they can work with second language writers to help them understand the increasing variety and complexity of linguistic resources needed to write the different kinds of texts that are expected.

It takes a long time to get control of the grammar of advanced literacy, but raising students' consciousness about how particular features help them accomplish different kinds of writing tasks is a way of enhancing instruction in positive ways and giving teachers guidance about how to focus on language. Seeing grammar as a set of choices from which students draw when they write helps us to move beyond just correcting errors and actually help students to expand their repertoire of grammatical forms. Focusing on the tasks that the Standards call for students to write, we can identify the linguistic features associated with those tasks, so that the teaching goals can be focused on what students need to be able to do with language as they develop writing proficiency.

This project has developed a framework for understanding the linguistic demands of the different genres that California English learners are expected to learn to write. Much more work is needed, however, to implement the framework. Specifically, completion of the following tasks, using the framework, could provide teachers with

detailed and specific information that could help them address language issues with students at all grade levels and levels of proficiency:

- At each of the grade level clusters, (3-5; 6-8; 9-12), descriptions of the six "Pathways" genres could be developed with more detailed and specific information about the grammatical features that teachers could work with.
- For each of the six genres, within each grade level cluster, sample texts written by ELLs could be collected and ordered to illustrate different levels of achievement of the purposes of the genre. The linguistic features of each text could then be identified so that more detailed grammatical information would be available to teachers related to all the target genres.
- Pedagogical materials could then be developed that would help teachers scaffold the learning of the different genres through a focus both on the purposes of the genre and the linguistic features that help construct it.

Acknowledgement
Many thanks to Ann Go, research assistant on this project, for her many contributions. I am also grateful to the Linguistic Minority Research Institute (LMRI) for funding the project “Grammatical and discourse features of the target genres in California’s English Language Development (ELD) Standards.”

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Notes

[1] The K-2 grade level standards are not addressed in this report.

[2] Note that the ELD Standards do not match up with the ELA Standards even for advanced students. For example, the ELD Standards do not mention the text type “research report” until Grades 9-12, while the ELA Standards provide specific guidelines for research reports beginning in the 4th grade. At all grade levels, even if students achieve the ELD Standards, they will not have learned to write all of the text types at the level that the ELA Standards call for. For example, at grades 3-5, the ELD Standards for Advanced students call for them to “Write narratives that describe the setting, character, objects, and events” (CDE, 1999a:72). The ELA Standards for this level, however, call for students to “a. provide a context within which an action takes place, b. include well-chosen details to develop the plot, [and] c. provide insight into why the selected incident is memorable” (CDE, 1999b:93-94); to “provide a context to

enable the reader to imagine the world of the event or experience" (CDE, 1999b:116), clearly a much higher standard than the Advanced ELL is being prepared for.

[3] For accessible introductions to functional grammar see (Butt, Fahey, Feez, Spinks, & Yallop, 2000; Droga & Humphrey, 2002; Eggins, 1994; Halliday, 1994; Thompson, 1996).

[4] Other genres mentioned in the Standards include *letters*, *career-related documents* (such as resumes), and *technical documents*. Since letters are of various types, some more narrative-like (personal letters) and some more like exposition (business letters), we do not treat them separately, assuming that the grammar students learn for narration and exposition will serve them well for writing letters, too. Grammar for writing the career-related documents can also be assumed in the development of skills in exposition (although in the future perhaps specific attention could be given to this, with relevant examples at hand of the actual types of documents students are expected to work with.) We also note that in the ELD standards, the overall emphasis in the area of career documents is on job-seeking skills (job application form, resume, letter of inquiry, bank forms). The ELA standards, on the other hand, emphasize documents of a more technical and professional nature (technical documents, procedures, business or invitation letters, memos, specification or operations manuals).

[5] This summary of features of narrative genres is based on (Christie, 1986; Christie, 1998, 2002) and Martin (1989).

[6] This summary of features of expository writing is based on (Applebee, Durst, & Newell, 1984); Christie (1986); (Crowhurst, 1980; Durst, 1987); Martin (1989); Martin & Rothery (1986); and (Schleppegrell, 1998).

[7] Thanks to Ann Go for permission to use this text.

[8] These types are adapted from the discussion in Halliday (1994).

[9] In this sense, exposition is easier than narrative. This would argue for more expository writing being introduced for beginning ELLs.

[10] This difficulty in defining levels is reflected in inconsistencies in the ELD Standards. For example, within a particular grade level, the same standards often appear at different proficiency levels. In Grades 3-5, both Early Intermediate and Intermediate level students are expected to "Produce independent writing that is understood when read, but may include inconsistent use of standard grammatical forms," (CDE, 1999a:67-68). Both Intermediate and Early Advanced students are expected to "Use more complex vocabulary and sentences appropriate for language arts and other content areas" (CDE, 1999a:69-70). In other instances, we find a major jump in expectations from one proficiency level to another. For example, the Grade 6-8 standards call for intermediate level students to "Use more complex vocabulary and sentences appropriate for language arts and other content areas" (CDE, 1999a:69) and "Write responses to selected literature that exhibit understanding of the text, using detailed sentences and transitions" (CDE, 1999a:68). At the next level, however, Early Advanced students are expected to be able to "Develop a clear thesis and support it using the rhetorical devices of analogy, quotation, and fact appropriately" (CDE, 1999a:70), "Use appropriate language variations and genres in writing for language arts and other content areas" (CDE, 1999a:70), and "Use appropriate tone and voice based on purpose, audience, and subject matter" (CDE, 1999a:71).

In some cases, the ELD Standards overstate or are contradictory about what might be expected from ELLs. For example, by the intermediate level in Grades 3-5, the ELD Standards suggest that students are expected to have “consistent use of standard English grammatical forms” (CDE, 1999a:68). This is clearly unrealistic; and is in fact contradicted by the statement at the same level that student writing “may include inconsistent use of standard English grammatical forms” (CDE, 1999a:68). The Standards often use quantity rather than qualitative features as benchmarks; for example, “Write an increasing number of words and simple sentences appropriate for language arts and other content areas” (CDE, 1999a:66). This provides little information about what teachers should look for beyond simply more words.

[11] ELD standards for 3rd through 12th grade are designed for students who are already literate in their primary language (CDE, 1999a:2).

[12] Work with such features may also be useful for students, especially in editing writing they have done.