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Integrating Grammar Into a High School Expository Reading and Writing Course

■ **For the last two decades, most high school English teachers have offered little grammar instruction, instead focusing primarily on literature. Meanwhile, standards-based instruction has been mandated at the state and federal levels and concern has grown about the gap between high school preparation in academic literacy and university requirements. The California State University 12th Grade Task Force has created the Expository Reading and Writing Curriculum (ERWC) to address that gap. To supplement the ERWC, materials based on ERWC texts enable teachers to integrate grammar instruction into the course. Students observe grammatical forms in the texts they are reading, apply what they have learned in a series of activities, and conclude by editing their own writing. Thus, grammar and the conventions of written academic English are taught as part of a continuous loop within the context of what students are reading and writing in the ERWC classroom.**

Evolving Attitudes Toward Grammar Instruction

For the last two decades, grammar has been exiled from many high school English classrooms in California and beyond. The focus of instruction has been a literature curriculum with writing primarily viewed as a tool for responding to literature. To the extent that grammar instruction existed at all, it usually came in the form of decontextualized exercises in grammar handbooks. However, grammar is beginning to again assume importance in classrooms. The Academic Content Standards that now guide all K-12 instruction specify particular areas of grammar that students need to master. Simultaneously, the CSU's efforts to better prepare students before they enroll in college has led to clearer communication to teachers that not only are critical reading and writing essential but so is control of the language and conventions of academic English.

Grammar as a Waste of Instructional Time

In an article in 1985, Patrick Hartwell explained the rationale for not including grammar in writing instruction:

> Those of us who dismiss the teaching of formal grammar have a model of composition instruction that makes the grammar issue "uninteresting" in a scientific sense. Our model predicts a rich and complex interaction of learner and environment in mastering literacy, an interaction that has little to do with sequences of skills instruction as such. Those who defend the teaching of grammar tend to have a model of composition instruction that is rigidly skills-centered and rigidly sequential: the formal teaching of grammar, as the first step in that sequence, is the cornerstone or linchpin. (p. 109)

Although he fails to explain the "scientific sense" in which grammar instruction is "uninteresting," he makes clear that good teachers would want to create classrooms where there would be "a rich and complex interaction of learner and environment" and would want to avoid the formal teaching of grammar since such instruction would be "rigidly skills centered and rigidly sequential." Like many critics of grammar instruction since his time, he fails to ask whether there might be a way of teaching grammar that could contribute to the "rich and complex interaction of learner and environment" and that would translate into improvement in students' ability to read and respond to challenging texts.

In 1985 California was already experiencing a shift in demographics. Today approximately half of the students in California schools began school speaking a language other than English, with 1,568,661 designated as English Learners and an additional 1,448,880 designated Fluent English Proficient (FEP)[1] in 2005-2006 (California Department of Education, 2006). No longer is it possible to assert, as Hartwell did in 1985, that teachers don't need to teach grammar because students bring to class the innate grammar—"the grammar in our heads" (p. 111)—of all native speakers. In fact, in many high school classrooms, multilingual Generation 1.5 students are the norm (for a detailed discussion of this group of students, see Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999; Roberge, 2002). Although often fluent orally and possessing an innate oral grammar of English, these long-term immigrants frequently do not have comparable control of the grammar of academic English. Nevertheless, teachers of English learners for two decades have frequently thought that they did not need to teach grammar to these students because linguists such as Stephen Krashen asserted that "comprehensible input"—exposure to written and spoken language—was all that was needed for students to acquire English. In 1985 Krashen wrote, "If input is understood, and there is enough of it, the necessary grammar is automatically provided" (p. 2). In this view, teaching grammar is a waste of valuable classroom time that could be better spent providing comprehensible input. Krashen acknowledged that older students could profit from instruction in certain teachable areas such as punctuation and possessives for use "in writing or in prepared speech" (p. 76), where the conscious application of rules could improve grammatical accuracy. That distinction, however, was lost in most teacher-preparation programs, and the suggestion that grammar instruction was ineffective and a waste of time became dogma in university classrooms where a generation of teachers was prepared (see Mulroy, 2003, for a detailed discussion).

Grammar as an Element of Academic Content Standards

In the 1990s a national movement gathered force to articulate the academic standards that students should meet at each grade level from kindergarten through graduation from high school. In California, this resulted in the California Content Standards (California State Board of Education, December 1997), among the most rigorous in the country. The English Language Arts Standards specify the knowledge of grammar, usage, and conventions of English that students are expected to have at each grade level. For example, at the fourth-grade level students should be able to do the following:

1.2 Combine short, related sentences with appositives, participial phrases, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases.
1.4 Use parentheses, commas in direct quotations, and apostrophes in the possessive case of nouns and in contractions.

By the time they reach 11th and 12th grade students need to have essentially mastered the grammar, usage, and conventions of written English. They must be able to:

1.1 Demonstrate control of grammar, diction, and paragraph and sentence structure and an understanding of English usage.
1.2 Produce legible work that shows accurate spelling and correct punctuation and capitalization.

Nationally, No Child Left Behind (U.S. Department of Education, 2001) has imposed accountability on schools for the standards that the states created, with stiff sanctions for schools whose students fail to show adequate annual progress toward meeting those standards. As a result, high school teachers have begun again to explore ways to integrate grammar instruction into their classes in order to prepare students for the standardized assessments awaiting them (Warne, pp. 22-27).

Grammar and Reducing the Need for Remediation

At the same time political momentum was building to hold schools accountable for ensuring that all students met academic standards, policy makers across the country were also increasingly alarmed by the mismatch between students' high school preparation and the expectations of university faculty for academic literacy. In 2002 in California, an intersegmental faculty group reported on that gap (Intersegmental Council of Academic Senates, 2002). The Board of Trustees of the California State University System (CSU) were dismayed to realize that nearly half of all students in the CSU required remediation in English and half in math despite being in the upper one-third of high school graduates in the state. In fall 1998, 47% of students were identified as not proficient in English and 55% were not proficient in math (California State University, Office of Analytic Studies, 2007). The Board of Trustees responded with Executive Order 665, which was implemented in the fall of 1998 on all CSU campuses. It mandated the following:

- All students not otherwise exempt must take the English Placement Test and the Entry Level Math Test before enrolling in classes.
- Students requiring remediation must enroll in the required class or classes in their first semester.
- Students must be fully remediated by the end of their first year of enrollment.
- Students who fail to complete their remediation may be sent to the community colleges and cannot reenroll in the CSU until they have passed their General Education English and/or Math courses. (California State University, 1997)

Although initially met with resistance, these requirements are now met on most campuses. Students take their placement tests, enroll in required classes, and receive needed advising and tutoring while receiving an unambiguous message about the urgency of developing their English and math abilities to the level that will give them access to the university curriculum. Rather than decimating the ranks of poor and minority students, particularly English learners, as many had feared, EO 665 has ensured that they can compete with their fully prepared peers. The result is that underprepared students now are retained and graduate at a rate comparable to students who enter the university fully prepared (P. Garcia, personal communication, February 12, 2007).

The most recent report to the CSU Board of Trustees on the current and future status of remediation in the CSU commends campuses for the innovative ways in which they have addressed the remediation needs of their students. While reaffirming the goal of working with high schools to better prepare students, it also acknowledges that providing remediation is a necessary part of the CSU mission to serve the upper one-third of high school graduates. It also acknowledges that "meeting the basic skills needs of students whose primary language is not standard English is a special concern, and indeed an increasing concern as such students increasingly find their way to the CSU." (California State University, September 18-19, 2007, p. 13)

Closing the High School/University Gap

As important as EO 665 has been on CSU campuses, another provision of the order will perhaps ultimately be viewed as having a more profound impact on students' education. The mandate also required that the CSU begin to collaborate more meaningfully with high schools to close the gap between students' proficiency at graduation and the expectations of the CSU. In response, the CSU Chancellor's Office collaborated with the State Department of Education (DOE) to create the Early Assessment Program (EAP). Taking a subset of items on the 11th-grade California Standards Test and adding 15 items from the CSU English Placement along with a 45-minute essay, the CSU and DOE created a test that would assess students' readiness for college-level work in English at the CSU. (An equivalent test was created in math minus the essay). In the spring of 2006 (the last date for which data are available), 312,167 11th-graders in schools throughout California took the English EAP exam to assess their readiness for college English (California State University,

Early Assessment Program, 2007). Of these, 15% demonstrated readiness and were exempt from the EPT if they enrolled at a CSU after graduating. The remaining 85% of the students and their schools received the message that they needed additional preparation in the senior year in order to prepare themselves generally for college and specifically to improve their placement, should they enroll in the CSU and take the EPT.

Creating the Expository Reading and Writing Course

The EAP test, which represents an unprecedented alignment between the standards of K-12 and the expectations of the CSU, has received national attention (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Nevertheless, CSU faculty recognized that simply giving a large number of students the message that they were underprepared would not enable them and their teachers to change that situation unless options were developed for them in 12th grade. The CSU English Council, a consortium of English departments across the CSU, sought and received funding to form a task force to address this need. The 12th Grade Task Force, a grassroots group composed of CSU English faculty, high school teachers, and administrators, began its work in fall of 2004. The outcome was the Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC) (California State University, Office of the Chancellor, July 9, 2007), composed of 14 assignments designed to develop students' ability to critically read expository texts and create text-based writing in response to those texts. The curricular approach, articulated in a template (California State University, July 9, 2007), provides students with strategies to read from a rhetorical point of view. Students are asked to consider the authors, their audience, their purpose, how they construct their arguments, and what kinds of appeals they make to the readers. They analyze their own writing and that of their classmates using the same rhetorical tools. The assignments themselves are based on a range of expository texts, including newspaper articles and opinion pieces, longer essays, and full-length books, all chosen for their appeal to a high school audience.

The ERWC has turned out to be the right curriculum at the right time. The English Language Arts Standards required students to be able to read and rhetorically analyze nonfiction texts, but teachers had been trained to teach literature and supplied with literary anthologies. The task force put appropriate materials for a 2-semester course into the hands of teachers who participated in 4 days of CSU and County Offices of Education-sponsored professional development. The student version was copy-ready and also available for downloading; the teacher version provided the pedagogical guidance that many teachers had been lacking. The task force also secured approval for the full course to fulfill Area B, 12th-grade English, in the A-G Requirements for admission to the CSU and University of California (UC). As of August 2007, 2,200 teachers have participated in the training and 135 schools have adopted the course. In other schools, teachers are integrating assignments into their existing courses (N. Brynelson, August 17, 2007, personal communication).

Supplementing ERWC for English Learners

In an early study of ESL composition, Ann Raimes (1985) asserts that

what L2 writers need in comparison with other students is:

> … more of everything: more time; more opportunity to talk, listen, read, and write in order to marshal the vocabulary they need to make their own background knowledge accessible to them in their L2; more instruction and practice in generating, organizing, and revising ideas; more attention to the rhetorical options available to them. (p. 250)

In that light, the ERWC has proved very successful even though it was not designed specifically for English learners. It provides carefully crafted scaffolding for learning to read academic language and asks students to apply reading strategies to texts that are directly relevant to their own experience in a way that *The Canterbury Tales* and "The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock" will seldom be. In a pilot study of the reactions of teachers to the ERWC, several teachers in interviews commented on the usefulness of the materials for their English learners. For example, a teacher in Bakersfield reflected this view:

> The way a lot of the second language strategies are written directly into these units, the way they're scaffolded … what's nice about the [materials] is that it is … written for teenagers … [about what they] are interested in and so their curiosity is piqued. While [English learners] may have a bit of a delay in accessing the text … they have improved … their writing skills. (California State University, 2005, pp. 29-30)

The ERWC materials give teachers the resources to provide academically rigorous yet highly engaging instruction in reading and writing to all students. However, it has not until recently provided teachers with materials for the extra instruction in "editing for linguistic form and style" (p. 250) that Raimes also argues that English learners need. In other words, it does not give teachers resources to help multilingual students develop grammatical competency, yet that competency is expected at the college level and measured in a variety of ways on the EAP and EPT exams. Two sample items from the Composing Skills section of the EPT demonstrate how these tests assess grammatical knowledge:

Sentence Correction:
Ancient Greeks ate with their fingers, wiped them on pieces of bread, and <u>tossed them</u> to the dogs lying under the table.

(A) tossed them
(B) tossing them
(C) tossed the bread*
(D) they tossed

Construction Shift:
Watson maintains that the worsening economic plight of the poor is reflected in the rising unemployment rate.

Rewrite, beginning with Watson maintains that the rising unemployment rate …
(A) reflects the*
(B) and the plight of
(C) is what worsens
(D) is worse

(*correct answer)
Note. *California State University, 2002, pp. 7-8.*

The first example measures students' ability to recognize that the reference for "them" is "fingers." The second measures the ability to see that although the first sentence is grammatically correct, answer (A) results in a more effective sentence by removing the passive verb construction. Questions such as these on the EAP and EPT measure students' ability to use the grammar and conventions of written English accurately and in ways that are rhetorically effective. In addition, two of the six descriptors used in holistically scoring the essays on these exams specifically ask readers to assess students' sentence-level competence:

CSU English Placement Test Scoring Guide:

A passing essay (i.e., score of 4: Adequate):
e. demonstrates adequate use of syntax and language
f. may have some errors, but generally demonstrates control of grammar, usage, and mechanics
Note. *California State University, 2002, p. 13.*

English learners must achieve "control of grammar, usage, and mechanics" along with other writing proficiencies while in high school to avoid spending 1 or 2 semesters in remedial classes that do not count toward graduation. Most TESOL specialists now believe that the best and perhaps only way for students to achieve this control is through direct instruction. Robin Scarcella (1996), who originally argued that the natural process of acquisition would suffice, no longer believes that this is the case, based in part on her experiences in working with a generation of entering freshmen at UC Irvine. In *Accelerating Academic English: A Focus on the English Learner*, she argues:

> Instructors can no longer simply hope that their students will acquire English grammar. For the majority of students—whether native or non-native English-speaking, the grammar of academic English cannot be acquired accurately without instruction. For ELs who have reached a plateau in developing English, grammar instruction is necessary. This instruction must show learners not only forms but the meanings of those forms and how to use the forms to accomplish purposeful communicative goals. … It must be taught in a principled manner. Not to do so is a disservice to students. (2003, p. 100)

The linguist Rod Ellis notes that experts in second language acquisition have reached a broad consensus that "teaching grammar can have a beneficial effect on learners' interlanguage development" (2002, p. 20).

Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing

As a member of the CSU 12th Grade Task Force and a TESOL specialist, I have created a supplement to the ERWC materials designed for English learners and other students who may be fluent native speakers of English, but who do not have control of the grammar and conventions of written academic English. The materials reflect the belief that successful instruction at the sentence level is based on:

- Materials that are contextualized and text based;
- Topics that are based on student needs;
- Classroom activities that are interactive and engaging (using group and pair work, not homework);
- Practice that is spaced and repeated (not drills);
- An approach that is directed toward making students independent editors of their own writing;
- Alignment with English Language Arts Standards and EAP/EPT assessment.

Developing Contextualized and Text-Based Materials

Grammar instruction is most likely to transfer to students' own writing if students become aware of how grammar functions in authentic texts written to communicate real ideas to real audiences for real purposes rather than in sentences without any context written simply to demonstrate certain grammatical features. Ellis (2002) recommends that instruction begin by encouraging students to notice key grammatical features in "input," in other words, in language that they are reading and hearing. They then need to receive explicit instruction in the features with a focus on "helping them to understand how grammar works" (p. 27). The ultimate step is "forging a link between the focus on form and the teaching of explicit knowledge … by teachers directing feedback on features that have been explicitly taught" (p. 29). The grammar materials that I have designed implement this process by using the ERWC materials as "input" for students to notice and identify particular grammatical forms, develop explicit knowledge about those forms, and then receive feedback focusing on those forms in their own essays.

A strength of this approach is that students are already highly familiar with the texts. As part of the reading process outlined in the ERWC template, student have made predictions about the texts, read them and familiarized themselves with the vocabulary, discussed the concepts, and analyzed the texts rhetorically. At that point (or at some point during that reading process), they are well positioned to start looking at specific grammatical features in the texts. Some of the grammar activities use the actual text unchanged; others are based on the text, but I either simplified the text to make the grammatical features more salient and eliminate distracting complexity, or I modified it so the target feature would appear more often than in the actual text. In either

case, the vocabulary is much richer and the texts themselves are more topical and engaging than is typical in grammar books. Every chapter also includes activities based on student essays written on the topic; I chose these essays as much for their approach to the topic as for their grammar. They thus serve a double purpose, providing material for editing activities while also demonstrating to students how a fellow high school writer has responded in a memorable way to the writing assignment.

Each chapter offers a guided writing activity to help students hear and become more conscious of the grammatical feature that is the focus of the chapter. In the guided writing activity, a series of connected sentences based on the topic of the particular ERWC assignment, for example "Racial Profiling" or "Juvenile Justice," incorporate a number of examples of the target feature for the chapter (passives, modals, and qualifying words in the case of "Racial Profiling," connecting words in the case of "Juvenile Justice"). The teacher reads the text while students take notes; then, in small groups, they reconstruct the text as closely as they can. This activity accomplishes two purposes—students hear the target feature several times while listening attentively because they know they will have to reconstruct the text, and they create a text that they can later use to edit for that feature.

The ERWC grammar materials do not attempt to teach students all the grammar that an educated native speaker knows intuitively. However, a strong argument can be made that a subset of those rules can be taught and that we owe it to students who are not native speakers or who do not use the standard dialect of English to teach them those rules explicitly (Delpit, 1988). This set of rules is not the same as the "school grammar" that opponents of grammar instruction refer to dismissively (Hartwell, pp. 353-354). School grammar is the prescriptive grammar of handbooks that forbid the use of the passive and warn against creating sentence fragments. The approach that I have taken is based on the analysis of grammar as it appears in real texts, most written within the last five years. Students learn a limited number of generally applicable rules, but they are also encouraged to observe how real authors use passives and create fragments. Students learn to recognize passives and learn that sometimes they are useful but can sometimes also be used to obscure the agent in a sentence, either for a rhetorical purpose or inadvertently. Students learn how to avoid fragments, but at the same time they are invited to see that an author can use a fragment for a stylistic or rhetorical purpose.

In Chapter 6: Connecting Ideas in Expository Writing, based on the ERWC assignment "Juvenile Justice," the focus is the use of coordination, subordination, and transitions to show the logical relationships between clauses and the ideas they express. The guided writing activity contains sentences that demonstrate how these words connect sentences (see Appendix A). After constructing their own version of the guided writing (see Appendix B), students learn that writers express logical relationships between clauses by using coordinating and subordinating words and transitions. For each type of sentence, they analyze a set of sentences based on one of the "Juvenile Justice" readings and identify the logical relationship expressed by the connecting words. Then, using the chart "Words That Connect Ideas," which summarizes what they have learned, they rewrite a set of sentences using alternative connecting

words (Appendix C). In the next activity students return to the guided composition text to identify connecting words, methods, and logical relationships. Students then write their own sentences based on one of the readings, using all three of the connecting methods. They conclude by applying what they have learned to editing a piece of student writing (Appendix D). After learning about parallel structure as an alternative way to connect ideas, students then edit their own "Juvenile Justice" essays.

Integrating Grammar Instruction in the English Classroom

As Scarcella points out, for grammar instruction to be worthwhile, it must be implemented in a principled way (2003, p. 100). Teachers, as professionals, must make strategic decisions about what to teach and how to teach it; otherwise, the opponents of grammar instruction will be right and the time would be better used reading and writing. The first decision a teacher using the ERWC grammar materials must make is which grammar topics to cover. The short answer is that "It depends. …" Since students have to read the readings that accompany a particular assignment before or during the time they are moving through the linked grammar chapter, the sequence will to some extent be determined by the assignments the class is doing. At the same time, not all classes will benefit from all the chapters. A teacher will have to make judgments about students' grammatical competence and grammatical knowledge. A classroom of students with less grammatical competence will benefit most from the early chapters, which focus on sentence structure, noun forms and subject-verb agreement, sentence boundaries, and verbs. Students with higher levels of competence will benefit from the later chapters, which explore more deeply the interface between grammar and rhetoric: ways in which writers qualify their assertions, ways in which they logically connect their ideas, ways in which they add information to sentences, and ways in which they incorporate the text of others into their writing.

Identifying Grammar Topics for a Class

Teachers integrating grammar instruction into an English class should have students write early in the semester and analyze the types of errors that are typical for the class as a whole. The sample of student writing below is characterized by a pattern of verb errors and run-on sentences. If these were typical errors for most of the students in the class, then the teacher might choose to focus on identifying subjects, verbs, and clauses (Chapter 1: Sentence Fundamentals for Expressing Ideas), repairing run-on sentences (Chapter 2: Sentence Problems: Run-ons and Fragments), and verbs (Chapter 4: Verbs for Expository Writing). Even within a chapter, some preliminary activities may be unnecessary for students with a good foundation while the application activities may be beneficial even for fairly advanced students.

General criteria for deciding which grammatical errors merit spending class time on include deciding how frequent the errors are, how serious they are, and how teachable the grammar points are. Preposition errors may occur throughout a piece of student writing, but many uses of prepositions are not teachable. They are lexical items that must be learned in connection with the

other words that regularly go with them. We say, "I took care of my children," but "I cared for my elderly parents." No rule explains why "to take care" requires "of" while "care" requires "for." The best strategy for teachers is to treat the whole cluster of words ("to take care *of*) as a vocabulary item and ask students to keep a log to assist them in learning them. Students can also refer to the log when they are editing their writing since a relatively small number of preposition errors is likely to crop up in their writing repeatedly. On the other hand, students can learn what a sentence fragment is and some strategies for avoiding them, and they can learn the basics of how verb tenses function and the way in which time markers enable writers to shift from one time frame to another. These are potential areas where class time will pay off by increasing students' awareness and editing capabilities.

Deciding How to Use the Materials

Once a teacher has determined which topics to focus on, the next decision is how to make use of the grammar materials. As the critics of grammar teaching rightly point out, grammar teaching can be sterile and uninteresting. A way to keep that from happening is to go over the explanations in class in the form of "minilessons," and then have students work on the activities in pairs or small groups. The most important learning will occur as students articulate their understanding of the rules in their own words and negotiate the answers among themselves and in consultation with their teacher (for additional strategies for integrating grammar instruction in an integrated reading/writing course, see Goen, Porter, Swanson, & VanDommelen, 2002). Approaching grammar in this way has multiple benefits. "Minilessons" of perhaps 10 minutes are brief enough not to become boring. They also ensure that instruction is spaced so students have time to process the new information. Following up immediately with the activity enables students to cement what they have learned and clarify any confusion immediately. At the end of the day the teacher walks out of the classroom without a stack of grammar exercises to correct, and students learn not to associate grammar with red check marks and grades in a grade book.

This is not to say that students should not be held accountable for learning, but the accountability comes when they edit their own writing. To ensure that the learning that has occurred transfers to students' writing, the teacher must give focused feedback by identifying and labeling students' errors using labels such as the ones in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Labels for Editing

noun	All errors in formation of nouns; singulars, plurals, possessives, and articles/determiners
verb	All errors of verb form (endings) and verb tense
s-v agree	Subject-verb agreement
run-on	Run-on sentence or comma splice
frag.	Sentence fragment

sentence structure	Errors in the way clauses are formed and joined
punct.	Punctuation error
sp.	Spelling error

In the beginning students need to have their sentence-level errors labeled to learn to identify their errors. Using a minimum number of labels makes it easier for students to remember what they mean and also speeds up the job of marking for teachers. Using labels such as these consistently in marking student writing will help them find their errors and understand that individual errors are often part of a larger pattern of error that they can and should master. Once a topic has been covered, the teacher should continue to hold students responsible for correcting the error during the editing phase of writing but can gradually make students independent, perhaps first by marking in the text but not labeling and later requiring students themselves to identify and correct the error without teacher assistance. The final grade on the paper, after revision and editing, should reflect not only global issues such as content and organization but also control of grammar and conventions. (For a comprehensive discussion of responding to student error, see Ferris, 2002.)

Developing New Grammar Activities

The ERWC materials in their two binders with their 14 assignments look much like a traditional textbook. However, the existence of the template says otherwise. They are really models of how teachers can construct reading and writing assignments for their students using materials of their own choosing, including literature. In the same way, the eight chapters of grammar materials looks like a grammar textbook that a teacher might march the class through in lockstep, but my intention is that it be regarded more like a cookbook. They model a way of teaching the key areas of grammar and conventions that are most likely to benefit California high school students. If students need instruction in a particular area, but the teacher is teaching an article from a recent news magazine rather than one from the ERWC materials, the teacher can create grammar activities that are modeled on the ones I created but based on the new text.

Not all texts, however, work equally well in every situation. For example, a fairly informal opinion piece might lend itself to teaching modals and other qualifying methods because the writer is likely to be making assertions and recommendations. A more literary reflective essay might be better suited to teaching ways of incorporating information in sentences. Text written primarily in the present tense works well to teach subject-verb agreement, while a text that narrates an event in the past while making observations about that event can be used to give students practice in choosing correct verb tenses and identifying time markers in expository writing.

One of the richest sources of text for teachers to use to develop grammar activities is the writing of their own students. Once you have decided on your focus, rather than look for texts that contain a lot of that type of error, choose an essay that is particularly interesting or particularly well written so that it will be a model of good writing for your students. Then create activities such

as a cloze passage (in which words are deleted and students need to fill in the correct form) or a sentence boundary activity, in which you remove the end punctuation and ask students to fill it in. If errors do occur in the text, correct them so students don't inadvertently learn incorrect forms. Have students complete the grammar activity, but close the instructional circle by also talking about the qualities of the text that make it rhetorically effective.

Sentence-correction activities based on students' own writing are useful also, but choose 10 sentences from 10 different essays rather than 10 from one essay, or select short paragraphs from several essays. That way no students will feel singled out. Again, correct any errors except for the error type you are teaching. This is not the place to worry about student ownership of their own writing. Instead, your goal is for students to focus on a particular kind of error and how it can best be edited, not to be distracted by a variety of errors for which you may not have a ready explanation.

Grammar Instruction Today

In a state where almost half the students in K-12 start school with a first language other than English, few English teachers would argue that students don't need help with grammar. The question for most teachers is how to go about providing that help. Some teachers would still argue that if you focus on meaning, on helping students clearly communicate their ideas, the grammar will follow naturally. Many, however, realize that direct instruction is probably the most efficient way for multilingual students to gain control over the grammar and conventions of written English. But what kind of direct instruction? A high school teacher with whom I was recently talking categorized the dearth of appropriate and engaging materials as a "grammar vacuum." The materials that I have created to supplement the Expository Reading and Writing Course are a step toward filling that vacuum. More important than the materials themselves, the text-based, contextualized approach that I have taken with a focus on teaching students to become self-editors is a model for how to connect reading with writing at the level of the sentence. With time and lots of feedback, using these kinds of materials, students can become more accurate and effective users of written English. At the same time, because the materials are based on authentic texts, they can become more sophisticated readers, aware not just of what writers are saying, but how they have constructed their sentences to achieve their rhetorical goals.

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Endnote

[1] "English Learner" (EL) is the term used by the California State Department of Education for students who have limited proficiency in English. English Learners who achieve proficiency are reclassified as Fluent English Proficient (FEP).

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Appendix A
Sample Guided Composition Activity

Chapter Focus

Writers use three main methods to show the logical relationships between clauses and the ideas they express:

- Coordination: and, nor, but, or, for, yet, and so
- Subordination: words such as *because, after,* and *although*
- Linking with transitions: words such as *therefore, thus,* and *however*

These words can express logical relationships such as adding one idea to another, suggesting alternative ideas, or showing that one idea is the result of another idea. In expository writing, clear relationships between ideas are essential for making convincing arguments and providing supporting information.

Exercise 1: Guided Composition Activity

Based on Adam Liptak, "Supreme Court to rule on executing young killers"
Directions: Take out a blank sheet of paper. Listen and take notes as your teacher reads the following sentences. They will be read twice. Then reconstruct what you heard using your notes. As your teacher reads the sentences one more time, make corrections to what you have written. Now work in pairs or a small group to reconstruct the text. Your teacher will collect what you have written and return it to you at the end of this unit so you can edit it.

1. After the Supreme Court agreed to review the juvenile death penalty, Robert Acuna was put on trial for his life.
2. He had killed two elderly neighbors.
3. Because he was 17, his youth should have counted in his favor.
4. Instead, his brooding adolescent behavior may have hurt him, and the jury sentenced him to die.
5. If the Supreme Court prohibits the execution of juveniles, 71 other juveniles on death row will be spared.
6. The court will consider whether putting youths on death row is cruel and unusual punishment, or if it is justified.
7. Teenagers are more likely to confess, and they may not fully understand the justice system.
8. Also, jurors may mistakenly believe that the adolescent brain is fully developed; therefore, they may not be the best judges of whether juveniles should die for their crimes.

Appendix B
Sample Students' Notes and Guided Composition

Exercise 12: Editing Your Guided Composition

- Kids are suing McD
- People take personal responsibility
- FFR are only options
- More obese children & increase 25% Type 2 diabetes
- Hard to buy grapefruits McD at every corner
- Some FF provide calories but hard to understand
- Marketing not label form
- Take no action we'll see

Kids are suing McDonalds for making them fat. Perhaps people should take personal responsibility for what they eat. Why would people eat healthy when fast food restraunts are the only options where there are available affordable meals. Now there are just more and more obese children with type 2 diabetes and overly increased 25%. Fast food is bad, but it also provides calory labels, but it may still be hard to understand. Unfortunately, if we don't take action now we will see more obese kids and more angry parents.

Appendix C
Sample Application Activity

Exercise 5: Using Connecting Words to Join Clauses
Based on Lundstrom, "Kids are kids—until they commit crimes"
Directions: Rewrite the following sentences from the previous exercises using alternative connecting words and phrases. Make sure the logical relationship stays the same. Check that you have punctuated the sentences correctly. Underline the new connecting word or phrase.

1. Since age can shape every aspect of a capital case, questions are raised about how reliable and consistent jurors have been.
   Rewrite with a transition: _____
   _____

2. Although some jurors believe that adolescents have diminished responsibility and should be treated leniently, others view them as a terrible danger to society.
   Rewrite with a coordinating word: _____
   _____

3. Despite the fact that he is only 14, Lionel Tate might be sentenced to life in prison.
   Rewrite with a transition: _____
   _____

4. Teenagers under 18 aren't allowed to smoke, drink, or vote; nevertheless, we are eager to try to sentence them as adults when they commit crimes.
   Rewrite with a subordinating word: _____
   _____

5. We don't really believe that 14-year-olds are adults; otherwise, we would let them vote.
   Rewrite with a subordinating word: _____
   _____

Appendix D
Sample Activity Based on Student Writing

Student Writing

Directions: Use the three ways to combine clauses to improve the following passage from a student essay. Highlight the connecting words and circle the punctuation that you use with them.

Some people would say that teenagers should know right from wrong. Teenagers are very young. Do we, as teenagers, know right from wrong? We are prone to do things. They are frowned on by adults. We are in a stage of life. We are most susceptible to peer pressure. During my own limited research, I have found something surprising. Teenagers feel the death penalty should be strongly enforced. They believe teens should be treated as adults. The teenagers I interviewed believed that we should face the consequences of our actions like adults. Jurors should not accept excuses like, "Well, I'm just a kid and it was a stupid mistake." Adults were faced with the question of whether adolescents should be tried as adults. They said they didn't have the "power" or "right" to judge whether someone should die or not. Teenagers should face up to their actions. They should accept the consequences of their behavior. The death penalty should not be applied to any person. No one has the right to judge that someone else should die.