

2020

Creating a Sentence Frame Toolkit Based on Third Grade Writing Standards to Support the Writing Instruction of Spanish-Speaking English Learners

Tanisha J. Rosa Le Bron
University of Central Florida



Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), and the [Elementary Education Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/honorsthesis>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the UCF Theses and Dissertations at STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Undergraduate Theses by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

Recommended Citation

Rosa Le Bron, Tanisha J., "Creating a Sentence Frame Toolkit Based on Third Grade Writing Standards to Support the Writing Instruction of Spanish-Speaking English Learners" (2020). *Honors Undergraduate Theses*. 754.

<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/honorsthesis/754>



Honors Thesis Proposal
For
**Creating a Sentence Frame Toolkit Based on Third Grade Writing Standards
to Support the Writing Instruction of Spanish-Speaking English Learners**
by
Tanisha Joann Rosa Le Bron

Sherron Killingsworth Roberts, Ed.D.
Thesis Committee Chair
School of Teacher Education

Sherron Killingsworth Roberts, Ed.D.
Honors in the Major Coordinator
College of Community Innovation and
Education

Cynthia Walters, MAT
Thesis Committee Co-Chair
School of Teacher Education

Abstract

Third grade general education teachers, particularly in Florida, will teach English learners (ELs) in their classroom who must participate in their English Language Arts writing classes at roughly the same pace as native English speakers in order to perform grade-level, standards-based writing tasks. For this reason, general education teachers must be equipped with helpful, research-based resources to support the ELs to become equally successful in writing instruction as their native-speaking peers. This thesis explored the use of sentence frames for improving the English skills of ELs as they start to understand and use the syntax of Standard English. As a result, this thesis created a teacher-friendly resource, the Sentence Frame Toolkit for Third Grade, containing sentence frame templates and sample student work for third grade teachers to use as a resource when teaching expository writing in English Language Arts to Spanish-speaking ELs. The sentence frames in the toolkit are aligned to Florida's third grade expository writing standards from Cluster I. By using the sentence frames in the toolkit as support, ELs will be able to turn thoughts into words, produce the second language at their pace, and continue to improve as skilled writers.

Dedication

To my parents, Alexandra and Juan, who have taught me to *always* aim to reach my full potential.

To my older brother John, whose insistence to play boardgames as I noticeably stressed to finish my thesis usually led to a needed fun time with family.

And to my closest friends and loved ones who were my emotional support system.

Thank you, mom, for believing in me and reminding me to take “brain breaks” between hours of writing when I felt overwhelmed.

You were right.

I needed it.

And you were right.

I did it.

“All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them.”

-Walt Disney

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Dr. Sherron Killingsworth Roberts who has been a wonderful Thesis Chair and knowledgeable mentor guiding me throughout this entire research process. She introduced me to the wonders of research, pushed me to do my very best, and motivated me to continue every time I hit a creative block.

Thank you to Co-Chair Professor Cynthia Walters who has supported me throughout my entire academic career as an Elementary Education student at the University of Central Florida. I appreciate you seeing the potential in me to take on this research, providing me with knowledge from your expertise in Language Arts, and for believing in the project.

I appreciate you both for your continued support. Every word of encouragement came at the right time when I felt like life was pushing me away from my goal. You filled my cup each time it ran too low. Without you I would not have been able to complete this study and create a toolkit to help English learners be successful.

And thank you to the Burnett Honors College for giving me the opportunity to complete this study and contribute a thesis in the field of education to support English learners.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Personal Rationale for Focusing on Sentence Frames to Support ELs’ Writing	1
Professional Rationale for Focusing on Sentence Frames to Support ELs’ Writing	3
Why Target Third Grade English Learners’ Writing Skills Development?.....	4
Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	6
Defining the English Learner Population.....	6
Needed Writing Support for Spanish-Speaking English Learners.....	7
Teaching English Learners to Write in ELA Utilizing Sentence Frames	9
Utilizing Sentence Frames Across Content Areas	11
Chapter Three: Methodology	14
An Overview of the Sentence Frame Toolkit	14
Sentence Starters Versus Sentence Frames.....	15
Providing Sentence Frames to Third Grade English Learners.....	16
Creating a Toolkit with Sentence Frames for Teachers of Third Grade English Learners	17
Revisiting the Key Points of This Study: Supporting ELs in Writing Instruction.....	19
Chapter Four: The Sentence Frame Toolkit.....	21
An Introduction of the Sentence Frame Toolkit	21
From the LAFS to the Toolkit	23
An Explanation of the Structure of the Sentence Frame Toolkit.....	24
Sentence Frame Toolkit for Third Grade.....	27
Findings of the Final Product.....	52
Chapter Five: Conclusion	53
Summary of the study	53
Concluding remarks	54
Educational implications.....	54
Limitations	55
Future research.....	55
References.....	57

Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis explored the use of sentence frames for improving the English skills of English learners (ELs) as they start to understand and use the syntax of Standard English. The assumption was that transition of native speakers of a language other than English to English could likely be assisted by providing learners with partial sentences to acquaint these learners with the relationship of the words in a sentence to each other in the English language.

Personal Rationale for Focusing on Sentence Frames to Support ELs' Writing

A few semesters ago, I began participating in Project MELTS (Micro-credentialing of English Learner Teaching Skills) for some of my elementary education program courses at the University of Central Florida. At that time, I became intensely interested in the topic of sentence frames. Their relevancy was highlighted throughout my field experiences in public schools as I worked closely with ELs. The purpose of MELTS was to better prepare elementary teachers to support academic achievement and language development of English learners (ELs). Preservice teachers, including me, who participated in this project developed important skills to boost ELs' learning through modules, microteaching, or TeachLivE sessions. After demonstrating a particular skill achievement, each education student received a micro-credential in the form of a digital badge. The module for one of the digital badge skills included an article stating that “[s]entence frames display grammar elements visually and can even teach higher-order structures, such as cause-effect writing in persuasive sentences” (Monroe, 2017). I learned that the visual and verbal support that sentence frames provided to the EL students was a determining factor for their success in completing the task of writing a simple paragraph. I remember

learning how to scaffold ELs' writing using academic sentence frames when completing one of the modules in MELTS through TeachLive, and that excited me. I wanted to learn more.

Using TeachLive, which is a virtual reality classroom for practicing teachers with student avatars, allowed me and my elementary education colleagues to rehearse these teaching skills using sentence frames without placing real students at risk. In these virtual teaching experiences, each of the three main EL students in the virtual classroom was at a different English proficiency level, so I had to think of the appropriate supports and strategies for each student's level in order to keep them as actively engaged in the class as their native-speaking peers. During these virtual sessions, using sentence frames as a tool to teach writing to English learners at all levels proved essential. This experience showed me how Monroe's (2017) article can come to life: EL students can be supported with the use of sentence frames to acquire academic language and understand basic sentence structures because it scaffolds their learning. Therefore, I was able to confirm the effectiveness of using sentence frames as a support during the MELTS sessions. The ELs successfully understood the input in the second language and were able to produce answers to complete the frames. Although there are many tasks that ELs may not be able to comprehend or complete independently, particularly the beginner ELs, I understood that through practice their "...success in school is largely related to the opportunities they have to participate in a range of authentic learning contexts..." along with the scaffolding teachers provide to succeed in English writing instruction (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005, p. 10). Certainly, all educators should be equipped with strategies and tools that will help them reach each learner in the classroom and scaffold them to eventually master an academic task without much support. Therefore, this thesis created a toolkit highlighting sentence frame examples for third grade teachers to use when

teaching expository writing to Spanish-speaking English learners. Not only did this personal rationale motivate me to explore sentence frames for the purposes of this thesis, but my research provided great motivation through a strong professional rationale to produce a product for teacher to use sentence frames to support writing instruction in their classrooms.

Professional Rationale for Focusing on Sentence Frames to Support ELs' Writing

With the staggering influx of Spanish-speaking students joining schools in Florida, educators must be prepared to use best practices to help these students succeed in English Language Arts and writing instruction. Many students move to a new, English-speaking country having varied second language proficiencies; some students are beginner English learners (ELs), while others are intermediate or advanced. Teachers are given the complex task of making the necessary accommodations to their instruction to help all ELs comprehend the class content, and hopefully, acquire the second language as well. Krashen once said that “we acquire language when we understand messages”; in order for ELs to understand English language and content, teachers can “chunk” the information, or break it down, by using verbal supports like sentence frames.

The National Center for Education Statistics (2018) states that “[i]n fall 2015, there were about 3.8 million Hispanic ELL students, which constituted over three-quarters (77.7 percent) of ELL student enrollment overall” (https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgf.asp).

Additionally, in the 2015-2016 school year, “...Spanish was spoken by almost three-quarters of Florida ELs...” (Sugarman & Geary, 2018, p. 3). With the increasing number of English learners (ELs) in the Florida classrooms, all educators must become knowledgeable about the best practices to support these students in English writing instruction. In fact, Lucas and

Grinberg (2008) support the need by expressing that “[m]ainstream, general education teachers are now seeing a high number of [ELs] among their students,” so all teachers “need to be able to work with [ELs]” (as cited in de Oliveira & Silva, 2016, p. 1). To ensure that all students are learning and being academically enriched in a least-restrictive environment, all students must be equally supported, so no population should be more privileged than another. Teachers can provide many supports to lessen the language gap and help ELs during instruction, and the supports will depend on the task being taught. In this case, to teach writing to ELs, teachers can use sentence frames to make the writing process more concrete for these students. Sentence frames help students focus their writing on the specific topic and produce a complete thought that includes academic language. Sentence frames are an important consideration for ELs at various grades and proficiency levels; therefore, this thesis research focused on targeting third grade, Spanish-speaking English learners’ expository writing instruction in the ELA classroom.

Why Target Third Grade English Learners’ Writing Skills Development?

Based on a literature review of related research and my teaching experiences using sentence frames, as well as professional development opportunities in Central Florida, this thesis seeks to create a toolkit with sentence frame examples for third grade teacher’s use when teaching expository writing to Spanish-speaking third grade English learners. This population was targeted for this research because of the increasing number of Hispanic students arriving to schools in Florida, and the grade-level was chosen due to the higher-order expository writing that third graders are tasked with on the standardized exams. Kinsella (2011) expresses that English language instruction for English learners requires explicit instruction that “...fosters accurate fluency in speaking and writing” (p. 1). For example, both ELs and native speakers should have

an understanding of the writing process which includes brainstorming, pre-writing, and finally drafting. However, for an EL, depending on the proficiency level, it may be more difficult to gather and use academic vocabulary in the second language to produce grade-level, coherent writing. Kinsella (2005) expressed that "...many English learners (ELs) lack sufficient academic language in both their home language and English to be successful with complex academic tasks" (as cited in Donnelly & Roe, 2010, p. 131). The use of sentence frames can provide the scaffolding ELs need to succeed expository writing tasks; it would bridge the gap between what they have learned in their native language and what they must write about in English by providing a frame to prompt their writing.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This thesis sought to create a toolkit of resources with sentence frame examples for third grade teachers to use when teaching expository writing in English Language Arts to Spanish-speaking, English learners (ELs). Therefore, this chapter provides the knowledge gained from a literature review of related research focused on the use of sentence frames with ELs, through the following subheadings: Defining the English learner population, Needed writing support for Spanish-speaking English learners, Teaching English learners to write in ELA utilizing sentence frames, and Utilizing sentence frames across content areas.

Defining the English Learner Population

Crawford and Krashen (2007) state that ELs are "...a diverse population. A majority of [EL]s are immigrants or the children of immigrants to the United States, with literally hundreds of national identities. Others are indigenous minorities, including Native Americans and Puerto Ricans." (p. 12). ELs come from different cultural backgrounds and have different proficiencies in English since their native language knowledge influences their academic learning in the second language (L2), and they may not have acquired the necessary academic vocabulary to produce grade-level expository writing. In Florida, all third grade students are required to meet writing standards from the Language Arts Florida Standards (LAFS) such as writing opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons (LAFS.3.W.1.1), and writing informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly (LAFS.3.W.1.2). It is unfair for ELs to be tasked with writing at the same level as native speakers because they have a literacy gap when it comes to having academic language

proficiency due to their current command of English as a second language. Proficiency in academic language is needed to succeed academically in writing, so teachers must provide appropriate support ELs to scaffold the L2 learning and develop writing skills. To consider the limited English proficiency of ELs, appropriate supports and services are necessary to help them become equally as successful as their native-speaking peers.

For instance, teachers can implement the use of visual and verbal supports during instruction to help ELs understand content and develop literacy skills. These supports allow ELs to understand what is being taught in the second language; for example, teacher can use pictures, realia, gestures, repetition, and modeling to clarify concepts and make the academic language comprehensible. One tool that teachers can use to provide the needed support for writing instruction is the use of sentence frames; the effectiveness of this tool to scaffold Spanish-speaking English learners is primarily discussed within the ELA subject, but sentence frames are also appropriate to use across content areas.

Needed Writing Support for Spanish-Speaking English Learners

Teachers may hold assumptions about students' readiness or comprehension that restrict students' opportunities to learn academic language for writing (Gilliland, 2015). Some ELA teachers may think that beginner ELs, for example, are not capable of producing answers in English and, therefore, will not ask them to participate in activities that require spoken or written answers. Instead, these students are usually assigned another task from another content area, such as math, because arithmetic operations are basically universal and require little to no command of English as L2. These misconceptions are counterproductive to English learners' experiences with writing in the ELA classroom; additionally, teachers who are unequipped with

the knowledge of instructional tools to use as supports for English learners may struggle to guide an EL to comprehend and master English writing. ELs may experience “...difficulties in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing English...” and these struggles “...are sufficient to create academic difficulties if [ELs] are placed in mainstream, English language classrooms” (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). Additionally, Leiki (1992) states that “[o]ther cultures develop ideas quite differently. Determining relevance or irrelevance of details, deciding how to organize an essay or formulate an argument is not universal but rather is culturally defined” (as cited in Fisher, Rothenberg, & Frey, n.d., p. 21). It is important to be aware of the pluralistic society that is represented in the classroom and to adapt the curriculum to the ELs by embedding strategies that support instruction and will scaffold their writing skills.

When teaching in English, teachers should have high expectations for the ELs to meet the expository writing standards; however, reasonable conditions that support each EL’s learning proficiency is necessary for ELs to develop writing skills in a second language. ELs have unique proficiency levels in their L2 and need leveled supports during instruction to succeed like their native-speaking peers. Some ELs are considered to be beginners, others are intermediate, and others are advanced. At each level of second language proficiency, teachers can provide supports to help the student better comprehend the academic task and develop literacy skills in English. For beginner and intermediate ELs, it may be difficult to communicate, and their writing production will most likely be limited; sentence frames can support their writing instruction because they would be able to expand on phrases to create sentences and form paragraphs with guidance. The use of sentence frames would be an appropriate support for ELs at all proficiency levels; it would scaffold them to understand the concept of writing in their

second language and could help them be more engaged in the required writing portion of the class. The sentence frame tool is beneficial to ELs at each proficiency level because they can be modified and leveled to each EL's unique literacy needs. For Spanish-speaking English learners, in addition to the sentence frames, teachers can highlight key academic vocabulary with word banks, provide Spanish translations, and emphasize some cognates to support writing instruction and L2 acquisition.

Teaching English Learners to Write in ELA Utilizing Sentence Frames

An important aspect to consider when seeking literacy development is highlighted by Lindholm-Leary and Genesee (2010) who stress that "...most curricula are developed for only one language and do not provide bridges between the two languages" (p. 341). Since ELs have varying proficiency levels in the L2, however, differentiated instruction is necessary to support ELs' writing skill development in the ELA classroom. Sentence frames help ELs because they "[p]rovide language needed for talking and writing about the topic being studied" which helps them develop content literacy and improve their proficiency to a level where they can feel confident writing in the second language (Carrier & Tatum, n.d., p. 285). Sentence frames benefit ELs because they may need additional support to produce answers or sentences in the English language, and sentence frames would be the tool to provide that. In fact, sentence frames also serve as needed scaffolding to turn ELs' thoughts into words while providing leveled support that can help them become skilled writers. Reyes (2015), a middle school ELA teacher, mentions in his thesis that he implemented sentence frames during his Reader's Workshop class to test the impact on ELs' writing. He created sentence frames and asked students to use them to describe a character's perspective. When students used the sentence frames, he found that they

were able to provide in depth, logical responses while successfully describing another character's perspective. According to Reyes (2015), "[o]verall, the students felt that the sentence frames were helpful in guiding them to write responses" (p. 42).

For this reason, it is essential that general education teachers be equipped with helpful research-based strategies, such as using sentence frames, to support the ELs to become equally as successful in writing instruction as their native-speaking peers. Hammond and Gibbons (2005) state that "[m]ainstream and ELL teachers working with ELL populations need to create a supportive and academically challenging environment for ELLs" (as cited in de Oliveira & Silva, n.d.). Therefore, teachers should "...encourage writers to react to an idea and to explore the ways in which responses can be generated and expanded both internally and externally" because this "...affords a good opportunity for students to discover that they have something to write about" (Gaies, 1987, p. 88).

Additionally, Hammond and Gibbons (2005) stress the concern to address student needs in writing instruction by providing the appropriate supports and enabling them to participate fully in the mainstream curriculum (p. 6). Instead of making the curriculum easier, teachers should become knowledgeable about the strategies and tools that can help English learners (EL) at different proficiency levels and support their learning process. This is where the use of sentence frames would support ELs during writing instruction by serving as a guide that adjusts to their proficiency level and helps them start writing in English to develop the skill. Carrier and Tatum (n.d., p. 287) state that the sentence frames "...develop students' academic language and literacy skills" and enable students to share their thoughts orally or in writing. One example of enabling and supporting ELs in writing instruction is implementing verbal supports such as

sentence frames to provide the student with a guide to continue their writing. This provides EL students a frame to focus their ideas and be able to produce the writing in English, and it serves as a visual scaffold of language. The practice of chunking the language makes it easier for ELs to understand and produce phrases by themselves based on the well-formed examples that teachers can provide for expository modes of writing. Breaking down the language also helps ELs with second language acquisition because they understand the messages and learning the academic vocabulary addressed in the third grade writing standards to complete the sentence frame. This process helps ELs practice and develop their writing skills. Utilizing sentence frames as a tool to support writing can go beyond the ELA classroom to aid all learners across content areas.

Utilizing Sentence Frames Across Content Areas

The use of sentence frames is highly beneficial in the ELA classroom to help ELs develop writing skills; however, utilizing simple sentence frames can also support writing skills development in the content area assignments. Students who are developing their English language proficiency acquire academic vocabulary at unique paces, and their second language proficiency must be considered as a factor when evaluating their contributions in the content area classes. Providing sentence frames is beneficial across the content areas because “...students can embed target vocabulary within the sentence frames as they take notes or complete other writing tasks” (Hoffman, 2013). ELs at their respective language proficiency levels, whether it is beginner, intermediate, and even advanced, are still developing command over the English language, so they will have a better grasp of sentence construction by using the sentence frames for expository writing tasks. Through this process, ELs will acquire the L2 and academic

vocabulary that is important to know in the content areas to fully comprehend the topics discussed. Hoffman (2013) adds that “[s]caffolding language structures through ‘sentence frames’ involves modeling appropriate use of common English sentence structures.” Sentence frames provide a visual and verbal support that will help ELs better understand written English and eventually produce phrases in English that include key terms for the respective class subject. The blanks indicate where students must add academic vocabulary and prompt the writing supported by the verbal support of the framed sentence template. For example, Shimada (2017) discusses how implementing sentence frames in science lectures can support the academic gains in writing skills for third grade ELs in her thesis. Additionally, Donnelly and Roe (2010, p. 135) specifically address the need to help [ELs] understand scientific concepts by using sentence [frames] within the classroom. Providing this type of support to help ELs write in the content area classrooms allows ELs to have equal access to the new knowledge, be engaged in the learning process, and closes the literacy gap that enables ELs to acquire academic language and develop writing skills. The sentence frames can help ELs put their thoughts into words, and it requires them to use words in the correct context of the sentence (Shimada, 2017, p. 6). Therefore, implementing this tool can help ELA teachers and teachers of other subjects to scaffold ELs language use and increase their English writing skills.

In summary, this literature review deepened my understanding of sentence frames through the explanation of the structure of sentence frames, their use, and their impact when used as a tool to support English learners with writing tasks from any content. In creating a sentence frame toolkit, therefore, one should keep in mind that sentence frames are an effective tool that can bridge the language gap for ELs. This thesis focused on application of these frames, so that

the sentence frames are specifically designed to target the expository task being taught. These tasks are further aligned with the Florida Language Arts Standards (LAFS) that students are expected to master for expository writing by the end of third grade. The following chapter outlines the methods used in this thesis to produce a toolkit for teachers to use to support the instruction of expository writing for Spanish-speaking ELs.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This study takes a qualitative approach and is a creative research project that explored and analyzed available literature on sentence frames in order to provide educators with resources to support English Learners (ELs) during expository writing instruction. Based on the literature review of related research, and personal experience using sentence frames in professional development opportunities, this thesis created a toolkit with sentence frame examples for third grade teachers to use when teaching expository writing to Spanish-speaking ELs. The preexisting literature regarding the use of sentence frames was reviewed to explain the concept of sentence frames, how to create them, and how they benefit ELs attempting writing tasks in English. This chapter translates the literature review of the use of sentence frames with ELs into the design and creation of the toolkit through the following subheadings: An Overview of the Sentence Frame Toolkit, Sentence Starters Versus Sentence Frames, Providing Sentence Frames to Third Grade English Learners, Creating a Toolkit with Sentence Frames for Teachers of Third Grade English Learners, and Revisiting the Key Points of This Study: Supporting ELs in Writing Instruction.

An Overview of the Sentence Frame Toolkit

The goal of this creative research project was to create a toolkit with sentence frames that will help support teachers of third grade ELs in expository writing instruction. Preexisting literature reveals that the most commonly used method to gather resources about sentence frames is through printed worksheets. Nevertheless, this study created a convenient and accessible toolkit that teachers can acquire and use to implement the use of sentence frames in expository

writing activities to meet the goals of the Language Arts Florida Standards (LAFS). The compilation of sentence frames for expository writing was created in digital format for teachers to have the option to print and cut into strips to provide to ELs as flashcards as needed. This toolkit was created for third grade teachers to use with ELs who must demonstrate grade-level proficiency in literacy when required to produce expository writing on the state of Florida exams. The toolkit is based on the skills targeted in the following third grade expository writing standards selected from Language Arts Florida Standards Cluster 1 : LAFS.3.W.1.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons, and LAFS.3.W.1.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. The toolkit offers teachers a better understanding of what sentence frames are and how they should be introduced to Spanish-speaking EL students to support their writing development. Additionally, the sentence frame toolkit clarifies any confusion between sentence starters and sentence frames.

Sentence Starters Versus Sentence Frames

Sentence starters are often confused for sentence frames; however, there is a difference between these two writing templates. Sentence starters function as prompts by providing only the beginning of a sentence for writers to complete the thought. When using starters, students have an open-ended guide to build upon using their prior knowledge and creative writing skills. On the other hand, Nutta, Strebel, Mihai, Crevecoeur-Bryant, and Mokhtari (2018) define sentence frames as “...sentence templates that leave out content information which [ELs] complete” (p.89) Sentence frames make abstract content understandable for English Learners (ELs) by framing the complete idea and leaving out the content information ELs’ must focus on.

When using sentence frames, students have verbal support to scaffold their writing, they can establish a clear focus for their writing, and they acquire and learn academic vocabulary as they produce writing in English. Sentence frames are a verbal support for ELs that teachers can implement during instruction to ensure these students are learning both language and content like their native-speaking peers.

Considering ELs' second-language proficiency level to accommodate their individual needs is important. Gaies (1987) states that novice writers struggle the most with getting their thoughts in order and getting it on paper (p. 88). These learners have a literacy gap that must be bridged for them to succeed academically because they may not have the necessary vocabulary to produce language on their own. Some long-term ELs have superficial oral fluency and "fossilized errors," so to address their complex linguistic needs, Kinsella (2012) recommends the use of frames (p. 28). In fact, by receiving this verbal support in the form of sentence frames, "...ELs can practice and show understanding of the concept and academic vocabulary" (p. 89) without the struggle of writing a coherent and grammatically correct response in the second language (Nutta et al., 2018).

Providing Sentence Frames to Third Grade English Learners

In Florida, third grade students are beholden to learning and demonstrating classroom command of the English language through expository writing tasks. However, this toolkit chose to focus on expository writing since that is the only genre tested by the state in writing samples. This writing assessment may be difficult for Spanish-speaking ELs because they may not have developed the necessary vocabulary in English to produce coherent writing in the second language. ELs would benefit from the use of sentence frames, because they will be able to focus

on precise academic vocabulary selection and choosing evidence from a text or their prior knowledge to write about.

Therefore, having teachers become equipped and educated on what sentence frames are, what they should look like, and how they should be presented will benefit the Spanish-speaking, third grade ELs. In order to present the concept of sentence frames and explain the appropriate use of sentence frames to support ELs during writing instruction, a set of examples were created that can be used to support expository writing instruction. This set of sentence frames within this thesis were designed as a toolkit for teachers to utilize; additionally, with this toolkit, teachers can provide ELs verbal support for expository writing tasks by using these sentence frames as a learning tool.

Creating a Toolkit with Sentence Frames for Teachers of Third Grade English Learners

This thesis worked to create a toolkit with sentence frame examples for third grade teachers to use when teaching expository writing to Spanish-speaking, ELs. According to Feldman and Kinsella (2005), “[c]lassroom teachers need efficient and effective instructional strategies to [e]nsure that all students are actively and accountably responding to all lesson content” (p. 1). If students do not understand what is being said, they will not acquire the second language nor the knowledge of subject-matter. To help ELs process text and focus their thoughts to become proficient writers, this study introduces a sentence frame toolkit with information and examples of sentence frames for expository writing instruction. This toolkit can take many forms; however, for the purpose of this study, two methods for its design were suggested, and the most appropriate was created.

Before I created the sentence frames to include in the toolkit, my committee and I made a determination to focus on the specific purpose of the writing; in this case, the ELs are writing expository pieces which would require them to analyze text content and include evidence to support their claims. Additionally, Nutta et al. (2018) explains that the procedure to prepare the sentence frames is to first identify the expressions that native English-speaking students are expected to produce, simplify the sentence structure, and replace key terms or phrases with blanks (p. 91). Also, teachers can determine if including a word bank would be necessary and beneficial for the ELs. Word banks list the key vocabulary that is being studied, and this helps students avoid grammar errors when writing. Providing sentence frames are verbal supports for ELs at each language proficiency level; additionally, the use of word banks, when necessary, serve as a scaffold to help ELs develop writing skills. These instructional tools help bridge the literacy gap between ELs' first and second language proficiency. In fact, the ELs' first language can also be used to support their understanding. For example, depending on the proficiency level, Spanish translations of key academic vocabulary and identifying existing cognates can make the process of using the frames for writing more comprehensible.

The first method to create the proposed toolkit was a compilation of sentence frames for expository writing in the form of flashcards for easy storage and access. The idea was to create a printed and physical product consisting of the groups of sentence frames cards bound by a ring. The cards were to be printed, cut, laminated, and grouped by standard, and contained in a box with the instructions and explanation labeling the cover. Each group of cards was to be color coded with a front card naming the standard to identify the resources. The second method was the chosen format: a digital and reproduceable version to allow teachers to print multiple copies

of the cards in case they have more than one EL at the same proficiency level in one classroom. The chosen format was selected due to its accessibility to third grade teachers and the focus on two LAFS from Cluster 1 for expository writing. A set of base sentence frames were produced to address the skills targeted in the selected expository writing standards. Teachers may modify the sentence frames as needed to meet specific instructional goals and language needs of each EL. In addition, sample writing prompts, suggested articles, and sample paragraphs were included for teacher reference. The final format and structure of the toolkit is explained in detail on Chapter 4 of this thesis.

Revisiting the Key Points of This Study: Supporting ELs in Writing Instruction

Third grade students, including Spanish-speaking ELs at varying second-language proficiency levels, are tasked with writing to demonstrate their understanding and writing skills in the English language. This can be problematic for ELs because they may not have the necessary English vocabulary or prior knowledge needed to successfully compose a written piece. Nevertheless, this study created a toolkit highlighting sentence frame templates for third grade teachers to use when teaching expository writing to Spanish-speaking English learners. Instead of asking ELs to individually produce a complete sentence, which may be above their second language proficiency level abilities, students can be given this set of tools as a support to scaffold expository writing instruction. Using this toolkit, teachers can frame the sentence allowing the student to fill in the blanks with a word or phrase; the answers can be provided by the teacher in a work bank for beginner ELs depending on the writing task and resources used in the classroom. By using sentence frames to support ELs during English Language Arts and writing instruction, Gardner (2015) believes that teachers can unlock ELs' potential, and

“[s]tudents [can] have the same outcome as the native speaker[s], but they produce the work in a different way” (as cited in Greene, 2015, p. 40).

This toolkit with information and examples of sentence frames to support ELs during expository writing can be shared with teachers. This thesis focused on third grade, Spanish-speaking ELs due to the writing demands of the grade during standardized testing and the increasing number of Spanish-speaking ELs in Florida. The digital toolkit is provided in Chapter Four and is available for teachers. The proposed timeline to complete the preparation and design of the instructional toolkit was a period of three months; however, the period was extended to two academic semesters due to the change in format of the product. During that time, the sets of sentence frames supporting expository writing were created and the Sentence Frame Toolkit for Third Grade was finalized.

Chapter Four: The Sentence Frame Toolkit

The purpose of this thesis was to create a toolkit of sentence frames for third grade teachers to provide to students when teaching expository writing in English Language Arts to Spanish-speaking, English learners (ELs). ELs have varying language needs and must be provided certain accommodations in order to be successful at writing tasks in English. Teachers can use these sentence frames to make the writing process more concrete for ELs, because they will help these students focus their writing on the specific topic and produce a complete thought to meet the tasks of the standards.

An Introduction of the Sentence Frame Toolkit

The primary direction of this research project shifted during the procedure of creating the sentence frames for the toolkit. The original intent was to make a set of universal sentence frames that could be used throughout a variety of expository texts for students to be able to write paragraphs and essays that met the skills targeted in the following third grade expository writing standards selected from Language Arts Florida Standards (LAFS) Cluster 1: LAFS.3.W.1.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons, and LAFS.3.W.1.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. These two standards are focused on expository writing, and they were selected due to their relevance for third grade ELs who will have to demonstrate their writing acumen during the standardized state testing process.

The rationale behind this toolkit is to have a set of tools, the sentence frames, available for teachers of EL students to reference when writing opinion pieces and informative or

explanatory texts. This toolkit supports my targeted audience of the teachers of Spanish-speaking, third grade ELs, to meet the learning goals of the selected LAFS and improve writing skills by using the sentence frames tools as verbal supports.

As I worked to enact this goal, I realized that each writing task addressed in the LAFS, such as writing the opinion pieces and writing the informational and explanatory texts, would require specific sentence frames rather than universal frames in order to create grade-level writing. Therefore, my committee and I realized that it would not be realistic nor beneficial to create a set of universal sentence frames for these tasks, since the writing can take many directions during the writing process. However, as I studied the literature review of related research on the use of sentence frames, I adjusted the procedure to create the toolkit to include specific readings, prompts, and example sentence frames in a way that would allow teachers to use these sentence frames as written in their lesson planning. Additionally, these sentence frames and accompanying readings act as a guide for teacher to make the writing process more concrete and for creation of their own unique sets of sentence frames for EL students.

Another adjustment during the creation process was the decision to make the set of sentence frames universal rather than specific to each EL language proficiency level. My committee and I came to this decision because in order to make each sentence frame correspond to a second language proficiency level, it was necessary to make each frame very specific to the text the student would be writing about. During the period of my research, I concluded this was not possible to accomplish while keeping the sentence frames universal to use for a variety of expository writing tasks, so the sentence frames were written as a base model that teachers can adjust to meet the specific language needs of the ELs.

From the LAFS to the Toolkit

The sentence frames included in the toolkit were created based on the skills addressed in the state of Florida writing standards (LAFS.3.W.1.1 and LAFS.3.W.1.2) to ensure expository writing that introduces a topic, states an opinion, supports the opinion with reasons and/or evidence, connects ideas, and provides a concluding statement. The final product was created by referencing the subskills of each standard, so students using these sentence frames to write opinion and/or expository pieces can reach mastery of the standards. I produced a set of base sentence frames that teachers may modify as needed to meet specific instructional goals and language needs. In addition, articles were selected from Newsela, a database of student-friendly current event stories, and details from those articles were used to fill in the sentence frames and create student sample paragraphs for reference.

The articles included in the toolkit were retrieved from *Newsela.com*, to provide context of how to use this teacher-friendly toolkit with instructional reading material. The articles were selected from the topics for debate text sets available for the elementary level. The readability of the articles is text level 3. For writing performance on Florida's third grade standardized testing, the students would reference two or more articles at their text level readability. For the purpose of my thesis, I included at least two articles so as to mirror the Florida end of year writing sample test. For each writing sample of each standard, articles were selected as an example, but the articles are not specifically leveled for third grade. These writing prompts and articles were selected to provide context and help teachers understand how to put the sentence frames from the toolkit into practice.

An Explanation of the Structure of the Sentence Frame Toolkit

The following sentence frame toolkit is organized as follows. At the beginning, there is an overview of the toolkit's contents and its purpose for teachers to understand the resource. The Sentence Frame Toolkit for Third Grade is a set of sentence frames based on Cluster 1 of the third grade Language Arts Florida Standards (LAFS) for writing. The kit includes sentence frames for the skills targeted in the following third grade writing standards selected from LAFS Cluster 1: LAFS.3.W.1.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons, and LAFS.3.W.1.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. This teacher-friendly kit also includes examples for each standard which shows how to use the sentence frames to create a paragraph based on suggested writing prompt and article to be used as a resource. The prompt, article, and sample paragraph citations are included in the same packet. This section allows teachers to put these sentence frames into use with appropriate context including a writing prompt and articles followed by an example opinion paragraph that was created using sentence frames from the toolkit. The paragraphs created with the sentence frames serve as a model to show how the paragraphs used in a full essay should be constructed. The first thing teachers see in the packet of the toolkit is a page with an overview of what the resource is and how to use it. Next, the code of the writing standard, LAFS.3.W.1.1 or LAFS.3.1.2, then the verbiage explaining the goal for that standard, and finally a list of each skill addressed within the standards. Next, the headings explicitly state which skill from the list is addressed in each set of sentence frames.

For the first writing standard addressed in this thesis, LAFS.3.W.1.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons, a set of 26 sentence frames were created to cover the four skills listed in the standard (see the product below for a full description of each standard and skills). Each set of sentence frames is in a table form. The first skill is to introduce the topic, which is letter (a) in the list and color coded in green for “go,” and that set has 5 sentence frames. Within that same skill description is to state an opinion, and a separate set of 5 sentence frames was created for that purpose and color coded in blue to differentiate. The next skill is to support opinion with reasons/evidence, which is letter (b) in the list and color coded in yellow for “wait, add reasons/evidence.” Along with that skill is skill (c) which is to use linking words and phrases to connect ideas. Those two skills are covered in the yellow set of 10 sentence frames. Lastly, skill (d) is to provide a concluding statement, and it was color coded in red for “stop and conclude.” That final set has 5 sentence frames.

For the second writing standard addressed in this thesis, LAFS.3.W.1.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly, a set of 16 sentence frames were created to cover the four skills listed in the standard (see the product below for a full description of each standard and skills). Each set of sentence frames is in a table form. The first skill is to introduce the topic, which is letter (a) in the list and color coded in green for “go,” and that set has 5 sentence frames. Along with that skill is to develop the topic with facts/details, which is letter (b) in the list and placed in the same green group. The next skill which is letter (c) is to use linking words and phrases to connect ideas, and it is a set of 6 sentence frames color coded in yellow for “wait, connect ideas.” Lastly, skill (d) is to provide a

concluding statement, and it was color coded in red for “stop and conclude.” That final set has 5 sentence frames.

Each set is preceded by the written standard, list of skills from the standard, and a table explaining the mentioned color coding for reference as teachers or students use the toolkit. A note on starting with the skill of introductory sentences: for the purpose of this project, the skills were kept in the same order as they were presented in the LAFS (introduction, state opinion or develop a topic, connect ideas, and conclude). However, usually in the writing process, writers will begin with the research and evidence, and later determine the introduction of a piece of writing. The order in which the sentence frames are used can adapt to the instructional plans of the teacher using the Sentence Frame Toolkit for Third Grade as a resource in the ELA classroom.

The sentence frames, as previously mentioned in Chapter 2’s literature review, are templates of a sentence that have blanks to be filled out by content information, information from texts, or the ELs’ ideas. Some sentence frames in this toolkit also include options in the form of maze (a forward slash dividing the words) for the ELs to choose which word applies to their writing. ELs may select one or more sentence frames from each set depending on the requirements of the expository writing tasks to put together one or more paragraphs. Below is the Sentence Frame Toolkit for Third Grade.

Sentence Frame Toolkit for Third Grade

Aligned to Florida's third grade
expository writing standards

Cluster 1: Text Types and purposes

Standard codes included: LAFS.3.W.1.1 & LAFS.3.W.1.2

Developed by Ms. Tanisha J. Rosa Le Bron

*Permission to use or share this Toolkit can be obtained from the creator at
the following email address: tanisharosa@knights.ucf.edu*

What is the Sentence Frame Toolkit for Third Grade?

This set of sentence frames is based on Cluster 1 of the third grade State of Florida LAFS. The kit includes sentence frames for LAFS.3.W.1.1 and LAFS.3.W.1.2. This teacher-friendly kit also includes examples for each standard which shows how to use the sentence frames to create a paragraph based on a suggested writing prompt and article to be used as a resource. The prompt, article, and sample paragraph citations are included at the end of this resource.

Who will this help?

This toolkit is designed specifically for third grade writing teachers as a resource to support English learners (ELs) during writing instruction; in particular for expository writing.

What does it help with?

These sentence frames provide research-based support to ELs during the writing process in English to make expository writing more concrete and comprehensible by breaking down the writing process into chunks.

Why sentence frames?

Sentence frames help these EL students focus their writing on the specific topic, provide common language, break ideas into parts, and produce complete thoughts to meet the complex tasks of the writing standards.

How can I use it with my students?

The sentence frames are divided by standard (LAFS.3.W.1.1 & LAFS.3.W.1.2) and by skill (each letter a, b, c, etc.). The skills are color coded to explain the tasks (see below each standard for color key). The colors are: green (go for introduction), blue (add opinion statement), pink (connect ideas), yellow (add evidence), red (stop and conclude). These color codes help identify what sentence frames to use. For example, ELs who need help writing an introductory sentence can use a sentence frame from the green section.

The Sentence Frames Toolkit can be printed and laminated, and/or each

sentence frame can be cut into strips and grouped by category and by need. Students can put sentence frames together and use resources such as texts or articles to plug in the information and create complete sentences. Students may also generate their own ideas to complete the sentence frames and write.

After the sentence frames for both standards, you will find the next section: The Sentence Frames in Use. There is a suggested writing prompt and two articles for each expository writing standard to model the use of the sentence frames. The articles are highlighted in yellow with suggested key information that ELs could select to include in their writing using the sentence frames. After the articles, you will find a sample student paragraph demonstrating how the Sentence Frames Toolkit for Third Grade can help your students complete standard-based expository writing.

LAFS.3.W.1.1

Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

- a. Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.
- b. Provide reasons that support the opinion.
- c. Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons.
- d. Provide a concluding statement or section.

Color code	Meaning	Standard skill addressed
Green	Go for introduction	<u>Introduce the topic or text they are writing about</u> , state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.
Blue	Add your opinion	Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, <u>state an opinion</u> , and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.
Yellow	Add reasons/ evidence	Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons.
Red	Stop and conclude	Provide a concluding statement or section.

Skill(a): Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.

Introduce the Topic

A _____ is/are _____.

A (what you are talking about) is/are (describe the topic).

An _____ is _____.

A (what you are talking about) is (describe the topic).

_____ is _____.

(What you are talking about) is (describe/define the topic).

The text _____ states that _____.

The text (title of the text) states that (evidence from the text).

The article _____ by _____ states that _____.

The article (title of the article) by (author's name) states that (evidence from the text).

Skill(a): Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons

State an Opinion and List Reasons

_____ is _____ for many reasons.

(Your topic) is (describe with an adjective) for many reasons.

I _____ that _____ because I believe _____.

I (agree/disagree) that (statement from the text) _____ because I believe (your opinion about the topic).

I _____ with _____ because I believe _____.

I (agree/disagree) with _____ because I think (your opinion about the topic).

I _____ because I believe there are more _____ than _____.

I (agree/disagree) because I believe there are more (what you think is the bigger problem/situation) than (what you compare it to).

I believe that _____.

I believe that (your opinion about the topic).

Skill (b & c): Provide reasons that support the opinion & Use linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reasons

Support opinion with reasons/evidence

_____ **is/are** _____ **because** _____.

(Topic) is/are (describe the topic) because (reason to support your opinion statement).

_____ **reports/states that** _____.

(“Article/book title”) reports/states that (evidence from the text to support your opinion statement).

In fact, _____ **reports/states that** _____.

In fact, (the article/the book/the author) reports/states that (evidence from the text to support your opinion statement).

Also, the author states/expresses that _____, **so** _____.

Also, the author states/expresses that (evidence from the text), so (explain how it supports your opinion statement).

According to _____, _____; **therefore,** _____.

According to (the article/the book/the author), (evidence from the text); therefore, (explain how it supports your opinion statement).

Skills (b &c): Provide reasons that support the opinion & Use linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reasons

Support opinion with reasons/evidence
<p>One reason that/why _____ is that _____.</p> <p>One reason that/why <u>(your opinion statement)</u> is that <u>(reason to support your opinion)</u>.</p>
<p>One example of _____ is _____.</p> <p>One example that/why <u>(your opinion statement)</u> is <u>(reason to support your opinion)</u>.</p>
<p>Another way in which _____ supports that _____ is _____.</p> <p>Another way in which <u>(example)</u> supports that <u>(your opinion statement)</u> is <u>(evidence to support your opinion)</u>.</p>
<p>In addition, the author states/expresses that _____, so _____.</p> <p>In addition, the author states/expresses that <u>(evidence from the text)</u>, so <u>(explain how it supports your opinion)</u>.</p>
<p>_____ is _____; for example, _____.</p> <p><u>(Topic)</u> is <u>(describe the topic/your opinion)</u>; for example, <u>(example that supports your opinion)</u>.</p>
<p>Since _____, then _____.</p> <p>Since <u>(evidence from the text)</u>, then <u>(your opinion statement)</u>.</p>

Skill (d): Provide a concluding statement or section.

Concluding Statement

Since evidence supports that _____, I believe _____.

Since evidence supports that (evidence from the text) because (concluding opinion statement).

Based on the evidence from the text/article _____.

Based on the evidence from the text/article (concluding opinion statement).

Clearly, _____ is/are _____ because _____.

Clearly, (topic) is/are (your opinion statement) because (concluding opinion statement).

For all these reasons, (topic) is/are/should be _____.

For all these reasons, (topic) is/are/should be (concluding opinion statement).

To conclude, _____.

To conclude, (concluding opinion statement).

LAFS.3.W.1.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

- a. Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.
- b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.
- c. Use linking words and phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to connect ideas within categories of information.
- d. Provide a concluding statement or section

Color code	Meaning	Standard skill addressed
Green	Go for introduction	Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.
	Develop topic	Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.
Yellow	Connect ideas	Use linking words and phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to connect ideas within categories of information.
Red	Stop and conclude	Provide a concluding statement or section.

Skill (a & b): Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons & Provide reasons that support the opinion.

Introduce the Topic

_____ is _____.

(What you are talking about) is (describe/define the topic).

Something interesting about _____ is _____.

Something interesting about (topic) is (a fact about the topic).

**Many people don't know that _____ can affect
_____ by _____.**

Many people don't know that (topic) can affect (who/what it affects) by (explain the effect).

For example, there is/are _____.

For example, there is/are (fact/detail about the topic)

**Statistics/Studies show that _____ which suggests that
_____.**

Statistics/Studies show that (fact about topic) which suggests that (what you think of the fact).

Skill (c): Use linking words and phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to connect ideas within categories of information

Connect Ideas

Another interesting fact about _____ is that _____.

Another interesting fact about (topic) is (fact about the topic).

Also, _____ is important because _____.

Also, (topic) is important because (fact/idea about the topic).

In addition, _____ is _____.

In addition, (topic) is (fact/idea about the topic).

Another interesting detail about _____ is that _____.

Another interesting detail about (topic) is (describe the topic).

Not only is _____, but also _____.

Not only is (topic) (detail about the topic), but also (second detail about the topic).

According to _____, _____ is/are _____.
According to _____, _____.

According to (text/article/author name), (topic) is/are (detail/fact about topic).
According to (text/article/author name), (fact from the text).

Skill (d): Provide a concluding statement or section

Concluding Statement

**All this information helps us understand why _____
is/are _____.**

All this information helps us understand why (topic) is/are (concluding statement).

**These facts support that _____ is/is not beneficial because
_____.**

These facts support that (topic) is/is not beneficial because (concluding statement).

**In conclusion, _____ is a good _____ for/to _____
because _____.**

In conclusion, (topic) is a good (method/alternative/practice/way) for/to (opinion statement)
because (concluding statement).

To conclude, _____ is important because _____.

To conclude (topic) is important because (concluding statement).

It is important to _____ because _____.

It is important to (topic) because (concluding statement).

The Sentence Frames in Use

This section will allow teachers to put these sentence frames into use with appropriate context including a writing prompt and articles followed by an example opinion paragraph that was created using sentence frames from the toolkit.

These articles were retrieved from *Newsela.com*, a database of student-friendly current event stories, to provide context of how to use this teacher-friendly toolkit with instructional reading material. The articles were selected from the topics for debate text sets available for elementary level.

Example #1 for LAFS.3.W.1.1 using the toolkit

Writing prompt:

Are Esports Really Sports?

Article reference 1:

By Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, adapted by Newsela staff

Published:06/05/2017

Word Count:401

Recommended for:Middle School - High School

Text Level:3

HARTLAND, Wisconsin — It was a hot afternoon in Hartland, Wisconsin. Some Arrowhead High School students were playing tennis outdoors. Others ran in a track race.

Meanwhile, another Arrowhead sports team played indoors. They were playing esports.

Unlike outdoor sports, esports is played inside on computers or game systems.

They are video game competitions. Each team has several people. The teams play against each other online.

Teams Play "League Of Legends" Video Game

Five boys on the Arrowhead esports team sat shoulder to shoulder. They shouted advice to each other. All sat in front of computers. They were connected to the other team through the Internet. The other team was at Reavis High School. Though the high school was about two hours away by car, they could still play.

The teams were playing a game called "League of Legends." The players controlled animated characters. The story in the game happens in the Middle Ages. The setting of the game is meant to look very old. To win, teams must pick the right characters to fight. The team that takes over the other team's control tower wins.

Students Must Have Good Grades To Play Esports

Students playing sports like basketball or tennis must get good grades. If not, they are not allowed to compete. This is true for esports, too.

Mike Dahle is a teacher at Arrowhead. He coaches the esports and gaming club. He started the club three years ago. Dahle wants to develop a statewide school

esports group. It would connect esports teams all over Wisconsin. Arrowhead is not the only school.

The professional sports world has noticed online gaming. Adidas and Nike now sponsor esports teams. The teams get jerseys with the companies' logos. It helps these companies sell their clothing.

Basketball teams in the NBA are interested in esports, too. Seventeen NBA teams have bought esports teams.

Esports Fans Like To Watch Players Play

Esports players like to watch other people play. Much of this happens on the game streaming website. It is called Twitch. Viewers can watch games and hear the players talking. They comment on game play.

For some players, esports pays for education. More than 30 colleges offer video game scholarships. Robert Morris University in Chicago was the first to do this in 2014.

For other players, esports can be a job. Top players can earn a lot of money at competitions.

Article reference 2:

What gaming as a job looks like

By USA Today, adapted by Newsela staff

Published:03/27/2019

Word Count:439

Recommended for:Middle School

Text Level:3

People might not think of video games as sports. Playing games is a job for some people, though. **They train and compete like athletes in other sports.**

One player is called Xmithie. He plays for Team Liquid. His team competes in "League of Legends," a **popular** online game. It is made by Riot Games.

Teams with five people compete against each other in "League of Legends." They need to work together to win. The idea is to destroy the other team's base and **protect** their own.

Making A Comfortable Living

Pro players can make a great deal of money. The best ones make more than some surgeons and lawyers.

Teams often live together in a house or apartment building.

Steve Arhancet owns Team Liquid. He said players get their own room. They live in an apartment building **provided** by the team.

A chef makes meals. Coaches and others help the players.

More Than Full-Time Work

For these players, gaming is full-time work. They work longer days than many jobs. Often, they are working on their game for six or seven days a week.

Xmithie's real name is Jake Puchero. He has been a pro "League of Legends" gamer for six years. He is 27 years old and is the oldest player in the league.

Puchero said he has played computer games since he was a boy. He started "League of Legends" when he was 21 years old. He quickly became a top player.

Puchero works six days a week. The hours are long, but he plans to play a few more years.

Getting A Spot On Teams

Another team is named Cloud9. Jack Etienne is the leader of Cloud9. With over 80 players on the team, he has seven houses around Los Angeles for them.

Gamers find each other online. They form teams that enter events.

This is how Zach "Sneaky" Scuderi began as a pro player. He started when he was 18 years old. Now he is 24 years old.

Scuderi was playing "League of Legends" online. He was offered a spot on a team.

The team of five competed in online tournaments. They split the prize money.

Scuderi used his prize money to buy more games.

One of his team leaders recommended him to the team that became Cloud9. So Scuderi switched teams. He moved from Florida to California.

Is Gaming A Job?

Jarred Kennedy is a leader at Riot Games. He hopes people get used to the idea of gaming as a job.

Example paragraph using sentence frames from the toolkit:

E- sports are video game competitions. I disagree that Esports are really sports because I believe that sports involve some physical activity and training. The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reports that the students who practice Esports control animated characters. **Since** players only need to sit in front of a computer to participate in Esports competitions, **then** they are not really doing any physical activity. **The article “What gaming as a job looks like” by USA today states that gamers train and compete like athletes in other sports.** However, the animated characters do the physical actions in Esports, not the person playing. **Also, the Cambridge Dictionary states that a sport is all types of physical activity that people do to keep healthy or for enjoyment.** **Clearly, Esports are not really sports because real sports require not only collaboration and practice, but also physical activity.**

Example #2 for LAFS.3.W.1.2 using the toolkit

Writing prompt:

Which animal makes the better pet, cats or dogs?

Article reference 1:

Dogs can help keep their owners healthy

By Ian Sample, The Guardian, adapted by Newsela staff

Published:11/22/2017

Word Count:410

Recommended for:Middle School - High School

Text Level:3

A few problems can come with owning dogs. They might chew slippers. Sometimes they bark in the middle of the night. Still, having a dog is good for your health. **Owning a dog reduces the chance of heart attacks**, a study says.

The study says a dog can help in other ways, too.

Scientists found that owning a dog helped people who live alone. Having a dog cut the chance of death from heart trouble. In homes with more people, dogs had less effect. They still lowered deaths from heart problems, though, the study says.

People in Sweden were in the study. Their health and pet records were studied. The people were 40 to 80 years old. They were studied for up to 12 years. Over 1 in 10 of them had pet dogs.

Dogs Help Owners Live Longer

Tove Fall is a professor at Uppsala University. She owns a puppy. Fall said owning a dog seemed the best for people who lived alone. Dogs seemed to help them more than those in homes with more people. Having a dog ends the effects of living alone, Fall said.

Helen Stokes-Lampard is the leader of a group of doctors. They did a study in Britain. She said **that being lonely was as bad as illnesses like diabetes**.

Lonely people might even die sooner. They appear more likely to die early than those with many friends. People who live alone are not always lonely. Still, many in the study seemed better from having a dog.

Mwenya Mubanga is a scientist who worked with Fall. They used records from Sweden. They looked at more than heart problems. The study looked at other deaths. It found that people who lived alone with their dogs were less likely to die. They did better than those without dogs. In homes with more people, the chance of death was also lower for dog owners.

Good Friendship And Good Germs

The study cannot explain why dogs might help with health. It could be just that they **keep people company**. They might also **help people get more exercise**. Dogs need to walk or exercise. Their owners help with that.

Fall thinks it is about more than exercise. She believes it has to do with friendship, she said.

Other explanations have been given, too. Dogs can give people germs. Some germs might be good for people.

Fall plans to keep learning. She hopes to have more answers soon.

Article reference 2:

Dogs want to help humans in trouble, study says

By Baltimore Sun, adapted by Newsela staff

Published:08/21/2018

Word Count:367

Recommended for:Upper Elementary School - Middle School

Text Level:2

Dogs will do a great deal for people.

Dog owners already know this. Just take a look on the internet. There are millions of stories of dogs. There are stories of them helping people.

Nothing Can Get Between A Dog And His Human

A new **study** was done. It shows that dogs will help humans. They will help even if something is in their way.

"There was a gap to be filled," said Emily Sanford. She helped write the study. She said people did not know how far dogs would go to help people.

Ms. Sanford worked on the study as a college student. She worked with Julia Meyers-Manor. Ms. Meyers-Manor is an **expert** on people's **emotions**.

Together they wanted to study dogs. They made an experiment. They put dogs on one side of a see-through door. Their owners were on the other side. They had the owners cry. They also had the owners sing. About half the dogs came through the door. What if the owner cried? Then, the dogs came over faster.

Dogs Come Running When People Cry Out

The pair got the idea from Meyers-Manor's dog. One day, she was playing with her children. They covered her in pillows. She called for help. Her dog came running. Meyers-Manor wanted to see if any other dogs would do the same thing.

The new study tells us more about dogs and humans. Studying dogs could help scientists learn about people, too.

Hoot is an example of a helpful dog. He is a therapy dog in the Baltimore-Washington **area**. He has been trained to work with people who need more help.

Hoot lives with Gayle Bragg, a teacher. She found out that he understood her needs. They have taken part in studies together.

Dogs Connect With People

Bragg said that **dogs can really help humans**. Hoot connects to all kinds of people. He will **change** what he does to suit the person.

"It's hard to put into words; **they just sense**," Bragg said. She said dogs and people can read each other. She thinks dogs just know how people are feeling.

Meyers-Manor agrees with Bragg.

"For sure, they are your best friend," she said.

Example paragraph using sentence frames from the toolkit:

Many people don't know that having a dog as a pet can affect humans in a positive way by keeping humans healthy. **Not only** are dogs fun and loyal pets, but they also reduce the risk of heart disease. **According to** Ian Sample, being lonely is almost as bad as having diabetes. **Another interesting fact about dogs is** that they help people get exercise. **Studies show that** people who live with a dog live longer, which suggests that dogs have a proven health benefit as pets. **Also, according to** Baltimore Sun, dogs help people because dogs can sense what they need. **All this information helps us understand why** dogs are better pets than cats.

References:

Example 1

Prompt 1: <https://newsela.com/subject/ela/2000002745/493723/2000045014/2000045015/2000045021>

Article 1: <https://newsela.com/read/esports-high-school/id/31212/>

Article 2: https://newsela.com/read/professional-video-gamers/id/50469/?search_id=db294886-924d-449c-840f-1e0c24ba916a

Definition: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/sport>

Example 2

Prompt 2: <https://newsela.com/subject/ela/2000002745/493723/2000045014/2000045015/2000158338>

Article 1: <https://newsela.com/read/dogs-good-for-health/id/37986/>

Article 2: <https://newsela.com/read/dogs-helping-humans-study/id/45438/>

Findings of the Final Product

After researching the available literature on the use of sentence frames to support ELs, studying the demands of the third grade expository writing LAFS, and structuring the toolkit, the final product provided a teacher- and student-friendly resource to support ELs during expository writing tasks. Teachers are able to use this set of sentence frames to support ELs at varying second language proficiency levels. ELs are classified as beginner, intermediate, or advanced based on their academic and social use and command of English as a second language. Likely, teachers should remember that the need may exist to adjust the sentence frames from the toolkit to meet the specific needs of the ELs in their classrooms. For example, teachers should strongly consider adding a word bank for beginner and intermediate ELs, or collaboratively brainstorming a word bank with students, using information from the readings or resources referenced during instruction to provide elaboration and evidence options to fill in the sentence frames.

The following chapter provides reflections and conclusions in regard to this study as well as limitations, implications for the classroom, and suggestions for future research.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This chapter provides the reflections and conclusions in regard to this study that created a toolkit of sentence frames for third grade teachers to provide to students when teaching expository writing in English Language Arts to Spanish-speaking, English learners (ELs). In addition, the chapter discusses limitations, implications for the classroom, and suggestions for future related research.

Summary of the study

Third grade general education teachers will have English learners (ELs) in the classroom that must follow along in an English writing class at the same pace as native English speakers in order to perform grade-level, standards-based writing tasks. For this reason, it is essential that general education teachers be equipped with a helpful research-based resource to support the ELs to become equally as successful in writing instruction as their native-speaking peers. This thesis explored the use of sentence frames for improving the English skills of ELs as they start to understand and use the syntax of Standard English. As a result, this thesis created a teacher-friendly resource, the Sentence Frame Toolkit for Third Grade, containing sentence frame templates and sample student work for third grade teachers to use as a resource when teaching expository writing in English Language Arts to Spanish-speaking ELs. The sentence frames in the toolkit are aligned to Florida's third grade expository writing standards from Cluster I. By using the sentence frames in the toolkit as support, ELs will be able to turn thoughts into words, produce the second language at their pace, and become skilled writers.

Concluding remarks

Because the sentence frames within this study were created for ELs, the product produced provides both a verbal and visual support that makes expository writing in English a more concrete task for the ELs. The blanks visually indicate where students must add academic vocabulary and prompt the writing aided by the verbal support of the framed sentence template.

By using the sentence frames in this toolkit, teachers of ELs will find it easier to gather and use academic vocabulary in students' second language of English to produce grade-level, coherent writing meeting the goals of the LAFS. The sentence frames provide the scaffolding ELs need to succeed in expository writing tasks by providing a frame to prompt their writing. Not only are sentence frames a research-based support for ELs, but they are also a convenient tool to support writing instruction. The sets of base sentence frames can be modified by the teachers to meet specific learning goals of the lesson, and they can be made more specific to a certain text used during instruction.

Educational implications

After researching the available literature on using sentence frames as a tool to scaffold ELs, the findings of this thesis confirmed the effectiveness and need for this toolkit in the ELA classroom. Carrier and Tatum (n.d., p. 287) state that the sentence frames "...develop students' academic language and literacy skills" and enable students to share their thoughts orally or in writing. This sentence frame toolkit serves as a resource for teachers of third grade ELs. As a result of creating this product, teachers are now able to access a research-based support for the expository writing instruction of beginner, intermediate, and advanced ELs. This product allows teachers to help ELs learn to write expository pieces by providing them with sentence frames as

a guide. Teachers can use the toolkit during one-on-one instruction, as a writing station or center, and/or have it available in class as a supplemental support for any student in the class who is struggling with producing expository writing, regardless of being an EL or native-speaker. Gaies (1987) states that novice writers struggle the most with getting their thoughts in order and getting it on paper (p. 88). Having the Sentence Frame Toolkit for Third Grade available in the classroom for ELs to use as a support, gives them independence with their learning because it provides a starting point and guide by framing the sentences they must write. Not only do the sentence frames in the toolkit frame the sentence, but they also include below each frame an explanation of what information should be filling the blanks, which makes it easier for an EL with limited vocabulary.

Limitations

One of the limitations experienced during this study was the scarce related literature. Early on, the time dedicated to this thesis was focused on finding the research-based information on sentence frames as a support for English Learners to ensure the validity of the study before creating the toolkit. No other specific resources or toolkits were identified that were linked to standards, which limited any kind of modelling for the current study. As a result, the other large portion of this project was invested in the planning and design of the actual toolkit in order to create a product that is useful and comprehensive. Additionally, the lack of time to acquire an IRB limited this study to a creative project, because it was not tested on human subjects.

Future research

Now that the Sentence Frame Toolkit for Third Grade is complete, I see many opportunities to expand on this study. If I had additional time to add to my research, I would

obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to present the toolkit to an elementary school in Central Florida and provide the toolkit to a third grade teacher to enact with a selection of ELs. Then, I believe it would be valuable to research the writing samples of third grade EL students. So, I would collect samples of student expository writing before being introduced to my product. Then, I would provide each student with the toolkit and assign them writing prompts to write a paragraph using the sentence frames as tools. After that, I would collect their work and compare their growth over time as a result of the implementation of the toolkit.

Another future research opportunity is the task of creating a similar product linked to first grade standards. As a senior intern placed in a first-grade classroom to teach, I identified that students at that early level struggled with generating coherent and complete sentences, and often were unable to write more than one sentence independently without teacher guidance. Future research should focus on that population of students to create a product for both native English speakers and ELs to support expository writing in first grade. Furthermore, students from many grade levels can benefit from a sentence frame toolkit if it is adapted to meet their writing standards.

References

- Carrier, K. A., & Tatum, A. W. (2006). Creating sentence walls to help English-language learners develop content literacy. *Reading Teacher*, 60(3), 285–288. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1598/RT.60.3.10>
- Crawford, J., & Krashen, S. (2007). *English Language Learners in American Classrooms 101 Questions, 101 Answers*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- de Oliveira L. C., & Silva T. (2016) *Second Language Writing in Elementary Classrooms: An Overview of Issues*. In de Oliveira L.C., Silva T. (eds) *Second Language Writing in Elementary Classrooms*. London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Donnelly, W., & Roe, C. (2010). Using sentence frames to develop Academic Vocabulary for English Learners. *The Reading Teacher*, 64(2), 131-136. Retrieved from <https://login.ezproxy.net.ucf.edu/login?auth=shibb&url=https://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.net.ucf.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsjsr&AN=edsjsr.20780292&site=eds-live&scope=site>
- Feldman, K., & Kinsella, K. (2005). “Practical strategies to improve academic discussions in mixed ability secondary content area classrooms” [PDF]. Retrieved from <http://fliphtml5.com/fsnu/wnuz/basic>
- Fisher, D., Rothenberg, C., & Frey, N. (2007). *Language learners in the English classroom*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English. Retrieved from <https://login.ezproxy.net.ucf.edu/login?auth=shibb&url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat00846a&AN=ucfl.020344668&site=eds-live&scope=site>
- Gaies, S. J. (1987). *To write English/writing research, theory, and applications*

- (Book review). *Modern Language Journal*, 71(1), 88-90. Retrieved from <https://login.ezproxy.net.ucf.edu/login?auth=shibb&url=https://search-ebshost-com.ezproxy.net.ucf.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=7723990&site=eds-live&sco>
- Gilliland, B. (2015). Reading, writing, and learning English in an American high school classroom. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 27(2), 272–293. Retrieved from <https://login.ezproxy.net.ucf.edu/login?auth=shibb&url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1078431&site=eds-live&scope=site>
- Greene, K. (2015). Unlocking Language for ELLS. *Instructor*, 125(1), 39. Retrieved from <http://db29.lincweb.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=f6h&AN=108945776&site=eds-live>
- Hammond, J., & Gibbons, P. (2005). Putting scaffolding to work: The contribution of scaffolding in articulating ESL education. *Prospect*, 20(1), 6–30.
- Hoffman, L. (2013). *Talk Like a Scientist! Simple “Frames” to Scaffold the Language of Science*. Online Submission. Retrieved from <https://login.ezproxy.net.ucf.edu/login?auth=shibb&url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=ED566950&site=eds-live&scope=site>
- Kinsella, K. (2005). Preparing for effective vocabulary instruction. Aiming high [Aspirando a lo major] resource, 1–8. Retrieved from www.scoe.org/docs/ah/AH_kinsella1.pdf
- Kinsella, K. (2011). “Research to Inform English Language Development in Secondary Schools” [PDF]. Retrieved from https://mes.scoe.org/resources/ALI%202011/Starlight_Kinsella_120711.pdf

- Kinsella, K. (2012). Tools to increase lesson engagement and academic language proficiency for English language learners, p. 19-29.
- Lindholm-Leary, K., & Genesee, F. (2010). Alternative Educational Programs for English Learners. In Lindholm-Leary, K., and Genesee, F (eds) *Improving Education for English Learners: Research-Based Approaches* [PDF]. Retrieved from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/chapter6.pdf>
- Lucas, T., & Grinberg, J. (2008). Responding to the linguistic reality of mainstream classrooms: Preparing all teachers to teach English language learners. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, D. J. McIntyre, & K. E. Demers (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring questions in changing contexts* (3rd Ed., p. 606–636). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Monroe, L. E. (2017). Scaffolding English learners' writing using academic sentence frames. *MELTS Skill 7: Using Sentence Frames to Scaffold ELs' Writing*. Orlando, FL: University of Central Florida.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2018). English Language Learners in Public Schools. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgf.asp
- Nutta, J., Strelbel, C., Mihai, F., Crevecoeur-Bryant, E., & Mokhtari, K. (2018). *Show, Tell, Build: Twenty Key Instructional Tools and Techniques for Educating English Learners*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Shimada, M. M. (2017) *Third grade science teachers' perspectives on implementing Sentence Frames and Word Banks during science lectures to Increase the writing levels of English*

Language Learners. Honors in the Major Theses. 199. Retrieved from

<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/honorstheses/199>

Sugarman, J., & Geary, C. (2018). “English Learners in Select States: Demographics, Outcomes, and State Accountability Policies” [PDF]. Retrieved from

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/english-learners-demographics-outcomes-state-accountability-policies>