

Designated ELD Vignette

The example in Vignette 5.3 illustrates good teaching for all students with particular attention to the learning needs of EL students. In addition to good first teaching, EL students benefit from intentional and purposeful designated ELD instruction that *builds into and from* content instruction and focuses on their particular language learning needs. The following vignette illustrates an example of how designated ELD can build from and into the types of lessons outlined in Vignette 5.4. The vignette below illustrates how teachers can show their students how to deconstruct, or “unpack,” the academic language in complex informational texts, which supports comprehension and language development.

Vignette 5.4 Designated ELD Instruction in Grade Five: Learning about Cohesion

Background:

During designated ELD, Mr. Rodriguez delves deeper into the language of the texts the class is using for their ecosystems research projects (see Vignette 5.3). Mr. Rodriguez and his fifth grade teacher colleagues are all teaching the same integrated ELA and science unit. This makes it possible for them to share students when they regroup for designated ELD and focus instruction that builds into and from science and ELA, targeting their students’ particular language learning needs. For his ELD class, Mr. Rodriguez works with a large group of EL fifth graders who are at the Bridging level of English language proficiency while one of his colleagues works with a small group of students at the Emerging level who are new to English and another works with the native English speaking students and reclassified EL students.

Lesson Context:

In integrated ELA and science instruction, Mr. Rodriguez has focused on text structure and organization and has taught his students general academic and domain-specific vocabulary pertaining to the ecosystem unit. He’s also worked with his students, particularly during writing instruction, on structuring their sentences and paragraphs in grammatically more complex ways, according to the expectations of the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the CA ELD Standards. Even so, he observes that some EL students at the Bridging level of English language proficiency experience challenges reading some of their complex science texts, and when they write, sometimes their texts are choppy and don’t hang together very well. The learning target and cluster of CA ELD Standards in focus for today’s lesson are the following:

Learning Target: The students will discuss ways of using language that help create cohesion, including connecting and transition words and words for referring.

CA ELD Standards (Bridging): *ELD.PI.5.6 – a) Explain ideas, phenomena, processes, and text relationships (e.g., compare/contrast, cause/effect, problem/solution) based on close reading of a variety of grade-level texts and viewing of multimedia with light support; ELD.PII.5.2a – Apply increasing understanding of language resources for referring the reader back or forward in text (e.g., how pronouns, synonyms, or nominalizations refer back to nouns in text) to comprehending texts and writing cohesive texts; ELD.PII.5.2b – Apply increasing understanding of how ideas, events, or reasons are linked throughout a text using an*

increasing variety of academic connecting and transitional words or phrases (e.g., consequently, specifically, however) to comprehending texts and writing cohesive texts.

Lesson Excerpts:

Today, Mr. Rodriguez is teaching his students how to identify words and phrases that help create cohesion in texts, in other words, that help texts *hang together* or flow.

Mr. Rodriguez: Today, we're going to discuss some of the ways that writers help guide their readers through a text. They use different words and phrases and other language to make sure that their texts "hang together" and "flow." These words help to link ideas throughout a text, and they help the reader "track" the meanings throughout the text. We call this way of using language "cohesion."

Mr. Rodriguez writes the word *cohesion* on a chart, along with a brief explanation, which he says aloud as he writes:

Cohesion:

- how information and ideas are connected in a text
- how a text "hangs together" and flows

Mr. Rodriguez: Sometimes, it might be hard to identify the language that creates cohesion in a text, so we're going to discuss it. We're going to dig into some passages you've been reading in science and take a look at how writers use some of this language so that it will be easier for you to see it in the texts you're reading for your research reports. Once you start to see the many different ways that writers create cohesion in their writing, you'll have some more ideas for how you can do that when you write your own ecosystem information reports.

Using his document reader, Mr. Rodriguez displays a short passage from a familiar text the students have been reading in science. The text is quite challenging, and Mr. Rodriguez has spent a fair amount of instructional time on the language and content of the text, including showing the students where *nominalization* occurs (e.g., *modification, flood protection, water diversions*) and teaching them the meaning of some of these words. Mr. Rodriguez models, by thinking aloud and highlighting the text, how he identifies the language in the text used to create cohesion. The passage he shows them is provided below:

Wetlands perform many important roles as an ecosystem. One is to provide an important habitat for birds, fish, and other wildlife. Another is to contribute to flood protection by holding water like a sponge. By doing this, they keep river levels normal and filter the water. However, California's wetlands are in danger, and their ability to perform these important roles is threatened. Unfortunately, they continue to be drained for agriculture or filled for development. Other activities that harm them include modifications to the watershed such as dams or water diversions, not to mention climate change.

Consequently, California has lost more than 90% of its wetlands, and today, many of the ones remaining are threatened. (adapted from the State of CA Environmental Protection Agency, http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/eco_health/wetlands/)

Mr. Rodriguez starts by highlighting the terms that may be more familiar and transparent to students: *however, unfortunately, consequently*. He briefly explains the meaning of the words and notes that these "text connectives" are very useful for helping readers navigate through texts. He continues by delving a little deeper into the cohesive language in the passage by explaining that "however" is signaling to the reader that something different is going to be presented, and that it will contrast what came right before it. He models confirming this idea by reading the rest of the sentence and then reading from the beginning of the passage.

Mr. Rodriguez: *However, California's wetlands are in danger, and their ability to perform these important roles is threatened.* Hmm ... I know that what it's saying here is contrasting with what came right before it. In the beginning, it was discussing all the great things that ecosystems do, or the important roles they have. Then, it says that they are having a hard time doing these things. So the word *however* links the ideas that came right before it with the new information.

When he comes to the word *unfortunately*, he explains that this word signals to the reader that something negative is going to be presented, and he confirms this by reading on. When he comes to the word *consequently*, he asks his students to briefly discuss with one another what they think the word is doing to help the text “hang together,” or connect the ideas in the text.

Ernesto: I think that when you use the word *consequently*, you’re saying that something is happening because something else happened. Like, *consequently* means *it’s a result*.

Mr. Rodriguez: Can you say more about that? What ideas is the word *consequently* connecting this text?

Ernesto: (Thinks for a moment, then points to the document reader.) Right there, where it says “they continue to be drained” and “other human activities” ... like, modif ... modifications and dams.

Talia: And climate change. That does it, too.

Mr. Rodriguez: So, what you’re saying is that the word *consequently* is linking those activities, those terms - *draining for agriculture, filling in the wetlands, making dams or water diversions, and climate change* – it’s linking those activities with ...? Turn to your partner and discuss what you think the word *consequently* is connecting those activities to.

The students grapple with this question, but through scaffolding Mr. Rodriguez provides, they determine that the word *consequently* connects the activities to the resulting loss of and threat to wetlands. Mr. Rodriguez continues to model how he identifies the other language in the text that creates cohesion, including pronouns that refer back to nouns (e.g., they, their) and other *referring* words that may not be as obvious. For example, he explains that the words *one* and *another* refer to *roles*, which appears in the first sentence. He highlights other referring words and the words they refer back to, and he draws arrows between them to make the reference clear. After modeling one or two examples, he asks the students to tell him what the words are referring to, and he marks up the text with additional arrows so they can see clearly what is being referenced. The passage he shows, along with the language he highlights through the course of his modeling, is provided below:

Wetlands perform many important roles as an ecosystem. **One** is to provide an important habitat for birds, fish, and other wildlife. **Another** is to contribute to flood protection by holding water like a sponge. By doing **this**, **they** keep river levels normal and filter the water. **However**, California’s wetlands are in danger, and **their** ability to perform **these important roles** is threatened. **Unfortunately**, **they** continue to be drained for agriculture or filled for development. Other activities that harm **them** include modifications to the watershed such as dams or water diversions, not to mention climate change. **Consequently**, California has lost more than 90% of its wetlands, and today, many of **the ones** remaining are threatened. (adapted from the State of CA Environmental Protection Agency, http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/eco_health/wetlands/)

After Mr. Rodriguez has modeled this process, he provides them with similar passages, and he asks them to work in pairs to locate the *cohesion* words by following the same process he modeled for them. At the end of the lesson, he asks the students to share what they found and to explain how the words they highlighted create cohesion in the text by linking ideas and information. The class generates a list of “cohesion” words they found, which Mr. Rodriguez writes on chart paper. Later that week, the students will work in small groups to categorize one type of cohesive language, text connectives. The chart will be posted so that the students can draw upon the language when they write their research reports. Mr. Rodriguez chooses the categories, but the students decide where the words go (with his guidance), and they agree on a title for the chart, provided below.

Language to Connect Ideas (Cohesion)		
Adding	Contrasting	Sequencing
in addition furthermore similarly also	however despite this instead otherwise unfortunately	to start with to summarize in conclusion finally
Cause/result	Time	Clarifying
therefore consequently because of this in that case	next meanwhile until now later	that is in other words for example for instance
Words for referring: they, their, it, them, this, these, those, one, another, the ones		
<p>Teacher Reflection and Next Steps:</p> <p>After teaching these lessons on cohesion, Mr. Rodriguez observes that many of his students begin to use the language resources in their writing. For example, instead of repeating the word <i>ecosystems</i> in each sentence (e.g., Ecosystems are ..., Ecosystems have ..., Ecosystems can...), they use pronouns to refer back to the first time they used the word. Similarly, many of his students begin to use the connecting words listed on the chart the students made during designated ELD. He also notices that his students are becoming more aware of this type of language as they encounter it in the texts they read, and throughout the day, his students tell him when they find other examples of cohesion.</p> <p>Lessons based on Gibbons (2002), Christie (2012), Derewianka and Jones (2012), Martin and Rose (2012), Schleppegrell (2010); Spycher and Nieves (2014)</p>		
<p>Resources</p> <p>National Geographic (www.nationalgeographic.com) has many resources for teachers on ecosystems, including freshwater ecosystems (http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/freshwater/).</p>		

Conclusion

The information and ideas in this grade-level section are provided to guide teachers in their instructional planning. Recognizing California's richly diverse student population is critical for instructional and program planning and delivery. Teachers are responsible for educating a variety of learners, including **advanced learners, students with disabilities, ELs at different English language proficiency levels, Standard English learners**, and other **culturally and linguistically diverse learners**, as well as **students experiencing difficulties** with one or another of the themes presented in this chapter (meaning making, effective expression, language development, content knowledge, and foundational skills).