**Rationale & Background**

This lesson was used during my practicum in a grade eight language arts class. ESL students were “mainstreamed”, and paragraph writing is something that should have been learned at this point. The majority of students in this class had poor writing skills which is why I prepared a paragraph writing lesson as revision. It is expected that basic paragraph writing skills would be mastered at this point. There were a few ESL students, but they were fairly high functioning in that this class did not need a support teacher. This lesson was modified for a mainstream class where there may be varying and diverse linguistic needs.

I found that the class responded quiet well to the activity as most students were engaged and all groups were eager to share their paragraphs out loud. This also provided an opportunity for students to communicate and collaborate with each other to find a solution. Having students share their answers out loud not only helps students understand the ordering of sentences, but also to listen and read along with the students who are sharing. This activity can easily be adapted to fit a variety of levels for ELLs. It is important to provide work that is within the zone of proximal development.

It is important to provide opportunities for reading, listening, and writing, which is what I tried to incorporate in this lesson. It is also important that I provide students the opportunity to write freely about a subject that is interesting and relevant to their own lives. I also encourage drawing pictures and using pictures to illustrate ideas because it can be difficult to express thoughts when vocabulary is limited. Pictures are a way of communicating that can be coupled with writing to create comprehendible work.

The anchor chart scaffolds paragraph writing when they begin to write their own paragraphs. Additional scaffolding would also be useful as this helps create structure and reminders for students on how to write a paragraph. Brainstorming topics, and writing out a model paragraph, together as a class, provides additional scaffolding for ELLs but this can also be a useful reference tool for all students.

It is not important for the ESL students to know what type of paragraph is persuasive or a narrative because whether they know how to categorize them or not, will not stop them from writing their own paragraphs with good structure. As mentioned, I am mainly focusing on paragraph structure and organization. I will provide feedback on that, but there is a large possibility of many mistakes in grammar, spelling, or punctuation that will be left for another class. In this particular lesson, the focus is on paragraph writing, and not the many intricacies and technicalities of the language.

**Lesson: Paragraph Writing**

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| **Subject: Language Arts** | **Grade: 8** |
| **Topic: Paragraph Writing** | **Date: Nov 8th, 2012** |

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| **Expectations:** | **Overall:**  3. use editing, proofreading, and publishing skills and strategies, and knowledge of languageconventions, to correct errors, refine expression, and present their work effectively;  4. reflect on and identify their strengths as writers, areas for improvement, and the strategies they found most helpful at different stages in the writing process.  **Specific:**  1.5 identify and order main ideas and supporting details and group them into units that could be used to develop a summary, a debate, or a report of several paragraphs, using a variety of strategies |
| **Goals/Objectives of Lesson:** | * Be able to identify the basic components of a paragraph * Be able to identify a few different types of paragraphs: narrative, descriptive, expository, & persuasive |
| **Relevant Background knowledge:** | * Know how to write sentences   + ESL: Know basic sentence structure (capitalization, periods, subject-verb-object). * Know how to organize thoughts in writing   + ESL: Know basic vocabulary to communicate ideas. Have basic writing skills. |
| **Assessment and Evaluation:** | Formative assessment: Observe whether or not they are able to identify the different components of a paragraph. Observe if they are able to identify types of paragraphs.  Summative assessment: Use checklist to correct their completed paragraphs next class. Check for topic, body and concluding sentences. |
| **Materials and Resources:** | * Media cart with correct answers. * Paper strips of sentences for activity. |
| **Lesson Development:** | * Activity: Students will be given strips of sentences that make a paragraph. They will work in groups to put the paragraph in the correct order. Groups will be invited to share their final paragraph order with the class (15 min).   + Provide a short paragraph with simple sentence structure and vocabulary for lower level ESL students.     - Having pictures to accompany each sentence may help with comprehension.   + Support teacher: work directly with the ESL students and facilitate the process of ordering the sentences while the teacher circulates the rest of the class. * Anchor Chart: We will create an anchor chart with the components of a paragraph (indent, topic, body, and concluding sentences). We will also go through a few different types of paragraphs (persuasive, descriptive, expository, and narrative) (15 min)   + ESL: Do not need to focus on this aspect of lesson. * Refer back to original paragraphs and see which type they were. (2 min) * Have students write their own proper paragraph. They can write about a place they like or dislike. (10 min)   + ESL: We can brainstorm ideas on the board for paragraph topics. We can write a simple paragraph together as a class. Encourage students to draw what they will be writing about. |
| **Modifications & Adaptations:** | * Group work allows stronger students to help weaker students or ESL students (particularly if there is no EA or support teacher). * If ESL students are grouped together with an EA, have them work with the simplified paragraph for the activity. * To provide additional scaffolding, provide a handout describing paragraph structure, and a graphic organizer * If class is struggling to understand paragraph structure and organization, go back to lessons on how to build a sentence, or provide class with very simple paragraphs to work with. |
| **Consolidation of Learning:** | Creating a paragraph as a class is an opportunity to check for understanding and consolidate learning.   * ESL: Be able to produce own simple paragraph. |
| **Homework & Links to future learning:** | Students will finish their paragraph. In the next class, students will partner up and review each other’s paragraphs. A good copy will be handed in once revisions are made. |
| **Safety Considerations:** | **-** |
| **Self-Reflection:** |  |

Sample Paragraphs for Activity:

Persuasive:

Homework is an important part of the learning process in middle school. One reason is that homework gives students additional practice of skills covered in class. Another reason for

homework is that it provides time to complete longer assignments. For example, the ideal

composition process allows time for students to think and to reflect on their ideas, as well

as time to revise and to proofread their writing. In addition, since all students do not work at

the same speed, giving students time at home to finish work keeps them from falling behind.

Finally, the most important reason for homework is that it ensures review. Students who do

their homework daily are prepared for tests and get better grades. In conclusion, not only is

homework essential to mastering new skills and maintaining previously learned skills, but it

also guarantees constant review and provides time for longer assignments, as well as additional

time for students who need it.

ESL simplified paragraph:

Homework is important in middle school. One reason is because it gives students extra practice on class work. Another reason is that it gives students more time to finish their work. Not all students work at the same speed so more time for school work is helpful. Finally, it helps students review their work. This will help them get better grades and do better on tests. In conclusion, homework is helpful because it gives students more time for work, and review, resulting in better grades.