Supporting assessment of EAL/D student writing: A concrete example of exploring genre-based feedback in pre-service teacher education coursework

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Abstract

Providing useful feedback on student writing is a challenging task, requiring an understanding of the specific language expectations in assignments teachers give students. Studies have shown that teachers are more likely to give corrective feedback on surface-level errors than attend to meaning-making linguistic resources. The question is how to prepare teachers in pre-service teacher education to notice and respond to genre and register expectations. This paper shares one concrete example from an educational linguistics course in a master's degree program in education with a secondary school teaching certification in the United States. Pre-service teachers from five different disciplines were instructed on basic concepts related to systemic functional linguistics and their utility in recognizing and unpacking the norms of disciplinary language. The paper explores how and to what extent nine of the pre-service teachers in the course targeted surface-level or meaning-making writing skills when using a genre-based rubric and when subsequently considering lesson activities. The analysis shows that the pre-service teachers incorporated genre-based ideas in their feedback but struggled to move away from teaching activities that focused on prescriptive, constrained skills. We conclude by discussing what genre-based activities can offer in initial teacher education and argue for the need for more explicit sharing of teacher education instructional strategies.

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Introduction

Educational linguistics classes in teacher education are often a part of programs that train language teachers, where the language is the content to be taught and grammar and linguistics is an expected part of the curriculum. Increasingly, however, language and literacy educators and researchers have advocated for the need for all teachers to understand the language expectations of their content area and support the literacy development of diverse students in the classroom (e.g., Turkan et al., 2014). Teachers in all disciplines are expected to assign students writing tasks and then assess and provide feedback on the assignments (Smagorinsky, 2014). Giving feedback, however, can be a challenging task if teachers are not explicitly aware of the language demands of texts in their content area (e.g., Agbayahoun, 2016). This paper explores how teacher educators can scaffold learning through a rubric to assess student writing for pre-service teachers (PSTs) in different content areas through offering an example from teacher education coursework and exploring how the PSTs engaged with the task.

One of the challenges in training PSTs to assess and give feedback on student writing is that teachers often focus on grammatical 'errors' – syntax, punctuation, spelling, etc. – and not the larger structural and meaning-making resources in a text (Ballock & McQuitty, 2023). In addition, there is a dialect of English privileged in schools (see Schleppegrell, 2001 or 2004 for the linguistic features of "the language of schooling") and students who are learning that dialect of English are often viewed through a deficit lens. Feedback often focuses on what they struggle to do rather than acknowledging the wealth of communicative resources they bring with them (Mallinson, 2024). Research shows PSTs can benefit from opportunities in teacher education programs to question their assumptions and biases about language and communication (Wiese et al., 2015), as well as explicit ways to talk about expectations for texts in their discipline (Schleppegrell, 2020). Wiese et al. (2015), for example, show how a teacher training program that targeted attitudes toward linguistic diversity had a positive effect on the attitude of teachers toward multilingualism and that the effects held several months after the training.

The teacher education course assignment described in this paper used a genre-based approach to draw attention to meaning-making resources in writing and support PSTs from different content areas in identifying aspects of writing to work on with students learning English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D). Using genre-oriented rubrics, the course assignment encourages the PSTs to notice structural and linguistic features of a text that relate to the genre and context. The goal of the assignment was to scaffold an opportunity to provide feedback on more open-ended

writing features. The paper explores what takeaways can be drawn from looking at PSTs work on such an assignment, and what the next steps would be for teacher education and teacher training.

Framing

Teacher feedback and teacher education

Writing assignments given in primary and secondary schools are intended to help students develop communication skills effectively across a range of contexts and feedback can help students "develop their writing voice" (Clements, 2023). School writing assignments address a range of genres and registers across disciplines and through years of schooling, including narratives, recounts, explanations, and discussions (Christie & Derewianka, 2008). Learning to write in different genres for classroom assignments offers a space to support students in explicitly understanding what different texts require of them and adjusting their choices for the intended audience and purpose (Brisk & Zisselsberger, 2011).

However, existing research on giving writing feedback documents that teachers are not well-equipped in giving students feedback on their writing and feel underprepared for this teaching task (Ballock et al., 2018; Bhowmik & Kim, 2021). As such, they often rely on corrective feedback on surface-level grammatical and punctuation errors (Ballock et al., 2018; Ballock & McQuitty, 2023; Bhowmik & Kim, 2021). The prevalence of surface-level corrections and the lack of focused training for teachers have additional consequences for EAL/D students. As Chang-Bacon and Pedersen (2023) point out, "multilingual learners in English-dominant contexts, particularly students of color... must contend with underlying deficit assumptions about their competence as language users based on raciolinguistic ideologies" (p. 2). These trends have an impact on the ability of EAL/D students to be successful in the school system, not because of their abilities, but because of the biases about language and the knowledge about language learners that teachers bring to the classroom (Mallinson, 2024). This study describes and investigates one potential way to train teachers in giving feedback to EAL/D students.

One aspect of addressing this problem is offering teachers more information and metalanguage about what language is, how we use language, and what we ask of students when we assign a writing task (Schleppegrell, 2020). A study by Ballock and McQuitty (2023) demonstrates that experienced teachers have implicit ideas about the writing assignments they give students, i.e., internal "expected texts" against which they evaluate how successful the student writing is (p. 68). Similarly, research on teachers' 'noticing' explores which "writing features they notice in the draft and how they reason about those features" (Ballock & McQuitty, 2023, p. 52), as well as how supported practice can help shift what teachers notice (Goldsmith & Seago, 2011). Teacher education that focuses on disciplinary literacy and supporting EAL/D learners can offer

opportunities for such practice and unpacking these expectations within an environment where there are time and space to break down and support teachers in that process. This study offers an example of such practice, prompting PSTs to recognize and respond to broader language features.

SFL and teachers' knowledge about language

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) offers a theory of language with explicit resources (e.g., functional grammar) for conceptualizing and analysing language as choices in meaning-making enacted in social context (Halliday, 1977). *Register*, or context of situation, is actualized in the three social functions of language [field (relating experience), tenor (enact relationships), and mode (organize language)] (Halliday & Hassan, 1985). *Genre*, or context of culture, relates to the communicative purpose of a text and is characterized by expected structural elements to fulfil that purpose (Christie, 2017). Schleppegrell (2001) provides a conceptual foundation to the idea of the register of school language while calling for the recognition of the linguistic challenges apparent in the language of schooling.

With regard to student writing, SFL provides metalanguage for discussing the language resources in assignments and research has consistently found that SFL is useful in supporting teachers and learners and addressing issues of race, equity, and class by recognizing diverse language use as valuable knowledge (e.g. Macken-Horarik, 2005; Matthiessen & Yousefi, 2022; Troyan et al., 2022). As Schleppegrell (2020) argues, "by investigating patterns of language in texts and the variation that makes a text the kind of text it is, learners can recognize the linguistic choices they can draw on as they write in different contexts" (p. 6). SFL's ability to inform language choice awareness is relevant for learners developing their meaning-making potential (Mickan, 2022). Recent applications of SFL include applying its explicit analytic tools in combination with a critical framework to explore language choices and ideologies and their role in maintaining inequitable power structures (e.g. Mizell, 2020; Troyan et al., 2022). The uptake of framing language choice through SFL theory in education has important implications for EAL/D learners given the potential for teachers to create spaces responsive to their linguistic needs. Exploration of inequitable power structures, which can be embedded in language choices and ideologies through SFL, can help teachers create spaces where linguistically diverse and/or racialized children can succeed.

The genre-based approach (GBA) recontextualizes concepts from SFL as a basis for how to support teachers' and students' understanding of language choices, norms, and features. GBA is based on the idea that students encounter recurring genres year after year, with identifiable language expectations that can be taught, modelled, and discussed (Derewianka, 2003). Using a target genre as a starting point, a teacher can unpack the expectations for that genre and

strategically plan units that build in opportunities to look at model texts and deconstruct them with students for common structural elements and language features.

Research has demonstrated how SFL's attention to genre, register, and discipline-specific language are useful in teaching students about writing and can strengthen students' genre-specific texts (Schwarz & Hamman-Ortiz, 2020). Using GBA as a teacher, however, requires teachers to have specialized knowledge of language and grammar. As Schleppegrell (2020) points out, "explicit attention to language calls for talk about language and meaning, and talking about language and meaning calls for linguistic metalanguage" (p. 6). Matthiessen and Yousefi (2022) review how SFL, given its status as an applicable linguistic approach, has been applied in teacher education and writing development since the 1960s. They conclude that SFL can play a key role in teacher professional development, where SFL-informed programs can train PSTs to become more responsive to multilingual meaning-making and translanguaging practices.

In a study on teacher education, Turgut Dost (2021) examined the impact of a semester-long course for teacher candidates which was informed by SFL and analysed how the teacher candidates took up SFL concepts in participant responses to student-text and published-text. Turgut Dost found that the participants' use of genre-related terms increased, and the teacher candidates used the information to alter teaching strategies; further, they reduced feedback regarding student errors, displaying a shift from mechanics to meaning-making potential. However, developing a deep understanding of linguistics and language patterns is complex. Brisk and Zisselsberger (2011) found that teachers struggled with not presenting genres as a fixed set of rules after weeks of professional development and recommended devoting time to instructing teachers to learn tenets of SFL theory and how to apply it to their teaching. More research is needed to explore which GBA-informed teacher education practices help facilitate a shift in teacher feedback and noticing from the surface level to meaning-making.

Research questions

In the literature on learning how to give writing feedback, research seldom provides concrete examples of the teacher education pedagogy that supports PSTs in developing those skills (Peck & Kavanagh, 2024). A systematic review by Peck and Kavanagh (2024) shows that there is "a paucity of knowledge about what teacher educators do to support novice teachers to apply the socially-situated writing theory from their coursework instead of reifying existing perspectives" (p. 2). The focus in this study is on the teacher education activities and a concrete example of using GBA in a teacher education setting for learning to think about language features in classroom teaching. In particular, PSTs' work from one course assignment that was based on GBA to assess student writing is examined to explore the following two questions:

1. How do pre-service teachers use genre-based rubric prompts in their assessment of student writing?
2. What features of student writing do pre-service teachers identify as a focus for teaching after using a genre-based rubric?

Methods

Context of the study

The context of this study was a master's degree program in education that includes a secondary level teaching certification at a large mid-western university in the United States. The course title was "Educational Linguistics", but as the only required course in the program regarding teaching EAL/D students, it had a split focus between linguistics and general knowledge about teaching language learners in U.S. schools. The linguistic content of the course was integrated with general pedagogical strategies for supporting reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The class aimed to support PSTs across any and all of the five possible content areas one could study in the program: Math, Science, Social Studies, English Language Arts, and World Languages. Using GBA enabled a discussion of the types of texts students often encounter in secondary school settings and different disciplines, either as reading or writing assignments, and supported an understanding about what language features of school texts can make them challenging for students.

One of the authors taught the course. Each week, a new aspect of SFL was taught and the lesson activities provided practice looking for the specific elements or language features from that week in texts from different disciplines. PSTs kept a running notes document where they reflected each week on expectations for those elements or features in genres in their content area and how they could imagine incorporating such knowledge into their teaching. Prior to the assignment in this study, the PSTs had learned about and practiced working with the following content: (1) genres and their stages and phases, (2) register features and how to talk about them with students, (3) nominalizations, dense noun groups, and tracking participants through a text, (4) process types and circumstances in a text, (5) APPRAISAL and MODALITY resources, and (6) cohesion, including transitions and thematic progression.

Study data

This study's participants were PSTs in the Educational Linguistics course in the fall of 2020[1]. The participants were recruited for this study after all course material was graded, the semester was

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[1] This course was taught online during the Covid-19 pandemic, which had an effect on the overall structure of the course and ways of interacting with the content and each other, but not on how this assignment was structured.

over, and course grades were submitted and were only then asked whether their assignments could be used in a study exploring how PSTs utilized the task. Nine PSTs from various content areas (see Table 1) agreed to the use of their assignment, which constitutes the data for this study.[2]

Table 1. Participant pseudonyms and respective content areas.

Pseudonyms	Content Area
Olivia, Henry, John	Social Studies
Liam, Scarlett	English Language Arts
Theo, Nora	Science
Ava	World Languages
Avery	Math

The data for this study comes from an assignment designed as a natural part of the teaching in the course, not as a research instrument. The assignment was designed with multiple purposes in mind. First, PSTs need to see authentic examples of EAL/D student writing in their content areas at different language levels. The texts came from real classroom examples collected over the years by the instructor and anonymized. Second, PSTs should practice using a rubric that draws their attention to more than surface-level grammatical errors. Third, they should use that assessment to plan instructional activities to address the areas of improvement.

The rubrics were based on the genre-based rubrics developed by Brisk (2014) in *Engaging Students in Academic Literacies* (first edition), where each genre had a two-part rubric. The first part is for analysing the 'purposes, stages, and tenor' and the second part addresses the 'language' typical for that particular genre. When working through the book and exploring all the language features, the rubrics serve as a way for teachers to consider what to unpack with students for any target genre, from structural to linguistic elements.

However, due to the limited time and competing content demands in the educational linguistics course, it was not possible to cover every genre, its purposes, stages and phases, and its language norms. As such, the rubrics were adapted so that the PSTs would fill in the genre for the student text they read, as well as which elements and features they would expect for that genre, based on what had been learned in the course. In part one, on genre, the Purpose, Stages & Phases were removed, and PSTs were asked to fill in the Purpose, Stages & Phases they would expect for that genre. They then used the categories they supplied to assess how well students structured the text. Table 2 shows how one PST, Olivia, filled in the Purpose ('Summarize Information') and the

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[2] While demographics like gender, race/ethnicity, age, and language background can be important characteristics in teacher learning, this study does not seek to explore patterns related to these categories.

Stages & Phases (e.g. 'Topic Introduction') for the text she was assessing. For the Register section, they were asked whether the text was appropriate for the context, specifically the audience and the discipline. In part two, the Language Feature section included the SFL-GBA content studied in class (listed in the previous section), but with the question whether those features were utilized appropriately for the genre and register, instead of specifying expectations for each genre, as the original rubrics from Brisk (2014) do. These adaptations made the rubrics genre-neutral, allowing the PSTs to use the same rubric for any text.

Table 2. Example of filled in (in italics) responses for Purpose, Stages & Phases (Olivia).

Purpose
Summarize Information   • Does the student fulfil the purpose?
Stages & Phases
Topic Introduction   • *Topic overview*   • *Main points from the lesson*
Supporting Paragraph   • *Explains first point*   • *Uses examples from the lesson*   • *Appropriate detail*
Supporting Paragraph   • *Explains first point*   • *Uses examples from the lesson*   • *Appropriate detail*
Formatted as a Letter

The rubric had columns to assess the student level for each criterion on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest) and space for a comment. Due to its nature as a course assignment, some PSTs wrote the comments as if they were for the students and others wrote the comments for the course instructor as the target audience. After the rubric was filled in, PSTs were asked to identify two strengths in the student's text and two areas of improvement. From there, they were asked to say what skills they would focus on in a lesson to support the student and to provide examples of an activity they would use for that purpose.

Data analysis

An *a priori* approach was implemented to code the data. The skills PSTs identified in the EAL/D writing assignment rubrics were initially coded as 'constrained' or 'unconstrained'. 'Constrained' corresponds to what others have called surface-level, where learning can be "mastered in a short timeframe and measured in terms of being correct or incorrect" (Chen & Derewianka, 2009, p. 236), whereas 'unconstrained' is more aligned with meaning-making, "the development of which

continues to expand throughout a person's lifetime" (p. 236) and is not easily measured as correct or incorrect. For example, comments on correct/incorrect spelling, punctuation, or grammar were coded as constrained skills. Choice of vocabulary, use of transitions or introductory phrases, or attention to which elements could be included in a stage or phase were recorded as unconstrained skills.

There was also a code for 'unclear', which captured instances where, for example, it appeared a PST was treating an unconstrained skill as correct/incorrect (e.g. Ava: *the student does not use a transitional phrase to suggest a third example, there is the use of a new paragraph, which, to me, signals a new idea*). Similarly, in the section of the rubric that asked the PSTs to identify what skills they would teach and to share lesson ideas, the codes were adapted slightly. 'Constrained' represented classroom activities that either addressed a constrained skill or where the description implied a skill was going to be taught in a constrained manner (i.e. as having a 'correct' answer). 'Unconstrained' in this section of the rubric was coded similarly and 'unclear' was used when we could not determine whether the classroom activity would be taught in a more prescriptive or open-ended manner.

We additionally coded for explicit attention to genre, register, and/or disciplinary language to capture the ways PSTs talked about them in assessing student writing, whether it included specific GBA labels or not. For example, Liam commented: "*The nature of this piece is to interpret the lesson. The student demonstrates the intended thematic moral.*" This attention to the purpose of the text to interpret and provide a moral were coded under 'genre, register, discipline'. A specific content example came from Avery, regarding mathematics: "*[In] math, it's very important to be precise, so variety isn't really important here.*", where 'math' was coded as attention to the discipline.

To ensure cohesion and validity of the coding, interpretation, and analysis, each researcher analysed the data separately and then discussed deviations to come to a consensus. Because of the different number of items in each section of the rubric, ratios of constrained/unconstrained skills were calculated. For example, in the Register section of the rubric there are only two prompts, whereas in the Language Features section, there are eleven. The Purposes, Stages & Phases section varied by how many stages and phases the PST filled in for their genre expectations. We also note that a response to one prompt might contain multiple codes, for example, if a PST mentions both the genre and an unconstrained skill. Therefore, ratios by section allowed us to more accurately capture how much of the PST's noticing was dedicated to various skills than reporting frequencies alone.

Findings

Use of the rubric prompts

In exploring how PSTs use genre-based rubric prompts in their assessment of student writing, interesting patterns emerged across the different sections of the rubric (Purpose, Stages & Phases; Register; Language Features) regarding the degree of attention given to unconstrained and constrained skills. The ratio of unconstrained to constrained skills in the sections on Purpose, Stages & Phases and Register was 11.4:1; in Language Features was 2.8:1. Table 3 provides an example of focusing on unconstrained skills in the Register section and a constrained skill in the Language Features section.

Table 3. Examples from different sections - italics mark what is filled in by the PST.

Example from	Prompt	Response
Avery	Stages & Phases: *Planning: the "what is your plan for solving the problem" section*	*I would prefer a little more detail in their plan, because they only really describe the first few steps. They explain how they'll write equations, but not what they'll do with them to solve the problem.*
Nora	Language Features: How does the student use verbs? Are they the correct tense for the genre? Is there/should there be variety?	*Switching between present and past tense – unclear which tense was assigned, if any*

However, as the ratio above shows, the attention to unconstrained skills still outnumbered the constrained skills in the Language Features section, perhaps as a result of responding to the prompts. The prompts asked about constrained skills but asked if they were appropriate for the genre (e.g. verb tense in the example in Table 3). In answering the prompts, the PSTs were then evaluating the constrained skill through the expectations of its use in that type of text. Table 4 provides examples of how two PSTs took up the same verb prompt, but their responses connected their evaluation of the constrained skill (tense) with unconstrained skills related to the Genre, Stages or Phrases.

Table 4. Constrained skills in italics, attention to genre/register underlined.

Example from	Prompt	Response
Theo	How does the student use verbs? Are [the verbs in] the correct tense for the genre?	Good use of *past tense verbs* <u>to summarize the article</u> and *present tense* <u>to describe relationship</u> between content and school experience.
John		Student used *past tense* for verbs throughout the entirety of the text which was <u>correct for a historical recount</u>.

With regard to the genre and register codes, the PSTs often took up the language of the prompts, either directly repeating the language of the prompt or indirectly, particularly around appropriateness for the genre/register (see Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5. Direct take-up of the prompt, PST response in italics, take-up underlined.

	Prompt	PST response
John	Is the <u>amount of judgment and evaluation appropriate</u> for the genre/purpose?	*I think the <u>amount of judgement and evolution was appropriate</u> in that there isn't much which is proper for a historical recount.*

Table 6. Indirect take-up of the prompt, PST response in italics, take-up underlined.

	Prompt	PST response
Avery	How does the student use verbs? Are [the verbs in] the correct tense for the genre?	*They use a lot of "is" and "have" which are <u>fitting for this problem</u>. They also use verbs like "subtract" that are <u>math specific</u>.*

It is important to acknowledge the role the prompts played in the PST responses and how they limit conclusions we can draw about uptake and learning. The PSTs were ultimately completing a course assignment and answering the questions asked of them. We cannot ignore the effect this had on the number of unconstrained skills they addressed. We cannot know whether they would have noticed and commented on the same aspects of the student writing without the prompts. For more evidence, we turn to the second research question – which features they identified as a focus for teaching after using the rubrics to assess the student writing.

Focus for teaching activities

The areas of improvement and the teaching activities the PSTs identified are also naturally influenced by the features PSTs were prompted to notice in the rubric. However, this part of the assignment opens up space to see what they considered most important to address in the student writing, what they would focus on in a lesson, and how they would teach it. In terms of ratios, the areas of improvement still displayed more unconstrained skills than constrained skills, but with an even lower ratio (2.1:1, unconstrained: constrained). This shift demonstrates that even as the PSTs noticed unconstrained skills related to meaning-making in the genre, they fell back on 'fixing' the constrained skills when identifying what needed improving. Table 7 provides some examples where the PSTs focused on constrained skills.

Table 7. Areas of improvement - constrained skills in italics.

Example from	Prompt	Response
Henry	What are the areas of improvement in this student's writing?	The student will need extra writing support when using multiple verbs in one sentence. *Grammar* and *punctuation* also need to be worked on. There are many sentences that *run-on or lack a stopping point*.
Liam		-Work on pacing by breaking up events, scenes, or ideas by paragraph. -*Article usage* before nouns and adjectives -*Tense continuity*

For the lesson ideas, each PST was asked to identify two areas of improvement they would plan a lesson around and provide two example lesson ideas, so we had 18 total examples of what they would teach and how[3]. Of those examples, five activities focused clearly on a constrained skill and/or taught it in a constrained manner. For example, in Liam's lesson activity below, he focuses on the use of articles and would have students 'find every accurate article usage' in their own writing:

> *Article usage – The student's text already uses articles appropriately in some places. I think a good activity would be to highlight article usage, give some examples, then have the student find every accurate article usage in their piece. Once they have those compiled, they can go back through and find places before nouns/adjectives where articles are missing.*

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[3] Because each example could contain multiple activities, there were often multiple codes for a single example. The number of coded data points, therefore, adds up to more than 18.

However, 12 of the activities described by PSTs focused on unconstrained skills and/or treated them in an unconstrained manner in the sense that they discussed writing skills to be about communicating and meaning-making, as seen in the example below from Avery:

> *I would suggest that they review their conclusion and justification and ask if it really justifies what they did. They describe other methods that wouldn't work as well as their method, but they don't describe their own method as being correct or "the best." I would probably give students some sample work to justify as correct or to point out mistakes in to practice communicating their critiques of mathematical work.*

This example shows Avery thinking about communicating in math writing and considering an important feature of writing in that discipline – justification. She brings in the idea of looking at a mentor text, a common method in genre-based pedagogy for understanding norms of a genre (Brisk, 2014); and discusses how she would have students unpack it.

An additional eight teaching activities could not be clearly identified as treating a language feature as correct/incorrect or an open-ended resource for meaning-making. Depending on how the PST taught the lesson, the language feature could be treated as either unconstrained or constrained. A lesson description from Theo provides an example:

> *I would create a graphic organizer that students use as they read a sample paragraph with all required elements and fill in the graphic organizer with each component.*

If Theo treated the graphic organizer as a support for filling in different choices in writing a text, it would treat the genre as a structured, but flexible piece of writing. Teaching students that a genre has a clear structure, but that some elements are obligatory for that genre, while others are optional, opens up creative space for students to understand both genre expectations and a writer's choices. However, if a graphic organizer is treated as a recipe to simply be filled in 'correctly', it removes student agency as writers and treats structuring text as something with a right and wrong answer. We cannot know from Theo's short description how he would teach using a graphic organizer in the classroom; these types of responses thus fell in the category of 'unclear'.

Discussion

The goal of this paper was to explore how PSTs used a genre-based rubric to give feedback on EAL/D students' writing and the impact of the rubric on their attention to surface-level constrained skills versus meaning-making unconstrained skills. The findings support the argument that using

classroom artifacts in teacher education supports teachers noticing particular features (Goldsmith & Seago, 2011). In this instance, the need to respond to specific rubric prompts likely led to feedback that took up the language connected to genre and register. As the rubrics were left genre-neutral, the PSTs had to consider what they expected for that genre in their discipline and fill in their expectations, even while echoing the prompt language. Therefore, while the finding that PSTs took up language from the prompts in their answers is not surprising, doing so suggests that they had "expected texts" in mind for such an assignment similar to the study on learning to give feedback from Ballock and McQuitty (2023).

The explicit resources afforded by SFL provided PSTs with a means to name those expectations, to "decode or unpack the linguistic features of [their] discipline to build connections between content and meaning" (Turkan et al., 2014, p. 10). The very fact that a genre-based rubric has sections for a text's purpose, its structural elements, and its register can encourage PSTs to provide students with feedback on these meaning-making aspects of writing, as demonstrated in the amount of attention to unconstrained skills in those rubric sections. As such, this particular teacher education assignment supported the PSTs in identifying and responding to the myriad communicative resources students bring to the classroom and not only to surface-level prescriptive grammar features. Such activities support PSTs in learning to recognize that linguistically diverse students' "languages and dialects have a legitimate place in [their] literacy practices" (Brisk & Zisselsberger, 2011, p. 123) and thus can further the goal of GBA to create more equitable classroom spaces for diverse learners through its inclusion of teacher education programs (Matthiessen & Yousefi, 2002).

That the relative number of constrained skills increased in the section on language features is not surprising, as the prompts include more attention to constrained skills. What is of note is that asking the PSTs to consider those skills alongside their appropriateness for the genre and register of the text encouraged them to explain their expectations for grammar with regard to the context. Linking grammar, meaning, and context explicitly is a foundational aspect of SFL (Halliday, 1977). However, the finding that the ratio of constrained skills increased more dramatically when asked to identify areas of improvement and lesson ideas further reinforces what previous research has argued: that the PSTs fell back on what they likely have the most experience with in schools, i.e. surface-level corrective feedback (Smagorinsky, 2010, with reference to the apprenticeship of observation from Lortie, 1975). Unconstrained skills still outnumbered constrained skills overall, but it is clear that PSTs need more support in coming up with lesson ideas that focus on meaning-making at the discourse level in writing.

A next step in using such an assignment in teacher education would be helping PSTs identify specific classroom activities to work on more open-ended writing skills. Similarly, another issue to take up in the teacher education setting would include discussing the lesson activities where it was unclear whether the PST was thinking about them in a constrained or unconstrained manner.

Explicit attention to the difference in such treatment of a skill could be easily incorporated in a course, allowing PSTs to discuss what happens when a lesson positions an activity as choice and meaning-making versus filling in the 'right' elements. The assignment explored in this paper supports PSTs in providing feedback on writing for a particular genre, but more work is needed on how to help PSTs examine the potential impact of different ways teachers talk about language when teaching writing.

Finally, this paper acknowledges that it cannot claim transfer from using a rubric once in a pre-service course to the PSTs' future practice as teachers. Still, Ballock and McQuitty (2023) found that experienced teachers referenced a rubric or set of criteria used in their school or district when asked to assess student writing, even when not explicitly asked to do so. We therefore know that using rubrics regularly can affect noticing, as teachers begin to internalize those criteria as features to recognize. The rubrics teachers referenced were often designed to consider features of a genre or attention to the audience, and the teachers in that study incorporated such ideas in their thinking about the student texts. Therefore, designing genre-based scaffolded feedback activities in pre-service teacher education with authentic student texts provides PSTs practice in assessing student writing for genre and register features they may encounter in future rubrics.

Conclusion

What this paper contributes is a concrete example of a practice in teacher education that targets learning to assess and give feedback on EAL/D student writing, a challenging skill to develop as a teacher and one in which many teachers report feeling underprepared. In particular, this work focuses on using genre-based ideas in an attempt to shift feedback from the prevalence of surface-level features, documented in previous research, to a more holistic approach of considering the multifaceted nature of meaning-making in writing. The paper demonstrates how a genre-based rubric prompts the noticing of particular genre expectations and suggests that when teachers notice unconstrained skills that need work in student writing, they consider addressing those in their teaching practice. While the ratios shifted closer in the Language Feature section of the rubric and in the task to identify areas of improvement and lesson ideas, the number of unconstrained skills still outweighed the focus on constrained skills. To continue improving teacher training in working with EAL/D learners, we need more examples of teacher education pedagogy made explicit and a discussion of what different practices afford PST learners. Only then can we understand how best to support pre-service teachers in learning challenging teaching skills and explore what teacher education practices offer our teacher-learners, with a focus on centring the needs of learners.

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