REFLECT AND APPLY

Choose a subject area, and a type of genre within that subject area. For example, you might choose to have students write a historical account of an important event in history. Have students look at some newspaper accounts of recent events. Once students understand the information an account needs, work with students to analyze an example of a historical account. Then work together with students to write an account. Finally, have students work independently to write a historical account. You could also follow this procedure with a different genre. With the added scaffolding you provided, were students able to write clear historical accounts? Be prepared to share your lesson and the results.

PARAGRAPH-LEVEL GRAMMAR AND SYNTAX

Often, ELLs and SELs have difficulty in writing paragraphs that follow the conventions of academic writing. Writing that is judged to be good academic writing contains different features that give it cohesion. Schleppegrell (2004) points out that writers connect ideas by using pronouns, conjunctions, and nominalization, among other strategies. Consider the following paragraph:

> The soldiers and priests of New Spain were already acquainted with raising cattle in Spain. Many were skilled horsemen. Even so, they needed help in rounding up the livestock on their sprawling lands.

We have underlined the subject of each sentence in the paragraph. The subject of the first sentence is "The soldiers and priests of New Spain." The next sentence starts with the pronoun, "Many," which refers to the soldiers and priests. The subject of the third sentence is "they," another pronoun that refers to the soldiers and priests. The subject of each sentence is linked to the subjects of the other sentences, and the result is a cohesive paragraph.

Writers also use conjunctions, such as *however*, *nevertheless*, and *as a result*, to connect sentences and give texts cohesion. Often ELLs and SELs know only a limited number of these conjunctions. They may use a word like *because* every time they try to show cause

and effect. Students need to develop a greater repertoire of conjunctions and begin to use more academic words and phrases, such as *consequently* or *for that reason*.

A third device writers use to connect sentences is nominalization. Earlier, we explained that nominalization is a process of turning verbs or adjectives into nouns. For example, the verb *procrastinate* can become the noun *procrastination* by the addition of the suffix *–ion*. The adjective *sincere* becomes the noun *sincerity* with the addition of *–ity*. Sentences in academic writing are often connected by the process of nominalization. The paragraph about the soldiers and priests of New Spain relies primarily on pronouns for cohesion. If the next sentence read, "This need was filled by Native Americans" the nominal form *need* would link with the verb *need* in the previous sentence and provide more cohesion.

Teachers can teach these cohesive devices to help students improve their paragraphs. Elementary teachers, for example, could teach students to check that each pronoun they use refers to a noun that occurred earlier. Students might draw an arrow from each pronoun to its antecedent. Teachers could also ask students to check to be sure that the pronoun and the antecedent agree in number and gender. Secondary students could practice using more advanced forms, such as nominals, to connect sentences. In addition, they could practice adding signal words and phrases, such as *in the same way* or *nevertheless* to connect sentences in their paragraphs and to connect one paragraph to the next.

REFLECT AND APPLY

Find a passage from a textbook your students are reading that has clear connections among the sentences. Ask students to work together to circle pronouns, conjunctions, and nominalizations that give the paragraph cohesion. Report back on how the lesson went.

THREE TYPES OF PARAGRAPH COHESION

Brown (2009) describes three ways that writers create cohesive paragraphs. He begins by explaining that sentences can be divided