

Students below grade level and English learners rely more heavily on sentence frames and students at or above grade level felt restricted by them. The interesting thing about this finding is that the students who relied on the sentence frames had conversations that sounded much more academic in nature than students above grade level.

During a debrief conversation between the class and myself about the use of sentence frames and academic language we found about a 60/40 split of finding sentence frames helpful and feeling restricted by them. The interesting thing about that conversation was that the lower level students and English learners were the ones relying on the frames. The more advance students in language arts and reading said they would rather talk about their writing in whatever way they chose too. What makes this finding particularly interesting to me is that when asked to provide a written response to what a pair conference was supposed to be the lower level students by far had the most complete and correct answers. It was also clear in the conferences that students relying on the frames were using the academic vocabulary much more regularly. What this leads me to believe is that the sentence frame itself and the organizer when used regularly helps students understand more clearly the purpose of the task and should help them in time make more meaningful comments and suggestions to their conference partners.