ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTION TOOLKIT

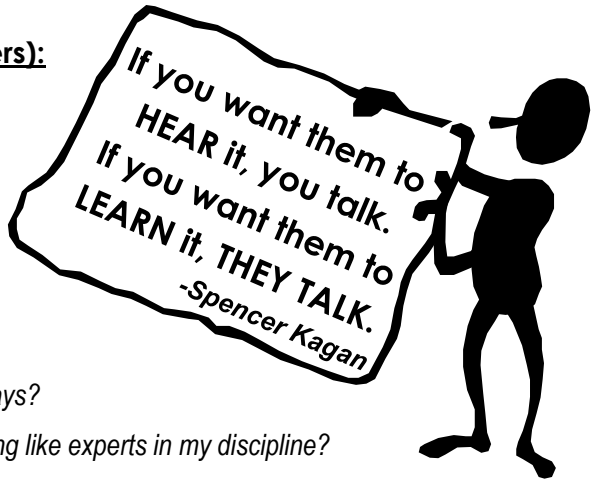
→ *A RESOURCE FOR DEVELOPING ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FOR ALL STUDENTS IN ALL CONTENT AREAS*

SWEETWATER
UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

District-Wide Academic Support Teams

Guiding Questions from Building Academic Language (Zwiers):

- ✓ *What is academic language, how can I **build** it as I teach **content**?*
- ✓ *How can I **adapt** my curriculum and assessment to build on the **cultural** and **linguistic strengths** of my students?*
- ✓ *How can I get students to think together to **co-construct** meaning; rather than just study to memorize?*
- ✓ *How can I **build language skills** for complex reading and writing?*
- ✓ *How can I **assess** thinking skills and language proficiency in useful ways?*
- ✓ *How can I most efficiently **apprentice students** into thinking and talking like experts in my discipline?*



→ Excerpts from "English Language Development: Implementation at Grades Six Through Twelve" (Dutro and Kinsella)

Secondary education is a complex endeavor. Fast-paced schedules, specialized courses, rigorous content, high-staked assessment, and variety of instructional methods place a high demand on students. For students, who must navigate these complexities while acquiring [academic] English, the demands intensify significantly (Dutro and Levy 2008).

Academic Language Development in Core Content

Although there are many definitions of academic English, there are agreed-upon commonalities. According to various sources cited by Saunders and Goldenberg, **"Academic language refers to the specialized vocabulary, grammar, discourse/ textual, and functional skills associated with academic instruction and mastery of academic materials and tasks".** Academic language is significantly different from the informal speech student use outside the classroom. The language of schooling includes everyday words *(e.g. reason, understand*), general academic vocabulary that cuts across subject areas *(e.g. respond, category),* and specialized terms *(e.g. polygon, onomatopoeia*) (Feldman and Kinsella 2008). Written and spoken classroom discourse is also characterized by academic text structures and grammatical complexity (Bailey 2007: Scarcella 2003; Schlepegrell 2004; Wong Fillmore and Snow 2000).

Academic English requires sufficient background knowledge to apply general knowledge of words differently across subject areas. For example, *division* and *product* have strikingly different meanings in mathematics than they so in social studies or everyday use. Similarly, a student might encounter the term *factor* in a mathematics class (process) and later that same day in a discussion of economics (issue). Academic English also entails specialized knowledge of concepts in particular subject areas.

Building Functional Language

Mastery of language and syntactic features allows students' full participation in academics by enabling them to put ideas together in a wide range of ways. Mastery includes learning the breadth of language patterns to communicate relationships between ideas: to explain, describe, compare, and contrast, summarize, generalize, express, cause-and-effect relationships, sequences, and so on. **The intentional teaching of language structures- the "mortar"- enables Students to internalize the patterns needed to express concepts, ideas, and thinking.**

Teaching English from the perspective of language functions helps to identify the language demands of a specific academic task (describing, sequencing events, comparing attributes) and content concepts (methods of communication, narrative events). The benefits of learning to use the language functions such as *comparing*, for example, extend beyond a given task because once Students know how to compare, they can apply that skill to a range of contexts across content areas. Students practice and extend their language skills for comparing by applying it in different ways**. Increasing competence in any language function obligates the speaker or writer to use increasingly complex sentence structures.**

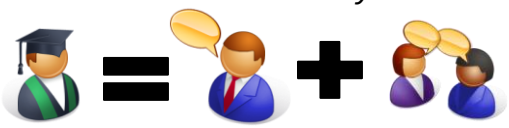
Using this approach, learning interesting content- and how to talk and write about that interesting content- is not delayed until more advanced levels of proficiency are reached. Academic language is developed from the beginning stages of second language learning. Competence in a range of functions equips students to participate in content instruction and supports academic language proficiency. **Language becomes a vehicle, rather than a barrier, to learning.**

Academic Language

Academic Language can be defined as 1) the language used in the classroom and workplace, 2) the language of text, 3) the language of assessments, 4) the language of academic success and 5) the language of power.

Informal Language	*Academic Language*
repetition of words	variety of words, more sophisticated vocabulary
sentences start with “and” or “but”	sentences start with transition words, such as “however”, “moreover”, and “in addition”
use of slang such as “dude”, “whatever”, and “like”	replaces slang with accurate descriptors
appropriate for use in casual, social settings	appropriate for use in all academic and work place settings
can vary greatly by ethnicity, region, gender, age	common language register for all

Academic Language consists of *academic vocabulary* and is used in *academic discourse*.



Academic Vocabulary

The vocabulary critical to understanding the concepts of the content taught in schools. Academic vocabulary includes content related vocabulary and high frequency academic words such as Bloom’s verbs.

“BRICKS”

Academic Discourse

Academic discourse provides students with the language tools (vocabulary and syntax) necessary to competently discuss the topic using complete sentences. Structured dialogue in the form of “sentence stems” provides a scaffold for students to appropriate academic language in meaningful contexts.

“MORTAR”

SUHSD/Special Services/CJ/RR

Inquiry/ Seeking Information

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTION 01

Student uses language to: Observe and explore the environment, acquire information, inquire

Examples: Uses who, what, when, where, and how to gather information

Strategies: Quick-write, Think Pair Share, Novel Ideas, 5 W's and How, Question Creation , Chart (Q-Chart)

Cue Words: in other words, that is to say, according to, specifically, who, what, when, where, why, how

Language Frames & Graphic Organizers:

Language of Inquiry/Seeking Information

I wonder why . . .
How does . . . work?
I'd like to ask you about . . .
Am I correct in assuming that . . .?
Could you expand a little bit on what you said about . . . ?
Could you be more specific about . . .?
Something else I'd like to know is . . .
If I have understood you correctly, your point is that . . .
I didn't understand what you said about . . .
I'm sorry, could you repeat what you said about . . . ?
Sorry, but I'm not quite clear on . . .

Expressing an Opinion*

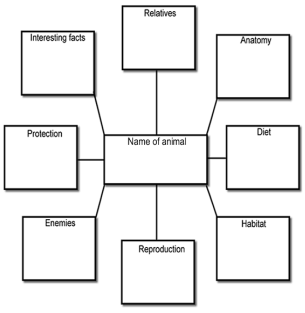
I think/believe that . . .
In my opinion, . . .
Based on my experience, I think . . .

Soliciting a Response*

What do you think?
We haven't heard from you yet.
Do you agree?
What answer did you get?

Paraphrasing*

So you are saying that . . .
In other words, you think . . .
What I hear you saying is . . .



K	W	L
What do you think you KNOW about slavery?	What do you WANT to know about slavery?	What did you LEARN about slavery?

Extended Anticipatory Guide (2)

Text:	Your Opinion		Justification of Your Opinion	Finding in Text		Evidence That Refutes Your Opinion
Statement	Agree	Disagree	What is the strongest reason you agree or disagree? Explain in as much detail as possible and provide an example or analogy.	Support	No Support	If the text does not support your opinion, explain why not, in your words.
1.						
2.						
3.						

Summarizing and Informing

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTION 02

Student uses language to: Identify, report or describe information

Examples: Recount information presented by teacher or text; retell a story or personal experience

Strategies: Novel Ideas Only, Writing Frames

Cue Words: in short, in summary, to sum up, finally, all in all, in conclusion

Language Frames & Graphic Organizers:

Language of Summarizing

On the whole…

Basically he/she is saying that….

In this text, the author argues that….

To support the main claim, the author provides evidence that suggests that….

Language of Informing

The advantages of _____ outweigh the disadvantages of _____ insofar as…

The statistics are misleading because they do/not show…

These [facts/reasons/data] strongly suggest that… Yet some argue strongly that….

Reporting a Partner's [or anyone's] Idea*

_____ indicated that….

_____ pointed out to me that….

_____ emphasized that…

_____ concluded that….

Main Idea/ Supporting ideas/Conclusion

Synectics

Definition				
Similar	Feels Like	Opposite	Similar	Synthesis

 *(*from K. Kinsella)*

Comparing and Contrasting

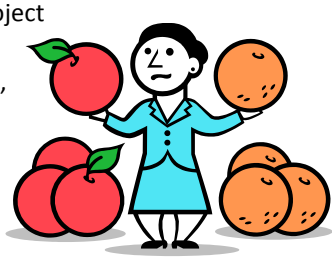
ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTION 03

Student uses language to: Describe similarities and differences in objects or ideas

Examples: Make/explain a graphic organizer to show similarities and contrasts; Write in bullet or paragraph format to specify similarities / differences; Categorizing to organize terms or ideas; Verbal clarification of similarities or differences through questioning or pairing activities.

Strategies: Categories on a wall, Content Curiosities (Survey), Jigsaw Project

Cue Words: likewise, however, nevertheless, despite, on the other hand, on the contrary, contrary to…, conversely, rather, still



Language Frames & Graphic Organizers:

Language of Comparing & Contrasting

One similarity/difference between [subject 1] and [subject 2] is ….

[Subject 1] and [subject 2] are similar because they both….

[Subject 1] and [subject 2] are rather different because while [subject 1] has _____, [subject 2] has _____.

Whereas [subject 1] is … , [subject 2] is …

[Subject 1] is …. Similarly / In contrast, [subject 2] is ….

Language of Agreeing*

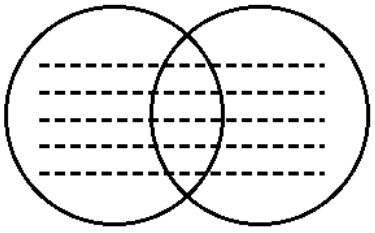
My idea/answer/explanation is similar to/related to…

I agree with (a person) that…

My idea builds upon (a person's) idea…

I don't agree with you because…

Venn Diagram

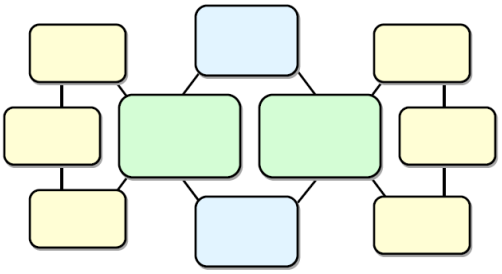


Compare/Contrast Matrix

	Name 1	Name 2
Attribute 1		
Attribute 1		
Attribute 1		

Double Bubble Chart

Directions: Use this mind map to compare (find similarities) and contrast (find differences).



Sequencing / Ordering

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTION 04

Student uses language to: sequence objects, ideas, or events.

Examples: Describe / make a timeline, Continuum, Cycle, Narrative sequence

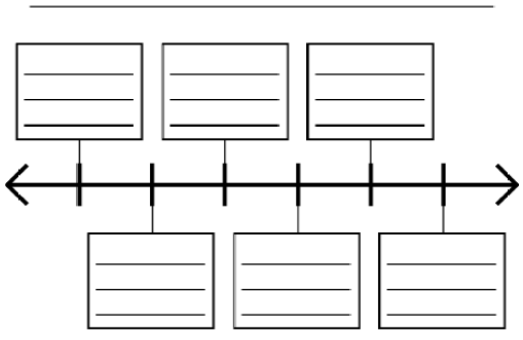
Strategies: Mix and match, Categories on a wall, Collaborative Poster

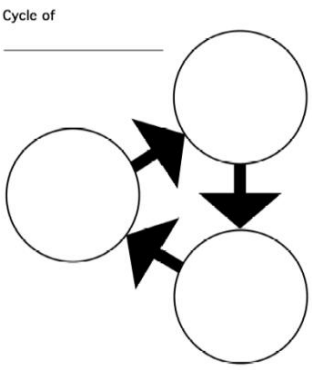
Cue Words: at which point, at this time, simultaneously, subsequently

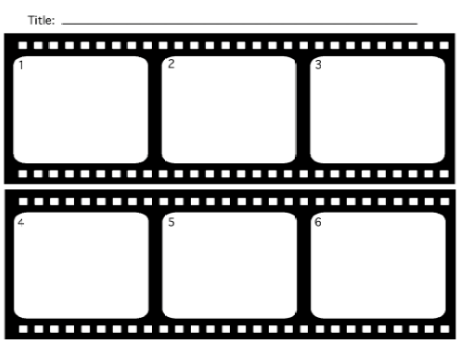
Language Frames & Graphic Organizers:

Language of Sequencing

First, … and second, …
Meanwhile, the ___ appeared to be …
While [subject 1] was …, [subject 2] was simultaneously/concurrently…
Finally ___ proceeded to…
Consequently the _____ began to …
Previously, _____ had decided to …
Following this event, …
Initially …. Some time later…..
After … the next step is/was to…
What occurred/happened prior to… was that…
In the first stage/phase, ….
The transition between stages __ and __ can be described as….







Classifying

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTION 05

Student uses language to: Group objects or ideas according to their characteristics. It is critical to identify the rules that govern class or category membership.

Examples: describe organizing principle(s), explain why A is an example and B is not,

Strategies: Collaborative poster, categories on a wall, word sorts, sort and label

Cue Words: sort, categorize, select, belongs to, fits into, features, traits, qualities

Language Frames & Graphic Organizers:

Language of Classifying

_____ consists of [quantity] categories.

The [quantity] categories of _____ are _____, _____, and ____.

We can classify _____ according to…

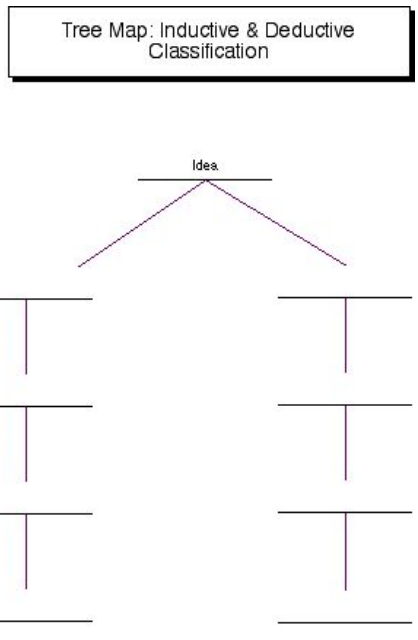
_____ and _____ are types of … because….

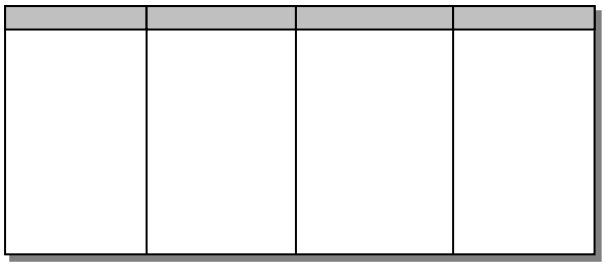
The most salient characteristic(s) of this group is/are…

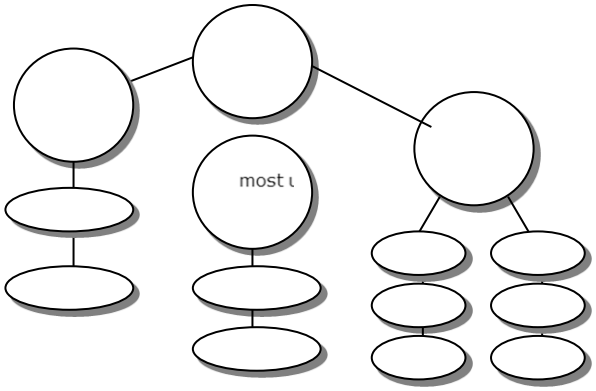
An appropriate name for this group is … owing to the fact that they all…

_____correlates to_____ insofar as….

These _____ are arranged according to….







Analyzing

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTION 06

Student uses language to: Separate whole into parts, identify relationships and patterns

Examples: Describe parts, features, or main idea of information

Strategies: Analysis Pizza, Collaborative poster, word sorts, sort and label, dissecting, various lab activities

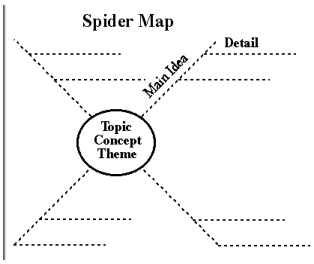
Cue Words: examine, scrutinize, break down, dissect, investigate, determine, elements

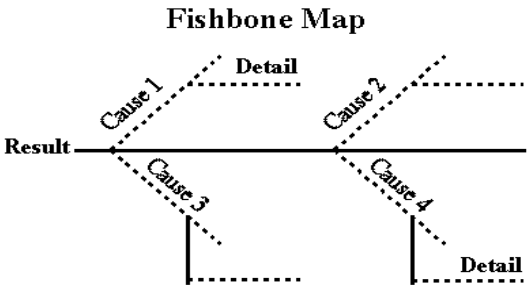
Language Frames & Graphic Organizers:

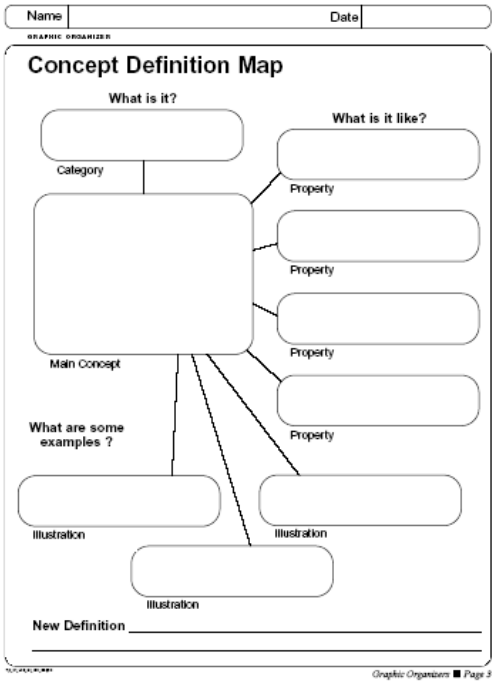
Language of Analysis

We can interpret _____ as ….
Given the evidence, we can deduce that…
_____ can be differentiated from _____ based on…
After a thorough analysis of the evidence, we conclude that….
This ____ is significant because…
After careful examination of… it appears that…
_____is related to _____ insofar as….
___ and ____ are connected by….. This is important because…
We can draw parallels between ____ and the world/other texts/self because….

	Cat	Dog	Goldfish	Parrot
Noisy?	+	+	-	+
Has to be walked?	-	+	-	-
Sheds hair?	+	+	-	-







om K. Kinsel

Inferring, Predicting, & Hypothesizing

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTION 07

Student uses language to: make inferences, predict implications, hypothesize.

Examples: Describe reasoning process (inductive or deductive); Generate hypotheses to suggest causes or outcomes; Describe observations using multiple senses

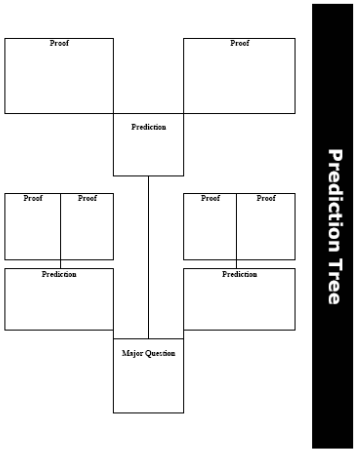
Strategies: Guess and check, Scientific method, Seeking patterns, Using visuals and structure of a text to predict topic, Pre-reading strategies

Cue Words: guess, conclude that…, estimate, speculate, draw a conclusion, believe, due to, since, in light of

Language Frames & Graphic Organizers:

Language of Prediction and Hypothesis

I predict / imagine that…
Given …, I hypothesize that …
If I use …then I predict…will happen.
Based on past results, I predict…
I deduced …. after analyzing _____ further.
I discerned that_____ because….
I foresee_____ because….
I prognosticate…… because I know…..



Language of Inference

Based on … I infer that …
I infer that… based on…
My conjecture on _____ is….
I anticipate that…

Hypothesis Matrix

Question	Conditional Statement	If, Then Statement

Making Inferences

Story Clues +	What I Know =	Inference

PREDICTION CHART

GUESSES	REASONS	EVIDENCE

Justifying and Persuading

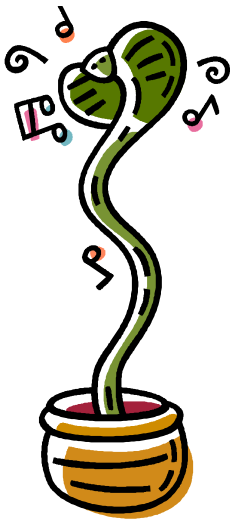
ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTION 08

Student uses language to: Give reasons for an action, decision, point of view; convince others

Examples: Tell why A is important and give evidence in support of a position.

Strategies: Socratic Seminar, Think-Pair Share, Anticipatory Chart with Round Robin, Rally-Robin Debate, Four Corners with justification, Error Analysis

Cue Words: defend, show, rationalize, think, feel, because of, for this reason, due to, right, argue, convince, influence, sway, urge, claim, beliefs, support, evidence, appeal, should, must, ought to, have to, furthermore, moreover, clearly



Language Frames & Graphic Organizers:

Language of Justification

I believe this because…

My primary reason for thinking so is…

Perhaps the most convincing reason for this is…

Language of Persuasion

Based on the evidence presented so far, I believe that…

Although some people claim that…, opponents argue that….

It is vital to consider…

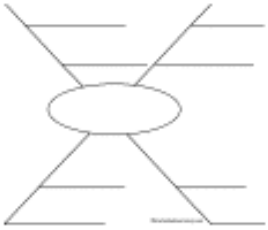
The advantages of _____ outweigh the disadvantages of _____ insofar as…

The statistics are misleading because they do/not show…

These [facts/reasons/data] strongly suggest that… Yet some argue strongly that….

T-Chart: Opinion – Reason

Spider Web/Map listing topic/idea and reasons on "branches"



Solving Problems/Problem Solving

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTION 09

Student uses language to: Define and represent a problem; determine a solution,

Examples: Describe the problem solving process or procedures; re-state the problem in their own words

Strategies: Collaborative Poster, Sage-Scribe, Mix and Match, Manipulatives, Creating a Mnemonic, Mathematically Speaking (____ally Speaking), Fold-ables, Pass the Envelope, Gallery Walk, Reciprocal Teaching, Create- Exchange- Access, Quiz-Quiz Trade

Cue Words: solve, figure out, think about, find, conflict, difficult question, situation

Language Frames & Graphic Organizers:

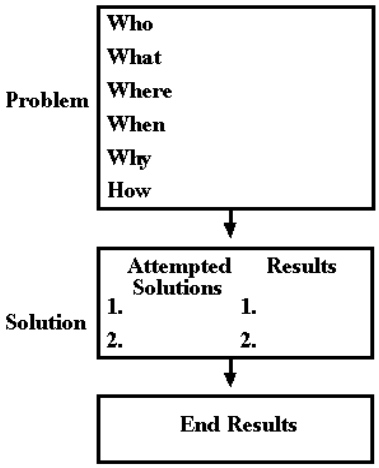
Language of Describing Problems

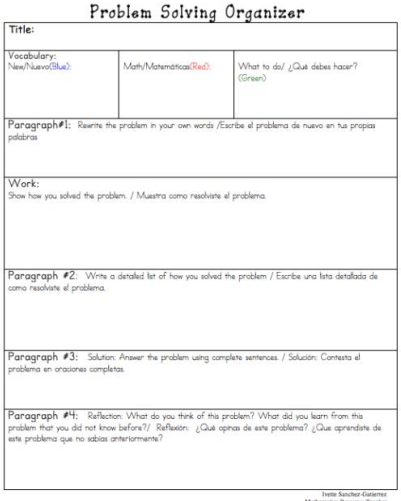
A way of thinking about solving this problem is…
In order to solve this problem we must first/ initially….
This problem is similar to….
We need to identify…
One way to visualize this problem is…
Let's break this into parts. First, …
Another way of looking at this problem is…
The most important thing to remember in this problem is…

Language of Explaining Solutions

A diagram or symbol that might represent this solution is…
We know our solution is correct because….
The solution to this problem is…
I know I have solved the problem because…
The solution to this problem will require….
A critical element of the solution to this problem is…

Problem/Solution Outline





Synthesizing

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTION 10

Student uses language to: Combine or integrate ideas to form a whole group

Examples: Summarize information; incorporate new information

Strategies: Allow students to create their own problem, Collaborative Poster, Compare- Contrast Matrix, Creating a Mnemonic, ThINK- Pair Share, Writing Summaries, Reports, Mathematically Speaking, Fold-ables, Analysis Pizza, Jigsaw, Pass the Envelope, Create- Exchange- Access, Window Pane

Cue Words: combine, merge, form, put together, synthesis, combination

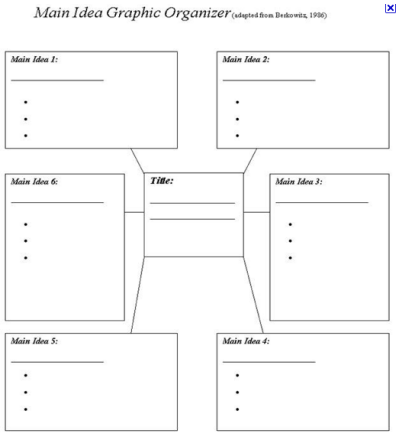
Language Frames & Graphic Organizers:

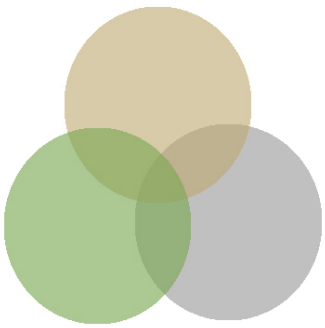
Acknowledging Ideas*

My idea is similar to/related to _____'s idea.
I agree/disagree with _____that . . .
My idea builds upon _____'s idea.
As _____already mentioned…

Language of Synthesizing

The main point(s) is/ are…
The point that _____ makes is related to _____ in that…..
The significance of _____ is…..
From my perspective, _____ means…..
The concept of _____ can be expressed as…..
Our conclusion is a synthesis of _____ and _____.
I feel that _____ and _____'s viewpoints are related in that….
My visual represents a synthesis of ____ and ____ because….
While creating _____, I built upon ……





Sweetwa ns, October 2010 *(*from K. Kin.*

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTION 11

Evaluation

Student uses language to: assess and verify with of an object, idea or decision.

Examples: Identify criteria, Explain priorities, Indicate reasons for judgment, Confirm truth

Strategies: Thumbs up/down, Colored cards (green – agree; red – disagree), Fist of 5 (level of agreement), Quickwrite

Cue Words: Judge, critique, assess, assessment, value, worth, based on, judgment, criteria, favorable, unfavorable, reason, evaluate, evaluation, features

Language Frames & Graphic Organizers:

Language of Evaluating

Based on … I determined that…

_____'s judgment of … was … because …

The critique of _____ was favorable/unfavorable because …

We/They judge _____ to be _____ because ….

We/I evaluated _____ on the following criteria …

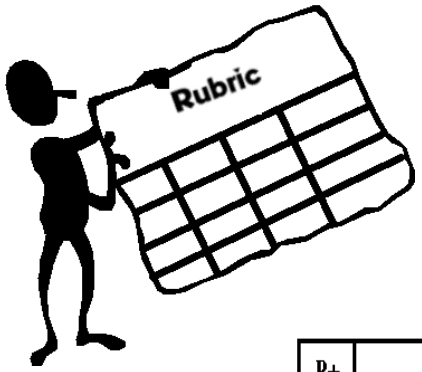
I assess that….

After inspecting…. I have determined…

After carefully scrutinizing_____ I believe that….

My interpretation of_____ is…

When ranking its importance, I feel that… because…



Ranking

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....

PMI

P+	
M-	
I?	

Graphic Organizer

Evaluation

Subject:		
Criterion:	Successful / Unsuccessful Reason:	Evidence:
Criterion:	Successful / Unsuccessful Reason:	Evidence:
Criterion:	Successful / Unsuccessful Reason:	Evidence:
Criterion:	Successful / Unsuccessful Reason:	Evidence:
Criterion:	Successful / Unsuccessful Reason:	Evidence:

Cause and Effect

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FUNCTION 12

Student uses language to: Describe why and how relationships and patterns exist between events, ideas, processes, problems; Identify consequences that led to the outcome

Examples: Make a graphic organizer to define the events leading up to the outcome or the possible outcomes based on a particular cause

Strategies: 1) Categories on a Wall/Sort and Label-Categories are provided and students develop list or students develop own categories based on given list; 2) Mix-n-Match cards-Students work in groups to match causes with effects; 3) Foldables; 4) Gallery Walk/Pass the Envelope-A cause or effect is given and students either rotate around the room or pass the problem from group to group to identify possible causes or effects; 5) Trading Cards-One cause or one effect is given on a card to each student. They develop an opposite idea for what they have and walk around the room to share. After sharing they trade cards to share with another.

Cue Words: therefore, consequently, thus, as a result of, since, because, in order to, if…then

Language Frames & Graphic Organizers:

Language of Explaining Causes

Even though many people thought the cause was …, I believe it was…

The most likely reason for… was…

I hypothesize that… made them…

That wasn't caused by …because

Several factors contributed to the outcome. Namely, …

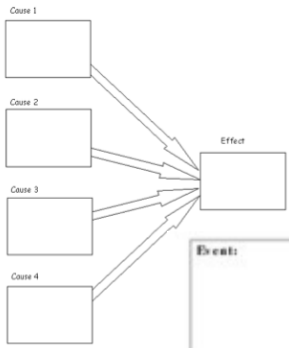
Language of Describing an Effect

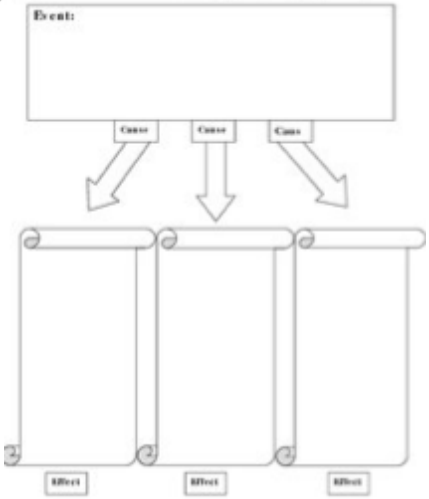
_____ was a result of…

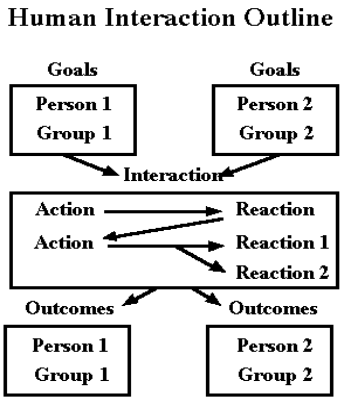
The…led to…, which led to…

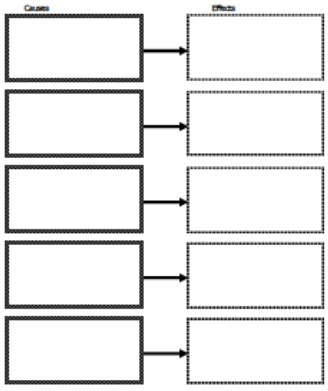
The change resulted in…

It combines with…to produce…









Academic Language Development Observation Feedback Tool

Daily Learning Target included the following components:

- ☐ Bloom's Taxonomy (verb)
- ☐ Content (subject-specific)
- ☐ Activity
- ☐ Product / outcome/ assessment

Academic Language Function (circle)

Inquiry *(Observe and explore the environment, acquire information, inquire)*	**Summarizing** **Informing** *(Identify, report or describe information)*	**Comparing** **Contrasting** (Describe similarities and differences in objects or ideas
Ordering Sequencing	Classify	Analyzing
Inferring Predicting Hypothesizing	Justifying Persuading	Problem Solving
Synthesizing	Evaluating	Cause and Effect

Academic Vocabulary and Discourse observed:

Academic Vocabulary	**Academic Discourse**
☐ Explicit, direct instruction (*bricks and mortar) ☐ Visuals, realia (images, word walls, student work) ☐ Clarification (of unfamiliar words)	☐ Modeling (usage of word form) ☐ Sentence frame use by students ☐ Dialogue based on graphic organizers ☐ Use of appropriate register ☐ Paired discussion ☐ Oral presentations ☐ Structured discussion ☐ Open-ended discussion ☐ Linked to the DLT

Student response to, "What are you learning?" tied to the Daily Learning Target.

- ☐ 1 - Student response unrelated to DLT
- ☐ 2 - Student response somewhat related to DLT
- ☐ 3 - Student response directly related to DLT

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

Student Discussion Guide

Ground Rules for Class Discussion

1. Be prepared to share your idea when instructed to do so, first with your partner and next with the class.

2. No blurting (ever) or hand raising (until I ask for volunteers).

3. Use the assigned sentence starter to share your idea.

4. Use your public discussion voice to share your idea: two times slower and three times louder than conversation.

5. Listen attentively while classmates are sharing and jot down new ideas.

6. If your idea is similar to someone else's, acknowledge your classmate's contribution before sharing your idea.

Language Class Discussion Sentence Starters

Expressing an Opinion
I think/believe that . . .
In my opinion . . .
Based on my experience, I think . . .

Predicting
I predict/imagine that . . .
Based on . . ., I infer that . . .
I hypothesize that . . .

Asking for Clarification
What do you mean?
Will you explain that again?
I have a question about that.

Paraphrasing
So you are saying that . . .
In other words, you think . . .
What I hear you saying is . . .

SUHSD/Special Services (msg)

Student Discussion Guide

Language Class Discussion Sentence Starters

Soliciting a Response
What do you think?
We haven't heard from you yet.
Do you agree?
What answer did you get?

Acknowledging Ideas
My idea is similar to/related to
I agree with (a person) that . . .
My idea builds upon ____'s idea.

Reporting a Partner's Idea
____ indicated that . . .
____ pointed out to me that . . .
____ emphasized that . . .
____ concluded that . . .

Reporting a Group's Idea
We decided/agreed that . . .
We concluded that . . .
Our group sees it differently.
We had a different approach.

Disagreeing
I don't agree with you because . . .
I got a different answer than you.
I see it another way.

Offering a Suggestion
Maybe we could . . .
What if we . . .
Here's something we might try.

Affirming
That's an interesting idea.
I hadn't thought of that.
I see what you mean.

Holding the Floor
As I was saying, . . .
If I could finish my thought . . .
What I was trying to say was . . .

(adapted from Kate Kinsella 8/07)

Teacher Academic Language Guide

Steps to Introduce New Vocabulary

1. Pronounce the Word
2. Example of the Word
3. Part of Speech
4. Representation
5. Use routine written format (4-Square, etc.)

Steps in Structuring an Academic Class Discussion

1. Pose a concrete discussion task on the board and clarify the expectations for task completion.

2. If the question/task is open-ended, allow students time to jot down a few possible ideas before assigning a starter.

3. Assign a sentence starter including target lesson vocabulary.

4. Model a response using the starter and point out the grammatical expectations for sentence completion.

5. Give students adequate time to write a complete response.

6. Cue students to share responses with an assigned partner. To increase active listening, ask them to paraphrase their partner's idea before adding it to their list.

7. Monitor students' writing and "nominate" one or two volunteers to jump-start the discussion.

8. Assign a listening and note-taking task for the discussion.

9. Randomly call on students before inviting volunteers.

10. Validate contributions, then establish clear connections to the lesson content/task.

SUHSD/Special Services (msg)

Teacher Academic Language Guide

Structured Practice with Vocabulary

WORD WALL Activities

Linguistically (or other) Speaking!

_____

_____

Classroom Partnering Recommendations

Classroom Seating Arrangement

- Rows – one partner to the left and one partner behind
- Chevron – one partner to the side and one behind

Assigning Appropriate Partners

Consider the following variables when determining appropriate partners:

- English communicative competence, including speaking and listening
- English reading and writing proficiency (consider data from CELDT, CSTs, etc.)
- Subject matter knowledge'
- Performance on assigned tasks to date in the class
- Personality traits: reserved, insecure, extroverted, class clown, domineering, etc.

TIPS:

- Don't put high students with low students in terms of academic competence
- Rank your students numerically from highest (1, 2, 3) to lowest (28, 29, 30).
  1. is paired with 16.
  3. is paired with 18.
  15. is paired with 30.

- Designate two "floaters" who are in the middle, flexible, reliable, friendly and socially competent to assign when there is an absence.

(adapted from Kate Kinsella, 8/07)