

# Glossary

**Academic Language:** Academic language is the oral and written language, sometimes accompanied by visuals such as pictures or charts, needed by students to understand and communicate in the academic disciplines for specific purposes and often for a distant audience. Academic language includes such things as specialized vocabulary as well as grammar, style, and organization associated with genres within a field (e.g., literary criticism, explanations of historical phenomena, lab reports) and other language-related activities typical of classrooms, (e.g., expressing disagreement, discussing ideas, asking for clarification).

**Assessment:** Evidence teachers collect of student prior knowledge, thinking, or learning in order to evaluate what students understand and how they are thinking. Informal assessments include such things as student questions and responses during instruction and teacher observations of students as they work. Formal assessments may include such things as quizzes, homework assignments, lab reports, papers, journals, and projects.

**Curriculum content:** The student learning that is expected to occur, including various areas of knowledge, e.g., facts, concepts, procedures, methods of inquiry and making judgments.

**Discourse:** In the context of this task, discourse refers to oral or written language used by the teacher and students to communicate about the content being learned. Discourse in classrooms makes thinking and meaning accessible to others. Teachers have different goals for classroom discourse, such as: 1) to help students learn how to express their thinking and meaning relative to the content; 2) to co-construct mathematical understandings as a class; or 3) to teach students the language that is conventionally used in the discipline for specific purposes. Teachers choose when to use everyday language and when to use the language of the discipline to meet these sometimes conflicting goals.

**Engaging students in learning:** When students are actively increasing their knowledge, skills, and abilities related to the learning objectives for the lesson. This is in contrast to **participating** in learning tasks where the students complete the activities, but little learning takes place because the tasks are not well-designed and/or implemented.

**Genres:** generic designs to guide the process of interpreting or constructing texts to achieve specific purposes related to a particular cultural and situational context.

**Guiding Question:** Questions used to identify the focus of each rubric, i.e., what it measures about the candidate's teaching practice as documented in the Teaching Event. Each rubric level descriptor provides an answer to the related guiding question at a different level of performance. (See Rubric level descriptor)

**Language Demands:** In the context of learning in classrooms, language demands are descriptions of the language students need to effectively participate in classroom tasks. This includes demands related to listening, speaking, reading, writing, and shifting between those

modalities. These demands can be vocabulary, linguistic features of genres, and other language demands related to participating in learning tasks (e.g., sharing ideas with a partner, listening to instructions). Particular language demands vary with the purpose and audience, although academic language is aimed at communicating with distant audiences so that assumptions and needed context need to be made explicit. The degree of language demand also varies with the cognitive complexity of the content, a student's current language development, a student's relevant knowledge and experience, and the context in which the language demand occurs (e.g., participating in a discussion with or without notes). Teachers can draw upon students' language strengths (including language abilities in another language or context) and supply scaffolds to enable students to understand or produce language beyond their current level of mastery.

**Learning Objectives:** Student learning outcomes to be achieved by the end of the lesson.

**Learning Segment:** A set of lessons that build one upon another toward a central purpose, with a clearly defined beginning and end.

**Learning Tasks:** Purposefully designed activities in which students engage (not just participate – see Engaging Students in Learning) to meet the learning objectives for the lesson.

### **Linguistic Features of Texts:**

**Routines and working structures:** Regular processes for conducting activities within a classroom. Once they are established, the rules and norms for routines and working structures are understood by the teacher and students and help classroom activities flow efficiently. Examples are roles during groupwork, how students signal that they have a question, procedures for taking turns during discussions, norms for what the rest of the class does when the teacher is working with a small group, types of questions expected to be asked when exploring a problem.

**Scaffolding:** A special type of instructional support to allow students to do a task that they cannot yet do independently. Like scaffolding for buildings under construction, the support is designed to be temporary and to be removed or gradually reduced as students learn to do the task by themselves.

**Student academic content standards:** A set of knowledge, skills, and abilities that students are to learn by the end of a particular grade, grade level, or course. Student academic content standards are usually published by the state department of education to guide curriculum and instruction in public schools.

**Text:** A text is a coherent configuration of language (and other symbolic resources such as graphs, charts, illustrations) of any length with the intention to communicate meaning and achieve social purposes in particular cultural and situational contexts. Every clause simultaneously represents a version of reality (who did what to whom), negotiates social relationships (author and audience) and organizes the message. Meaning is realized through language choices that simultaneously interweave language choices (grammar, technical words,

linking words, text forms, organizational moves and other linguistic devices) into a coherent and cohesive whole to achieve particular cultural and situational purpose/s and audiences.

**Textual resources:** Textual resources help readers make sense of texts. They include formatting conventions, graphics, and organizational titles and headings.

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# Checklist of Required Evidence

## Task 1. Planning for Instruction & Assessment

- Context for Learning Form
- Lesson plans for learning segment
- Key instructional materials, e.g., class handouts, overheads, labeled by the lesson number(s) (e.g., Lesson 1, Lessons 2-3) for which each document will be used
- All assessment tools and evaluation criteria labeled by the lesson number(s) (e.g., Lesson 1, Lessons 2-3) for which each tool will be used
- Commentary explaining how the planned instruction and assessments draw upon what you know about your students as well as research and theory to support and monitor student learning
- Daily reflection

## Task 2. Instructing Students & Supporting Learning

- Video clip(s)
- Video Label Form
- Commentary explaining and analyzing the teaching and learning portrayed in the video

## Task 3. Assessing Student Learning

- Evaluation criteria used to assess student performance on the assessment
- Work samples from three students to illustrate what students generally understood and what a number of students were still struggling to understand plus work samples from the two focus students, if different. (Be sure to mask or remove student names.)
- Evidence of oral and/or written feedback given to two focus students
- Commentary analyzing student learning based on performance on the assessment, describing feedback given to two students, and identifying next steps in instruction

## Appendix A

### Academic Language for Elementary Mathematics

Academic language differs from everyday language. The differences include:

- a better-defined system of genres with explicit expectations about how texts are organized to achieve academic purposes;
- precisely-defined vocabulary to express abstract concepts and complex ideas;
- more complex grammar in order to pack more information into each sentence;
- a greater variety of conjunctions and connective words and phrases to create coherence among multiple ideas;
- textual resources (formatting conventions, graphics and organizational titles and headings) to guide understanding of texts

Academic language also includes instructional language needed to participate in learning and assessment tasks, such as:

- discussing ideas and asking questions,
- summarizing instructional and disciplinary texts,
- following and giving instructions,
- listening to a mini-lesson,
- explaining thinking aloud,
- giving reasons for a point of view,
- writing essays to display knowledge on tests.

Academic language takes the form of many genres, including Genres are generic designs to guide the process of interpreting or constructing texts to achieve specific purposes related to a particular cultural and situational context. They have particular organizational structures and linguistic features that help achieve these purposes.

Examples of genres in elementary mathematics:

- *representing* word problems mathematically
- *explaining or justifying* mathematical reasoning
- *describing* computational procedures
- *recounting* how a problem was solved
- *defining and relating* mathematical concepts
- *evaluating or constructing* mathematical arguments
- *interpreting and explaining* proofs

Examples of linguistic features of genres:

- related clusters of vocabulary to express the content such as angle, triangle or divide, divisor, dividend
- connector words that join sentences, clauses, phrases and words in logical relationships of time, cause and effect, comparison, or addition<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Knapp, P. and Watkins, M. (2005). *Genre, text, grammar: Technologies for teaching and assessing writing*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, Ltd. p. 49

- cohesive devices that link information in writing and help the text flow and hold together<sup>11</sup>
- grammatical structures such as comparisons (The \_\_\_ is longer than the \_\_\_\_.); passive voice, nominalizations where verbs are turned into nouns like add into addition to help condense text and make connections between sentences as in “ I added 2 to 3 to get 5. By this addition, I found the number of books that Susana and Peter had together.”
- text organization strategies

Examples of connector words for different purposes:

- Temporal: first, next, then
- Causal: because, since, however, therefore
- Comparative: rather, instead, also, on the other hand
- Additive: and, or, furthermore, similarly, while
- Coordinating: and, nor, but, so

Example of text organization strategies for increasingly complex arguments<sup>12</sup>:

- Simple argument: point/proposition, elaboration I added 3 plus 7 because I wanted to find the total number of cookies that Mei Lee and Kevin brought.
- Argument with evidence: Proposition, argument, conclusion
- Discussion: statement of issue, arguments for, arguments against, recommendation
- Elaborated discussion: statement of issue, preview of pro/con, several iterations of point/elaboration representing arguments against, several iterations of point/elaboration representing arguments for, summary, conclusion

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<sup>11</sup> Knapp & Watkins, op. cit., p. 47

<sup>12</sup> Adapted from Knapp & Watkins, op. cit., pp. 190-195.