ACADEMIC LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

ESSENTIAL PRACTICES:
FRAMES AND OBSERVATION RUBRICS

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ACADEMIC LANGUAGE OVERVIEW

The Academic Language Development Network (CLD Network) is a collaborative project focused on the academic success of all students who need to improve their abilities to use language in school. The Network focuses on research-based teaching and assessment practices for developing the academic language, literacy, and thinking skills that support the learning of the Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and other new standards. One of the main purposes of this network is to share ongoing research and effective professional development resources for building system-wide capacity to meet the instructional needs of academic English learners. We currently collaborate on professional development and research efforts in multiple school districts, counties, and states.

The Academic Language Development Network focuses on clarifying and developing the dimensions and features of academic language across disciplines with a strong emphasis on developing complex academic language. Complex academic language is a subset of features within the larger scope of academic language. The broad term academic language includes everything linguistic and academic, such as content vocabulary, general academic words and phrases, and grammatically correct sentences. What we call complex language is focused on constructing whole messages, connecting sentences, and clarifying complex ideas. We realize that some complex ideas are conveyed by individual words and sentences, but as Common Core Standards take center stage students need to also learn how to think and describe their thinking with connected discourse. Academic English learners, in particular, need to learn how sentences (and text features) fit together to describe concepts and ideas in a discipline. In table 1 below we include all three interlaced dimensions of academic language: vocabulary, syntax, and discourse. Complex academic language, which is a major emphasis of this Network's work, emphasizes discourse and message-level features.

We have identified a set of essential practices for developing academic language across content areas and grade levels. These practices emerged from analyses of data from a study of expert recommendations, observations of classroom instruction, and a review of the research literature on the topic. Perhaps more importantly, the data pointed to the essential relationships between these practices and how they interconnect in effective classroom instruction of complex language. To show the interconnectedness of the practices, we have organized them into what we call "frames." The frames show how the essential practices support one another, and they also highlight three practices with the highest impact on complex language development at the top of each frame. Supporting each comprehensive practice are three cross-cutting practices: Clarify, Model and Guide Language Learning. Supporting all is the foundational practice of Design Language and Literacy Activities.

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For the purposes of these essential practice frames academic language (CAL) consists of the language features used to describe complex ideas, abstract concepts, and cognitive processes (thinking skills) in school texts, tasks, and tests. For example, many texts, tasks, and tests require students to both comprehend and produce language in order to engage in disciplinary thinking such as: compare, describe cause/effect, persuade, take other perspectives, recognize patterns and relationships, hypothesize, interpret, conclude, problem-solve, evaluate, apply, justify, support ideas with evidence, contradict, infer, inquire, refer to a text, research, concede, seek information, narrate, and sequence ideas.

Table 1 – Academic Language Dimensions, Features, and Skills

Dimensions	AL Features	AL Skills
Lexical	- Content terms and multiple meaning words - Figurative expressions and collocations - Affixes, roots, and transformations - General academic terms (e.g., *aspects, consider, as long as, perhaps, evaluate*)	- Figure out the meaning of new words and terms in a particular message – connect to underlying concepts and for comprehension of text - Use new words to build idea or product - Choose and use the best words and phrases to get the message across
Syntax	- Sentence structure (compound, complex) and length - Transitions/Connectives (e.g., *however, because, therefore, yet, as, despite*) - Complex verb tenses and passive voice - Pronouns and references	- Craft sentences to be clear and correct - Use of a variety of sentence types to clarify a message, condense information, and combine ideas, phrases, and clauses.
Discourse	- Message organization and text structure - Voice and register - Density - Clarity and coherence	- Combine features to communicate, clarify, and negotiate meaning - Create a logical flow and connection between ideas - Match language with purpose of message (Clear, complete, focused, logical, and appropriate to the discipline)

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ESSENTIAL PRACTICE FRAMES

High-Impact Practices	**Foster Academic Interactions** • (INT) Provide and support extended and rich opportunities for student-to-student interactions • (COM) Build disciplinary communication skills		
	Fortify Complex Output • (ORL) Provide and support extended and rich opportunities for oral AL output • (PCT) Provide and support extended and rich opportunities to use AL to produce written texts		
	Use Complex Texts • (TXT) Analyze the text's organization, syntax, and word choice to develop disciplinary thinking, language, and literacy • (RCT) Provide and support extended and rich opportunities for students to read complex texts		
Cross-Cutting Practices	**Clarify Academic language** • (INP) Use communication strategies to make AL input understandable • (CHK) Check for AL comprehension	**Model Complex Language** • (MOD) Model target AL • (DEC) Deconstruct target AL	**Guide Language Learning** • (PRO) Prompt for and provide target AL • (FBK) Provide specific feedback on AL use
Foundational Practices	**Design Language & Literacy Activities (OBJ, AUT, MAT)** • (OBJ) Set language objective(s) that support content objectives • (AUT) Structure tasks to require authentic and meaningful communication using target AL. • (MAT) Use AL support materials		

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High-Impact Essential Practice: FOSTER ACADEMIC INTERACTIONS				
This practice focuses on structuring and strengthening student-to-student interaction using academic language, which consists of two-way dialogue such as whole class discussion with methods to ensure that all participate, paired conversations, and small group tasks. At the high end, teacher scaffolds multiple opportunities for students to produce original, academic messages which require academic language. At the low end, the teacher does the majority of the talking/writing and accepts minimal, memorized, or unclear student responses.				
	1 **Provides little or no evidence**	**2** **Provides limited evidence**	**3** **Provides acceptable evidence**	**4** **Provides consistent & strong evidence**
Provide and support extended and rich opportunities for student-to- student interactions (INT)	Teacher does not provide opportunities for students to interact with each other.	Teacher provides interaction tasks that are limited and/or unsupported (e.g., share short and/or memorized answers); few students participate.	Teacher provides and supports interaction tasks that are extended and related to content objectives; most students participate.	Teacher provides and supports interaction tasks that are extended, related to content objectives and are structured to encourage all students to participate.
Build disciplinary communication skills (COM)	Teacher does not use interaction opportunities to develop students' abilities to communicate with one another.	Teacher uses interaction opportunities to develop students' abilities to communicate with one another but these opportunities are limited in scope and do not foster deep interactions.	Teacher uses some interaction opportunities to develop students' abilities to communicate with one another using discourse moves, language, and thinking processes of the discipline and its experts.	Teacher uses multiple and extended interaction opportunities to develop students' abilities to communicate with one another using discourse moves, language, and thinking processes of the discipline and its experts.

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High-Impact Essential Practice: FORTIFY COMPLEX OUTPUT

This practice focuses on structuring, strengthening, and supporting the quantity and quality of students' oral and written production using academic language, all of which is meant to fortify content learning. Output consists of communication such as oral presentations and answering teacher questions. At the high end, teacher scaffolds multiple opportunities for students to produce original, academic messages that require academic language. At the low end, the teacher does the majority of the talking/writing and accepts minimal, memorized, or unclear student responses. Interaction/output can include usage of the home language, which should serve as a bridge to academic English. For writing, the teacher supports students in using academic language to produce written texts that communicate clear and meaningful messages. At the high end, teacher provides opportunities for students to produce original, academic messages that use complex language appropriately, and teacher provides the language as needed. At the low end, the teacher does the majority of the writing and accepts minimal, memorized, or unclear student responses.

	1 **Provides little or no evidence**	**2** **Provides limited evidence**	**3** **Provides acceptable evidence**	**4** **Provides consistent & strong evidence**
Provide and support extended and rich opportunities for oral academic language output (ORL)	Teacher does not provide opportunities for students to orally produce target academic language.	Teacher provides limited and/or unsupported opportunities for all students to orally produce target academic language but these opportunities are not designed to fortify student oral use of target academic language.	Teacher provides some supported opportunities for all students to orally produce target academic language.	Teacher provides multiple, meaningful, and supported opportunities for all students to orally produce the target academic language in meaningful ways.
Provide and support extended and rich opportunities to use academic language to produce written texts (PCT)	Teacher does not provide opportunities for using academic language to produce written text.	Teacher provides limited, and/or unsupported, opportunities for all students to use academic language in writing but these opportunities do not focus on the target academic language.	Teacher provides some supported opportunities for all students to use target academic language to produce written text.	Teacher provides multiple, meaningful, and supported opportunities for all students to use target academic language to produce written text.

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High-Impact Essential Practice: USE COMPLEX TEXTS				
This practice focuses on using complex texts to develop academic language. This practice is highly beneficial because it develops students' overall abilities to process the academic language of complex texts, which develops students' academic language, while also developing their disciplinary thinking skills, comprehension habits, and content knowledge of specific texts. At the high end, the teacher engages students in analysis of how a text's organization, syntax, and word choice combine to create meaning, and fosters analytical discussions of authors' use of language to convey certain meanings for given purposes. At the low end, the teacher uses non-complex texts (too easy) and/or focuses solely on vocabulary.				
	1 **Provides little or no evidence**	**2** **Provides limited evidence**	**3** **Provides acceptable evidence**	**4** **Provides consistent & strong evidence**
Analyze the text's organization, syntax, and/or word choice to develop disciplinary thinking, language, and literacy (TXT)	Teacher does not engage students in an analysis or mention of a text's organizational features, syntax, and/or word choice.	Teacher engages students in a cursory analysis or mention of a text's organizational features, syntax, and/or word choice.	Teacher engages students in some analysis of how a text's organizational features, syntax, and/or word choice combine to create meaning; but misses opportunities to build language, thinking, or comprehension.	Teachers engages students in analysis of how a text's organizational features, syntax, and/or word choice combine to create meaning; use as opportunity to build disciplinary language, thinking, and comprehension.
Provide and support extended and rich opportunities for students to read complex texts (RCT)	Teacher does not provide or support opportunities for students to participate in tasks that use complex texts.	Teacher provides unsupported opportunities for students to participate in tasks that use complex texts.	Teacher provides some supported opportunities for students to participate in tasks that use complex texts.	Teacher provides extended, meaningful, and supported opportunities for students to participate in engaging and rich tasks that use complex texts.

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Cross-Cutting Essential Practice: CLARIFY ACADEMIC LANGUAGE				
This practice includes using a range of communication strategies to make written and spoken academic language input (oral, written) comprehensible to students. To the extent possible, the language should be just beyond current levels of students' competence (not too difficult or too easy) in order to push them to new levels. The teacher takes into account varying levels of language proficiency, uses varied communication strategies (e.g., gestures, drama, drawing, repetition, rate of speech, intonation, synonyms), and strategic use of primary language to make the academic language of texts and oral classroom discourse accessible to all students. This practice includes using different tactics (e.g., asking questions, providing sufficient wait time for students to answer, using written, verbal, and nonverbal evidence) to formatively assess and check for comprehension of academic language at strategic times during the lesson.				
	1 **Provides little or no evidence**	**2** **Provides limited evidence**	**3** **Provides acceptable evidence**	**4** **Provides consistent strong evidence**
Use a variety of communication strategies to make oral and written academic language input understandable (INP)	Teacher does not use communication strategies appropriate to meet students' levels of language proficiency.	Teacher uses a few communication strategies, but they are not varied nor differentiated for the different levels of language proficiency represented in the class.	Teacher uses a variety of communication strategies that are differentiated but not for the multiple levels of language proficiency represented in the class.	Teacher uses a variety of communication strategies appropriate to the multiple levels of language proficiency represented in the class.
Check for AL comprehension (CHK)	Teacher does not check for comprehension of academic language.	Teacher rarely checks for comprehension of academic language or does not vary tactics for doing so. Teacher rarely adjusts instruction based on checks.	Teacher varies checks for comprehension of academic language and adjusts instruction based on checks, but misses some opportunities to check or adjust.	Teacher uses multiple approaches to check for academic language comprehension and appropriately adjusts instruction.

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Cross-Cutting Essential Practice: MODEL ACADEMIC LANGUAGE				
The practice of modeling focuses on how effectively a teacher models (or provides a model for) the use of the target academic language. At the highest levels, the teacher models how to use the target academic language to speak, listen, read, and/or write in order to support content learning and its assessment. The teacher might use models of language taken from literature, speeches, texts, student work, and other sources. For example, at the highest levels, the teacher might model target academic language to make a scientific argument, hypothesize about the outcome of an experiment, or cite evidence to support a thesis. The teacher also analyzes and deconstructs what is being modeled, which means to break down and explain the components or processes for students. Modeling should support students in completing tasks in this lesson. At the low end, the teacher may simply refer to a model without using it to support the task.				
	1 **Provides little or no evidence**	**2** **Provides limited evidence**	**3** **Provides acceptable evidence**	**4** **Provides consistent & strong evidence**
Model target academic language (MOD)	Teacher does not model (or provide a model for) academic language and/or models language not related to language demands of the lesson.	Teacher models (or provides a model for) academic language but the modeling is limited, only available to some students, untimely, inaccurate, and/or unclear.	Teacher models (or provides a model for) the target academic language; the modeling is available to most students; modeling might be rushed or slightly unclear.	Teacher clearly and completely models (and/or provides an exemplar model of) target academic language that supports content learning.
Deconstruct target academic language being modeled (DEC)	Teacher does not deconstruct the language being modeled.	Teacher rarely or briefly deconstructs the language being modeled, deconstruction is rushed or not clear	Teacher deconstructs what is being modeled, but is incomplete.	Teacher clearly and completely deconstructs the language being modeled.

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Cross-Cutting Essential Practice: GUIDE LANGUAGE LEARNING				
This practice focuses on how effectively a teacher guides the learning of academic language throughout each task and throughout the lesson as a whole. The practice includes adapting and supporting complex language tasks to meet the current language proficiency levels of students in the classroom. This practice also includes gradually removing supports to foster students' independent use of academic language.				
	1 **Provides little or no evidence**	**2** **Provides limited evidence**	**3** **Provides acceptable evidence**	**4** **Provides consistent & strong evidence**
Prompt for and provide target language (PRO)	Teacher does not prompt for or provide target academic language for the tasks.	Teacher prompts for or provides some of the target academic language in limited ways	Teacher prompts for, or provides some of the target academic language for tasks, but misses some opportunities.	Teacher consistently prompts for, and provides target academic language for the tasks at appropriate times.
Provide specific feedback on academic language use (FBK)	Teacher provides no feedback on academic language use to students during practice opportunities.	Teacher provides minimal, vague, and/or repetitive feedback on academic language use.	Teacher provide some specific feedback on academic language use, and it is reasonable to infer the feedback helps students with the academic language demands of the current activity.	Teacher consistently provides specific feedback on academic language use related to targeted language features and it is reasonable to infer it helps students with the language demands of the current activity.

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Foundational Essential Practice: DESIGN LANGAUGE AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES				
This practice focuses on the design of language and literacy activities to promote academic language development and support the high impact practices. This practice also focuses on how clearly and directly a teacher aligns academic language objectives with the content objectives, which in turn should align with the lesson's texts and tasks. At the highest level, the teacher identifies the key academic language demands (at word, syntax, and discourse levels) that students need in order to complete lesson's texts and tasks and show mastery of the skill or concept to be learned. The teacher creates each language objective with a clear function, examples of the language to be used, and conditions under which students will use the target language. Throughout the lesson, the teacher uses authentic tasks that require meaningful use of the target language; the teacher also uses support materials such as visual aids, real objectives, word walls, posters,				
Element	**1** **Provides little or no evidence**	**2** **Provides limited evidence**	**3** **Provides acceptable evidence**	**4** **Provides consistent strong evidence**
Set language objective(s) that support content objectives (OBJ)	Language objective is not apparent or does not support the content objectives.	Language objective partially supports content objectives (e.g., might focus only on content vocabulary when there are more important needs).	Language objective supports content objectives, but lacks clarity or is less effective than a different language objective would be.	Language objective clearly and directly supports content objectives (aligns with the key academic language demands of the texts and tasks).
Structure tasks to require authentic and meaningful communication using target language (AUT)	Teacher does not structure tasks that require students to use academic language in meaningful ways.	Teacher structures tasks that require a limited amount of academic language but does not require use of target academic language to understand and communicate meaningful messages.	Teacher structures tasks that require some use of target academic language to understand and communicate meaningful messages.	Teacher structures tasks that require students to authentically use the target academic language to understand and communicate meaningful and purposeful messages; deepen ideas; and share perspectives.
Use academic language support materials (MAT)	Teacher does not provide accessible support materials to make academic language input comprehensible or usable.	Teacher provides support materials, but does not use the materials to make the target academic language comprehensible or usable; or they are not differentiated for the different levels of language proficiency represented in the class.	Teacher uses academic support materials to make the target academic language comprehensible or more accessible to use; materials are differentiated but not sufficiently for the multiple levels of language proficiency represented in the class.	Teacher uses support materials to make target academic language understandable or more accessible to use; ; materials are differentiated to the multiple levels of language proficiency represented in the class.

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