

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE: BUILDING ACADEMIC LANGUAGE, GRADES K-6

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CREDITS: 3 GRADUATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDITS

Course Overview

With the adoption of college and career standards, all students need support developing their understanding and use of language within an academic context. As students progress through school, subject matter becomes more complex and students must use language in more sophisticated ways to argue, to evaluate evidence, to analyze complex texts, to develop their own complex texts, and to engage academic discussions. This course is designed to equip K-6 teachers with the knowledge, skills, and strategies required to help their students grasp language principles and develop the academic language skills they need to reach their highest levels of academic achievement across all grade bands and content areas. Building Academic Language introduces teachers to the features and functions of academic language, strategies and activities for supporting the use of academic language, techniques for modeling academic language, and ideas for lesson planning and assessment that support academic language development.

Author Biography

Jeff Zwiers, Ed.D., is a senior researcher at Stanford University. He has taught elementary, middle, and high school students in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the United States. He has taught graduate courses on language development, bilingual education, and content literacy at Stanford University and the University of San Francisco. He works with teachers and schools to promote academic language development, critical thinking, disciplinary literacy, and formative assessment practices.

As you take this course, you will:

- listen to experts.
- watch real classroom learning.
- read research and best practice.
- access resources to support implementation.

Course Objectives

In this course, you will learn:

1. the foundations of language use in and out of school as well as the functions and features of academic language.
2. how students acquire language and what habits and strategies best support student language development.
3. the rationale and strategies for effective whole-class discussions that build academic language.
4. how small groups and pairs can be used to build oral academic language, content knowledge, and thinking skills.
5. the complex language involved in academic reading and writing and how best to strengthen students' abilities.
6. how to use assessments and planning to identify thinking and language skills for students to learn before instruction.

Course Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. recognize the functions and features of academic language and identify your students' language needs.
2. model and scaffold the development of specific content-area language.
3. plan and lead whole-class discussions that deepen and extend student thinking and build academic language.
4. implement small group and pair activities that support academic language growth.
5. support academic reading and writing, particularly through modeling, scaffolding, and analyzing texts with students.
6. formatively and summatively assess the use of academic language and plan for instruction based on assessments.

Course Resources

Included within each unit are readings, resources, and materials available to download, save, and print. Please make sure you access all materials for each unit by clicking on the "Resources" tab to the right of the screen. At the end of each unit, you will find a PCG Application Toolkit that includes resources that can be used for implementation the next day, e.g., graphic organizers, activity ideas, suggested texts and on-screen graphics that are available to print or download.

Methods of Instruction and Evaluation

- Pre and Post surveys
- Videos (presentations consisting of interviews and classroom footage)
- Readings
- Reflection Questions (open-ended questions at intervals throughout the course that ask participants to reflect on the course content, their own practice, and next steps for their practice)
- Checks for Understanding (selected-response quizzes to assess understanding)
- Discussion Forums (prompts that engage participants in online dialogue with their cohorts)
- Mid-course Project and Final Capstone Project



Academic Honesty

PCG recognizes plagiarism as a serious academic offense. Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else's work as one's own, and includes failing to cite sources for others' ideas, copying material from books or the Internet (including lesson plans and rubrics), and handing in work written by someone other than the participant. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade and may have additional consequences. For more information about plagiarism and guidelines for appropriate citation, consult plagiarism.org.

Grading Policy (using rubric 1-4 scale system)		Percentage of Course Credit	
Total grade for the course is a culmination of performance grades.		Course grade is determined by the following:	
A:	3.4 – 4.0	Reflections	15%
B:	2.7 – 3.3	Checks for Understanding	25%
C:	2.0 – 2.6	Mid-course Project	25%
F:	<2.0	Final Capstone Project	35%

In order to complete the requirements of the course, you must complete all course work (e.g., reflections, checks for understanding), including watching all videos and participating in all discussion forums. We do not award partial credit.



Checks for Understanding and Reflection Rubric

Assessment	Underdeveloped (1)	Basic (2)	Proficient (3)	Distinguished (4)
Checks for Understanding	65% or below	66-79%	80-89%	90-100%
Reflection Question	<p>Participant has included little to no content indicating consideration and comprehension of course content.</p> <p>Participant has not addressed the questions posed. Participant has copied from the course transcript without synthesis or analysis.</p>	<p>Participant has included little that indicates consideration and comprehension of course content.</p> <p>Participant has answered most questions directly but some too briefly.</p>	<p>Participant has included appropriate content from the course content and made connections to practice.</p> <p>Participant has made thoughtful comments in direct response to the prompts.</p>	<p>Participant has provided rich detail and supporting examples from the course content and made specific connections to his/her practice.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Participant has made thoughtful comments in direct response to the prompts and created next steps to support his/her learning.</p>



Course Outline

Unit 1: Foundations for Student Language Use

Objective: In this unit, you will explore the foundations of language use in and out of school as well as the functions and features of academic language.

Outcome: By the end of this unit, you will be able to identify your students' language needs and explain to them the functions and features of academic language.

Resource: PCG Application Toolkit related to the unit topic that provides project ideas, reading suggestions and templates to support classroom planning and instruction.

Readings:

- Zwiers, J. (2014). Excerpt from chapters 1 & 2. In *Building Academic Language* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Assessment: Reflection Questions, Checks for Understanding

Unit 2: Cultivating Academic Language Acquisition

Objective: In this unit, you will explore how students acquire language and what habits and strategies best support student languagedevelopment.

Outcome: By the end of this unit, you will be able to model and scaffold the development of specific content-area language.

Resource: PCG Application Toolkit related to the unit topic that provides project ideas, reading suggestions and templates to support classroom planning and instruction.

Readings:

- Zwiers, J. (2014). Excerpt from chapters 3 & 4. In *Building Academic Language* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Assessment: Reflection Questions, Checks for Understanding



Unit 3: Facilitating Whole-Class Discussions for Content and Language Development

Objective: In this unit, you will learn the rationale and strategies for effective whole-class discussions that build academic language.

Outcome: By the end of this unit, you will be able to plan and lead whole-class discussions that deepen and extend student thinking and build language.

Resource: PCG Application Toolkit related to the unit topic that provides project ideas, reading suggestions, and templates to support classroom planning and instruction.

Readings:

- Zwiers, J. (2014). Excerpt from chapter 5. In *Building Academic Language* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Assessment: Reflection Questions, Checks for Understanding, Mid-Course Project

Unit 4: Academic Listening and Speaking in Small Groups and Pairs

Objective: In this unit, you will learn how small groups and pairs can be effectively used to build oral academic language, content knowledge, and thinking skills.

Outcome: By the end of this unit, you will be able to implement small group and pair activities that support academic language growth.

Resource: PCG Application Toolkit related to the unit topic that provides project ideas, reading suggestions, and templates to support classroom planning and instruction.

Readings:

- Zwiers, J. (2014). Excerpt from chapter 6. In *Building Academic Language* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Assessment: Reflection Questions, Checks for Understanding



Unit 5: Language for Reading and Writing Complex Texts

Objective: In this unit, you will explore the complex language of academic reading and writing and how best to strengthen students' abilities.

Outcome: By the end of this unit, you will be able to teach content area and general academic vocabulary in context as well as model, scaffold, and analyze texts for students.

Resource: PCG Application Toolkit related to the unit topic that provides project ideas, reading suggestions, and templates to support classroom planning and instruction.

Readings:

- Zwiers, J. (2014). Excerpt from chapters 7 & 8. In *Building Academic Language* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Assessment: Reflection Questions, Checks for Understanding

Unit 6: Building Language Development into Lessons and Assessments

Objective: In this unit, you will learn how to use assessments and planning to identify thinking and language skills for students to learn before instruction.

Outcome: By the end of this unit, you will be able to formatively and summatively assess the use of academic language and plan for instruction based on assessments.

Resource: PCG Application Toolkit related to the unit topic that provides project ideas, reading suggestions, and templates to support classroom planning and instruction.

Readings:

- Zwiers, J. (2014). Excerpt from chapter 9. In *Building Academic Language* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Assessment: Reflection Questions, Checks for Understanding



Unit 7: Practices in Action

Objective: In this unit, you will observe practices of building academic language in the classroom.

Outcome: By the end of this unit, you will be able to create lesson plans that apply building academic language practices in your own classroom.

Resource: PCG Application Toolkit related to the unit topic that provides project ideas, reading suggestions, and templates to support classroom planning and instruction.

Assessment: Reflection Questions, Checks for Understanding

Unit 8: Wrap-Up

Objective: N/A

Outcome: N/A

Readings: N/A

Assessment: Final Capstone Project

