

6<sup>th</sup> Annual Academic Success for English Learners and  
Migrant Students: Using Research-Based Practices

**Session XIII**

*We Are All Language Teachers:  
Developing Academic Language in Every Lesson*

(Grades 5-12 )

**Presenter**  
**Dr. Jeff Zwiers**

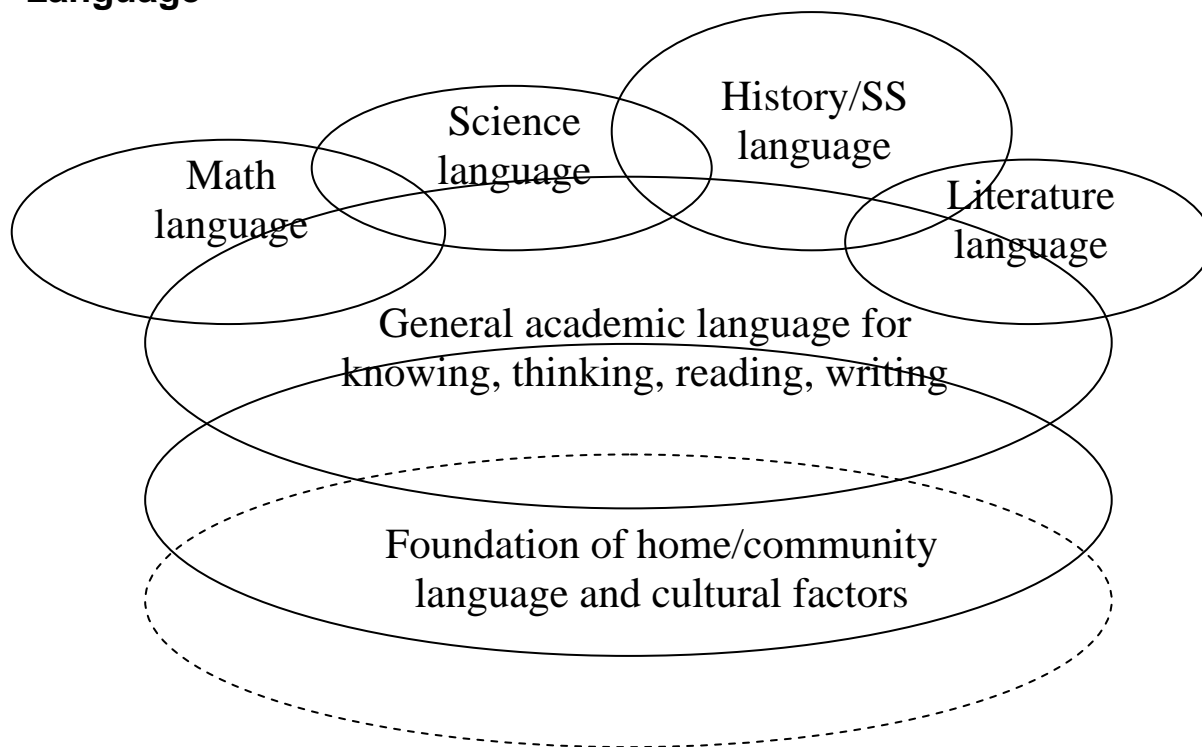
# We are all language teachers: Developing academic language in every lesson

April 12, 2008

*Handouts*

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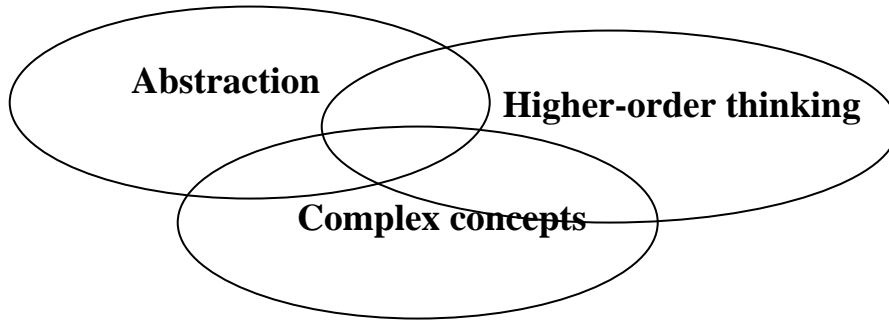
## I. Expanding & Overlapping Circles of General and Specialized Language



Each student starts with a foundation of language that they have been building from early childhood (above). This foundation represents the language and thinking of family, home culture, and community. During the school years a student constructs other levels of general and specialized language from this foundation. An important layer is the general academic language of thinking and literacy that is used across the disciplines. This layer then overlaps with more specialized variations of thinking and language, four of which are prominent in school: math, science, history/social science, and literature (in upper circles). Over time all of the circles expand and even contract, depending on where we are and with whom we interact. Later, students often pick an area that becomes even more expanded with technical and professional language of the discipline. This often becomes their field of study and/or eventual job.

When students come to us, they come with a wide range of language and thinking “circles.” The student above, for example, has more developed math and history language abilities. For some students, their general academic language is well-developed, having significant overlap with their home/community language foundation. If the student had the dotted-line foundation in figure above, though, he would have less support from home and cultural factors for school’s ways of doing things. This would mean less alignment, and hence more clashing, of learning and language. Ultimately, all students must build up each of their circles/spheres of language and thinking to succeed in school.

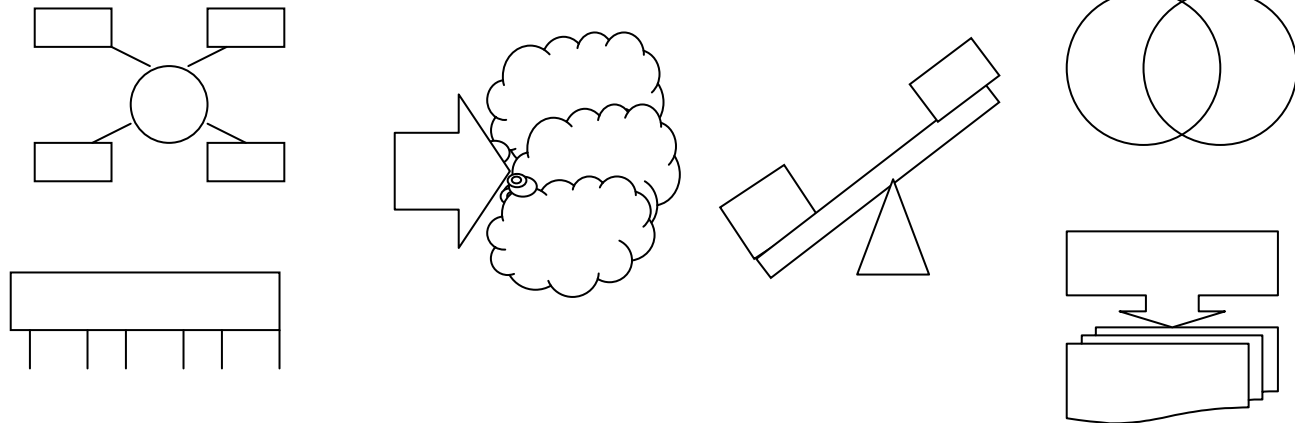
**II. We use academic language to describe**



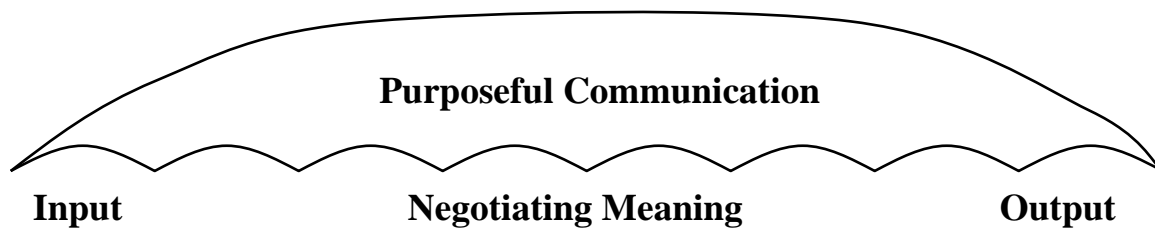
**III. Features of academic language**

<b>Figurative Expression</b>	
<b>Abstract terms</b>	
<b>Modals &amp; Qualifiers/Hedges</b>	
<b>Long Sentences</b>	
<b>Nominalization</b>	

**Organization of information and text structure**



**academic**  
IV. Principles of ^ language acquisition



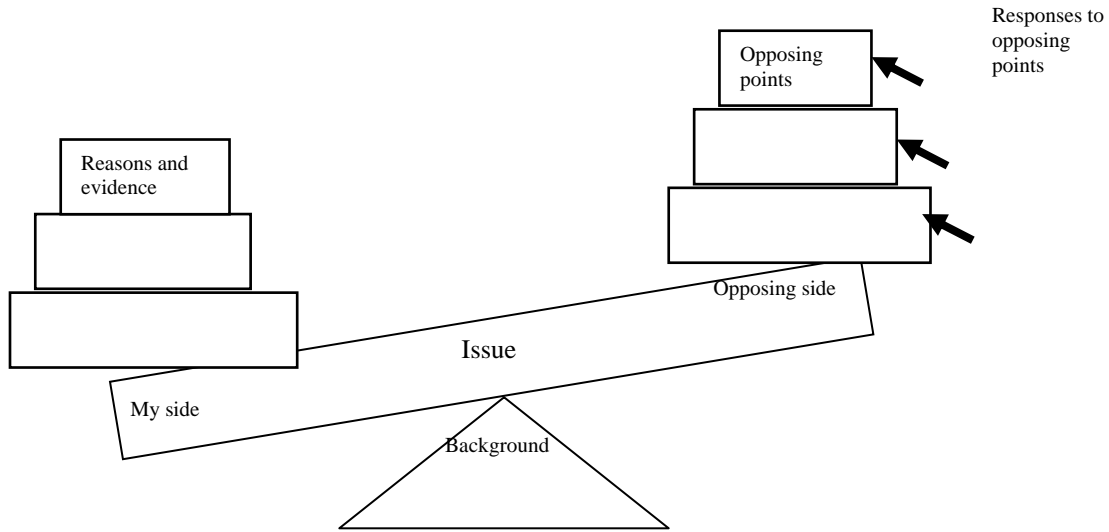
**Aspects of meaning negotiation in classroom conversation (*Types of Heroes*)**

- Disagreement and challenge (lines )
- Requesting justification (line )
- Building off another's point (line )
- Conceding a point (line )
- Synthesizing and problem-solving (lines )

**Content Info Gap Cards**

**Pro-Con Improv**

## Persuasion Balance Scale



Students use the persuasion scale above to stack up reasons and evidence on both sides of their issue. It can be used for organizing reasons and evidence before writing. They put the most influential, or the “heaviest,” reasons and evidence in the bigger boxes to show their persuasive value (strength/weight).

After filling in and discussing the scale, students then pull information from the scales to draft their essays. You can have students use color-codes in their first drafts to show they understand different elements of the essay. They can, for example, make hooks yellow, background statements blue, and thesis statements red. The *e*'s can be green—evidence, examples, & explanations. Opposing arguments can be orange. This color scheme can also be used on the scale organizer above and the posters below (or any other visual you might use). As they write, students can borrow brick and mortar language from the wall posters and from the model essays.

## Language Posters for Writing (Persuasive)

Hook	Background	Thesis	Reasons and Evidence	Counter-arguments	Conclusion
<i>Have you ever...</i> <i>Why...</i> <i>It started with...</i> <i>Many believe...</i> <i>What would...</i>	<i>This quotation by...</i> <i>In the year...</i> <i>This question has been discussed...</i> <i>Many history books say that...</i>	<i>Even though...</i> <i>The evidence shows that...</i> <i>I believe that...</i>	<i>First of all,</i> <i>This is also supported by</i> <i>Another reason for...</i> <i>For example,</i>	<i>Yet some people argue that...</i> <i>On the other hand</i> <i>It is true that...</i> <i>Granted,</i>	<i>Ultimately,</i> <i>In conclusion,</i> <i>Finally,</i> <i>In the long run</i> <i>In summary,</i>