Resource: Developing Academic Language

What is academic language?

". . . the set of words, grammar, and organizational strategies used to describe complex ideas, higher-order thinking processes, and abstract concepts" (Jeff Zwiers, *Building Academic Language*, 2008, p. 20).

Building Academic Language

- **Categories** *(i.e. Carnivores, Dairy, Perennials, Produce, Reptiles)*

- **Content-specific Vocabulary** *(Congruent, Immigrate, Mitosis, Stanza)*

- **Expand the Context** *(Self → Neighborhood → Community → Country → Culture → World)*

- **Focus on General Academic Language That Transfers Across Disciplines** *(Argument, Contribute, Evolve, Expansion, Generate, Network, Preserve)*

- **Mind Maps & Word Families** *(nourish, nutrients, nutrition, nutritious, malnourished)*

- **Progressively Shift from Concrete to Abstract** *(My boyfriend → dating → the concept of affection)*

- **Substitute Prepositional Phrases** *(to come back = to return; to give up = to surrender)*

- **Teach Transitional Words & Phrases** *(By contrast, Consequently, Furthermore, However, Therefore)*

- **Use Technical Terms** *(Calibrate, cardiac, configure, contusion, pediatric, polymer)*

- **Word Study** *(i.e, word roots, prefixes, suffixes, synonyms and antonyms, compound words)*

COMPONENTS OF ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

- **Complex Sentences**

- **Content-Specific Vocabulary**

- **Formal, Professional Language**

- **General Academic Language**

- **Specialized Vocabulary**

- **Transitions & Connecting Language**

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