The Realities of Developing Academic Language

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Nooksack Valley:
- ~2,000 students
- 34% Hispanic
- 14% ELL
- 4% Native

- 3 elementary
- 1 middle school
- 1 high school
Learning

1) Describe the different components of academic language and make connections to leadership and equity
2) Consider the role academic language plays in creating or preventing Long Term English Learners (LTELs)
3) Determine action steps through resources and discussion
What does “academic language” mean to you?

Academic language means ____________________.

Academic language is ________________________.

Choose one or more:

- To elaborate, ____________.
- For example, ________.
- On the other hand, ______________.
What does “academic language” mean to you?

• “The vocabulary that students need to know in order to participate in the content.”

• “The language of school. The language used in textbooks, in assessments, and in our classes.”

• “Not just the vocabulary I think, but how we use the vocabulary in context in our different classes. Students might hear the same academic term used in four different ways, for different reasons, in the same day depending on the class.”
Academic Language is....

- Who has the status in the classroom?
- Whose ideas are elevated?
- Who has the language of leadership?
Academic Language

Vocabulary
- Tier I: Common in spoken language
  Clock, baby, happy, walk
- Tier II: Cross-content
  Infer, predict, describe, brilliance, astonish
- Tier III: Content specific
  Photosynthesis, sum, factor, quotation

Grammatical Structure
- “Even though bats have wings, they are not birds.”
- Syntax: How we arrange the words... rephrasing

Function
- Purpose for using language
  - Compare
  - Explain
  - Solve
- Structure and vocabulary are determined by purpose
Put it all together = Discourse!

Talk is part of our identity

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**Academic Language**

- **Vocabulary**
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  - Tier III: Content specific
    - Photosynthesis, sum, factor, quotation

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Process and Connect: What does this discussion make you think or wonder about?

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Academic Language, Access and LTELs

• Enrolled in school for six years or more (usually since Kinder)
• “Stuck:” Academic struggles & lack of progress toward English proficiency
• Function socially in both English and home language, yet both languages are imprecise and inadequate for expression and communication
• Reluctant to participate; may be characterized as ”unmotivated”
• Many have internalized a sense of failure
So what do we do?

- Involve students
- Teach all components of academic language
- Keep equity, status and leadership at the forefront
Involve Students: What is Academic Language?

“What’s that?”

“Describe what you observe.”

Social language

Academic language
Tier II Words:
Student Generated Definitions

**Explain** means to help someone understand what I know and think using supporting evidence.

- examples
- words
- pictures
- numbers
- symbols
- gestures
What is your favorite animal on the planet and why?

My favorite animal on the planet is a__________ because__________

Even though ________ are my favorite, I also like ______________.
“But although Daniella's family and friends are thrilled by the news of her comeback, health experts have expressed concern that Daniella, 35, who battled cocaine addiction for 12 years, may be faced with the temptation of drugs again when she returns to the showbiz scene.”

Her family and friends are excited for her to comeback, but other people are not...

Doctors are concerned that she did drugs for a long time

She might do drugs again when she goes back to work
## Language of Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Objective</th>
<th>What is it?</th>
<th>What does it sound like?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To sequence</td>
<td>Put in order</td>
<td>“The first step is...” “Next...”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“After that...” “Finally...”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“At the same time...” “In the end...”</td>
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<tr>
<td>To describe</td>
<td>Tell about something</td>
<td>“There are...” “Such as...”</td>
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<td>“It looks/sounds/feels...” “Consists of...”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“There are ____ kinds of ____” “For example...”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“____ has several characteristics.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>To explain</td>
<td>Giving examples</td>
<td>“This is an example of...” “It is...”</td>
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<td>“This is important because...” “It has...”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“For instance...” “To elaborate...”</td>
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<tr>
<td>To compare and contrast</td>
<td>Showing how two things are alike or</td>
<td>“Something they both have in common is...”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>different</td>
<td>“These are different from each other because...”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“____ and ____ are alike because ____”</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>“Differs from...” “On the other hand...”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“However...”</td>
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<tr>
<td>To analyze cause and effect</td>
<td>Discussing why or how something</td>
<td>“If ____ then ____” “Therefore...”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>happened, exists, or works</td>
<td>“Due to...” “Because of...”</td>
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<td>“As a result of...” “Since...”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Some people think...” “The reason why ____ happened was because ____”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What does “academic language” mean to you now?

Academic language means/is ____________________.

Choose one or more

One idea I will implement is __________.
I’m excited about ____________.
My next steps are ____________ and ____________.
1) Describe the different components of academic language and make connections to leadership and equity

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