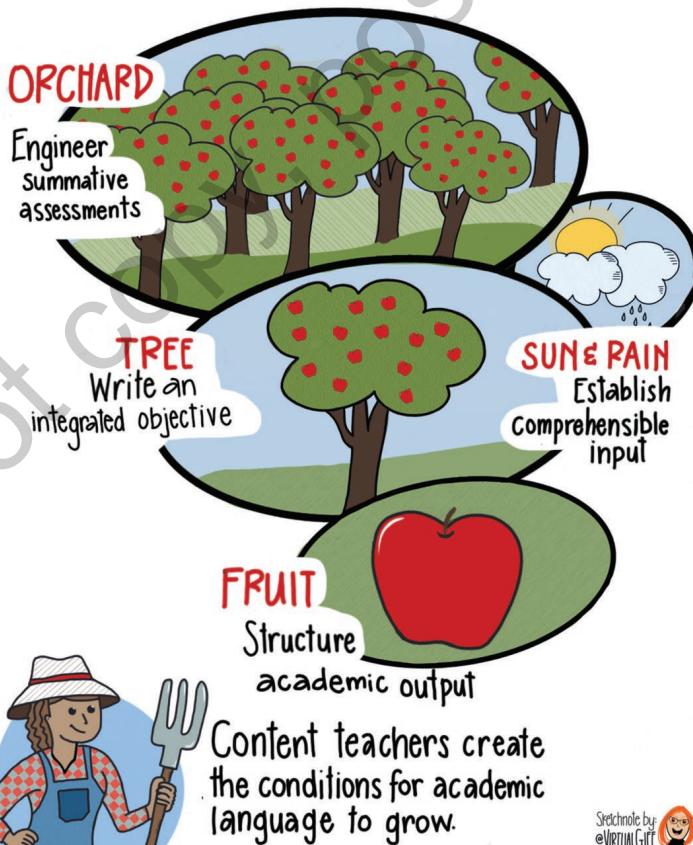


# INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR EXPERIENCED MULTILINGUALS

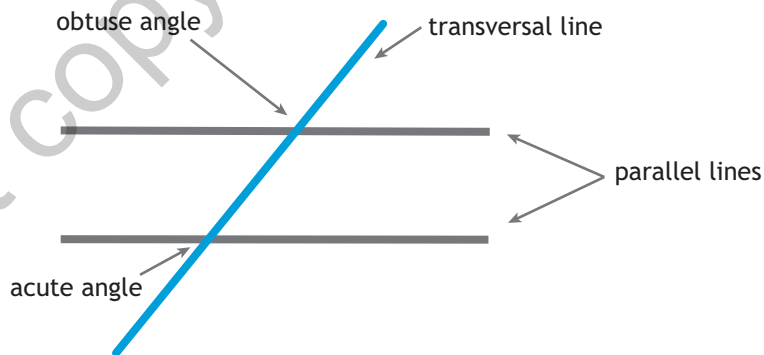
INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR EXPERIENCED MULTILINGUALS

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Min Woo walks into his favorite class, math, sits down next to his partner, and reaches into his backpack for the folder with the papers for their current project. They are learning to think like city planners by using angles and lines to plan out the roads and buildings for a new city. Mr. Nguyen, the seventh-grade math teacher, greets each student by name at the door. When the bell rings, he gestures to the board where the next step for the project is posted. To get the class started with the next step in their city planning project, he tells them to read the prompt with their partners, making sure to restate the directions in their own words or ask each other questions about the prompt. Min Woo reads aloud, “Draw at least two parallel streets and two transversal streets to form acute and obtuse angles.” Puzzled, he asks his partner, “What does *transversal* mean?” His partner points up to the poster on the wall with labeled angles and lines. They study the poster and then start talking about how they want to draw the parallel and transversal lines for their city streets. When Mr. Nguyen calls the class back from their discussion, Min Woo and his partner are ready for the next step.

Mr. Nguyen knows that several of the students in his math class are still classified as English learners, even though they have been in the school district for many years. Because he wants all students to experience success in his math classes, he thoughtfully provides content instruction with **scaffolds** for academic language development.



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**Scaffold:** Anything that temporarily supports students in engaging in tasks that they would not be able to do independently (Gibbons, 2015)

In the lesson described in the previous paragraph, Mr. Nguyen used the following scaffolds:

- ▶ Labeled visuals
- ▶ Time for partner discussions
- ▶ Step-by-step instructions for solving problems
- ▶ Chunking the final performance assessment project into shorter daily tasks

For Mr. Nguyen’s lesson plans on lines and angles, see Appendix B.

None of these scaffolds “water down” the grade-level expectations of the lesson but rather provide the necessary support so that experienced multilinguals can meet these high expectations. In fact,

providing the right scaffolds at the right time  
exemplifies equitable learning.

In the hands of a skillful teacher, scaffolds stretch students’ skills, proficiency, and confidence.

Since most of the experienced multilinguals in his class no longer receive any direct, specialized English instruction, Mr. Nguyen knows he not only has to teach the math curriculum but also the academic English skills required to process and communicate the math-specific ideas.

If teachers provide appropriate scaffolds, experienced multilinguals like Min Woo are capable of learning new content in English in grade-level content classes.

As experienced multilinguals reach higher levels of English proficiency, their English development needs become less obvious, but the academic language demands continue to increase.

For many learners, these increasingly challenging academic language demands make them feel like they have finally reached an apparent summit on the mountain only to discover another higher peak ahead. Scaffolds give them support to reach the highest peak, even as the trail gets more difficult.

Some experienced multilingual students like Min Woo have greater proficiency in spoken English than in reading and writing in English. Therefore, when they answer questions and participate in class discussions, teachers may assume they will also be successful on the written exam. However, when these students do not perform as expected, some teachers may be tempted to label them as “lazy,” “unmotivated,” or “unfocused.” We offer a different way of thinking about these responses and provide a framework that will address the academic language needs of these students in every content class.

In this chapter, we introduce the concept of **academic language** and advocate for teaching this type of language meaningfully within the context of the content classroom. Experienced multilinguals need high grade-level expectations coupled with high support to engage in content classes. In addition to teaching complex content and the academic language of each discipline, we suggest that experienced multilinguals benefit from explicit instruction in effective learning strategies. These strategies help students learn, transfer skills to other content areas, and become more independent learners. We share several of these learning strategies, which are anything a student does to boost their understanding of new content and use of academic language. Finally, we provide an overview of our framework for designing equitable content instruction that supports and stretches experienced multilinguals as they develop academic language proficiency across the curriculum. This framework serves as the outline for the rest of the book.

## ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

Academic language is more than just vocabulary words. It includes complex sentence structures, transition phrases, and organizational patterns used for different purposes like writing lab reports, arguing a claim, or analyzing a poem. Each of these purposes requires students to use academic language differently (WIDA, 2020). When students learn the language to justify their choices of lines and angles in math class, they can transfer that language to justify choices in science or language arts class. Teaching this cross-disciplinary academic language helps students succeed in the long-term.

Honigsfeld (2019) explains that academic language is “not something students *have* or *do not have*; it is something all students *use* daily to

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**Academic language:** Discipline-specific and transferable vocabulary, sentence structures, and discourse patterns needed to comprehend and communicate ideas in content areas

learn” (p. 49). While experienced multilinguals have generally acquired the ability to communicate clearly in most social situations, they are still developing the ability to use academic English. Developing this

“academic language proficiency helps students achieve long-term success at school” (Dutro & Moran, 2002, p. 231).

Experienced multilinguals may also have different linguistic abilities in different fields and content areas (Walqui & van Lier, 2010). One experienced multilingual student may find the most success in a math class, while others triumph in social studies, sciences, or the arts.

The various dimensions of academic language are often described through an architectural metaphor as shown in Figure 2.1 (Dutro & Moran, 2002; Zwiers, 2008). The first dimension—vocabulary words and phrases—is like the bricks that form the foundation of the structure or text. Next, the sentence structures are like the mortar that connects the bricks to form the walls of that building or academic work. In the next dimension, the organizational features such as transition phrases and paragraphing conventions are like the roof, windows, doors, and interior design. As economics teacher David Carney says,

“If students don’t write with academic phrases and organization, their essays read like a pile of bricks; there is no cohesion”  
(D. Carney, personal communication, February 2022).

David Carney

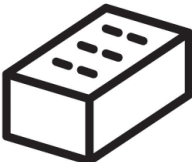
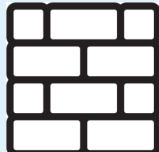


Finally, the context for the written or spoken project is like the neighborhood or community, in which the structure is located. Students need explicit instruction in each dimension of **discipline-specific language** in order to succeed on classroom assignments and assessments.

The bricks in Min Woo’s math lesson are the words and phrases used to describe the angles and lines. The walls of this lesson are formed with the sentences that explain the relationships between the lines and angles. Finally, the entire house structure will be completed when he organizes his presentation. The purpose of the presentation will be to explain the location of each line. He will have to justify the

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**Discipline-specific language:** Words and phrases specific to each content area

## 2.1 Dimensions of Discipline-Specific Language

Dimension	Description	Examples From Mr. Nguyen's Math Class
Word 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical vocabulary words and phrases specific to the content</li> </ul>	Parallel to, adjacent to, opposite side of, intersected by, transversal, obtuse angle, acute angle, interior angle, exterior angle, corresponding angles
Sentence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sentence structures for different purposes (compare, contrast, explain, argue, describe, etc.)</li> <li>Complex, compound, and simple sentence structures needed for an academic purpose</li> </ul>	I drew ___ streets in the city center, because ___. I created an ___ angle in this corner, because ___.
Organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizational structures of discipline-specific texts such as lab reports, arguments, persuasive essays, etc.</li> <li>Transitional phrases and cohesive devices that link one idea to another</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present the city map.</li> <li>Describe the position of lines (streets) and angles on their city map.</li> <li>Justify why they drew the map with those angles with at least three different reasons and explanations.</li> </ul>
Context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purpose for the project, report, essay, etc.</li> <li>Students' role in the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present to town council using formal language and style</li> <li>Propose a street map to council members for a city expansion project</li> </ul>

Adapted from Dutro & Moran (2002); WIDA (2012); Zwiers (2014).

Image sources: istock.com/da-vooda, istock.com/Antti Hekkinen, istock.com/Nadiinko, istock.com/yugoro

layout of his street map to the audience. The context or audience for this project is the presentation to the town council. As apprentice city planners in the math class, Min Woo and his classmates will develop mathematical reasoning as well as the mathematical-specific language needed to share their developing understanding. When Mr. Nguyen asks students to justify their choices for placing the lines and angles on the city map, the sentence structures and organization they use must justify their decisions, not just describe the lines and angles. As math teacher and author Molina (2012) writes, “the phrase

*'the problem with math is English'* applies to *all* students, not just those whose native language is not English" (p. 1). Therefore, all students in the class will benefit from explicit instruction in using math-specific academic language to be successful engaging with this project.



## TRY IT OUT

### *Discipline-Specific Language*

Review an upcoming lesson or unit for two dimensions of discipline-specific language.

1. Words and phrases related to the unit
2. Sentence structures for the purpose students will use academic language (describe, explain, argue, compare, etc.)
3. Expected organization and any transition phrases students should use between ideas
4. Context for using academic language (Who is the audience? What is the students' role?)



## REFLECTION

- In which academic disciplines are your content knowledge and skills most developed?
  - When you discuss topics in these content areas, do you use academic language? What academic language do you use that colleagues from other fields may not be familiar with? Think in terms of
    - discipline-specific vocabulary,
    - sentence structures, and
    - organizational patterns.

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- Which disciplines challenge you the most?
  - Why?
  - How is the academic language associated with that field a part of the challenge?

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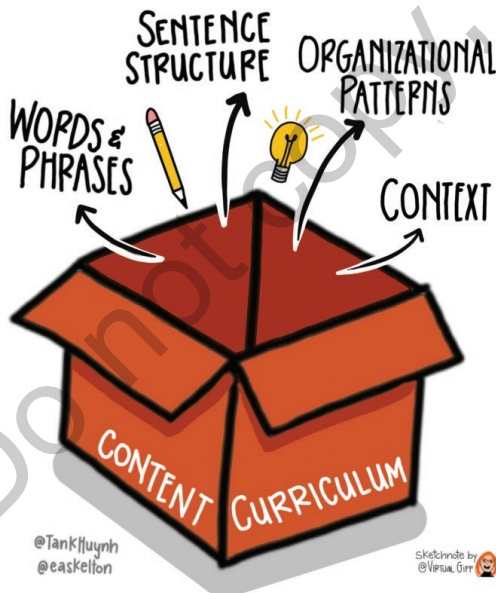
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## CONTENT TEACHERS AS ACADEMIC LANGUAGE TEACHERS

### 2.2 Unpacking Academic Language and Content



We believe the most equitable place for experienced multilinguals is in content classes because they provide the fertile soil for both content and academic language to grow.

The visual of the box in Figure 2.2 illustrates the content curriculum educators are charged with teaching. Inside that box is the academic language of that curriculum. We value secondary teachers for their expertise in the field and deep knowledge of the content and mastery of specific skills. Secondary content teachers are well versed in the standards that guide their content instruction such as Common Core State Standards, International Baccalaureate



Standards, or the Next Generation Science Standards. However, they may need additional professional learning to **unpack the academic language** hidden in these content standards or “boxes” that hold their units and lessons and teach that language to their students. We wrote this book to be a part of that professional learning.

We know that many secondary teachers have taken at least one workshop or course focused on meeting the needs of English learners. In fact, at least 39 states in the United States require educators to complete professional development hours focused on the needs of multilingual learners in order to maintain their teaching license (Rafa et al., 2020). International school teachers are often encouraged or required by their school to take a course called Teaching English in Multilingual Classrooms (Dare & Polias, 2020). Typically, these professional learning courses provide an overview of academic English and general strategies for students at all levels of English language development, or they share strategies for newcomers and students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE). This book focuses on the often-overlooked group of experienced multilinguals who have been learning in English for at least five years.

Experienced multilinguals develop increasingly complex academic language through their content classes with the careful attention and support of their secondary content teachers (Echevarría et al., 2017). If educators serving in middle and high school settings explicitly teach the academic language expected in written and oral responses, students will find more success. Linguist Schleppegrell (2004) suggests that students may understand the concept, but just do not know the academic words and structures to express that understanding like experts in the field. Explicit instruction in academic language will support experienced multilinguals in achieving across the curriculum as it develops their ability to express what they know with greatly clarity.

Learning new content is inseparable from learning the language for that content (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2014; Halliday, 1993; Schleppegrell, 2004; Walqui & van Lier, 2010; Zwiers, 2014).

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**Unpack academic language:** Analyze academic language used in the curriculum to make it explicit to students

Mr. Nguyen understands that fact, so he designs his lessons with academic English development in mind. Even though Mr. Nguyen did not study linguistics or major in English, he can still teach both the concept of angle relationships and the mathematical language students need to successfully express their growing understanding of the mathematical concepts. This focus on academic language serves all learners. Since academic language is rarely used outside of school and professional settings, all students are academic language learners (Gottlieb, 2016; Ottow, 2019). Given the complexities of math-specific language, Mr. Nguyen knows that *all* his students, regardless of the other languages they speak, will benefit from the scaffolds in his lessons. He knows that they will need support describing how they got an answer, so the scaffolds guide students to communicate using math-appropriate language.

Mr. Nguyen does not assume his students have the academic language they need to explain their thinking or justify their choices on the city plan. He has heard Min Woo and other students speaking quite fluently about their weekend activities in the local community, so he plans to connect their background knowledge of the layout of the town streets to the new unit. Then, he will introduce the new words and phrases, sentence structures, and the desired organization of the final presentation as shown earlier in Figure 2.1. He plans to model how to speak like a city planner and give time to practice before they present their proposals to the town council. Mr. Nguyen's careful planning unpacks both the content and academic language students need to succeed in the lesson. In this way, academic language in his math class "becomes a vehicle, rather than a barrier, to learning" (Dutro & Moran, 2002, p. 236). Explicitly teaching the language for his math lessons makes his instruction more equitable for his experienced multilinguals. Chapters 3 through 6 will guide content teachers through the steps to planning assessments and lessons with a focus on academic language development.

Since we are focusing on developing academic language skills, some teachers may wonder about the role of the dedicated English language development (ELD) specialist. As highly skilled educators, ELD teachers have many opportunities to serve experienced multilinguals across the curriculum, including teaching specialized English classes, co-planning and co-teaching with content teachers, and coaching. Even if the ELD educator teaches a specialized English class for experienced multilinguals, these students should not miss the rich opportunity to learn content *in* content classes with guidance *from* discipline-specific experts. As Walqui said, "Nobody uses the language of history better than a history teacher" (OELA Podcast Series, 2021). Content teachers are experts regarding concepts, skills, thinking, and the academic

language used in their disciplines. Therefore, we urge all teachers to develop academic English across the curriculum rather than relying only on the English language development specialist, who may not have the same level of expertise to teach the academic language for every discipline. Chapters 3 through 6 present each part of our instructional framework that is designed to scaffold and teach both academic language and content for experienced multilinguals. In Chapter 7, we share specific ideas for implementing the framework and scaffolds schoolwide with the support of the ELD specialist.



## FROM THE FIELD

### *Developing Academic Language in Social Studies*

Beth shares how one teacher made instructional changes to explicitly teach academic language in his social studies class.

For two years, I have been supporting one middle school with a high percentage of experienced multilinguals. The social studies teacher, Mr. Kruger, was interested in how the experienced multilinguals were using academic English during structured interactions in the class. Because he could not listen to every group of students during each interaction, he asked the school's English language development coach and me to transcribe student responses during class discussions and small group cooperative learning activities. In one activity, students had to work together to place tokens on a chart and justify how much they thought the government should spend on different categories like education, military, and infrastructure. As students talked collaboratively, we transcribed some of the following responses:

"Environment. To help the planet."

"More for foreign aid."

"We should spend money on the educational system."

When we showed these transcribed responses to Mr. Kruger, he noticed that the students were discussing the topic and participating in the activity, even though they were not fully justifying their choices. He could tell they understood the concept, but needed support for using more academic English to justify the amount they wanted to spend. He decided to model a desired response and provide some sentence frames to extend their academic language. This type of coaching feedback can support all learners in the class by clearly communicating academic expectations and providing equitable scaffolds for students to achieve success.



## REFLECTION

- How do you currently unpack the academic language of your content curriculum for yourself and your students?

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- If your school has an English language development specialist on staff, how do you collaborate with that teacher or coach?

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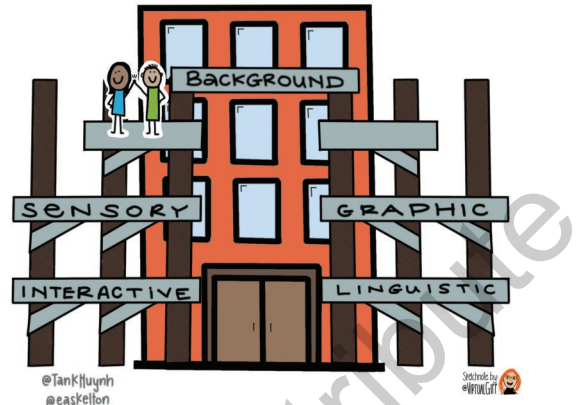
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## BALANCING GRADE-LEVEL EXPECTATIONS AND EQUITABLE SUPPORT

Finding the balance between grade-level appropriate challenges and supports for experienced multilinguals can be a tricky task. Some secondary teachers may believe experienced multilinguals can manage in content classes without any extra support, especially with such fluent speaking skills. Others may believe that experienced multilinguals who have not yet experienced much success in grade-level content courses just need a simplified text or a reduced curriculum until their English improves. Some educators may argue that explicitly teaching academic English and providing scaffolds will lower grade-level expectations or water down the curriculum for the English fluent students in the class. We believe equitable learning for experienced multilinguals happens when high expectations are met with intentional scaffolding.

The physical scaffold used in construction serves as a metaphor for the kinds of scaffolds that balance high academic expectations and support. Just as the scaffold on the outside of an edifice supports construction workers to safely access parts of a building they otherwise could not reach on their own, instructional scaffolds for experienced multilinguals support them in successfully reaching new heights academically. Once the construction of the building is completed, the scaffolds are removed. If the scaffolds are kept in place after the construction has been completed, they will obstruct the function of the building. Once students can complete assignments and assessments independently, scaffolds are removed or else they will hinder autonomy. Knowing when to remove the scaffolds from a physical building may be obvious, but knowing when to remove scaffolds so students can work independently requires careful observation and experimentation. It can be helpful to collaborate with an ELD specialist through co-planning, co-teaching, or coaching to find the most appropriate time to intentionally remove scaffolds.



Removing scaffolds prematurely leads to disengagement and frustration, while leaving them in place when they are no longer necessary breeds dependence.

In their book *Scaffolding the Academic Success of Adolescent English Language Learners*, Walqui and van Lier (2010) argue that “for the scaffolding process to work, the teacher’s role is not to control the learner but to support and encourage the learner’s emergent autonomy” (p. 25). When Mr. Nguyen models and labels lines on an example street map, he is providing an essential scaffold, what Krashen (1982) refers to as **comprehensible input**. This comprehensible input creates the conditions for students to independently discuss and analyze the angles and lines on their own map. When he asks students to compare and contrast the lines on their street maps with several actual city plans, he is apprenticing them into using math in real-world situations, which is his ultimate goal. By reflecting on the desired outcome

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**Comprehensible input:** Making ideas understandable

for the content unit, teachers can identify the required scaffold that builds autonomy and maintains a high challenge. The framework and scaffolds in this book are meant to provide teachers ways to challenge while supporting experienced multilinguals, so they can successfully meet and exceed grade-level expectations.



## REFLECTION

- How do you currently scaffold your lessons for experienced multilinguals?

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- What types of scaffolds seem to increase or decrease students' ability to successfully work independently?

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## LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS

When teachers unpack and teach the academic language of their curriculum, experienced multilinguals can meet success in content classrooms. The teacher's role in this process is essential, and so is the student's role. While students may rely on teachers for comprehensible input at initial stages, we also want students to become more independent learners by relying on strategies we model. Teaching students how to apply appropriate **learning strategies**

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**Learning strategies:** Any action a student does to boost their understanding of new content and use of discipline-specific language

serves them by developing the skills they need to learn in any content area. For long-term success, experienced multilinguals can learn to rely on effective learning strategies whenever they face academic challenges.

Learning strategies include activities like those shown in Figure 2.3. When students know *when* and *how* to use these learning strategies—such as activating their background knowledge, using mental imagery, monitoring their comprehension, or cooperating with others—they become more independent learners. Teachers can make learning strategies explicit throughout the lesson and encourage students to try these strategies in different contexts. The teachers mentioned by Marcus and Carolina in the following feature “From the Field” directly taught learning strategies, which helped these experienced multilinguals become more successful and positive about the class.



## FROM THE FIELD



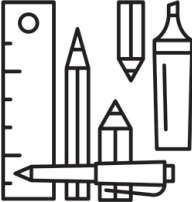

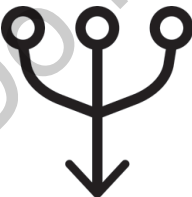
### Learning Strategies Lead to Success

Beth interviewed several ninth-grade experienced multilinguals who had been students in a school in Colorado for seven to ten years already. Their responses to questions about their favorite classes reveal insights into the benefits of teaching of learning strategies. It is clear that they like the class because they feel successful due to the teachers’ careful use of scaffolds and explicit focus on learning strategies.



Interview question: Tell me about your favorite class and why you like it.

Marcus	Carolina
<p><i>I like math class the most. I've always liked following the clear steps to solve problems. My teacher showed me how to find important words in word problems, which helps me understand the problem. He also writes notes on the board with numbered steps that help me solve complicated problems.</i></p>	<p><i>Biology is my favorite class because I love learning about science. I want to study medicine after high school. The teacher gives step-by-step directions for every project so I know exactly how to complete it. She also labels pictures and explains the concepts clearly.</i></p>

## 2.3 Learning Strategies

Strategy Name	Description	Examples
Visualize 	Use images (real or mental) to learn new information, solve a problem, or remember key concepts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a mental movie while reading a story.</li> <li>• Draw a math problem.</li> <li>• Google an image of a new vocabulary word.</li> <li>• Add pictures to a graphic organizer.</li> </ul>
Cooperate 	Talk with a peer to synthesize new content, solve a problem, understand a text, or practice a skill.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read a text with a partner, and discuss each section.</li> <li>• Work with a team to complete a task.</li> <li>• Ask a peer questions about the content, text, vocabulary, or grammar.</li> <li>• Read a peer's example work.</li> </ul>
Use Resources 	Use dictionaries in any language, videos, images, calculators, and other tools to comprehend new information, problems, or texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch a YouTube video to build background on a new concept.</li> <li>• Use a calculator to check math solutions.</li> <li>• Look up unknown words in an online dictionary.</li> </ul>
Take Notes 	Write or draw ideas and concepts while listening, reading, or working in teams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a Venn diagram to compare and contrast ideas.</li> <li>• Write notes and questions in the margins of the text.</li> <li>• Use Cornell Notes to study for a test.</li> <li>• Draw sketchnotes during or after a lesson with key ideas.</li> </ul>
Summarize 	Make a mental, oral, or written summary of main ideas during a pause in listening or reading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell a partner what you understood in the lesson so far.</li> <li>• Write a one-sentence summary of the paragraph or page.</li> <li>• Draw a sketch to summarize key ideas of the lesson.</li> </ul>



Strategy Name	Description	Examples
Activate Prior Knowledge 	Think about what you know about the topic. Connect the new information to something from background knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make an analogy, metaphor, or simile to describe new learning.</li> <li>• Link the task, text, or information to something you've done before.</li> <li>• Make a personal connection to the new information.</li> </ul>
Monitor Comprehension 	Notice what you do or do not understand when listening or reading. Notice when comprehension breaks down and what causes it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make notes about what you do and do not understand.</li> <li>• Highlight specific words or phrases you do not understand.</li> <li>• Ask clarifying questions.</li> </ul>



Adapted from Chamot & O'Malley (2001).

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Available at [resources.corwin.com/Long-Term SuccessforExperiencedMLs](https://resources.corwin.com/Long-Term SuccessforExperiencedMLs)

Developing learning strategies helps all learners take ownership of their learning and “when students take control over their learning, they see themselves as more effective and thereby gain in confidence with future learning activities” (Chamot & O'Malley, 2001, p. 18). When students begin applying learning strategies on their own, they may initially see them as an activity, such as asking clarifying questions while reading. However, as they practice these strategies regularly, they will internalize them. Then, they can choose or intentionally apply the learning strategy that best supports their learning in different contexts. When students intentionally use strategies to support their learning, they are practicing a form of metacognition, or thinking about their thinking. As students develop **metacognition**, they become much more effective at learning because they are able to

**Metacognition:** Awareness and understanding of your own thinking process

recognize when they need support and intentionally choose an appropriate tool to help themselves. (Echevarría et al., 2017; Hattie, 2021).

“when students take control over their learning, they see themselves as more effective and thereby gain in confidence with future learning activities” (Chamot & O’Malley, 2001, p. 18).

However, many experienced multilinguals have not yet fully developed the learning strategies to effectively engage with school tasks independently, that is, strategies for tasks such as studying for an exam, reading a text, or completing multistep problems. When teachers advise students to study for an exam and give explicit instructions on *how* to study, students learn effective study strategies in addition to the content. Students are more likely to independently comprehend a text when teachers provide a purpose for reading and suggest ways to make meaning from that text (Tovani, 2000). When math teachers ask students to work through a problem set and explicitly teach strategies for how to solve that type of problem, they create the conditions for students to understand the process as well as complete the problem set. As the popular learning strategies program AVID (2016) states, “note-taking, studying, and organizing assignments are all skills that must be taught and practiced, but are not explicitly taught in schools.” We believe all teachers can and should explicitly teach learning strategies. These strategies give experienced multilinguals confidence that they have the tools they need to tackle grade-level content.

If experienced multilinguals know how to use effective learning strategies, they will find long-term success in any class they find themselves in.

When they learn how and when to ask questions, cooperate with others, visualize information, and take notes, then they are truly prepared for long-term success both in and out of school.

Mr. Nguyen teaches learning strategies throughout his seventh-grade math class with the hopes that students will transfer these skills to other math units and to other content areas. When he asks students to read the task aloud and ask each other questions about it before starting on the task, he lets them know that cooperation is a learning strategy that can help them understand complex problems. When he asks them to draw the lines and angles for their city map, he also explains

that using imagery can help them visualize angle relationships. When Mr. Nguyen names each of these strategies during his lessons, students are able to apply them across the curriculum to become more autonomous learners.



## FROM THE FIELD

### *Learning Strategies in Action*

Julio, a ninth-grade experienced multilingual, claimed his English language arts was his worst class. He knew that comprehending large chunks of text was his biggest challenge in the class and he seemed to understand the importance of different learning strategies as he reflected on his struggles with the class content and assignments.

When he asked the teacher to help him understand the texts, she recommended that he read more slowly. He tried that strategy, but it didn't work for him. He was undeterred. Being a natural problem-solver, Julio experimented with several different strategies on his own. He tried using an online bilingual dictionary and looked for cognates to understand the words in the stories, but he still struggled to understand the full page of text. Julio tried rereading, but that was not effective. Finally, he called a friend to talk about what they had read. Talking to someone in the class helped him the most.

Notice all the learning strategies Julio tried. Some were more successful than others in helping him comprehend texts in his most difficult class. The strategies that seemed to help him the most were monitoring his comprehension, using the dictionary and cognates, and cooperating with a friend. As Julio develops more effective learning and reading strategies, he may no longer consider English language arts class his "worst" class.



### TRY IT OUT

#### *Learning Strategies*

1. Choose one of the learning strategies described in Figure 2.3 that you think would help your students learn content and academic English more independently.
2. Write where in a lesson you could model and name that strategy.

*(Continued)*

(Continued)

3. Plan an activity that would allow students to practice the learning strategy with your guidance.
4. Ask students how successful the strategy was for them.
5. Plan to teach additional strategies in future lessons.



## REFLECTION

- Which learning strategies are you using to comprehend this text?

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- Which learning strategies do you teach your students to use in your classes?

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- Review the list of learning strategies in Figure 2.3. Which ones could you explicitly model and teach in an upcoming lesson?

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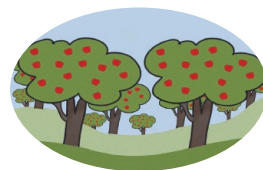
## INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR EXPERIENCED MULTILINGUALS

In this chapter, we have provided a rationale for teaching academic language to experienced multilinguals in content area classrooms. We have proposed that content teachers are the best teachers of the disciplinary language of their content. We whole-heartedly believe that

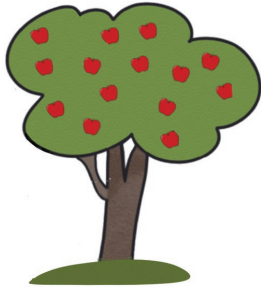
experienced multilinguals can become successful, autonomous learners in every content area when teachers explicitly teach academic language, content, and learning strategies.

In order to guide teachers in unpacking and teaching the academic language for assessments and daily lessons, we have created a four-part framework. This framework, as shown in Figure 2.4, serves as the outline for the rest of the book. The visuals that accompany each part of the framework refer to an analogy of an orchard, which may help educators remember and process the concepts.

Part 1 of the framework is the summative assessment. In Chapter 3, we explain the need to begin planning a unit by first designing equitable summative assessments, and we guide teachers through the process. This assessment-first approach to planning comes from Wiggins and McTighe (2005) in their seminal book *Understanding by Design*. The authors encourage educators to start with the end in mind and finalize what students have to know and do by the end of the unit before planning the daily objectives and learning experiences. Knowing the assessment at the end of the unit helps us define what we have to teach, what skills we have to develop, and in what order to teach these things. We offer ways to support the content, academic language, and learning strategies needed to succeed on summative assessments. The visual of the orchard for this first part of the framework encourages educators to see the big picture of the unit from the beginning. We encourage teachers to think about the harvest or the final product of the unit as it guides our daily instruction.



By keeping the end-of-unit assessment in mind, teachers can more effectively plan lessons by first designing integrated objectives. Part 2 of the framework, discussed in Chapter 4, guides teachers through creating these integrated objectives that focus on both the



academic language and the content students need to be successful during each of the lessons leading up to the summative assessment. The visual of the individual tree in the orchard represents these daily objectives. Each tree contributes to the orchard's bountiful harvest just like each objective supports students in achieving the highest level of learning by the end of the unit.



Once the academic language demands are unpacked, teachers can plan scaffolds strategically so that content is accessible. In Part 3 of the framework, described in Chapter 5, we focus on five essential scaffolds that create comprehensible input, which is represented by the visual of the sun and rain. Like water and sun, comprehensible input in each lesson creates the conditions for experienced multilinguals to grow in their content and academic language skills.

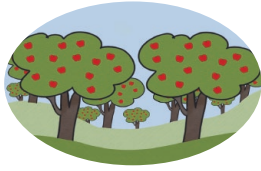


Finally, in Part 4 of the framework, we share strategies that scaffold students' output. After lots of comprehensible input, students will also be ready to produce in speech and writing about their new content understandings. Chapter 6 describes strategies for speaking and scaffolds for writing across disciplines. The visual of the apple represents this output or production. After establishing the optimal conditions for growth with plenty of nurturing inputs, the trees finally can produce fruit.

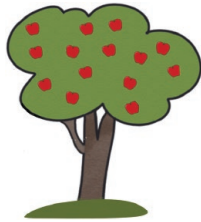
The goal of the instructional framework is equitable instruction. That equity comes from unpacking and explicitly teaching the discipline-specific language hidden in the content curriculum. The framework guides content teachers in identifying and teaching the academic language so that students can successfully engage with assessment expectations and lesson objectives. We believe that experienced multilinguals will thrive when they have “equitable access to rigorous and authentic disciplinary instruction that effectively develops and deepens their understandings, learning, and language development” (Heineke & McTighe, 2018, p. 31).

When educators reveal the hidden academic language of their content curriculum, they create conditions for experienced multilinguals' long-term success.

## 2.4 Instructional Framework for Experienced Multilinguals



Engineer the summative assessment



Write the integrated objective



Establish comprehensible input



Structure academic output

### CLOSING REMARKS

By the end of this book, secondary content teachers will know how to design equitable assessments, write objectives that integrate content and academic language expectations, make lessons comprehensible, and structure speaking and writing. School administrators will also have a road map for implementing the framework schoolwide. With this framework, secondary teachers can use their content as the context for academic language development. When experienced multilinguals meet success in their content classes, they will also more likely see themselves as independent, capable learners who have increasingly diverse choices for their future. We hope that our framework provides a practical and streamlined approach for all content teachers to design the most equitable, clear, and scaffolded lessons for experienced multilinguals.



## CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Experienced multilinguals deserve high grade-level expectations coupled with high support to successfully engage in content classes.
- Appropriate intentional scaffolding enables experienced multilinguals to succeed in grade-level content courses.
- Academic language includes vocabulary, complex sentence structures, transition phrases, and organizational patterns.
- Academic language is best taught *within* the context of the content classroom from a discipline-specific teacher.
- Experienced multilinguals develop metacognitive skills from explicit instruction that teaches them to independently apply learning strategies in new contexts.
- The instructional framework for experienced multilinguals includes engineering equitable summative assessments, writing integrated objectives focused on teaching content and academic language, establishing comprehensible input, and structuring academic output.