

Assessing Academic Language Needs for Content-Area Instruction

Prior to deciding on a focal level of academic language for an ALO, it is important to conduct an inventory of the language demands in a particular lesson. See the following form, Academic Language Demands Inventory (also available for download on the companion site for this book, www.tesol.org/swel-leadership).

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE DEMANDS INVENTORY

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| 1. Identify Your Content Objective(s): |
| 2. Language Function(s): What are you asking students to do with language? (e.g., analyze, compare/contrast, explain, interpret, argue, persuade, categorize, describe, predict, question, retell, summarize, justify with evidence) |
| 3. Content Vocabulary: What key vocabulary (word level; “the bricks”) do you need to introduce/review with students? Which word parts could be pretaught? Which sounds are difficult for students to pronounce? |
| 4. Syntax: What syntax (sentence level; “the mortar”) is present in the materials that you are going to teach? |
| 5. Discourse: What text type (discourse level; “the building”) will students need to produce? |

This inventory can be used to decide which levels and areas of academic language are in need of explicit attention.