Common edTPA Glossary

**Academic language:** Oral and written language used for academic purposes. Academic language is the means by which students develop and express content understandings. Academic language represents the language of the discipline that students need to learn and use to participate and engage in the content area in meaningful ways. There are **language demands** that teachers need to consider as they plan to support student learning of content. These **language demands** include vocabulary, language functions, syntax, and discourse.

- **Discourse:** Discourse includes the structures of written and oral language, as well as how members of the discipline talk, write, and participate in knowledge construction. Discipline-specific discourse has distinctive features or ways of structuring oral or written language (text structures) that provide useful ways for the content to be communicated. It includes:
  - In **Elementary language arts and literacy**, there are structures for composing, interpreting, and comprehending expository, narrative, poetic, journalistic, and graphic print materials as well as video and live presentations. If the language function is to interpret character development, then appropriate language forms could include written essays (with particular ways of citing textual evidence) or pattern sentences, such as, “The author used (action, dialogue, and/or description) to introduce (main character). One example of (action, dialogue, and/or description) was ____________, which suggested that the character was ___________.”
  - In **Elementary Mathematics**, language structures include symbolic representations such as numbers, equations, and proofs (which can be translated into words), tables and graphs (which are shorthand language for summarizing complex sets of data), and narrative (e.g., explanations of problem solutions). If the function is to compare, then appropriate language forms could include Venn diagrams or pattern sentences such as “The _____ is longer/larger/heavier than the ______.” If the function is to explain, then students might use sentence starters like “First I…”, “Then I…” to structure the explanation, and use “Finally I…” to signal the conclusion.
  - In **performing arts**, language forms include symbolic representations such as notation, dynamics (which can be translated into words), stage and section diagrams, choreography, and narrative (analytical and evaluative critique). If the function is to compare, then appropriate language forms could include Venn diagrams or pattern sentences such as “The _____ is similar to/different from the ______.” If the function is to explain a procedure or technique, then students might use sentence starters like “First I…” and “Then I…” to structure the explanation, and use “Finally I…” to signal the conclusion. Students respond verbally and/or physically to symbolic and gestural language in music and dance to demonstrate understanding of these forms of language in a performing arts classroom.
  - In **physical education**, language structures include symbolic representations such as officiating signals (which can be translated into words), graphic representations such as X’s and O’s (which is shorthand language depicting game play strategies), pictures (which represent movement forms), and
orienteering maps or diagrams. If the language function analyzes movement, then appropriate language structures would be a list of critical elements that describe the essential movements of the skill.

- In **history/social studies**, language features include expository, narrative, journalistic, maps, and other graphic print materials; presentations of data in text, charts, and graphs; and video and live presentations. Discourse structures can be at the sentence, paragraph, or symbolic level. If the function is to develop a document-based argument, then appropriate language features could include written essays with specified formats and pattern sentences such as “The two main causes of _______ were _______ and _______. For example, the (author of) (document) stated that _____________” (citation).

- In **English Language Arts**, language structures include words, grammar and mechanics, text structures, writing processes, and genres. If the language function is to persuade, then appropriate language structures include claims, supporting evidence, and counterarguments.

- In **mathematics**, language structures include symbolic representations, such as numbers, equations, two-column proofs (which can be translated into words), graphic representation (which is shorthand language for complex sets of data), and narrative (e.g., to describe or compare). If the language function is to prove, then appropriate language structures include formal two-column proofs as well as informal explanations that begin with a statement of the problem and known information, followed by a series of statements such as “And then, I know ________ because ______,” ending with what is to be proved.

- In **science**, language structures include symbolic representations such as chemical equations (which can be translated into words), graphic and tabular representations (which are shorthand language for complex sets of data), lists (e.g., materials lists), and narrative (e.g., analysis and conclusion sections in a lab report). If the function is to draw conclusions, then appropriate structures could include charts of investigative results or sentence starters to structure an analysis such as “The result of the investigation show . . .,” “This data suggests that . . . .”

- In the **visual arts**, if the function is to respond to a work of art, then an appropriate language form would include an essay beginning with a summary of the overall response, followed by paragraphs identifying specific elements of the work that contributed to the response, with supporting details explaining why or how they worked. For a kindergarten student, the response might consist of pattern sentences such as “What catches my eye about this painting is ______ because ______.”

- In **agricultural education**, language structures include symbolic representations such as schematics and blueprints, graphic representation (which is shorthand language for complex sets of data), and narrative (e.g., to describe or compare).

“DISCOURSE” is not used in the early childhood, special education, or world language handbooks.

- **Language demands**: Specific ways that academic language (vocabulary, functions, discourse, syntax) is used by students to participate in learning tasks through reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking to demonstrate their disciplinary understanding.
• **Language functions:** The content and language focus of the learning task, represented by the active verbs within the learning outcomes.

  o in *elementary mathematics* include describing mathematical phenomena, predicting from models and data, comparing based on common attributes, summarizing mathematical information, recording multiple ways to solve problems, justifying conclusions, evaluating data and mathematical representations, classifying based on attributes, explaining how or why certain strategies work, drawing conclusions based on data, representing mathematical information, and so on.

  o Common language functions in the *performing arts* include describing techniques or methods used in a given period or style of performance, using analysis to reproduce or reinvent performances, making comparisons based on common attributes, summarizing information, justifying conclusions, evaluating performances, classifying based on attributes, explaining processes, drawing conclusions, and so on.

  o Common language functions in *physical education* include, but are not limited to, interpreting instructions in task cards; describing how to perform a particular movement; explaining the how and why of a movement, tactic, or strategy; signaling verbally and nonverbally to classmates about tactics during a game; interpreting data; critiquing a peer performance and listing personal health-enhancing fitness goals; and describing the purpose of opposition, contrasting player-to-player versus zone defense.

  o Common language functions in *English Language Arts* include reading/listening for main ideas and details; analyzing and interpreting characters and plots; writing narrative, informational, or poetic text; using presentation skills to present a play, deliver a speech, or do a dramatic reading; evaluating and interpreting an author’s purpose, message, and use of language choice, setting, mood, tone, and other literary strategies; comparing ideas within and between texts; and making sense of unfamiliar vocabulary through pictures, word parts, and contextual clues.

  o Common language functions in *history/social studies* include interpreting maps, graphs, and data tables; evaluating and interpreting an author/presenter/historian’s purpose and message; examining evidence an author/presenter/historian uses to support claims; analyzing arguments in favor of a perspective; writing/presenting persuasive arguments; analyzing and/or describing causes of historical, economic, geographic, and political events; and defending argument with evidence.

  o Common language functions in *mathematics* include describing mathematical phenomena; predicting from models and data; comparing based on common attributes; summarizing mathematical information; justifying conclusions; evaluating data, models, and mathematical representations; classifying based on attributes; explaining phenomena and processes; drawing conclusions based on data; representing mathematical information; and so on.

  o Common language functions in *science* include interpreting written investigative procedures, diagrams, figures, tables, graphs, and dense authoritative text; writing or presenting causal explanations; explaining models of scientific phenomena; predicting from models and data from scientific inquiries; comparing based on common attributes; summarizing scientific data from inquiries; justifying conclusions with scientific evidence; evaluating data and investigative procedures; classifying based on attributes; describing processes and procedures; drawing conclusions based on investigative results; and so on.
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- Common language functions in the visual arts include describing elements of a work of art, comparing two works of art from a similar genre, explaining how a certain way of applying a technique makes it more effective, critiquing a peer’s work, analyzing what makes elements effective or not effective in communicating meaning, interpreting symbols, and evaluating the extent to which elements work together to create an impact or convey an intended message.

- Common language functions in agricultural education include describing agricultural phenomena; interpreting investigative procedures, diagrams, figures, tables, graphs, and dense authoritative text; predicting from models and relationships between concepts; classifying based on common attributes; summarizing agricultural data from investigations; justifying conclusions; evaluating data; explaining phenomena and processes; drawing conclusions based on data; and so on.

“LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS” is not used in the early childhood, special education, or world language handbooks.

- Syntax: The set of conventions for organizing symbols, words, and phrases together into structures (e.g., sentences, graphs, tables).

- Vocabulary: Includes words and phrases that are used within disciplines including: (1) words and phrases with subject-specific meanings that differ from meanings used in everyday life (e.g., table); (2) general academic vocabulary used across disciplines (e.g., compare, analyze, evaluate); and (3) subject-specific words defined for use in the discipline.

**Assessment (formal and informal):** Refers to all those activities undertaken by teachers and by their students that provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities. Assessments provide evidence of students’ prior knowledge, thinking, or learning in order to evaluate what students understand and how they are thinking. Some examples of informal assessments are student questions and responses during instruction and teacher observations of students as they work. Some examples of formal assessments are quizzes, homework assignments, lab reports, journals, and projects.

**Assets (knowledge of students):**

- **Personal:** refers to specific background information that students bring to the learning environment. Students may bring interests, knowledge, everyday experiences, family backgrounds, and so on, that a teacher can draw upon to support learning.

- **Cultural:** refers to the cultural backgrounds and practices that students bring to the learning environment, such as traditions, languages, worldviews, literature, art, and so on, that a teacher can draw upon to support learning.

- **Community:** refers to common backgrounds and experiences that students bring from the community where they live, such as resources, local landmarks, community events and practices, and so on, that a teacher can draw upon to support learning.
Central focus: A description of the important understandings and core concepts that you want students to develop within the learning segment. The central focus should go beyond a list of facts and skills or procedures, align with content standards and learning objectives, and address the subject-specific components in the learning segment.

- **Elementary literacy:** The subject-specific components for *elementary literacy* include an essential literacy strategy and the associated requisite skills for comprehending or composing text. For example, the central focus for a primary grade learning segment might be summarizing narratives. The learning segment would focus on the essential literacy strategy (summarizing) and requisite skills (e.g., decoding, recalling, sequencing). The central focus for an upper elementary learning segment might be persuasive writing. The learning segment would focus on the essential literacy strategy (using evidence to support an argument) and requisite skills (e.g., writing paragraphs, using correct verb tense, or other conventions).

- **Elementary mathematics:** For example, the subject-specific components for *elementary mathematics* are conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, AND mathematical reasoning or problem-solving skills. A central focus for the elementary mathematics learning segment might be equivalent fractions or equivalencies. The learning segment would focus on conceptual understanding and the associated computational/procedural understandings AND reasoning or problem-solving skills.

- **K–12 Performing Arts:** For example, the subject-specific components for *K–12 Performing Arts* include using artistic skills, knowledge, and contextual understandings to create, perform, or respond to music/dance/theater. A central focus for a music or dance learning segment might be recognizing rhythmic patterns. The learning segment would focus on conceptual understanding of rhythm and recognizing the different beats through clapping or counting. In theater performance, an example might be a focus on character motivation. The learning segment could include working with students in dialogue analysis to determine the clues offered through language into the character’s motives.

- **Physical education:** A statement that captures or summarizes the overarching learning outcomes associated with content standards and learning objectives. It may not be as broad or comprehensive as a central focus used in a longer unit of instruction, but it should represent a focus beyond facts and skills. For example, the central focus for a *physical education* learning segment might be executing basic basketball skills in a small-sided game.

- **Middle Childhood English Language Arts:** For example, the subject-specific components for *Middle Childhood English Language Arts* include construction of explicit and inferred meaning from text and analysis of themes and ideas. A central focus for the learning segment might be analyzing the author’s use of language to develop theme within a complex text. The learning segment would focus on conceptual understanding of figurative language and characterization, citing evidence and appropriate reasoning.

- **Middle Childhood History/Social Studies:** For example, a central focus for a *Middle Childhood History/Social Studies* learning segment might be “the effects of British colonial rule in India” or “the role of political parties in the electoral process.” The learning segment would focus on facts, concepts, analyses, and interpretations of sources to build and support arguments about historical events, a topic/theme, or a social studies phenomenon.

- **Middle Childhood Mathematics:** For example, the subject-specific components for *middle childhood mathematics* are: conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, AND mathematical reasoning and/or problem-solving skills. A central focus for the learning segment might be relationships between symbolic expressions and graphs of lines. The
learning segment would focus on conceptual understanding of linear functions, slope, and intercepts, and the associated procedures and mathematical reasoning and/or problem-solving skills.

- **Middle Childhood Science**: For example, the subject-specific components for Middle Childhood Science are: conceptual understanding, use of scientific practices during inquiry, and evidence-based argument about a scientific phenomenon. A central focus for the learning segment might be inheritance of traits. The learning segment would focus on understanding factors producing genotypes and phenotypes. The learning segment would focus on conceptual understandings of genotypes, phenotypes, dominant genes, and so on; an investigation of how relationships between genotypes are expressed in phenotypes; and an argument of how these relationships would affect distributions of phenotypes in a population.

- **Secondary English Language Arts**: For example, the subject-specific components for Secondary English Language Arts include construction of explicit and inferred meaning from text and analysis of themes and ideas. A central focus for the learning segment might be analyzing the author’s use of language to develop a theme within a complex text. The learning segment would focus on conceptual understanding of figurative language and characterization, citing evidence, and appropriate reasoning.

- **Secondary history/social studies**: For example, a central focus for a secondary history/social studies learning segment might be “the effects of British colonial rule in India” or “the role of political parties in the electoral process.” The learning segment would focus on facts, concepts, analyses, and interpretations of sources to build and support arguments about historical events, a topic/theme, or social studies phenomenon.

- **Secondary mathematics**: For example, the subject-specific components for secondary mathematics are: conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, AND mathematical reasoning and/or problem-solving skills. A central focus for the learning segment might be relationships between symbolic expressions and graphs of lines. The learning segment would focus on conceptual understanding of linear functions, slope, and intercepts, and the associated procedures and mathematical reasoning and/or problem-solving skills.

- **Secondary science**: For example, the subject-specific components for secondary science are conceptual understanding, use of scientific practices during inquiry, and evidence-based argument about a scientific phenomenon. A central focus for the learning segment might be inheritance of traits. The learning segment would focus on understanding factors producing genotypes and phenotypes. The learning segment would focus on conceptual understandings of genotypes, phenotypes, dominant genes, and so on, an investigation of how relationships between genotypes are expressed in phenotypes, and an argument of how these relationships would affect distributions of phenotypes in a population.

- **Visual arts**: For example, the subject-specific components for visual arts are form and function, production, art context, and personal perspective. An example of a central focus for a learning segment in third grade (based upon the bigger idea of motion and movement) might be learning about the use of line in visual arts to communicate the idea of motion. The learning segment would focus on students being introduced to the concept by examining several artworks in which it features prominently. Next the class would experiment with the concept, followed by the whole group sharing their observations of their own and others’ explorations of how and why the line was used to create the feeling of motion.

- **Agricultural science**: Agricultural-related conceptual understanding, skills, and problem-solving strategies. For example, the central focus for an agricultural science learning segment might be understanding factors involved in producing genotypes and
phenotypes in connection with the development of genetically modified food sources. The learning segment would focus on conceptual understandings of genotypes and phenotypes, and an investigation of how relationships between genotypes are expressed in phenotypes and affect distributions of phenotypes in development of an improved food source. In contrast, the central focus for an agricultural mechanics learning segment might be developing the knowledge and skills to do arc welding. The learning segment would focus on the relevant skills necessary to safely weld joints on mild steel by selecting the proper amperage, understanding the procedures and properly using safety equipment, strike and arc, and making butt and fillet welds.

- Early Childhood: The subject-specific components for an Early Childhood central focus are: developmentally appropriate practices to promote language and literacy development in an interdisciplinary context that take into consideration the active and multimodal nature of young children's learning. Within an Early Childhood context, the unit of instruction may center on a theme (e.g., birds or insects) or a particular aspect of language and literacy development (e.g., making how-to books, poetry, genre study). However, the central focus of the learning segment might be rhyming sounds or poetry made up of 3–5 learning experiences that are developmentally appropriate, take into consideration the active and multimodal nature of young children's learning, and take place in an interdisciplinary context. For example, a central focus on poetry might include developmentally appropriate, interdisciplinary, active, and multimodal learning experiences on a rhyming poem, haiku poem, and picture poem; or a learning segment on how-to books might include similar learning experiences on reading a how-to book, focusing on parts of the book—title, author, illustrator, table of contents. Or a central focus on learning to express “feelings” through words might include reading a book about feelings, making a chart about different feelings, and drawing a picture about feelings.

- World Language: The central focus of world language teaching is developing students' communicative proficiency in the target language in meaningful cultural context(s). For example, the central focus for a world language learning segment might be talking about family and self by using adjectives, pronouns, vocabulary that relates to kinship, and verbs such as “to be” and “to have” in the target language. The whole segment can focus on the development of students' communicative proficiency in the target language, developing their skills to be able to introduce and talk about self and family through the creation of family albums, biographical writing pieces, and posters/drawings of family trees with labels.

"CENTRAL FOCUS" is not used in the Special Education Handbook.

Engaging students in learning: Using instructional and motivational strategies that promote students’ active involvement in learning tasks that increase their knowledge, skills, and abilities related to specific learning objectives. Engagement in learning contrasts with student participation in learning tasks that are not well designed and/or implemented and do not increase student learning.

Evaluation criteria: Performance indicators or dimensions that are used to assess evidence of student learning. They indicate the qualities by which levels of performance can be differentiated and that anchor judgments about the learner’s degree of success on an assessment. Evaluation criteria can be represented in various ways, such as a rubric, a point system for different levels of performance, or rules for awarding full versus partial credit. Evaluation criteria may examine correctness/accuracy, cognitive complexity, sophistication or
elaboration of responses, or quality of explanations.

**Learning environment:** The designed physical and emotional context, established and maintained throughout the learning segment to support a positive and productive learning experience for students.

**Learning objectives:** Student learning outcomes to be achieved by the end of the lesson or learning segment.

**Learning segment:** A set of 3–5 lessons that build one upon another toward a central focus, with a clearly defined beginning and end.

**Learning task:** Includes activities, discussions, or other modes of participation that engage students to develop, practice, and apply skills and knowledge related to a specific learning goal. Learning tasks may be scaffolded to connect prior knowledge to new knowledge and often include formative assessment.

**Patterns of learning:** Includes both quantitative and qualitative consistencies for different groups of students and individuals across the whole class. Quantitative patterns indicate the number of similar correct responses or errors across or within student assessments. Qualitative patterns include descriptions of understandings and/or misunderstandings, and/or partial understandings that underlie the quantitative patterns.

**Planned supports:** Instructional strategies, learning tasks and materials, and other resources deliberately designed to facilitate student learning of the central focus.

**Prior academic learning and prerequisite skills:** Includes students’ content knowledge and skills as well as academic experiences developed prior to the learning segment.

**Rapport:** A close and harmonious relationship in which the people or groups understand each other’s feelings or ideas and communicate well with each other.

**Respect:** A positive feeling of esteem or deference for a person and specific actions and conduct representative of that esteem. Respect can be a specific feeling of regard for the actual qualities of the one respected. It can also be conduct in accord with a specific ethic of respect. Rude conduct is usually considered to indicate a lack of respect, *disrespect*, whereas actions that honor somebody or something indicate respect. Note that respectful actions and conduct are culturally defined and may be context dependent.

**Variety of learners:** Students in your class who may require different strategies or support. These students include but are not limited to students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, ands/or gifted students.