Instructional Tool: Language Demands Flowchart

This instructional tool supports element 1, *Set disciplinary learning targets that are aligned with ELA/Anchor Literacy CCSS and the target High-Impact Practice*. When designing a lesson at any grade level, it is essential to identify the language demands inherent in texts, support materials, and instructional tasks. The Language Demands Flowchart is a tool that provides teachers with a consistent, systematic process for identifying, sorting, and prioritizing the academic language demands students need to understand.
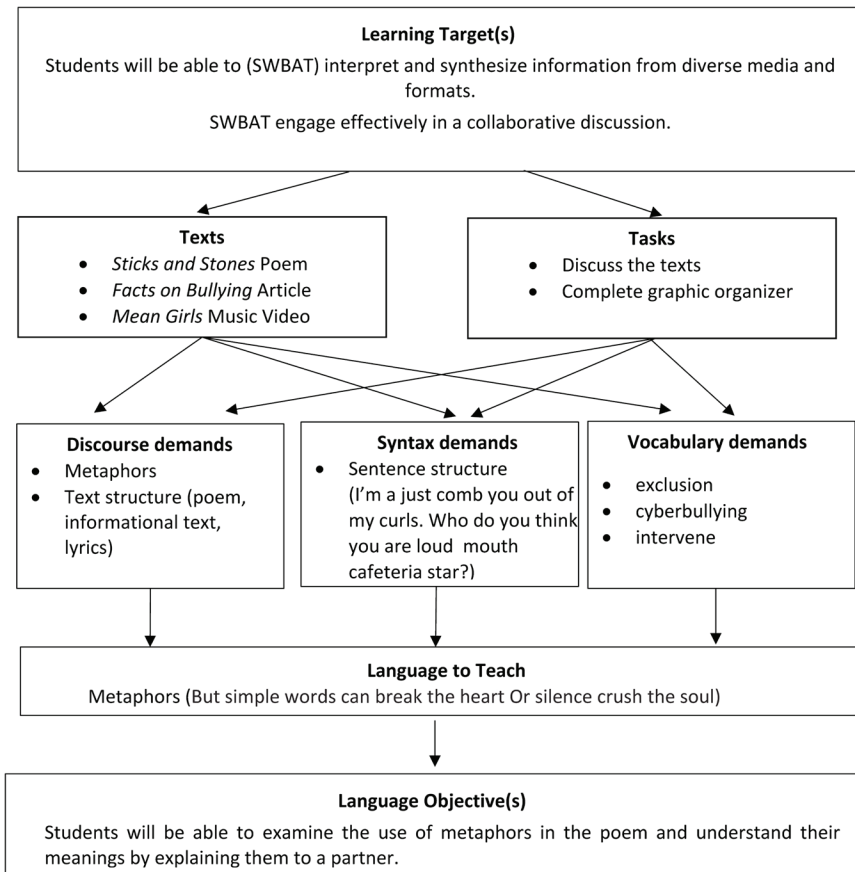
Why Use This Tool: The CCSS and NGSS clearly establish high expecta-tions for students in regard to academic language usage. Yet, in too many classrooms academic language development is reduced to teaching vocabu-lary. So, you must be aware of the full range of academic language features (discourse and syntax as well as vocabulary) and systematically analyze the language demands of all three features that are inherent in the texts and tasks students use in your lessons.

When to Use This Tool: You need to identify the academic language de-mands students will encounter in virtually every lesson you design. This is true across all grade levels and content areas. In addition, you usually iden-tify many more demands (e.g., words, language functions, text structures) than you have time to teach. So, a tool that helps you think through how to prioritize those demands can be used on a daily basis.

How to Use This Tool: Using the Language Demands Flowchart when de-signing your lesson requires five steps:

1. Reflect on the learning target(s) of your lesson and the academic language needs of your students. What language knowledge and skills do they most need to develop?
2. Analyze the texts you plan to use, remembering that texts include any written, visual, audio, or multimedia message that conveys information or ideas. Identify the most challenging discourse, syntax, and vocabulary demands in those texts.
3. Analyze tasks that will be used, including activities, handouts, and assessments. Identify the most challenging discourse, syntax, and vocabulary demands in those tasks.
4. Choose the most useful and important language demands that are needed to support the learning target(s).

Figure 2.4. Example of the Language Demands Flowchart

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│                         Learning Target(s)                            │
│  Students will be able to (SWBAT) interpret and synthesize            │
│             information from diverse media and formats.               │
│      SWBAT engage effectively in a collaborative discussion.          │
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Texts	Tasks
• *Sticks and Stones* Poem • *Facts on Bullying* Article • *Mean Girls* Music Video	• Discuss the texts • Complete graphic organizer

Discourse demands	Syntax demands	Vocabulary demands
• Metaphors • Text structure (poem, informational text, lyrics)	• Sentence structure (I'm a just comb you out of my curls. Who do you think you are loud mouth cafeteria star?)	• exclusion • cyberbullying • intervene

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│                         Language to Teach                             │
│  Metaphors (But simple words can break the heart Or silence crush     │
│                            the soul)                                  │
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│                        Language Objective(s)                          │
│  Students will be able to examine the use of metaphors in the poem    │
│  and understand their meanings by explaining them to a partner.       │
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5. Use the language identified in step 4 to create a language objective for your lesson. Figure 2.4 is an example of how one teacher used the Language Demands Flowchart and the Layering Texts Strategy as she planned a unit on bullying.