Classrooms That Promote Academic Language and Vocabulary Development

**Classrooms that focus on academic language:**
- Prepare students to address the complexities of the English language
- Provide English language learners (ELLs) with opportunities to practice using English in an academic setting with strategic support systems
- Provide ELLs with access to content knowledge through focused and explicit instruction

**Classrooms that focus on academic vocabulary:**
- Prepare students to read informational and content area text with high levels of proficiency
- Facilitate students’ comprehension of text
- Increase students’ use of words in a variety of contexts—both in and outside of academic settings

**What is seen in these classrooms:**
- Content and language objectives
- Writing samples (student and teacher)
- Concept maps and word analysis charts
- Word walls that support instruction
- A variety of texts (e.g., informational, reference books, newspapers)
- Vocabulary instruction that makes connections to words’ Greek and Latin roots
- Sentence stems posted to support conversation
- Materials adapted to meet the language, content, and developmental needs of ELLs

**What is heard in these classrooms:**
- The teacher and students facilitating and guiding conversations
- The teacher and students using academic language and academic vocabulary
- The teacher and students incorporating background knowledge and experiences that support learning
- The teacher scaffolding instruction
- Teacher-to-student, student-to-student, student-to-teacher discussions
- Examples being produced by the teacher and students to support new learning
- Students asking and answering higher-order questions
- Students using a variety of words in different contexts
References


Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts at The University of Texas at Austin. (2007). Best practices in reading instruction for English language learners. Austin, TX: Author.
