

**SEC-ELL Enhanced Assessment Grant:
Aligning Instruction to Standards and Assessments
for English Language Learners**

Language Needed for Academic Success

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Council of Chief State School Officers

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Overview

- Key questions, brief background
- Language Demands Taxonomy
 - Academic Language Functions
 - Language Complexity
- Findings
- Implications
- Continued examination
- Next steps

Key Question:

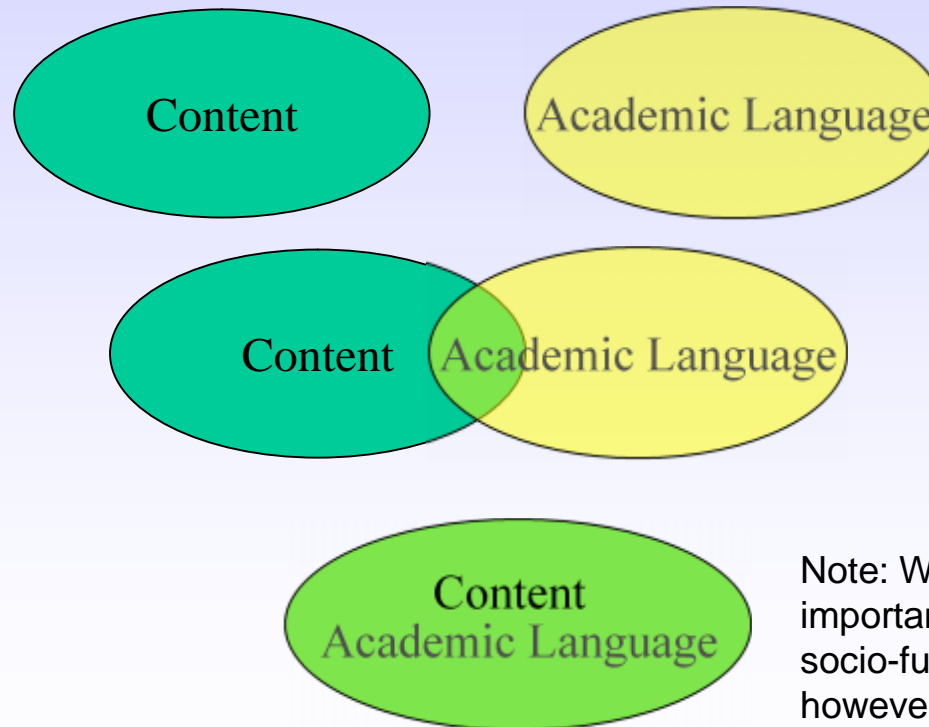
What is the nature of the language that students need to *meaningfully engage with* and *achieve* academic content?

That is...

Given the expected student outcome (content, learning), how do we expect students to use (receive, produce) language to acquire and demonstrate understanding of the content?

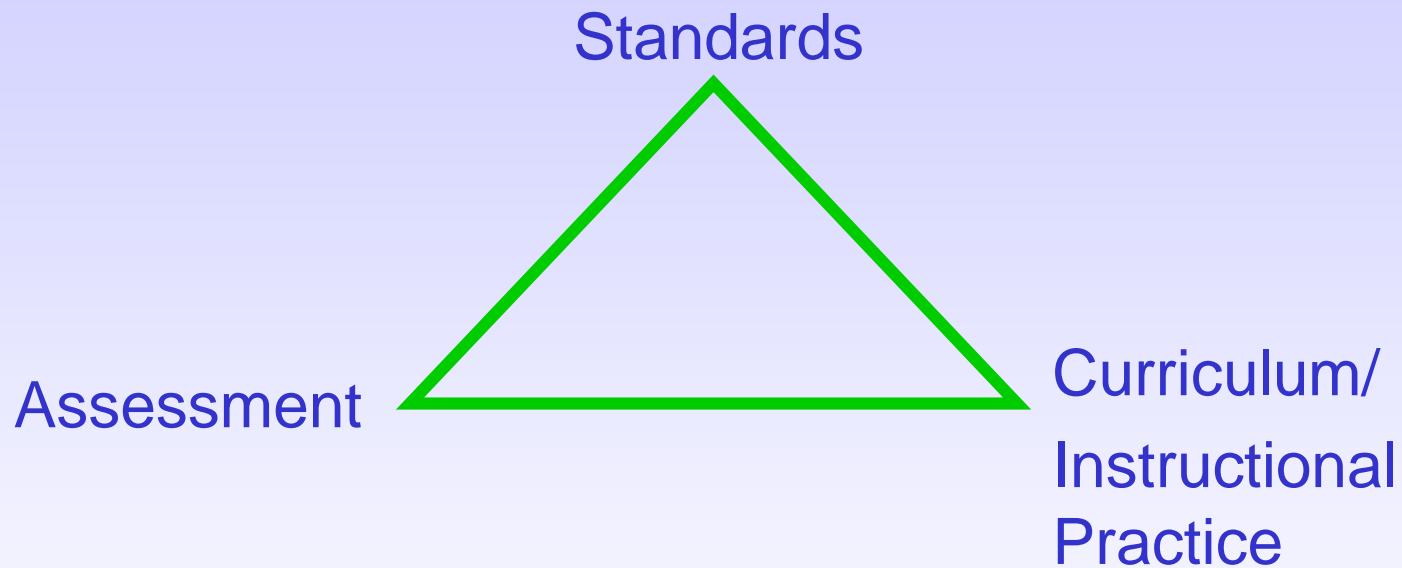
Content and Academic Language

What is the relationship?



Note: We recognize the importance of linguistic skills and socio-functional language; however, the focus is on academic English language.

What do the data suggest regarding the relationships?



- Content topics
- Cognitive demand
- Language demand
- Language complexity

Language Demands

Language Demands—Academic English Language Functions

Academic English Language Function		Operational Definition—The language needed to engage with and achieve in the context of (academic or item) activities of the use of	Academic English Language Function		Operational Definition—The language needed to engage with and achieve in the context of (academic or item) activities of the use of
A	Identification	a word or phrase to name an object, action, event, idea, fact, problem, need, or process.	K	Generalization	phrases or sentences to express an opinion, principle, trend, or conclusion that is based on facts, statistics, or other information, and/or to extend that opinion/trend/principle to other relevant situations/contexts.
	Labeling	a word or phrase to name an object, action, event, or idea.		Infering	words, phrases, or sentences to express understanding of implicit/explicit based on available information. Discourse markers include inferential logical connectors such as <i>although, while, thus, therefore</i> .
	Enumeration	words or phrases to name distinct objects, actions, events, or ideas in a series, set, or groups.		Prediction	words, phrases, or sentences to express an idea or notion about a future action or event based on available information. Discourse markers include adverbials such as <i>maybe, perhaps, obviously, evidently</i> .
B	Classification	words, phrases, or sentences to associate an object, action, event, or idea to the category or type to which it belongs.	L	Hypothesizing	phrases or sentences to express an idea/expectation or possible outcome based on available information. Discourse markers include adverbials such as <i>generally, typically, obviously, evidently</i> .
	Sequencing	words, phrases, or sentences to express the order of information (e.g., a series of objects, actions, events, ideas). Discourse markers include adverbials such as <i>first, next, then, finally</i> .		Argumentation	phrases or sentences to present a point of view with the intent of communicating or supporting a position or conviction. Discourse structures include expressions such as <i>in my opinion, it seems to me</i> , and adverbials such as <i>since, because, although, however</i> .
C	Organization	words, phrases, or sentences to express relationships between/among objects, actions, events, or ideas or the structure or arrangement of information. Discourse markers include coordinating conjunctions such as <i>and, but, yet, or</i> , and adverbials such as <i>first, next, then, finally</i> .	M	Persuasion	phrases or sentences to present ideas, opinions, and/or principles with the intent of creating agreement around or convincing others of a position or conviction. Discourse markers include expressions such as <i>in my opinion, it seems to me</i> , and adverbials such as <i>since, because, although, however</i> .
	Comparison/Contrast	words, phrases, or sentences to express similarities and/or differences, or to distinguish between two or more objects, actions, events, or ideas. Discourse markers include coordinating conjunctions <i>and, but, yet, or</i> , and adverbials such as <i>similarly, likewise, in contrast, instead</i> .		Negotiation	phrases or sentences to engage in a discussion with the purpose of creating mutual agreement from two or more different points of view.
D	Inquiring	words, phrases, or sentences to seek information (e.g., yes-no questions, wh-questions, statements used as questions).	N	Synthesizing	phrases or sentences to express, describe, or explain relationships among two or more ideas. Relationship verbs such as <i>contain, entail, consist of</i> , participles such as <i>a part of, a segment of</i> , and quantifiers such as <i>some, a good number of, almost all, a few, hardly any</i> often are used.
E	Descriptive	word, phrase, or sentence to express or observe the attributes or properties of an object, action, event, idea, or solution.		Critiquing	phrases or sentences to express a focused review or analysis of an object, action, event, idea, or text.
F	Definition	word, phrase, or sentence to express the meaning of a given word, phrase, or expression.	O	Evaluation	phrases or sentences to express a judgment about the meaning, importance, or significance of an action, event, idea, or text.
G	Explanation	phrases or sentences to express the rationale, reasons, causes, or relationships related to one or more actions, events, ideas, or processes. Discourse markers include coordinating conjunctions <i>so, for</i> , and adverbials such as <i>therefore, as a result, for that reason</i> .	P	Symbolic & Representation	symbols, numerals, and letters to represent meaning within a conventional context (e.g., π , CO ₂ , \pm , Δ , π , $\text{cat} = y = 3x - 4$, $\text{area} = \frac{1}{2}(b_1 + b_2) \times \text{height}$, cat).
H	Retelling	phrases or sentences to relay or repeat information. Discourse markers include coordinating conjunctions such as <i>and, out</i> , and adverbials such as <i>first, next, then, finally</i> .	Z	No Academic Language Function	form or standard does not contain any academic language functions; may contain linguistic skills (e.g., phonemic awareness, syllabication).
	Summarization	phrases or sentences to express important facts or ideas and relevant details about one or more objects, actions, events, ideas, or processes. Discourse structures include: beginning with an introductory sentence that specifies purpose or topic.			
I	Interpretation	phrases, sentences, or symbols to express understanding of the intended or a latent meaning of information.			
J	Analyzing	phrases or sentences to indicate parts of a whole and/or the relationship between/among parts of an action, event, idea, or process. Relationship verbs such as <i>contain, entail, consist of</i> , participles such as <i>a part of, a segment of</i> , and quantifiers such as <i>some, a good number of, almost all, a few, hardly any</i> often are used.			

Language Complexity—Density

Low	High
<p>Length ranges from a word to paragraphs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No/little variation in words and/or phrases in sentences/paragraphs; consistent use of language• Repetition of key words/phrases/sentences <i>reinforces</i> information• Language is used to present critical/central details• No/little abstraction; language reflects more literal/concrete information; illustrative language is used; language is used to define/explain abstract information• Graphics and/or relevant text features reinforce critical information/details	<p>Length ranges from a word to paragraphs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some variation in words and/or phrases in sentences/paragraphs• Repetition of key words/phrases/sentences <i>introduces new</i> or <i>extends</i> information• Language is used to present critical/central details, but non-essential detail also is presented• Some abstraction; language <i>may or may not</i> be used to define/explain abstract information; illustrative language <i>may or may not</i> be used; technical words/phrases are used• Graphics and/or relevant text features <i>may or may not</i> reinforce critical information/details

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Language Complexity—Construction

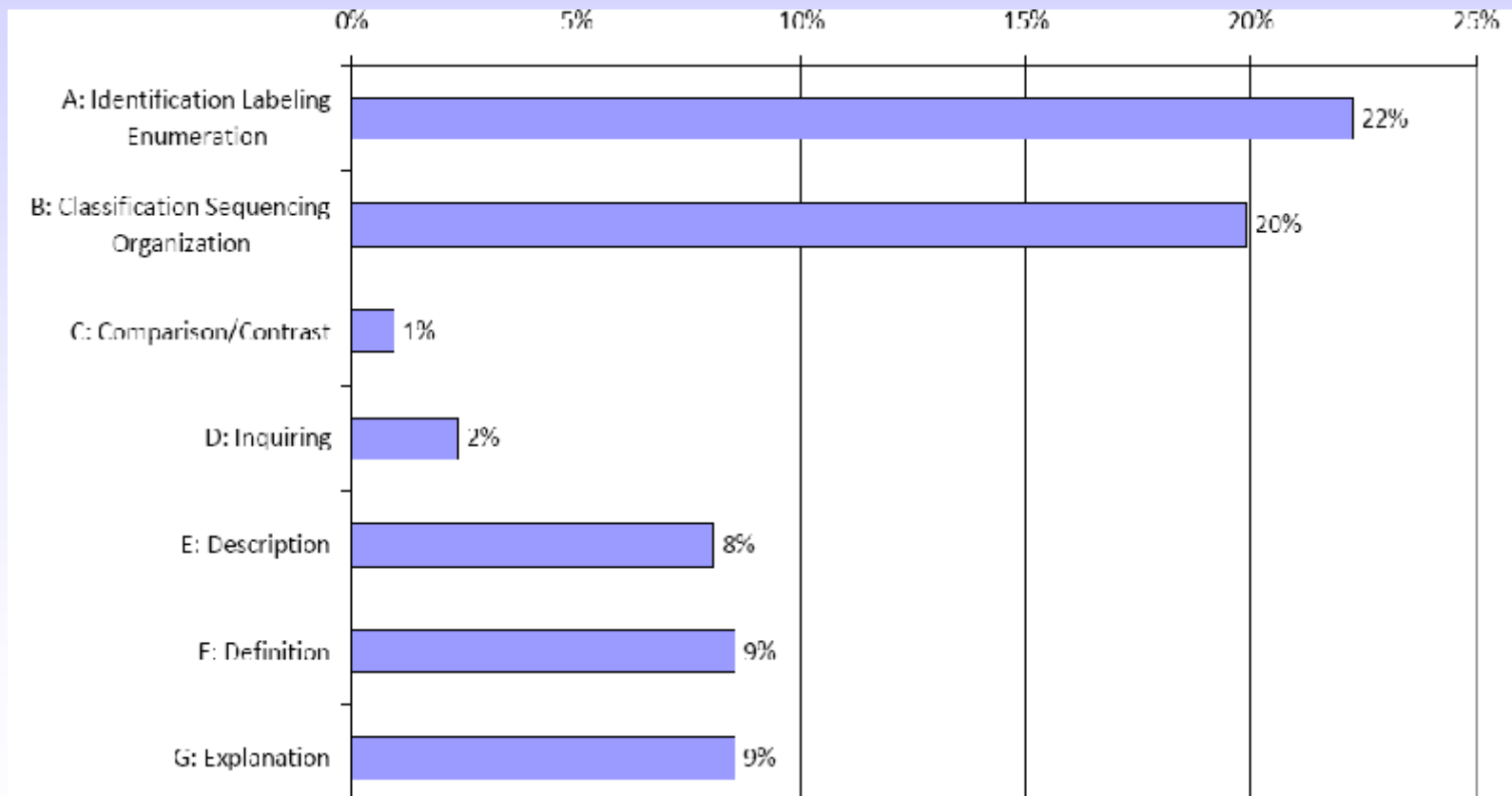
Simple	Complex
<p>Mostly common/familiar words/phrases; no/few uncommon words/phrases, compound words, gerunds, figurative language, and/or idioms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Language is organized/structured• Mostly simple sentence construction• No/little passive voice• Little variation in tense• Mostly one idea/detail per sentence• Mostly familiar construction (e.g., 's for possessive; s and es for plural)• Mostly familiar text features (e.g., bulleted lists, bold face)	<p>Some common/familiar words/phrases; some uncommon words/phrases, compound words, gerunds, figurative language, and/or idioms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Language <i>may or may not</i> be organized/structured• Varied sentence construction, including complex sentence construction• Some passive voice• Variation in tense• Multiple ideas/details per sentence• Some less familiar/irregular construction• Some less familiar text features (e.g., pronunciation keys, text boxes)

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What we're finding...

1. A common language for language...

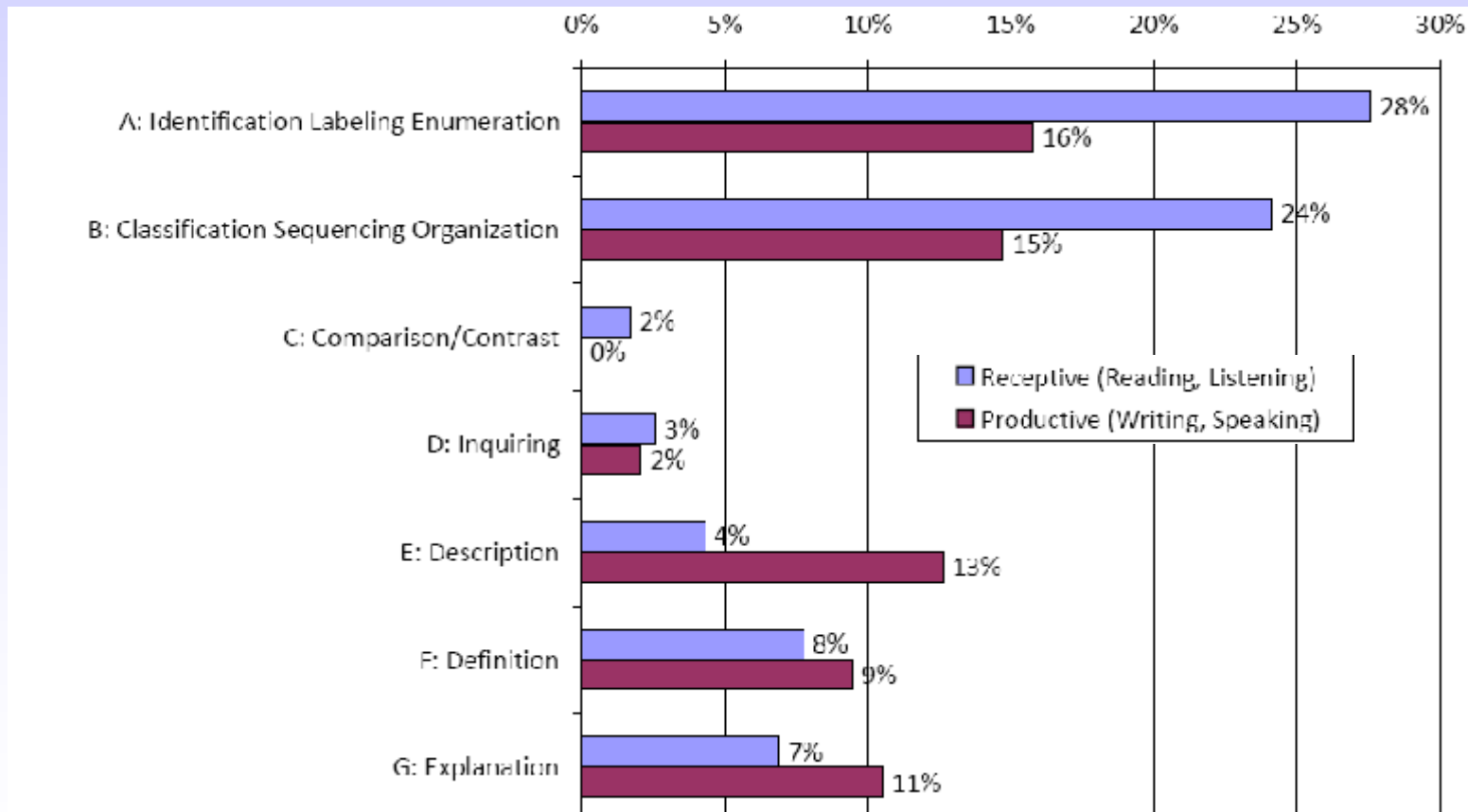
The taxonomy is applicable to a range of content:
ELP, ELA, mathematics, science



Excerpted example

2. Mode matters...

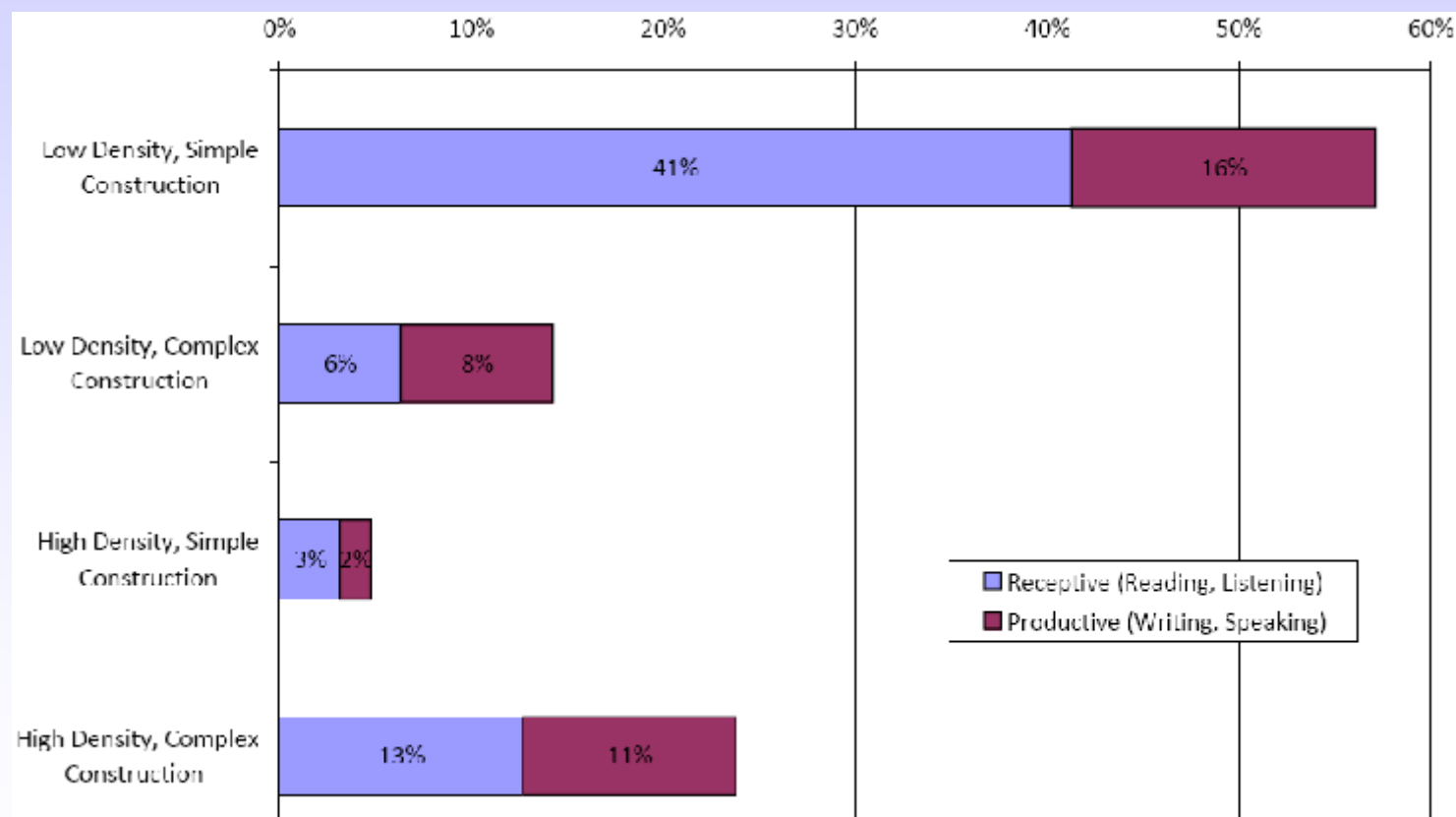
There often are differences in the expected *receptive* and *productive* language of students, as reflected in our standards, assessments, and curricula.



Excerpted example

3. Language complexity is complex...

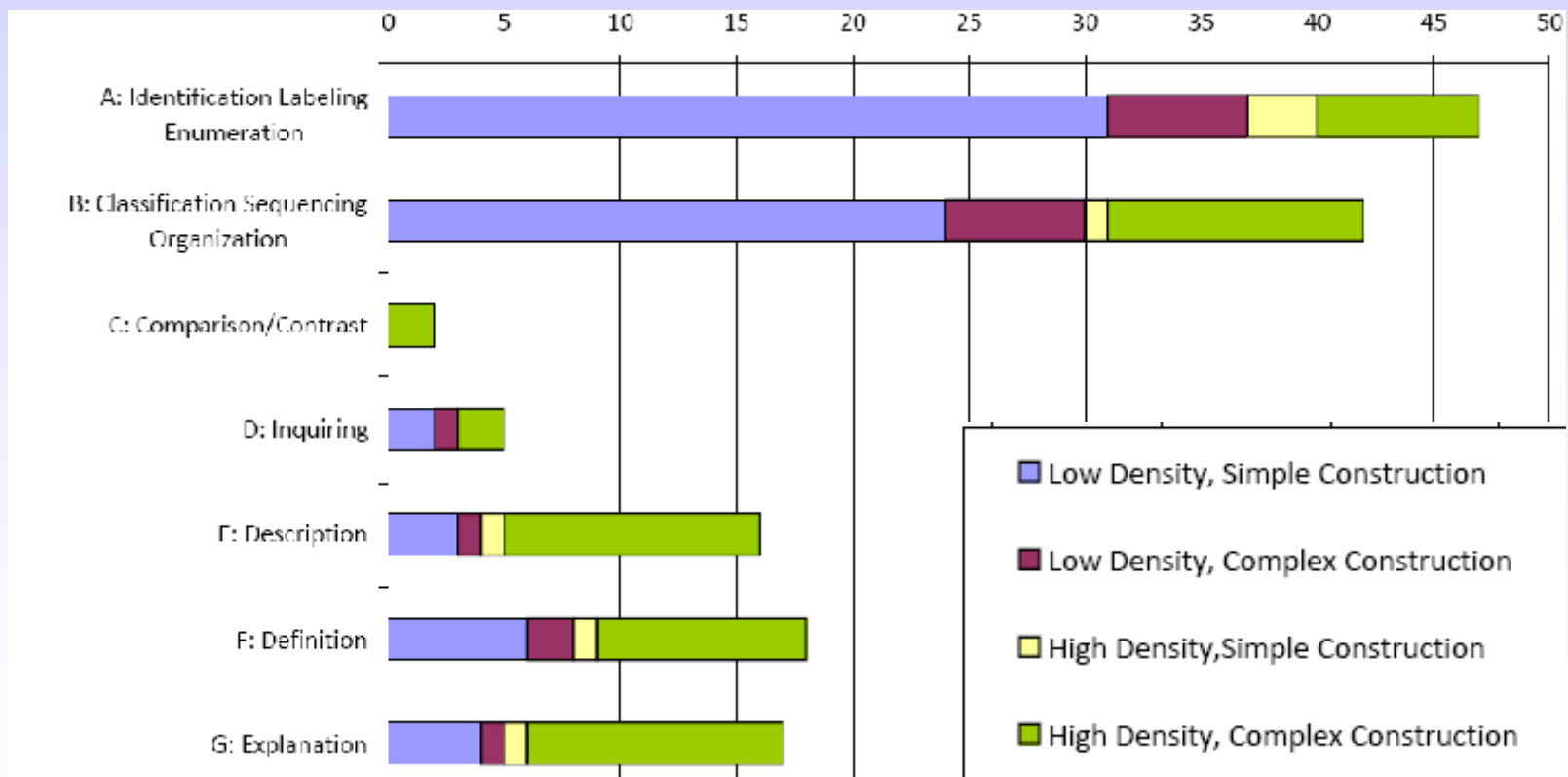
There is a range of language complexity in our students' language, and *density* and *construction* appear to affect this complexity.



Excerpted example

4. Language is interaction...

There is an interaction between the *language demands* and *language complexity* we present to and expect from our students.



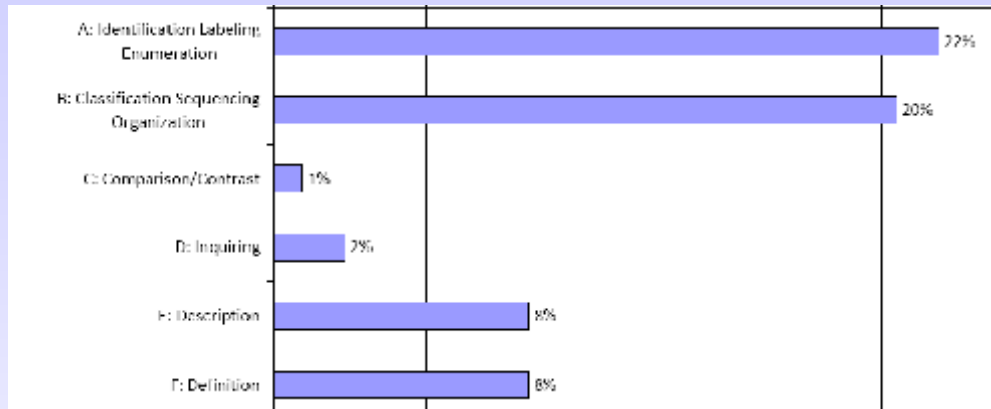
Excerpted example

Analysis and discussion about:

- what's intentional?
- what's appropriate?

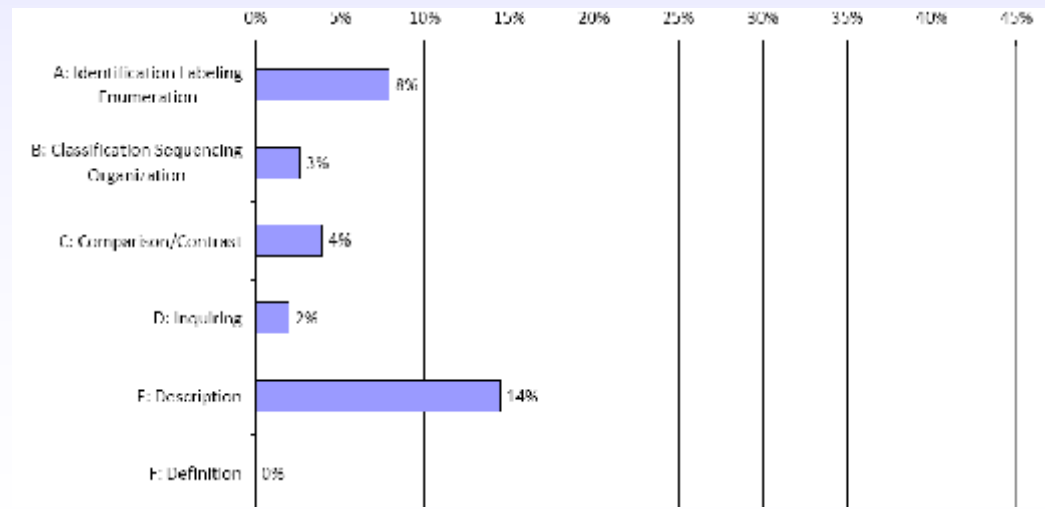
Example: Language Demands in Two Documents

Math assessment



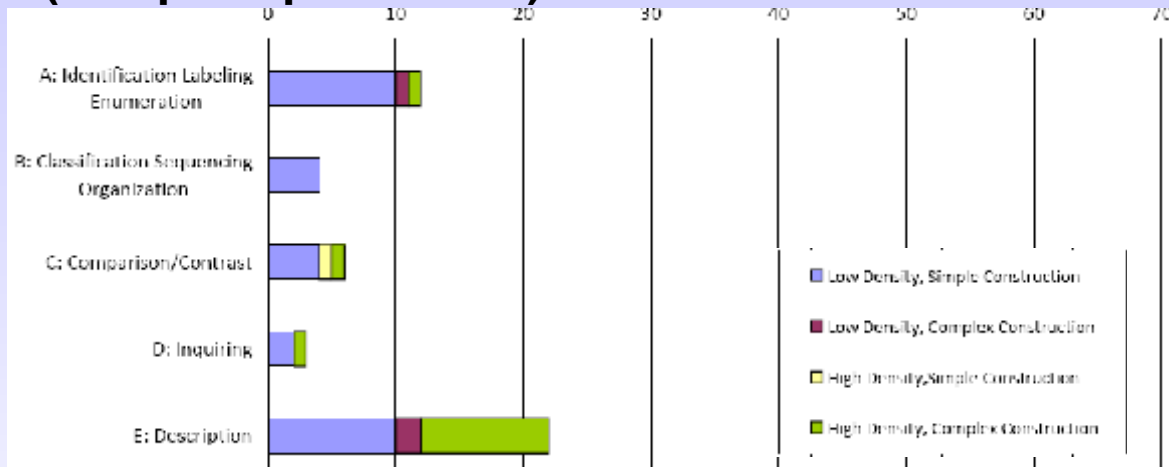
- Similarities/differences
 - Intentional?
 - Appropriate?

ELD standards



Example: Language Demands and Instructional Practices

ELD standards: Language Demand & Complexity (receptive/productive)



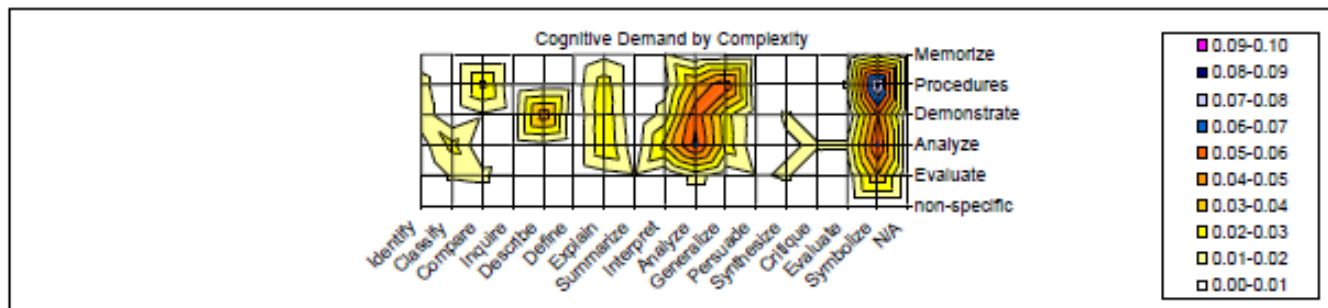
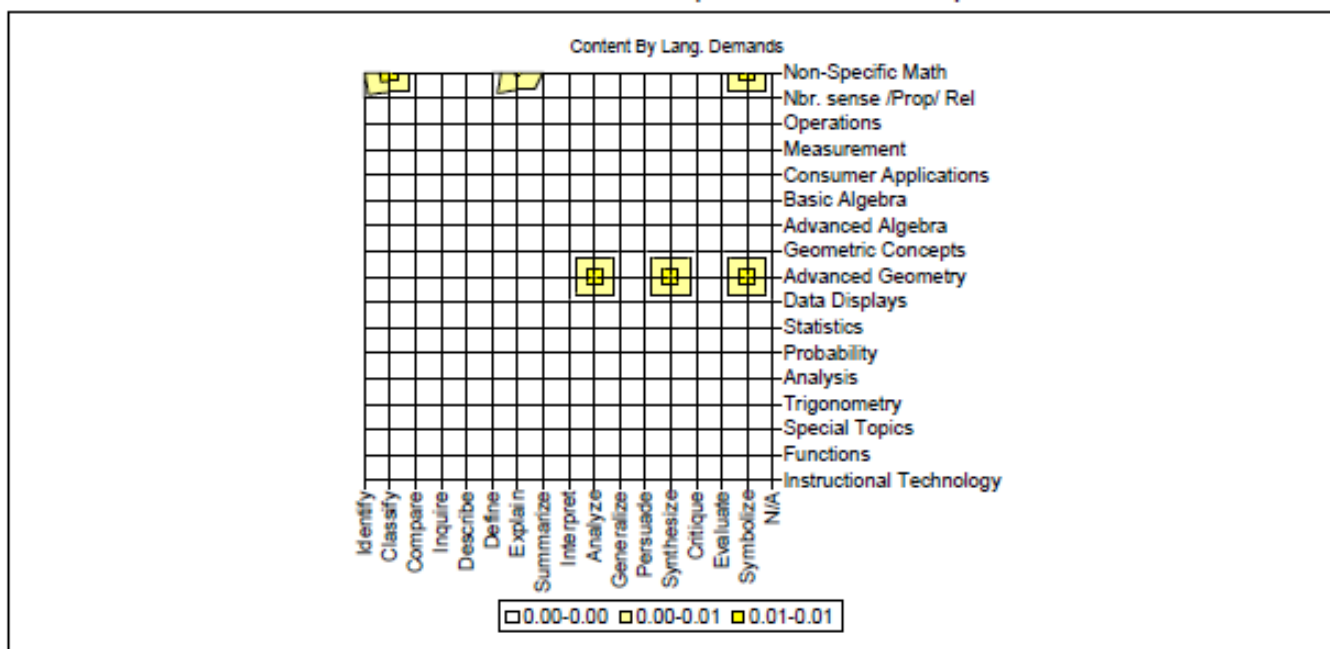
- Similarities/differences
 - Intentional?
 - Appropriate?

Instructional Practices (% time):

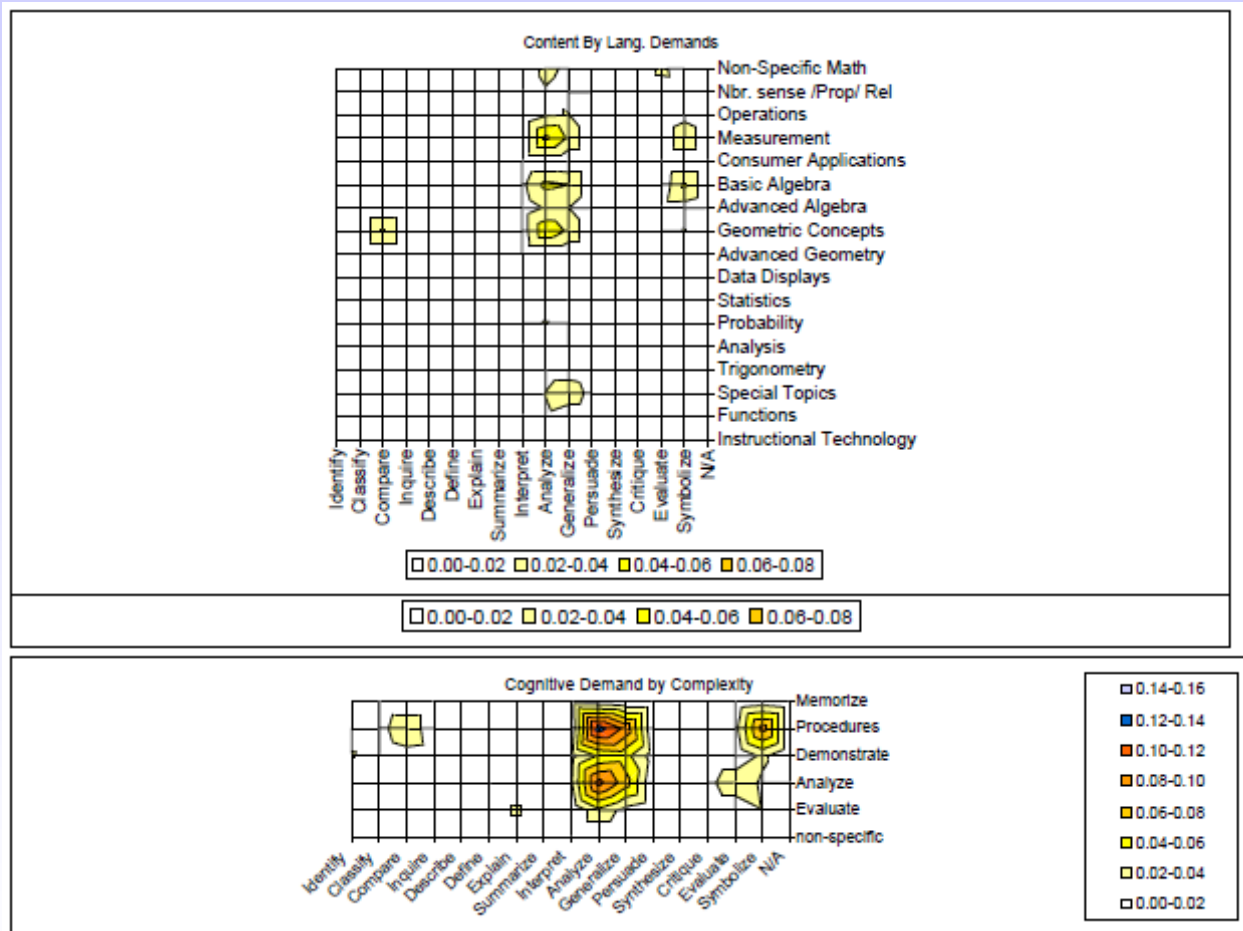
- Silently read books or other written material of their own choice (40%)
- Use computers or other technology (25%)
- Listen to the teacher read aloud (10%)
- Use a work center/station (25%)

Excerpted example

Language Demands and Assessment Content (Productive)



Language Demands and Assessment Content (Receptive)



Continue Examination

- Typical/common associations between:
 - Content topic and language demand(s)
 - Content topic and language complexity
 - Cognitive demand and language demand(s)
 - Cognitive demand and language complexity
- Typical/common clusters of language demands
- Typical/common progressions of language
- Existing instructional practices that address the language needs of our EL students?

...for a given grade level?

...across grade levels?

Implications

- Facilitates a shared understanding and responsibility for student academic language development
 - Common nomenclature for content and language specialists
- Supports a cohesive system of standards, assessment, and instruction
- Informs instructional planning and prioritization

Next steps

- White paper on the language taxonomy
- Interpretation guide for language demands and language complexity

Related work:

- Language progressions

If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact
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