

CREATING A WEBSITE THAT PROVIDES CLASSROOM TEACHERS WITH
RESOURCES AND TOOLS TO DEVELOP A LANGUAGE-RICH CLASSROOM

by

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in English as a Second Language

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

May 2019

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Research Question

The question that guided my research was: *How can a professional development resource help classroom teachers create a language-rich environment that can support the development of academic language for all learners?*

Project Summary

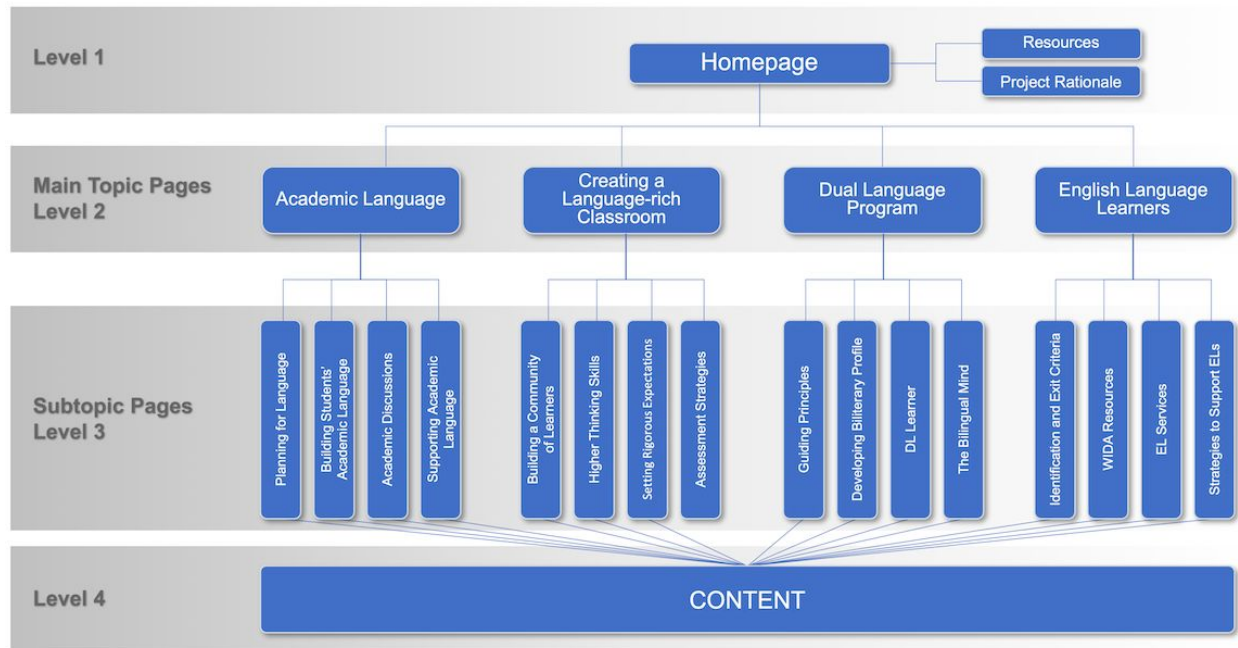
There is a general agreement in education that the linguistic demands of the curriculum have greatly increased and that academic language plays a more central role in student achievement. Broadly speaking academic language is the language students need in order to access increasingly complex texts, perform formal writing tasks and engage in content-related discussions that show grade-level understanding of the material presented. Academic language development is imperative for all students, but it is especially crucial to English language learners (ELs) who face their own obstacles in achieving grade content standards. Classroom teachers need to develop the skills to ensure purposeful, meaningful and consistent academic language instruction for all in an equitable environment. They need to understand the language demands of the curriculum and how to effectively address them in order to help students attain higher levels of learning and fluency. It can be daunting for teachers who have had limited or no preparation in this area. Support from colleagues who have expertise in language development can certainly guide them in these efforts to develop linguistic knowledge and effective language development practices.

This website is designed as an instructional resource for the classroom teachers in my school building. It provides information to develop linguistic knowledge and tools to implement a well-designed approach to academic language development in our diverse classrooms. I chose to create a website to centralize some key research and essential language development practices to support the professional development of our classroom teachers and promote a culture where purposeful and rich academic language development and student language data inform our daily instructional practices. This website's goal supports our school's overall improvement plan, the PD objectives and sessions that were developed to improve the staff's linguistic knowledge and understanding in the context of our school setting and the students we serve.

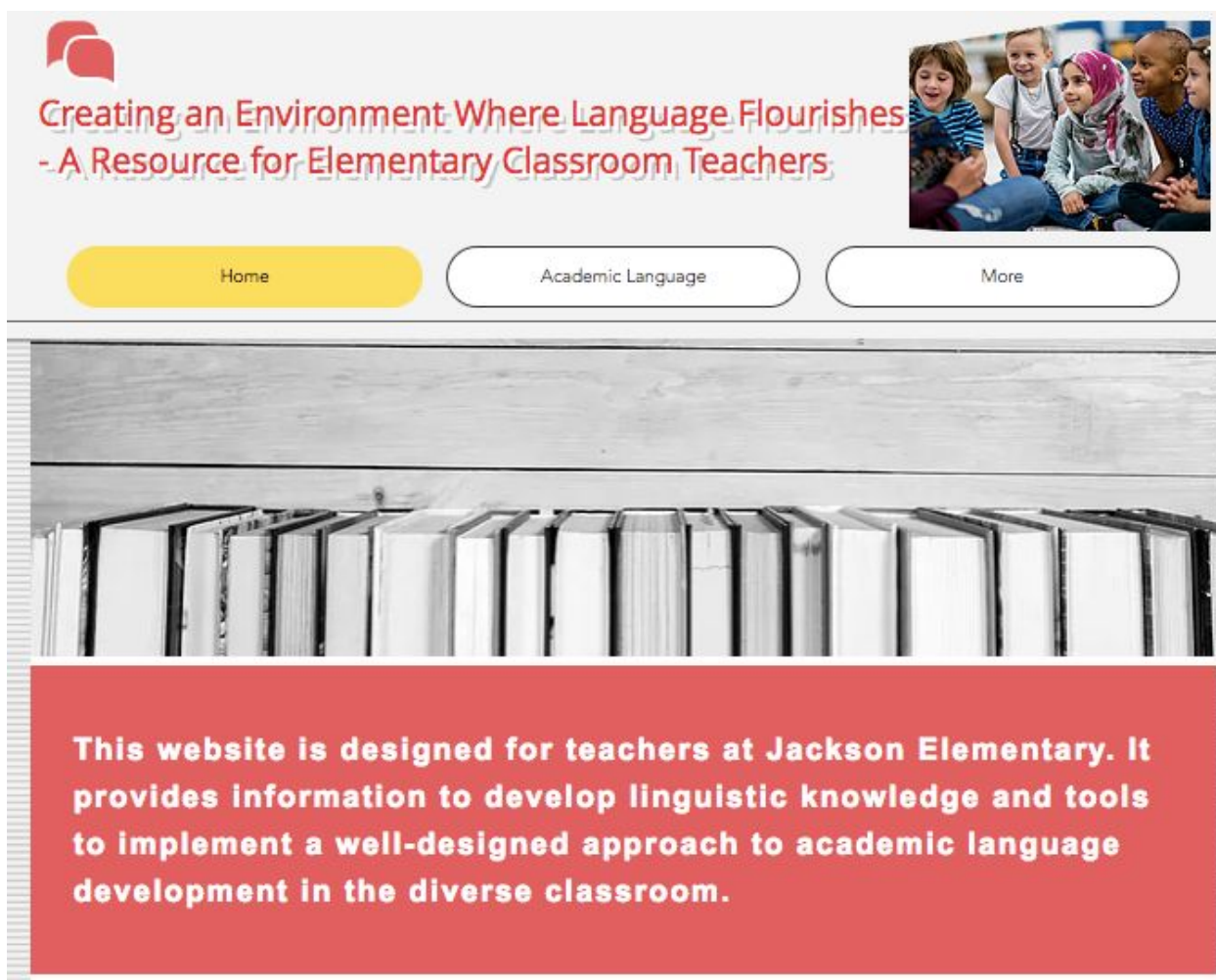
The Project

The website can be found at <https://esontgerath01.wixsite.com/languagejackson>. Designing a website can be quite complex and daunting for a novice website designer. Based on accessibility, quality of templates, and cost, I have chosen Wix as a website development platform. My first step was to create a sitemap to determine the overall architecture of the site, organize the information gathered during the research process and identify how visitors would

navigate their way from one page to the other.



Krug (2014) provides a common sense approach to web usability, a how-to that is very accessible to the non-expert. His approach is based on the simple concept that websites must require minimum thinking from the user as most users tend to scan, or skim content. Therefore, in order to optimize website usability, one needs to keep its design simple and self-explanatory. Krug calls the home page “the North Star” (p.62) as it communicates the primary goal of the site, provides an overview of the content and guides the user.







Creating an Environment Where Language Flourishes
- A Resource for Elementary Classroom Teachers

Home Academic Language More

This website is designed for teachers at Jackson Elementary. It provides information to develop linguistic knowledge and tools to implement a well-designed approach to academic language development in the diverse classroom.

This website includes 4 main sections available from the *Home Page* (The navigation bar also provides access to a *Resource Page* and *Project Rationale* (similar in purpose to an About Page). The 4 main sections or topics are: *Academic Language*, *Creating a Language-Rich Classroom*, *Dual Language Learners*, and *English Language Learners*. These sections are also accessible from the drop-down list in the navigation bar. Each of these sections is identified with a symbol, a blurb, and a link to *Read More*.

	<p>Academic language refers to the learning of formal English that allows all students to meet the demands of school environments. In this section, you will learn research-based tools and strategies to accelerate academic language growth in your classroom.</p>		<p>As teachers, we should strive to create a classroom environment where all students are exposed to high-quality language in varying forms. In this section, you will learn to build classrooms that are engaging and welcoming to all students and support their linguistic and academic growth.</p>
Academic Language		The Language-Rich Classroom	
	READ MORE		READ MORE
	<p>English language learners need to acquire the English language skills necessary to access the content area knowledge they need for school success. In this section, you will learn more about English learners and how to best support their specific needs in the classroom.</p>		<p>In the Dual Language program, students are taught literacy and academic content in English and a partner language with a goal of high academic achievement in both languages. In this section, you will learn more about the guiding principles and key features of DL programs and how they impact teaching and learning.</p>
English Learners		Dual Language Program	
	READ MORE		READ MORE

Based on conclusions drawn from the research presented in my research paper, I chose to focus on the specifics of academic language as the language of school. In this section, teachers can find information, strategies, and tools to impact students' development of academic language. In *Creating a Language-Rich Classroom*, teachers can identify essential research and practices to support students' use of academic language and build capacity within their community of learners. *Language Learners*, and *English Language Learners* are two sections that present foundational knowledge that teachers must acquire to address the specific needs of these learners in the context of developing academic language. Tools to encourage self-reflection, engagement and learning about language development are added throughout the site to optimize the experience of the user and support the overall goal of the project.

Back

Planning for Language

How do you identify the linguistic demands of a lesson? How do you communicate the language objective you identified for your lesson?

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

Analyze this student's explanation. What can she do? What feedback would you provide in order to support her linguistic growth?

Try it!
Use these tools to create a language objective for an upcoming lesson.

FIGURE 10.3 Function chart for describing people, places, and things

Beginning	Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Early Advanced	Advanced
Brown; <i>brown bear</i>	The bear is <i>brown</i> . It <i>has claws</i> .	The brown bear <i>has thick fur</i> and <i>sharp claws</i> .	The brown bear <i>isn't a predator</i> even though it <i>has sharp claws and teeth</i> .	During their winter <i>hibernation</i> , brown bears <i>give birth to cubs</i> .

From Dutro & Prestridge (2001)

Try it out: You are asking your students to describe the main character in the story you read during the mini-lesson. Prepare a function chart based on the figure above that matches the content and grade level you are teaching. What vocabulary would you pre-teach or provide? What sentence structure would you explicitly teach or model to increase the language proficiency of your students? What differentiation would you make? How can you support both reading and speaking skills using this chart as your guide? What do your students need to practice to improve on their message level? What collaborative activity would best support this goal?

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