

# Language Sensitive Domain Teaching for Secondary Teachers

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## Guiding Questions

- What is language sensitive domain teaching?
- How does language sensitive domain teaching relate to the role of the secondary content teacher with literacy?
- What do we know about the literacy of domains?
- What does language sensitive domain teaching look like?

## Language Sensitive Domain Teaching

- An approach to teaching subjects in middle, junior and high schools
- Deliberate inclusion of listening, speaking, reading and writing instruction to support content acquisition
- Identifying language trouble spots in discourse/text

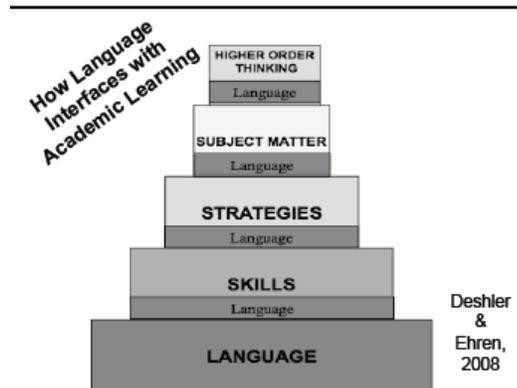
## Many of the Challenges in Content Teaching Relate to Literacy:

- More rigorous curriculum requires deep thinking. Deep thinking requires facility with language and literacy.
- Multiple literacies require flexibility in handling a variety of texts and formats to access information.
- Students with diverse needs often have difficulty with language and literacy.

## Domain Learning Requires Proficient Literacy

- Listening to teacher instruction and lecture
- Participating in class discussions, answering teacher questions, making presentations (speaking).
- Reading textbooks and resource materials in print and digital formats. (Includes viewing.)
- Demonstrating knowledge (tests), writing reflections, generating written or other products. (Includes representing.)

Needed: a linguistically informed literacy pedagogy that foregrounds the role of language in construing knowledge and value in school subjects. (Fang, Schleppegrell & Cox; 2006)



“Although most students manage to master basic and even intermediate literacy skills, many never gain proficiency with the more advanced skills that would enable them to read challenging texts in science, history, literature, mathematics, or technology.”  
Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008

## Disciplinary Literacy

- Unique ways of sharing information, getting people’s attention, debating, responding to criticism, reporting facts, and establishing authority in a given subject area.
- Members of every profession have their own set of characteristic literacy practices
- Disciplines create, disseminate, and evaluate knowledge using language in different ways.

## 10 Point Action Plan

1. Surface the features of your discipline’s discourse.
2. Embed word level study, sentence level study, and discourse level study as you teach content.
3. Troubleshoot and scaffold difficult language.
4. Foster deep thinking about content with complex language.
5. Integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities.
6. Teach students to be strategic readers.
7. Teach students to activate background knowledge.
8. Teach vocabulary and vocabulary acquisition strategies explicitly.
9. Engage all students in active processing of language to learn content.
10. Seek help for students who need additional intervention.

- These action items are not discrete entities.
- All together they constitute a language-sensitive approach to domain teaching.
- The action plan calls secondary teachers to teach their academic subjects in a way that embeds language and literacy considerations in what they ordinarily do.
- Teaching students to access the language of a discipline will help them learn the content.