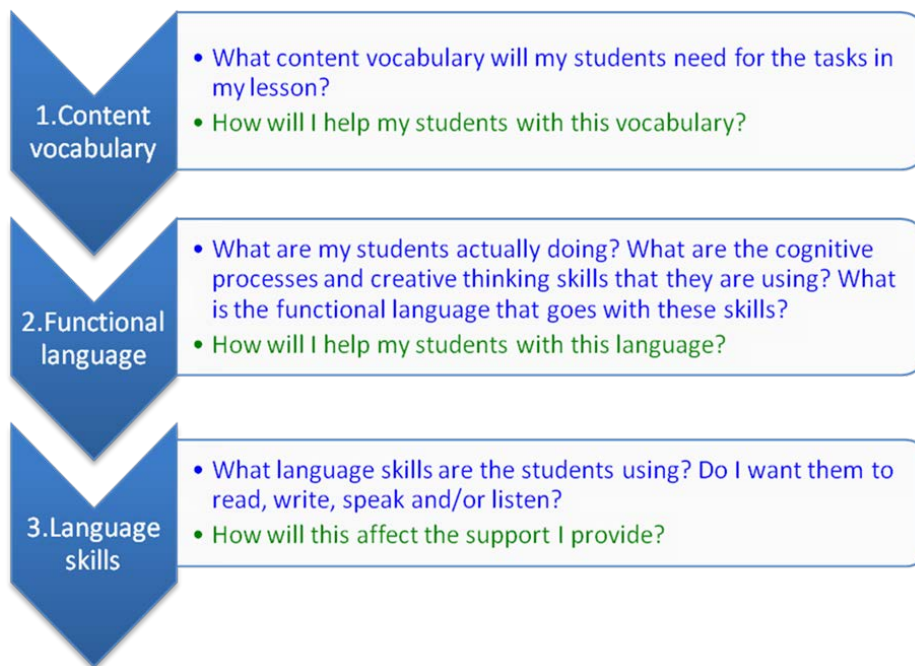


Planning language support in content lessons

Select a learning activity that you plan to use in your next lesson. Ask yourself the following questions:



Here is an example of this framework being applied to an activity in Maths. In this example, the maths teacher wants his or her students to work together in pairs to answer the following question:

The following numbers are the test marks of 15 students in your class. What is the mean, median and mode of these numbers?

86% 76% 59% 41% 89% 74% 90% 67% 41% 54%
71% 63% 86% 76% 50%

1. Content vocabulary

What content vocabulary will my learners need for this task?

The vocabulary items 'mean', 'median' and 'mode' are specific to mathematics and learners will need to understand their meaning in order to be able to solve this problem. It's possible that students may have already been introduced to these terms in an earlier lesson.

How will I help my students with this vocabulary?

You could record the terms and their definitions in a box at the top of the hand out or on the whiteboard. You could use concept check questions to ensure learners have understood the meaning of the terms. For example, 'If the answer is 86% have I worked out the mean, mode or median?' If students respond with 'mode' you know they have understood that the mode is the number which appears most often in a set of numbers. Asking students to hold up cards with their answers on allows you to get a good understanding across the class.

2. Functional Language

What are my students actually doing? What are the cognitive processes and creative thinking skills that they are using?

The teacher is asking students to solve this problem together. They will need to explain the steps they are taking to work out the answer to their partner.

What is the functional language that goes with these skills?

In order to explain how they are approaching the problem, the following language will be useful:

- *I think we should start with...because*
- *To solve...we need to...*
- *Before that we should...*
- *After that we need to...*
- *Next...*

How will I help my students with this language?

The sentence stems above will be useful for learners and could be included in their handout or on the whiteboard to prompt the discussion in pairs.

3. Language Skills

What language skills are the students using? Do I want them to read, write, speak and/or listen? How will this affect the support that I provide?

In this example, students are being asked to discuss their answer with their partner. The teacher may also want some students to explain the process they followed to the whole class. The sentence frames above will give the students the language support that they need to carry out this task verbally.

To find out more, refer to: *Chadwick, T. (2012) Language Awareness in Teaching: A Toolkit for Content and Language Teachers. Cambridge: CUP.*