

edtpa language function examples

Introduction

The Educative Teacher Performance Assessment, or edTPA, is a vital benchmark for aspiring educators, and understanding its components is crucial for success. Among these components, the language function is a cornerstone, representing the specific ways students will use language to learn and demonstrate their understanding within your lesson. Mastering the concept of language function examples for the edTPA means recognizing how to identify, support, and assess these linguistic demands effectively. This article delves deep into the nuances of language functions within the edTPA, offering concrete examples and actionable strategies for every teacher candidate. We will explore what language functions are, why they are so important in the context of the edTPA, and provide a comprehensive overview of various language function categories with illustrative examples. By the end of this guide, you will possess a robust understanding of how to articulate and plan for language functions in your edTPA submissions, ensuring a more impactful and successful demonstration of your teaching practice.

Table of Contents

- What are Language Functions in the Context of the edTPA?
- Why are Language Functions Critical for the edTPA?
- Identifying and Analyzing Language Demands
- Common Language Function Categories and edTPA Examples
 - Analyzing
 - Comparing and Contrasting
 - Explaining
 - Justifying
 - Predicting
 - Summarizing
 - Synthesizing
 - Persuading
 - Describing
 - Classifying
 - Defining

- Evaluating
- Interpreting
- Strategies for Supporting Language Functions in Your Lesson Plan
 - Scaffolding and Visual Aids
 - Sentence Frames and Starters
 - Collaborative Learning Structures
 - Vocabulary Development
 - Explicit Instruction of Academic Language
- Assessing Language Functions in the edTPA
- Connecting Language Functions to Student Learning
- Putting it All Together: A Practical Approach to edTPA Language Function Examples

What are Language Functions in the Context of the edTPA?

In the realm of the edTPA, language functions are not merely about speaking or writing; they are the specific academic purposes for which students use language to engage with content and demonstrate their learning. They represent the cognitive and linguistic actions students perform, such as analyzing information, explaining a concept, or comparing different ideas. These functions are the bridge between students' existing knowledge and the new academic content they are expected to master. Understanding language functions is essential for designing lessons that explicitly target and support students' ability to communicate their understanding effectively in academic settings. The edTPA framework emphasizes that teachers must be able to identify these demands and plan instruction to meet them, thereby promoting academic language acquisition alongside content mastery.

Why are Language Functions Critical for the edTPA?

The edTPA places a significant emphasis on language functions because they are intrinsically linked to student learning and equitable access to the curriculum. For candidates, demonstrating proficiency in identifying, planning for, and assessing language functions is a key indicator of their ability to support all learners, especially English language learners and students with diverse linguistic backgrounds.

When teachers explicitly address language functions, they create a more inclusive learning environment where all students have the opportunity to engage with the academic content and express their understanding. The edTPA requires you to articulate how your lesson design supports students in using language for academic purposes. This means showing that you've thought about not just what students will learn content-wise, but also how they will be expected to talk, write, and read about that content. Failing to address language functions can lead to a lower score in the assessment's rubrics, particularly in the planning and instruction sections.

Identifying and Analyzing Language Demands

The first step in effectively addressing language functions for the edTPA is to accurately identify the language demands inherent in your chosen learning segment. This involves a careful analysis of your learning objectives, the instructional materials, and the assessment tasks. You need to consider what specific linguistic actions students will be asked to perform. This analysis goes beyond simply identifying vocabulary. It requires thinking about the verbs that describe student actions. For instance, if a learning objective states that students will "explain the water cycle," the language function here is "explaining." However, simply identifying the verb is not enough. You must consider the complexity of the explanation required. Will students be expected to provide a simple definition, or a detailed, multi-step process? This deeper analysis informs your instructional planning and the types of supports you will need to provide.

When analyzing language demands, consider the following:

- What are the key academic vocabulary words and phrases students need to understand and use?
- What grammatical structures are necessary for students to effectively communicate their understanding?
- What discourse structures (e.g., paragraphing, argumentation, sequencing) are expected?
- What is the primary language function students will be performing to demonstrate their learning?

Common Language Function Categories and edTPA Examples

The edTPA often categorizes language functions to help teacher candidates focus their analysis and planning. While specific terminology might vary slightly, understanding these common categories provides a solid framework. Here are several frequently encountered language functions with specific edTPA-relevant examples.

Analyzing

Analyzing involves breaking down complex information into its constituent parts to understand relationships and patterns. For the edTPA, this could mean students dissecting a historical document to identify the author's purpose and intended audience, or examining scientific data to identify trends and outliers.

edTPA Example: In a middle school science lesson on ecosystems, students might be asked to analyze food webs to identify producers, consumers, and decomposers, and to explain the flow of energy. The language function is to "analyze the relationships within an ecosystem's food web and explain the energy transfer."

Comparing and Contrasting

This language function requires students to identify similarities and differences between two or more concepts, texts, or ideas. It's a fundamental skill for critical thinking and understanding relationships.

edTPA Example: For an elementary social studies lesson on community helpers, students could compare and contrast the roles of a firefighter and a police officer, identifying commonalities in their service to the community and differences in their specific duties. The language function is to "compare and contrast the responsibilities of different community helpers."

Explaining

Explaining involves making something clear or understandable, often by providing reasons, details, or examples. This is a very common language function across disciplines.

edTPA Example: In a high school English class studying a novel, students might be asked to explain how a specific character's dialogue reveals their personality traits, citing textual evidence. The language function is to "explain character development through dialogue, supported by textual evidence."

Justifying

Justifying requires students to provide reasons or evidence to support a claim, opinion, or decision. This often involves argumentation and persuasive reasoning.

edTPA Example: In a mathematics lesson on geometric proofs, students might need to justify each step in a proof using established geometric theorems and postulates. The language function is to "justify each step of a geometric proof using appropriate mathematical reasoning and theorems."

Predicting

Predicting involves stating what is likely to happen in the future based on available information or patterns. This function encourages students to apply their understanding and think ahead.

edTPA Example: In a reading comprehension activity for early elementary, students might read the beginning of a story and be asked to predict what will happen next, explaining their prediction based on clues in the text. The language function is to "predict the outcome of the story based on narrative

clues."

Summarizing

Summarizing involves condensing a longer piece of text or information into its main points, usually in one's own words. This demonstrates comprehension and the ability to identify key information.

edTPA Example: After reading a chapter in a history textbook, students might be required to summarize the main causes of a particular historical event, using key terms and concepts from the chapter. The language function is to "summarize the key causes of the event using academic vocabulary."

Synthesizing

Synthesizing is similar to summarizing but often involves combining information from multiple sources to create a new understanding or argument. It's about making connections and building a coherent whole.

edTPA Example: In a research project, students might synthesize information from several articles about climate change to construct an argument about its most significant impacts, citing evidence from each source. The language function is to "synthesize information from multiple sources to construct an argument about the impacts of climate change."

Persuading

Persuading involves presenting arguments and evidence to convince an audience to adopt a particular viewpoint or take a specific action.

edTPA Example: In a civics lesson, students might write a persuasive essay arguing for or against a proposed school policy, using evidence from research and logical reasoning to support their position. The language function is to "persuade the reader to adopt a specific viewpoint on a school policy."

Describing

Describing involves providing details about a person, place, object, event, or process. This function focuses on using precise language to create a clear picture.

edTPA Example: In a science class focusing on plant biology, students might be asked to describe the process of photosynthesis in detail, using specific scientific terminology. The language function is to "describe the process of photosynthesis using scientific vocabulary."

Classifying

Classifying involves grouping items or concepts based on shared characteristics or attributes. This demonstrates an understanding of categories and relationships.

edTPA Example: In a biology lesson on animal life, students could classify different animals based on their diet (herbivore, carnivore, omnivore) and explain the criteria used for each classification. The

language function is to "classify animals based on their dietary habits and explain the classification criteria."

Defining

Defining involves stating the meaning of a word or concept. This can be a foundational language function, especially for introducing new academic terms.

edTPA Example: In a literature class, students might define literary terms like "metaphor" or "simile," providing their own original examples to illustrate understanding. The language function is to "define literary terms and provide original examples."

Evaluating

Evaluating involves making judgments about the value, quality, or effectiveness of something based on criteria. This requires critical analysis and justification.

edTPA Example: In a history lesson on different forms of government, students might evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of democracy versus monarchy, using specific historical examples and criteria for effective governance. The language function is to "evaluate the effectiveness of different forms of government based on defined criteria."

Interpreting

Interpreting involves explaining the meaning of something, such as a text, data, or a piece of art, often by drawing inferences and making connections.

edTPA Example: After viewing a painting, students might interpret the artist's message or emotions conveyed through the use of color, composition, and subject matter, supporting their interpretation with visual evidence. The language function is to "interpret the artistic message of a painting using visual evidence."

Strategies for Supporting Language Functions in Your Lesson Plan

Once you have identified the language functions required for your lesson, the next critical step for the edTPA is to plan explicit strategies to support students in mastering them. This involves providing scaffolding and explicit instruction in academic language. These strategies should be woven throughout your lesson design, from the introduction of new concepts to the final assessment.

Scaffolding and Visual Aids

Scaffolding involves providing temporary support that is gradually removed as students become more proficient. Visual aids can be powerful tools for scaffolding language functions by making abstract concepts more concrete and providing a visual anchor for complex vocabulary and ideas.

- Use graphic organizers (e.g., Venn diagrams for comparing and contrasting, flow charts for explaining processes).
- Employ anchor charts that display key vocabulary and sentence frames related to the language function.
- Utilize realia, pictures, videos, and diagrams to support understanding of content and vocabulary.

Sentence Frames and Starters

Sentence frames and starters provide a linguistic scaffold, offering students a predictable structure for expressing their ideas. These are particularly beneficial for students who are learning English or who struggle with oral or written expression.

- For "explaining": "One reason for this is...", "This happens because...", "The process involves..."
- For "comparing and contrasting": "Both X and Y are similar because...", "However, X is different from Y in that..."
- For "justifying": "I believe this is true because...", "The evidence suggests that...", "This supports the idea that..."

Collaborative Learning Structures

Opportunities for students to practice language functions in a supportive, low-stakes environment are crucial. Collaborative learning structures allow students to interact with peers, share ideas, and refine their language use.

- Think-Pair-Share activities where students first think individually, then discuss with a partner, and finally share with the larger group.
- Jigsaw activities where students become experts on a part of the content and teach it to others.
- Small group discussions where students can engage in dialogue, ask questions, and build understanding collaboratively.

Vocabulary Development

Explicitly teaching academic vocabulary is fundamental to supporting language functions. This includes not only the meaning of words but also their morphology, syntax, and how they are used in academic contexts.

- Pre-teach key vocabulary before introducing the lesson content.
- Provide opportunities for students to use new vocabulary in context through speaking and writing.
- Use word walls, glossaries, and vocabulary notebooks.

Explicit Instruction of Academic Language

Beyond vocabulary, students need explicit instruction on the grammatical structures and discourse patterns associated with specific language functions. This means teaching them how to express themselves academically.

- Model the language function: Demonstrate how to perform the function yourself.
- Break down the components of the language function: Explain the specific language features needed.
- Provide opportunities for guided practice: Have students practice with teacher feedback.
- Encourage independent practice: Allow students to apply the learned function independently.

Assessing Language Functions in the edTPA

The edTPA requires you to assess how well students have met the language objectives related to the identified language functions. This assessment should be formative, providing information to guide further instruction, and summative, measuring learning at the end of the segment. Your assessment plan should clearly align with the language function you've targeted.

Consider these assessment approaches:

- **Formative Assessments:** Observe student discussions, review written responses to prompts using sentence frames, analyze student work on graphic organizers, and provide immediate feedback.
- **Summative Assessments:** Analyze student essays, presentations, or projects where they are expected to perform the target language function. Look for evidence of accurate use of academic vocabulary, appropriate grammatical structures, and clear articulation of ideas related to the function.
- **Rubrics:** Develop or utilize rubrics that specifically address the criteria for successful performance of the language function, including the use of academic language.

Connecting Language Functions to Student Learning

The ultimate goal of focusing on language functions in the edTPA is to demonstrate how they directly impact student learning. You need to articulate the connection between your instruction on language functions and the students' ability to engage with the content and demonstrate their understanding. This means showing that by supporting students' use of language, you are enhancing their comprehension, critical thinking, and overall academic achievement.

When discussing this connection in your edTPA commentary, consider:

- How does mastering this language function help students understand the content more deeply?
- How does supporting this language function contribute to students' ability to think critically about the subject matter?
- How do the planned supports enable students to express their learning effectively and demonstrate their understanding?

Conclusion

Putting it All Together: A Practical Approach to edTPA Language Function Examples

Successfully navigating the language function component of the edTPA requires a systematic and thoughtful approach. Begin by meticulously identifying the primary language function(s) essential for your learning segment. Then, analyze the specific linguistic demands associated with that function, considering vocabulary, grammar, and discourse. Crucially, design your lessons with explicit strategies to support students in meeting these demands. This includes employing scaffolding techniques like sentence frames, graphic organizers, and collaborative learning. Finally, your assessment plan must clearly indicate how you will measure students' ability to perform the target language function. By providing concrete edTPA language function examples and detailing your instructional and assessment practices, you demonstrate a deep understanding of how language drives learning. This comprehensive approach will showcase your readiness to support all students in achieving academic success.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is 'language function' in the context of the edTPA?

In the edTPA, 'language function' refers to the specific ways students use language to accomplish a

task, such as explaining, describing, arguing, comparing, contrasting, or summarizing. It's about the verbs of language use that demonstrate understanding and critical thinking.

Why is identifying language functions important for edTPA success?

Identifying language functions is crucial because the edTPA requires candidates to demonstrate how they will support students in developing and using academic language. By explicitly naming and planning for specific language functions, teacher candidates show they understand how language supports learning.

Can you provide some common examples of language functions found in edTPA lesson plans?

Common examples include: 'explain a process,' 'describe characteristics,' 'compare and contrast events,' 'justify a claim with evidence,' 'summarize key findings,' 'analyze cause and effect,' and 'evaluate a solution.'

How does a teacher candidate analyze student language to identify language functions?

Teacher candidates analyze student language by observing student discussions, written work, and responses to prompts. They look for patterns in how students are using words and phrases to convey meaning, identify the academic tasks they are performing, and then infer the underlying language functions.

What's the difference between 'language function' and 'language demand' in the edTPA?

Language function focuses on the verb of language use (what students are doing with language, e.g., explaining). Language demand refers to the linguistic complexity required to engage in that function, including vocabulary, syntax, and discourse structures.

How can I effectively support students in using specific language functions during a lesson for the edTPA?

Support can include providing sentence frames, graphic organizers, modeling the language function, offering opportunities for collaborative talk, and giving explicit feedback on how students are using language to achieve the task.

Where in the edTPA must I demonstrate my understanding of language functions?

Your understanding of language functions is demonstrated across multiple edTPA artifacts, particularly in Task 1 (Lesson Design) when you identify language demands and supports, and in Task 2 (Assessment) when you analyze student work and provide feedback related to language use.

How can I differentiate language function support for diverse learners according to edTPA requirements?

Differentiation involves scaffolding language functions for students who need more support (e.g., providing simpler sentence frames or visual aids) and extending language functions for students who are ready for more complex academic language use (e.g., challenging them to synthesize information or present counterarguments).

Additional Resources

Here are 9 book titles related to EDTPA Language Function examples, with descriptions:

1. Understanding Language Functions in the Classroom

This book explores the foundational concepts of language functions as they manifest in educational settings. It delves into how students use language to analyze, compare, contrast, explain, and justify their thinking across various subjects. The text provides practical frameworks for educators to identify and cultivate these essential academic language skills. It emphasizes the importance of explicit instruction in supporting student comprehension and production of complex academic discourse.

2. Academic Discourse: Bridging the Gap for English Learners

This resource focuses specifically on supporting English Learners in developing academic language functions. It offers strategies for scaffolding instruction to make complex tasks like summarizing, predicting, and evaluating more accessible. The book highlights how understanding language functions is crucial for ELs to participate fully in academic conversations and demonstrate their knowledge effectively. It provides research-based approaches to vocabulary development and sentence construction that support higher-order thinking.

3. The Art of Explaining: Teaching Students to Articulate Their Thinking

This book centers on the language function of explaining and its critical role in learning. It offers a variety of instructional techniques to help students develop clarity, coherence, and precision in their explanations. The author provides examples of how to model effective explaining, offer feedback, and create opportunities for students to practice this skill. The text emphasizes how mastering explanation leads to deeper conceptual understanding.

4. Analyzing and Synthesizing: Developing Critical Thinking Through Language

This title examines the language functions of analyzing and synthesizing, essential for critical thinking. It provides educators with strategies for teaching students how to break down information, identify patterns, and then recombine ideas into new understandings. The book offers examples of activities that encourage students to draw conclusions, make inferences, and construct arguments based on evidence. It underscores the power of language in fostering intellectual growth.

5. Comparing and Contrasting: Unlocking Meaning in Text and Discussion

This book delves into the language functions of comparing and contrasting, vital for making connections and distinctions. It offers practical lesson ideas and assessment strategies for helping students identify similarities and differences in various contexts. The author emphasizes how mastering these functions improves students' ability to analyze texts, understand relationships between concepts, and engage in sophisticated discussions. The text provides tools for differentiating instruction to meet diverse student needs.

6. Predicting and Justifying: Building Reasoning Skills Through Language

This resource focuses on the language functions of predicting and justifying, which are integral to scientific and mathematical reasoning. It provides educators with methods for teaching students to hypothesize, infer, and support their claims with evidence and logical reasoning. The book offers classroom examples of how to foster a culture of inquiry where students are encouraged to explain their thought processes. It highlights the connection between these language functions and the development of critical problem-solving skills.

7. Evaluating and Critiquing: Empowering Student Voices Through Language

This book explores the language functions of evaluating and critiquing, empowering students to form informed judgments. It provides strategies for teaching students to assess information, offer reasoned opinions, and engage in constructive criticism. The text offers practical ways to incorporate these functions into various subjects, encouraging students to move beyond simple recall to higher-level analysis. It emphasizes how developing these skills fosters independent thought and intellectual agency.

8. Language Functions Across the Curriculum: A Practical Guide for Teachers

This comprehensive guide offers educators a practical approach to integrating language functions across all subject areas. It provides explicit examples of how to foster functions like describing, sequencing, classifying, and interpreting within math, science, social studies, and ELA. The book offers ready-to-use templates, lesson starters, and assessment rubrics designed to support student development of academic language. It emphasizes the role of teachers in systematically building these skills to enhance overall academic achievement.

9. The Spectrum of Academic Language: From Simple to Complex Functions

This book maps out the progression of academic language functions, from foundational skills to more sophisticated forms of discourse. It helps educators understand how simpler functions like identifying and listing build towards more complex ones such as synthesizing and debating. The text offers instructional strategies for scaffolding and differentiating to support learners at all stages of language development. It provides a clear framework for planning instruction that systematically expands students' linguistic repertoires.

[Edtpa Language Function Examples](#)

Edtpa Language Function Examples

Related Articles

- [emily post guide to etiquette](#)
- [easy jeopardy questions and answers printable](#)
- [edpt practice test free](#)

[Back to Home](#)