



Equity in Gifted
Education



Co-funded by the
European Union



Co-funded by the
European Union

Academic Language Programme

Supporting Equity Through Academic Language

Many cognitively able students from disadvantaged socioeconomic, cultural or linguistic backgrounds remain underidentified in education. One important reason is that they may not yet possess the academic language needed to demonstrate their abilities in school. Although these students often have strong reasoning skills and learning potential, limited familiarity with the language of schooling can prevent them from fully participating in classroom discussions, understanding complex instructions and showing what they know.

The Academic Language Programme (ALP) was developed within the Erasmus+ project Equity in Gifted Education (EGE) to address this challenge. Rather than focusing solely on subject-specific terminology, the programme explicitly teaches general academic vocabulary—the words students encounter across subjects when they are asked to analyse, compare, justify, evaluate, interpret or conclude. Strengthening these language skills helps students access learning more effectively and provides fairer opportunities to demonstrate their cognitive potential.

A Research-Informed Approach

The Academic Language Programme combines insights from educational research with practical classroom experience gained in Belgium, Ireland, Kosovo and the Netherlands. Throughout the project, teachers implemented and refined academic language lessons, while researchers evaluated their impact on student participation, confidence and learning.

The programme is built around four evidence-informed teaching steps:

- **Present** new academic vocabulary in meaningful contexts.
- **Explain** words explicitly using examples, visualisation and discussion.
- **Consolidate** understanding through varied and engaging activities.
- **Check** both passive understanding and active use of the vocabulary.



Equity in Gifted
Education



Co-funded by the
European Union



Co-funded by the
European Union

This structured approach supports deep vocabulary learning while encouraging collaboration, reflection and active participation.

From Vocabulary to Opportunity

The programme encourages teachers to organise vocabulary around meaningful themes such as research skills, critical thinking, collaboration, presentation skills and future careers. Students actively apply new vocabulary through discussions, presentations, writing assignments, problem-solving tasks and collaborative learning activities, making academic language both relevant and transferable across subjects.

An important feature of the programme is differentiated instruction. Students enter school with different levels of exposure to academic language, even when they have similar cognitive abilities. By assessing prior knowledge, adapting instruction and providing appropriate challenge, teachers can ensure that every student continues to learn and develop. In this way, academic language becomes not only a language intervention, but also an equity intervention.

Resources

This section of the Resource Centre contains practical materials developed during the EGE project, including:

- **Academic Language Programme Manual**
- **Lesson Examples**
- **Classroom Activities**
- **Practice Examples from Belgium, Ireland, Kosovo and the Netherlands**
- **Research & Publications** (*coming soon*)

Together, these resources support teachers, school leaders and teacher educators in creating learning environments where students from all backgrounds have equitable opportunities to demonstrate and develop their talents.