



# IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE:

## WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework

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# Section 1: Introduction

This guide is designed to support you, as an educator, as you explore ways to implement the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition (the Framework, or the 2020 Edition, when referring to the publication). It assumes that you are familiar with the concepts and approaches introduced in the Framework and is meant to be used side by side with that publication. You do not need to be a specialist to use this guide. It's designed for classroom teachers, as well as for other professionals who work with multilingual learners.



**The 2020 Edition is available as a free [PDF on the WIDA website](#), and a print edition can be purchased from the [WIDA Store](#).**

This **Introduction** (Section 1) provides some background on the specific approaches used in this guide. Section 2 of this guide, **Planning for Language Development in Units and Lessons**, gives specific guidance and is organized around four instructional focus areas:

- Take an Asset-Based Approach and Apply the Can Do Philosophy (read the [Can Do Philosophy](#))
- Determine the Learning Destination: Language Expectations
- Determine How to Assess Language Growth: Proficiency Level Descriptors
- Consider Lesson Planning and Scaffolding Approaches

Each instructional focus area contains the following information:

- Introduction to the focus area
- A chart with suggested readings, reflections, and sample actions
- A sample resource for each area

## What are Colleagues Doing? Stories of Practice

Stories of Practice tell how real educators from across the U.S. are taking action to implement aspects of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework. Each focus area has different stories. Share them with your colleagues to inspire action!

**[Click here to read our stories!](#)**



Section 3 of this guide, **What Does Implementation Look Like?**, helps you envision key aspects of implementation related to the Big Ideas and components of the Framework. It offers examples and non-examples of implementation, along with prompts to guide evidence collection related to implementation.

Finally, this guide is accompanied by an **Administrator Supplement** that focuses on programmatic aspects of systemic ELD standards implementation for school and district administrators.

## Connecting the Big Ideas to Standards Implementation

The WIDA ELD Standards Framework is anchored in four **Big Ideas** (shown at right). You can read more about these Big Ideas in Section 1 of the 2020 Edition.

### Functional Approach to Language Development

When you work through the material in the next section of this guide (**Planning for Language Development in Units and Lessons**), you will find a particular focus on one Big Idea: that of a **Functional Approach to Language Development**.



The Framework uses a functional, genre-based approach to identify high-leverage ways language is used in school. You can in turn use that approach to guide your students to success via well-designed units and lessons. The examples and explanations in this guide are consistent with this approach.

Think for a moment about the kinds of texts a student encounters across the school day. At the secondary level, for example, students may encounter a historical text such as the *Declaration of Independence* in one class, a novel such as *Their Eyes Were Watching God* in another, and mathematical equations later on. Using all these varied kinds of texts requires sophisticated uses of language and literacy by both teachers and students (Moje et al., 2004).

The good news is that there are predictable patterns in the way language is used in many contexts of schooling. We can organize these patterns of language use into genres. Groups of similar genres can be further grouped into larger categories of genre families, or **Key Language Uses (KLUs)**; Narrate, Inform, Explain, Argue. Each of these groupings shares some characteristics, such as

- Purpose
- Organization
- Linguistic features

Recognizing these relatively predictable patterns of language use can help teachers plan for the kinds of linguistic resources students are likely to need for specific tasks or practices. The Framework takes a functional, genre-based approach to represent these typical patterns so that teachers can

- Identify and predict common organizational and linguistic resources students might need for classroom tasks and texts
- Plan and deliver units and lessons that offer students explicit and systematic explanations of the ways we use language in these disciplinary tasks and texts
- Scaffold learning to enable multilingual learners to reach future goals

## Integration of Content and Language

Section 2 of this guide also shines a light on the Big Idea of **Integration of Content and Language**. A robust curricular plan plays a large role in supporting multilingual learner success, and language development curriculum can be integrated into and driven by the local academic content curriculum.

From a wider perspective, well-designed curricula consider student learning over time—for example, thorough curricular maps across years of study. As this guide is focused on classroom application, we begin discussion at the unit level.

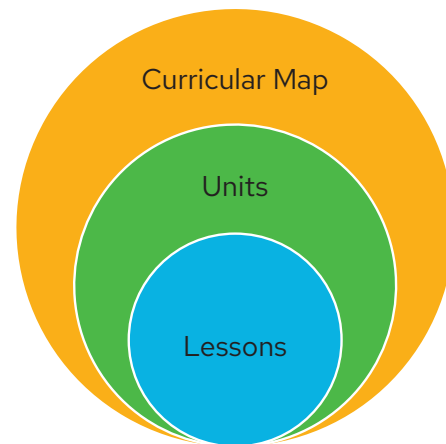
Understanding the unit plan allows teachers to ensure that a sequence of lessons is not circular or aimless, but is coherently organized and resourced to move students toward the unit’s desired learning outcomes. Looking at a sequence of lessons as organized through a unit helps teachers incorporate several necessary instructional design elements, and to consider their joint interplay. Examples include

- Incorporating student interests and preferences
- Understanding what knowledge, skills, and practices to focus on
- Logically sequencing lessons
- Taking linguistically and culturally sustaining approaches
- Using student data to inform instruction
- Creating environments and experiences to maximize engagement

## Collaboration Among Stakeholders and Equity for Multilingual Learners

Another Big Idea of the Framework is **Collaboration Among Stakeholders**. An important first step for classroom implementation of the Framework is for school leaders and teachers to establish a shared vision of what should be happening in classrooms serving multilingual learners. Broadly articulating such a shared vision supports and strengthens the necessary efforts for instructional change. This change will honor everyone’s commitment to **Equity for Multilingual Learners**.

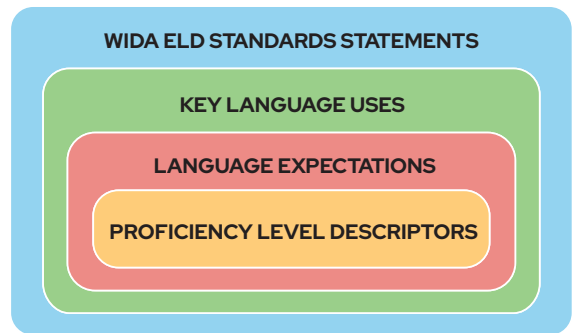
## Integration of Content and Language



[Read more about these Big Ideas in Section 1 of the 2020 Edition.](#)

# The Big Ideas and Framework Components as Organizing Themes

The WIDA ELD Framework consists of four components, ranging from broad to narrow in scope. You can read about the components of the Framework in Section 2 of the 2020 Edition, or [on the WIDA website](#). These components work as an organizing structure for the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, and together they present a comprehensive picture of language development.



Similarly, the Framework components also serve as an organizing structure for Section 3 of this guide, **What Does Implementation Look Like**. Section 3 includes one-page tables for each Big Idea and each component of the Framework. These tables include examples of implementation, prompts for evidence collection, and cross references to specific sections of the 2020 Edition. As you develop units and lessons using the tools and approaches presented in Section 2, you can check your consistency using the tables in Section 3.



**Dr. Kathy Gull** @KathyGullESL · Oct 11

The EL office spent time w/ department chairs & EL teacher leaders using @WIDA\_UW big ideas to reflect on the current status of the EL programs in their schools & identify areas for growth. #fcps\_EL



<https://twitter.com/KathyGullESL/status/1579784964455157768> Used with permission



## Section 2: Planning for Language Development in Units and Lessons

This section is divided into four different instructional areas that highlight select aspects that are critical to strong standards-based instruction. They are not meant to be exhaustive but can provide a sequence that you can follow as you plan units and lessons. Use them for inspiration and ideas.

Notice that the instructional areas are presented in a sequence that follows a *backward design process*. A backward design process begins when you identify your end goal and then work backwards to figure out the steps needed to achieve that goal. Educators first identify what students are expected to be able to do (the learning destination). From there, they work backwards to create lessons that move learners toward this goal.

In the sequence shown below, the backwards design process actually begins with Step 2. Step 1 reminds you to consider the WIDA Can Do Philosophy throughout the process. With all this said, the sequence is not meant to be prescriptive.





# Take an Asset-Based Approach and Apply the Can Do Philosophy



Mel Tera  
@meltera2

Yes! Our identities are paramount 🎉



6:48 PM · Oct 23, 2021

<https://twitter.com/meltera2/status/1452059450940985344> Used with permission.

## Introduction

Teaching and learning should revolve around who multilingual learners are, and the tremendous strengths they bring to the classroom. Educators can leverage the backgrounds, experiences, interests, intersectional identities, and funds of knowledge multilingual learners bring. Using their linguistic and cultural resources in curricular design, educators can instruct students more responsively, resulting in increased student independence, agency, understanding of multiple perspectives, and critical lenses with which students make sense of the word and the world.

In action, taking an asset-based approach and applying the WIDA Can Do Philosophy means that educators

- Recognize, respect, and affirm students' identities, experiences, and strengths
- Build on the academic and linguistic knowledge and skills that students bring
- Set high expectations and provide access to challenging academic content for all students
- Scaffold up and build toward student autonomy in meeting college, career, and civic goals





## What are Colleagues Doing? Stories of Practice

**The Ripple Effect of Cultural Responsiveness:** Mónica Farris, English Learner Teacher at Weeden Elementary, Alabama, describes some ways the school takes an asset-based approach and applies the Can Do Philosophy—including collaborating with families, braiding the schoolwide Heritage Day Celebration into the broader curriculum, and leveraging students' home languages, cultures, and previous experiences into every day instruction.

[Click here to read my story!](#)



## Suggested Reading, Reflection, and Action

Take an Asset-Based Approach and Apply the Can Do Philosophy	
Read, Annotate, Reflect, Discuss	Sample Collaborative and Individual Actions
<p> <a href="#">WIDA Can Do Philosophy</a></p> <p> WIDA Focus Bulletin: <a href="#">Embedding the Can Do Cycle Throughout the School Year</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is it important for educators to have a Can Do Philosophy? Why is this especially important for multilingual learners?</li> <li>• What do you already do to embed students’ abilities, interests, and identities into the curriculum?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a shared understanding of what it means to take an asset-based approach by applying the Can Do Philosophy—individually, with a partner, with a team, and the whole school.</li> <li>• Following suggestions from the text’s resource banks, create planning routines that weave student assets into units of learning (e.g., students’ languages, cultures, experiences, intersectional identities, knowledge, skills, and interests).</li> <li>• Create asset-framed student portraits, such as the ones described in the reading, or by using the sample template on the next page. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What purpose will the portraits serve?</li> <li>• What information should be included?</li> <li>• How will student and family voices be included?</li> <li>• How often should portraits be updated? By whom?</li> <li>• How can these portraits be easily accessible to educators?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p> <a href="#">WIDA Guiding Principles of Language Development</a> <i>(available in 14 languages and illustrated versions)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which of the Guiding Principles resonates with you the most? Why?</li> <li>• What might each of these principles look like in action? Provide examples from your context.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a team discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the team applying the guiding principles? Where and how can their application be strengthened?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Print the WIDA resource <a href="#">Illustrated Guiding Principles of Language Development</a> and post around the school in shared spaces.</li> </ul>
<p> WIDA Resource: <a href="#">Gathering and Reflecting on Families’ Language and Cultural Goals</a> (<a href="#">English</a> and <a href="#">Spanish</a>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways do you already collaborate with families?</li> <li>• In what ways are current discussions inclusive, and culturally and linguistically responsive?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use ideas from the text to collaborate with families in their preferred languages.</li> <li>• After illustrating ways the school community is enacting the Guiding Principles, ask students and families how those efforts could be strengthened.</li> <li>• Ask families to share oral stories and connect this practice to language development.</li> <li>• Explore additional materials on the WIDA website, on the <a href="#">WIDA Family Engagement</a> page.</li> </ul>

## Sample Resource

Use the question guides to gather information about students' assets to inform learning. There are many reasons to gather student information and many modes for organizing this information. Whether through an individual student portrait, a classroom portrait at the beginning of the school year, or a community quilt for an upcoming topic of study, it's essential to consider how this information can inform student learning. This tool offers some questions to consider when planning a unit of study while using the Framework.

Beginning of a Unit		
Assets	Considerations for Teachers	Considerations for Students
Linguistic	<p>What formal and informal literacy experiences and abilities do students already bring, both in English and their other languages? How can you leverage those abilities to transfer and support learning in your classroom?</p> <p>What is the most prominent Key Language Use of the unit? How can you build on what students can already do to Argue, Explain, Narrate, and Inform?</p> <p>What are the language expectations/goals for all students?</p> <p>Where are the opportunities to leverage and incorporate translanguageing?</p>	<p>What languages do you prefer to use for speaking or writing to explore this topic?</p> <p>Have you read or heard about this topic (in any language)?</p>
Experiential	<p>What are the opportunities to bridge students' previous/personal experiences to the content?</p> <p>What are the touchpoints to other units?</p>	<p>What connections do you or your family have to this topic?</p> <p>Have you learned about this topic? What do you remember?</p>
Cultural	<p>What opportunities exist to bridge students' cultures and identities to the content?</p> <p>Who in the school or wider community may be able to provide multiple perspectives about this topic?</p>	<p>What are some of your home/community connections to this topic?</p> <p>How might this topic impact your community beyond school?</p>
Social/ Emotional	<p>What questions do students have about the topic?</p> <p>What opportunities exist to connect students' interests and strengths to the content?</p>	<p>Why do you think people should care about this topic?</p> <p>What perspectives related to this topic would you value?</p>

During the Unit	
Considerations for Teachers	Considerations for Students
<p>How will I integrate students' interests, assets, experiences, and identities to the learning environment?</p> <p>What functions and features of language will students utilize?</p> <p>How will I ensure that students engage in multiple modes of communication when working independently and collaboratively during learning events?</p>	<p>What peers might you want to work with?</p> <p>What learning strategies do you think might be helpful as you learn about this topic?</p> <p>What interests and experiences do you have that connect to this topic?</p>

End of Unit	
Considerations for Teachers	Considerations for Students
<p>How did the assessment reveal what students know?</p> <p>How was the success criteria culturally and linguistically appropriate for all students?</p> <p>How were students involved in the assessment process?</p> <p>What Key Language Uses/Language Expectations need to be revisited? How will this occur?</p>	<p>How was this unit connected to you? How did the teacher value and incorporate previous experiences/interests? What could be improved?</p> <p>Were you able to demonstrate what you know about the topic at the end of the unit? Are there different/more helpful ways to demonstrate what you have learned?</p>

Adapted from: WIDA Focus Bulletin: Embedding the Can Do Process Throughout the School Year

# Determine the Learning Destination: Getting to Language Expectations

## Introduction

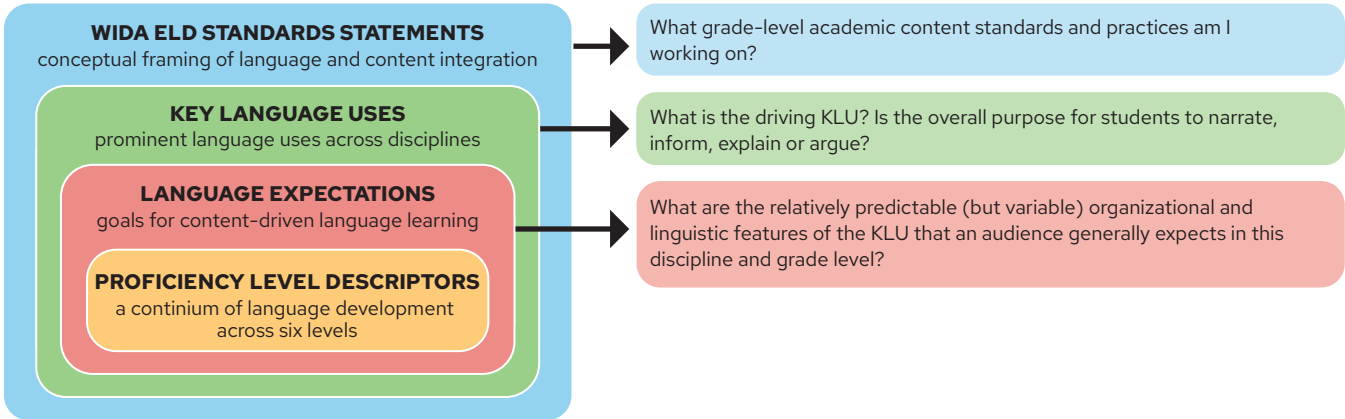
Having a clear understanding of content and language goals allows educators to use backward design to better align curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005); incorporate classroom assessment opportunities to be responsive to student learning during instruction; and promote both content and language growth (Metz, 2016). Implicit or hidden expectations are often misunderstood. When learning goals are explicit and visible, instruction becomes more responsive to students, and student engagement and ownership of learning increases (Birch, Hattie, & Masters, 2015).

Another way to think about this is to consider how you plan a road trip. When you go on a road trip, first you identify a destination, and only after you know what your desired end point is do you use a map and consider possibilities of various routes. In the same way, agreed-upon, formal long-term learning goals should be identified before lessons are designed and/or delivered. Once we a) know our students and b) understand what our content and language goals are, we are better positioned to develop assessments, learning sequences, materials, and methods, and to respond to learner variability by scaffolding learning.

## Use the Framework as a Guide

The Framework can serve as your guide when determining the learning destination. Let’s examine three components and think about some guiding questions.

- ELD Standards Statements broadly remind teachers that the focus of instruction for multilingual learners, like for all students, begins by clarifying the goals of the grade-level academic curriculum: what state academic content standards, practices, texts, and tasks is the unit targeting? Ask yourself: What grade-level content standards and practices am I working on?
- Once the unit’s content standards, goals, and tasks are clear, KLU (Narrate, Inform, Explain, Argue) help teachers prioritize what language to focus on, and to organize unit and lesson plans around this. Ask yourself: What is the driving KLU? Is the overall purpose for students to narrate, inform, explain or argue?
- Whereas in the content areas the formally agreed-upon, long-term educational goals are expressed through state academic content standards (or local curricular goals), the Framework’s language development goals are expressed through Language Expectations. Ask yourself: What are the relatively predictable (but variable) organizational and linguistic features of the KLU that an audience generally expects in this discipline and grade level?



## Consult Other WIDA Resources

For an illustrated explanation of this concept, take a look at [What can collaboration look like with the WIDA ELD Standards Framework?](#) In this infographic, two teachers collaborate to determine language destinations for their students.

**What Can Collaboration Look Like with the WIDA ELD Standards Framework?**

**Steps 1-6**

- 1** Ms. Khoury is a 7th grade science teacher. Next month she will teach a unit called "Where does food come from and where does it go next?" She collaborates with Mr. Renner, the ESL teacher, on ways to incorporate language development into her daily lessons, and to expand the ways multilingual learners can engage meaningfully with the content. Together, they use the ELD Standards Framework to focus their approach.
- 2** Ms. Khoury gathers her unit plans and notes, along with the 2020 Edition. She reaches out to Mr. Renner and schedules time for collaborative planning.
- 3** They start by identifying the academic content standards that students will work toward in the unit, and locate the corresponding ELD Standards Statements. In this case, they are Standard 1: Language for Social and Instructional Purposes, and Standard 4: Language for Science.
- 4** They ask themselves, "How are students expected to use language to act and talk like in the unit, and locate the corresponding ELD Standards Statements. In this case, they are Standard 1: Language for Social and Instructional Purposes, and Standard 4: Language for Science." They ask themselves, "How are students expected to use language to act and talk like in the unit, and locate the corresponding ELD Standards Statements. In this case, they are Standard 1: Language for Social and Instructional Purposes, and Standard 4: Language for Science."
- 5** **Tasks...**
  - maintain progress trackers
  - read informational texts
  - ask and answer questions
  - participate in discussions
- 6** They ask themselves, "What Key Language Uses best reflect how students will interact with language?" Mr. Renner and Ms. Khoury also take note of how both the content standards and the science unit's summative assessment focus on explaining how things work and why they happen, so they decide on the Key Language Use: **Explain**.

**Steps 7-12**

- 7** They also explore Language Expectations for Social and Instructional Purposes (ELD Standard 1: ELD S1A-12.Explain), and note that ELD-S1 functions will naturally interweave into daily lessons as students interact, take notes, and engage in inquiry and discussion. They are reminded that students communicate to learn, but also to convey personal needs and wants, affirm their identities, and form and maintain relationships.
- 8** They also explore Language Expectations for Social and Instructional Purposes (ELD Standard 1: ELD S1A-12.Explain), and note that ELD-S1 functions will naturally interweave into daily lessons as students interact, take notes, and engage in inquiry and discussion. They are reminded that students communicate to learn, but also to convey personal needs and wants, affirm their identities, and form and maintain relationships.
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- 12** Now that their ultimate language destination for the unit is clear, the teachers plan to meet again to review how a language lens is embedded in the unit's sequence of lessons. They will take into account students' backgrounds, experiences, cultures, and home languages, as well as their English language proficiency levels.

To learn more about the framework components, visit the [ELD Standards Framework webpage](#).

Get a copy of the 2020 Edition and related resources on the [2020 Edition webpage](#).

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## What are Colleagues Doing? Stories of Practice





**All Plants and Animals Grow Over Time:** Molly Ross and Kait Zanterkia of Randolph Public Schools, Massachusetts, discuss reflective practices, lifelong learning, and a targeted approach to determine the content and language goals for a first-grade science unit.

**Why Do Countries Need Each Other? Complex Trade Relationships:** In this video vignette, Elizabeth Folberg, English Learner Teacher at Stoner Prairie Elementary, Wisconsin, shares her approach to implementing the Framework in a third-grade social studies unit. Grounded in the unit's content learning goal, Ms. Folberg systematically teaches language in service of content learning. Check out the video to see how Ms. Folberg designs and delivers instruction based on Key Language Uses, Language Expectations, mentor texts, and scaffolding approaches.

[Click here to read our stories!](#)



## Suggested Reading, Reflection, and Action

Determine the Language Learning Destination	
Read, Annotate, Reflect, Discuss	Sample Collaborative and Individual Actions
<p> Section 2 of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework: Understanding the Framework (pp. 23-35)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are the components of the Framework organized?</li> <li>• What role might each component play when planning the integration of content and language?</li> <li>• What do you notice about the relationship between Language Expectations, Language Functions, and Language Features?</li> </ul>	<p>In team meetings, review existing units to identify opportunities to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate across classrooms for content and language development.</li> <li>• Enhance the language lens of units of learning.</li> <li>• Note where and how each KLU appears in the curriculum.</li> <li>• Build on shared Language Expectations across classrooms.</li> <li>• Share resources, ideas, and activities with a focus on instruction for multilingual learners.</li> </ul>
<p> Section 4 of the Framework: Sample Collaborative Planning Process (pp. 234-250)</p> <p> The infographic <a href="#">What Can Collaboration Look Like?</a> summarizes the planning process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you notice about Ms. Khoury and Mr. Renner’s use of the Framework?</li> <li>• How might the collaborative planning steps and questions on page 237 inform your planning and teaching practices?</li> </ul> <p> Extend your exploration with this WIDA Voices From The Field article: <a href="#">Collaboration As A Tool For Equity And Language Development</a></p>	<p>Select a unit to practice going through the Collaborative Planning Process. Keep planning simple by focusing on just a few items (e.g., 1 driving KLU for the unit, 1-2 Language Functions , and no more than a few Language Features).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the unit’s academic content standards and practices.</li> <li>• Identify the unit’s culminating task(s) and major learning events.</li> <li>• Identify the driving KLU for the culminating task(s).</li> <li>• Using grade-level cluster materials, identify corresponding Language Expectations.</li> <li>• Analyze the unit’s sequence of lessons to ensure they build the content and language necessary for students to be successful on assessment tasks.</li> </ul>



# Sample Resource

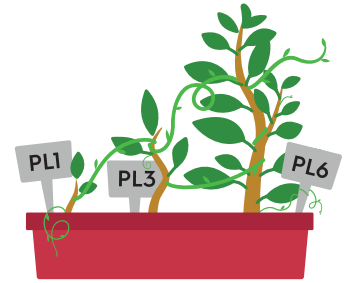
To design a coherent instructional plan, we want to start with the end in mind, not only for academic content, but also for the language that students need to accomplish tasks. This **Sample Unit Template** is a modification of a widely used model, Understanding by Design (UbD) (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). This streamlined sample focuses on sharpening the language development lens of a content-driven unit. Use it as a foundation for your own unit template, simplify it, or add components, based on local expectations and needs. For example, Geneva Valvo of Waltham Public Schools has included a “social justice/community engagement section,” and Tamara Coburn of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools has included “technology integrations” and “opportunities for student ownership of learning.” Instructional Focus Area 1: Take an Asset-Based Approach and Apply the Can Do Philosophy, should be present throughout all learning stages and activities.

<b>UbD Stage 1: Desired Results:</b> <i>This section is informed by Instructional Focus Area 2, Determine the Language Learning Destination.</i>		
<b>Academic Content Standards, Practices, Goals:</b>	<b>Corresponding Language Expectations:</b>	<b>Essential Question:</b>
<b>Mentor Text(s):</b> What specific content and language would you like students to produce? Select or create a mentor text to serve as a model.		<b>Language Knowledge, Skills, and Practices:</b> Analyze the mentor text to prioritize language knowledge, skills, and practices you’d like students to develop in this unit. What are students expected to do with language? How so?
<b>UbD Stage 2: Evaluative Criteria:</b> <i>This section is informed by Instructional Focus Area 3 (below), Determine How to Assess Language Growth.</i>		
<b>Evaluative Criteria:</b> Use grade-level cluster Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs) to determine the criteria by which you will know multilingual learners are progressing toward Language Expectations. Notice that PLDs measure growth over variable periods of time (e.g., months to years), so you will not necessarily see students move from one PLD level to the next in each unit.		<b>Evidence of student learning:</b> What types of fair and authentic classroom assessment tasks, embedded in learning, best lend themselves to collecting the kinds of evidence from student work that can show progress toward unit goals, as determined by the evaluative criteria?
<b>Stage 3: Create the Learning Plans:</b> <i>This section is informed by Instructional Focus Area 4 (below), Considerations in Lesson Planning and Scaffolding</i>		
<p><b>Summary of Learning Events:</b> Once desired results and evaluative criteria are clearly established, lay out a sequence of lessons that will challenge and support multilingual learners as they progress toward goals. You may begin by simply listing a summary of learning events. Before jumping in, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways will you take an asset-based approach?</li> <li>• How can learning experiences be culturally and linguistically responsive?</li> <li>• How might a pedagogical structure like the Teaching and Learning Cycle (described in Instructional Focus Area 4) support development of lessons?</li> </ul>		

# Determine How to Assess Language Growth: Proficiency Level Descriptors

## Introduction

A comprehensive assessment system is comprised of a range of measurement approaches to provide a variety of evidence to inform educational decision-making (National Research Council, 2001). It can include, for example, placement (e.g., the [WIDA Screener](#)), diagnostic, formative, interim (e.g., [WIDA Model](#)), and once-a-year summative assessments (e.g., [WIDA ACCESS for ELLs](#)).



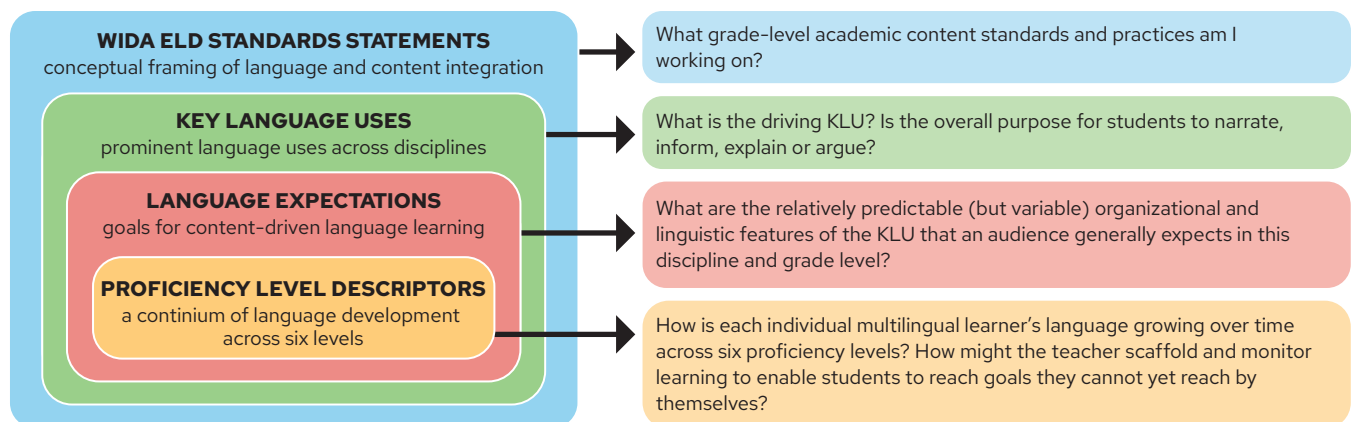
However, in this section, when discussing language assessment, we are referring to classroom assessment practices that are embedded in learning. As used here, classroom assessment is a collaborative, interactive, multistep process of planning, gathering, analyzing, and interpreting information as a precursor for taking action. It involves a variety of methods to determine the extent to which multilingual learners are developing language, but its purpose is not to grade a student’s language performance. Its overriding purpose is to enhance teaching and learning, including to:

- Determine student progress (e.g., through teacher and student self-assessment)
- Offer actionable feedback
- Set next instructional goals and approaches
- Inform scaffolding and differentiation (both planned and contingent)
- Collaboratively plan next teacher and student moves
- Put students more effectively in charge of their own learning
- Communicate with families about student progress

Language development is a fluid and dynamic affair, often occurring as a non-linear, variable process over years. *Asset-based educators* understand that all students learn through various ways and at different paces. During demonstrations of learning, asset-based educators support students to show what they know and can do through multiple, multimodal means of engagement and expression. They then collaboratively analyze and use data to continue to look forward by setting new goals with students to drive development based on what students have shown they can do.

## Understand the Relationship between Language Expectations and Proficiency Level Descriptors

From many possible discussions on various aspects of assessment, we focus on the Framework’s criteria for interpreting student growth toward Language Expectations: the **Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs)**.



As you think about PLDs, ask yourself, How is each individual multilingual learner's language growing over time across six proficiency levels? How might the teacher scaffold and monitor learning to enable students to reach goals they cannot yet reach by themselves? Language Expectations tell us what students are expected to do with language and how they might do it. Whereas **Language Expectations** offer goals for how all students might use language (e.g., we would like all students to develop complex scientific explanations), PLDs describe how individual multilingual learners might develop over time across six levels of English language proficiency. If Language Expectations are language goals, we can think of PLDs as language growth criteria. They help us answer the question: to what extent is each multilingual learner expanding what they can do with language in relation to Language Expectations?

## Collaborative Practice

Consistent analysis of student work samples and discussion of how to use them for assessment and instructional purposes can take place in the context of collaborative practices—for example, through common planning time, curriculum development sessions, language assessment team meetings, professional learning communities, and/or teacher initiatives (e.g., through lesson study among groups of teachers). Establishing regular, formalized opportunities for collaboration among teachers may lead to more effective long-term assessment planning and a more powerful approach for developing a balanced assessment system (Gottlieb, 2012). Given that both content and language teachers integrate content and language standards to drive and scaffold instruction for multilingual learners, collaboration in a school's assessment system is critical to ensure coherence for instructional decision-making.

### What are Colleagues Doing? Stories of Practice





**Community Helpers:** Helen Lannie Simpson, English Learner Director at Burke County, North Carolina, discusses collaborative efforts to develop language development portfolios based on the Framework. Mrs. Simpson brings readers to Mrs. Peeler's class to illustrate how one student's use of the KLU Inform grows over a period of four months.

**Collaboration among Teachers and Districts:** Tamara Coburn, Lead ESL Teacher at Winston-Salem/Forsyth County, North Carolina, introduces KLUs to teachers, and then with her team engages in inter-district collaboration with Ms. Simpson to create digital language development portfolios.

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## Suggested Reading, Reflection, and Action

Determine Student Language Growth	
Read, Annotate, Reflect, Discuss	Sample Collaborative and Individual Actions
<p> Section 2 of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework: Introduction to PLDs (pp. 31-34)</p> <p> <a href="#">WIDA FAQ Series: Proficiency Level Descriptors</a></p> <p> Section 3 of the Framework: Become familiar with PLDs for your grade-level cluster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does language change across proficiency levels?</li> <li>• How might the PLDs be used with students and families?</li> <li>• How might the PLDs be used for co-reflecting, co-planning, and co-assessing?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For a playful activity to help colleagues become more deeply acquainted with PLDs, first print a paper copy of the PLDs for the grade-level cluster they teach. Then, take scissors to cut up the PLDs into separate rows.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give a small group of teachers the cut and mixed PLD row.                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can they tell which row belongs to which dimension of language?</li> <li>• If you cut up the levels, can the group put back together the order of levels 1 to 6?</li> <li>• What do they notice about how language changes from one PLD box to the next?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Challenge zone: cut up and mix all PLD boxes, from all rows. Can the group put the whole chart back together in the original rows and from levels 1-6?</li> <li>• What insights and questions does this activity bring up for your group?</li> </ul> <p>PLD levels are not meant to be static boxes permanently categorizing what students can do, but a general measure of student language performance at a specific point in time—to be supplemented and adjusted as student language use evolves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review student portraits, or notes you keep about students. When the school year began, were students assigned to a specific PLD level?</li> <li>• Look at recent student work samples and choose one PLD row to focus on. Which level best matches each sample? Point to evidence to support your interpretation and discuss with colleagues.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you notice students can currently do with language?</li> <li>• How might you decide on next learning goals?</li> <li>• What types of supports and scaffolding might best serve this students’ content and language growth?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Discuss with colleagues: how PLDs can help you notice how student language is growing throughout and across school years.</li> </ul> <p>Take a look at the sample resource on the next page: it’s a PLD graphic organizer to support analysis of student work.</p>
<p> WIDA Focus Bulletin: <a href="#">Supporting Multilingual Learners’ Language Growth Through Language Development Portfolios</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you currently do to notice, interpret, and document language growth of multilingual learners?</li> <li>• What ideas might you want to try with language development portfolios to measure language growth over time?</li> </ul>	<p>PLD levels are not meant to be static boxes permanently categorizing what students can do, but a general measure of student language performance at a specific point in time—to be supplemented and adjusted as student language use evolves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review student portraits, or notes you keep about students. When the school year began, were students assigned to a specific PLD level?</li> <li>• Look at recent student work samples and choose one PLD row to focus on. Which level best matches each sample? Point to evidence to support your interpretation and discuss with colleagues.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you notice students can currently do with language?</li> <li>• How might you decide on next learning goals?</li> <li>• What types of supports and scaffolding might best serve this students’ content and language growth?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Discuss with colleagues: how PLDs can help you notice how student language is growing throughout and across school years.</li> </ul> <p>Take a look at the sample resource on the next page: it’s a PLD graphic organizer to support analysis of student work.</p>

## Sample Resource

Use this Proficiency Level Descriptor (PLD) Graphic Organizer to analyze and make notes about student work.

<b>Analyzing Student Work with Dimensions of Language in the Proficiency Level Descriptors</b> <i>Start small: begin by just focusing on one row</i>					
Dimensions of Language	PLD Criteria	Sample Features: Look for...	What Can Students Currently Do?	Next Teaching and Learning Moves	Strategies to Support and Scaffold Learning
<b>Discourse Dimension</b>	<b>Organization:</b> How does this student arrange texts that are increasingly coherent, logical, and clear?	Whole text organizational patterns, such as introduction, body, conclusion; claim, evidence, reasoning.			
	<b>Cohesion:</b> How does this student connect ideas throughout a text?	Cohesive devices such as demonstratives, repetition, pronoun synonyms, antonyms, connectors, ellipsis, substitution, omission.			
	<b>Density:</b> How does this student use language to elaborate or condense ideas?	Elaboration or condensing of ideas through adjectives, prepositional phrases, noun groups, classifiers, embedded clauses, nominalization.			
<b>Sentence Dimension</b>	<b>Grammatical complexity:</b> How does this student extend or enhance meaning through sentence construction?	Simple, compound, complex sentences; dependent and independent clauses; coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.			
<b>Word/Phrase Dimension</b>	<b>Precision:</b> How does this student use everyday, cross-disciplinary, and technical language to convey precise meanings?	A variety of words and phrases, such as adverbials of time, manner, and place; verb types; abstract nouns; collocations; idiomatic expressions, shades of meaning; and every day, cross-disciplinary, and technical language.			

# Considerations for Lesson Planning and Scaffolding Approaches

## Introduction

Once educators have a solid understanding of goals and assessment criteria through which to determine growth, they are better positioned to develop or refine a sequence of learning experiences that prepares and supports students to make progress toward those goals.

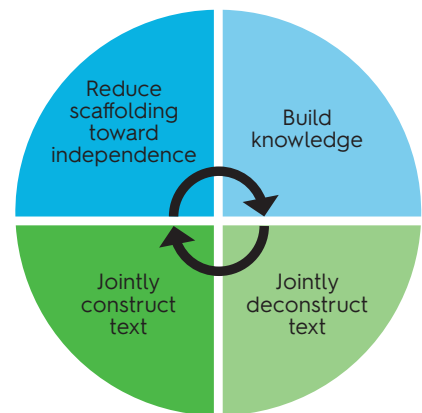
To begin planning a series of lessons with multilingual learners in mind, it is helpful to have a pedagogical structure that systematically supports both content and language development. One such example is the **Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC)**, which can be used to explicitly teach how language functions in service of disciplinary learning (e.g., an explanation in science).

The TLC offers general guidance to plan sequences of learning that rely on an iterative gradual release of responsibility model. TLCs can appear in a variety of formats (Accurso & Gebhard, 2020; Brisk, 2015, 2022; Derewianka, 2018; Gibbons, 2014; Martin & Rose, 2005; Spycher, 2017)—here we present a succinct version that captures its four main types of activities:

- Build knowledge
- Jointly deconstruct (multimodal) text
- Jointly construct (multimodal) text
- Gradually reduce scaffolding toward independent practice

TLC phases are not meant to be a rigid process: teachers and students come in and out of phases and cycles as they weave through heavier or lighter scaffolding and move toward autonomy. *Scaffolding* is a temporary, flexible support that bridges the gap between what a student can currently do and what they will be able to do independently at some point in the future. It is an interactive approach that is tailored to a variety of learning situations to maintain a balance of just enough support and student autonomy, where supports are gradually lessened as students move toward independent practice (Vygotsky, 1978). Each phase of the TLC is further explored in pages that follow.

The Teaching and Learning Cycle







## What are Colleagues Doing? Stories of Practice

**Coaching Reflections about Scaffolding:** Paula Merchant and Allison Audet, coaches for the Transformative Learning Collaborative, Massachusetts, consider the importance of macro and micro scaffolding. The coaches describe their collaborative work with teachers to unpack the Framework to determine clear language development goals and assessment criteria—then, in relation to these goals, they highlight the centrality of student-teacher interactions to drive a responsive and contingent pedagogical approach to scaffolding.

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## Suggested Reading, Reflection, and Action

Considerations for Lesson Planning and Scaffolding Approaches	
Read, Annotate, Reflect, Discuss	Sample Collaborative and Individual Actions
<p> Section 4 of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework: Ideas for lesson planning and classroom supports (pp. 249-250).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What scaffolding practices have you successfully implemented?</li> <li>• In what ways do the questions and ideas in pages 249-250 prompt specific actions you might apply?</li> </ul> <p> Examine the Annotated Language Samples for your grade-level cluster.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways do they make language for learning content visible?</li> <li>• How might they guide your approach to deconstructing mentor texts?</li> </ul> <p> WIDA Focus Bulletin: <a href="#">Scaffolding Learning for Multilingual Students in Math</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does it mean to balance challenge and support?</li> <li>• What is the difference between “scaffolding up” and “differentiating down?”</li> <li>• In what ways do you scaffold up with macro-scaffolding practices? With micro-scaffolding practices?</li> </ul> <p> WIDA Focus Bulletin: <a href="#">Multiliteracies: A Glimpse into Language Arts Bilingual Classrooms</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do multiliteracies support student participation in the learning experience?</li> <li>• How do multiliteracies help create access to appropriate grade-level learning for students?</li> <li>• What strong examples have you observed in classrooms about the use of multiliteracies?</li> </ul>	<p>Sound instructional planning relies on two important forms of scaffolding:</p> <p>Macro-scaffolding practices refer to instructional planning before a lesson (e.g., during yearly, unit, or lesson planning). Plan for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A balance between challenge and support.</li> <li>• Bridging from familiar, valued experiences to new ones.</li> <li>• Ways of using language that move toward complexity.</li> <li>• Tasks that logically build on one another to support students to move toward independent practice.</li> <li>• Offering multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression.</li> </ul> <p>Micro-scaffolding practices refer to interactions with students during a lesson. Develop in-the-moment practices that are responsive to students’ ever-evolving zones of proximal development (Vygotsky 1978):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect concepts to students’ experiences to make them concrete.</li> <li>• Prompt students to recap and use all their language resources.</li> <li>• Cue students to stretch their language use as they share their thinking.</li> <li>• Model language use by recasting students’ contributions.</li> <li>• Signal students to take responsibility for collaborative learning roles.</li> <li>• Share (multimodal) samples of student work for analysis with colleagues. Discuss ways students successfully express content learning, as well as specific learning goals you might set next.</li> </ul>



## Sample Resource

Use the tables in the next few pages to explore ideas for each phase of the Teaching and Learning Cycle. Which will you take up? As you explore each phase, you can find brief examples from a first-grade classroom in the midst of a science unit on life cycles. In these examples, which appear in a blue box, two educators use the TLC cycle to plan ways of highlighting and supporting language in support of learning during this unit.

<p><b>Build knowledge about the topic:</b> Given the unit’s content and language goals, early lesson sequences can be designed to prepare students to engage in new disciplinary tasks through an abundance of engaging, hands-on, interactive, and responsive experiences.</p>	
<p>Build <i>foundational</i> student knowledge about content and language and create a common basis from which to launch into new, deeper learning.</p> <p>For example...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow student curiosity to shape discussion and inquiry.</li> <li>• Leverage students’ full linguistic repertoires (e.g., home and other languages, translanguaging, and multimodality, such as diagrams, interviews, discussions of videos, podcasts, or photos).</li> <li>• Engage in ample oral discussion to elicit funds of knowledge—in pairs, small, or large groups (e.g., turn-and-talk; Socratic seminar on what students already know, gallery walk).</li> <li>• Use a K-W-L chart, engage in think-write/draw-share, or complete a jigsaw activity where groups of students share their expertise.</li> <li>• Ask an expert: invite families and community members to share their experience with this topic.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ideas for collecting artifacts of student learning:</b> During the first few lessons of a new unit, you may want to collect a baseline sample of student work, eliciting what students already know about the content topic and Key Language Use (or genre). Then, consider: based on this baseline data, what adjustments might you make in the upcoming lesson plans? As lessons build, teachers and students can compare evolving drafts of student work to this baseline artifact to notice, interpret, and document content and language growth.</p> <p>In one activity, first-grade teachers Ms. Fayed and Mr. Caven pull ideas from a WIDA resource called <a href="#">Embedding the Can Do Cycle Throughout the School Year</a>. They will use this to elicit connections between student experiences and unit topics. In small language-affinity groups, students gather to discuss images of the life cycle of a chicken. Students engage in a chalk talk protocol to capture questions, ideas, and connections that will then be posted around the room and considered throughout the unit. The teachers gather oral and writing samples from students (in English and other languages) as baseline data.</p>
<p><b>For this unit of learning, in relation to the students in my classroom, I will...</b></p>	
<p> <b>Ideas for teaching and scaffolding:</b></p>	<p> <b>Ideas to collect artifacts of student learning, notice student growth toward unit goals, and adjust teaching and learning in response to students’ evolving performance:</b></p>

**Jointly deconstruct texts:** The next sequence of lessons brings mentor text(s) to the spotlight as you jointly deconstruct model texts with students to a) make language visible, b) understand how language works, and c) build metalanguage to discuss and analyze texts.

Continue to connect to what students already know and can do with content and language, and gradually introduce new academic concepts and texts through rich and authentic activities.

Scaffold reading of new challenging texts (remember that "texts" in this document are always defined as multimodal, so they include equations, maps, graphs, and so on). For example...

- Use teacher modeled reading (e.g., What strategies am I using to make sense of the text?), shared reading, guided reading, and collaborative reading.
- Jointly deconstruct and annotate several sections of texts for content and language (e.g., use colored highlighters to map organizational patterns, jointly complete graphic organizers).

Jointly analyze texts through the three dimensions of language.

- **Discourse:** investigate the text's purpose, audience, organizational patterns, and what makes it cohesive and logical.
- **Sentence:** condense and expand sentences and discuss the effects.
- **Word/phrase:** What types of words (e.g., figurative, evaluative) is the author using? Why?
- Strategically select shorter sections of texts to analyze—what makes these sections work? How do they relate to the whole?

**Ideas for collecting artifacts of student learning:** Continue to collect samples of student work, possibly asking students to revise the baseline sample (*individually, with peers, or with the teacher*). Is there a specific area students **should** focus on for the next revision?

- Create opportunities for peer-to-peer and teacher conferences.
- What do students and teachers notice has changed in the revised work?
- Given the revised work, how might teaching and learning be adjusted, in terms of next teacher and student moves?
- Regularly build in opportunities and supports for students to develop meta-awareness of their own growth (e.g., what do you notice is changing in your work over time? How? Why?).

In one activity, first-grade teachers Ms. Fayed and Mr. Caven's class jointly look at several texts, videos, and diagrams to see how they achieve the purpose of explaining the life cycles of a chicken and other animals. What makes a good explanation? How is information presented?

Later, students work in pairs to identify how each text achieves a sense of cohesion by highlighting how concepts are repeated or connected in a series of sentences throughout the text. The students play with cohesion by changing repeating subjects to pronouns or synonyms. The teachers also guide students to explore how short simple sentences may be combined into compound sentences. Students reflect on what they hear, see, and feel when they read their revised texts.

**For this unit of learning, in relation to the students in my classroom, I will...**



**Ideas for teaching and scaffolding:**



**Ideas to collect artifacts of student learning, notice student growth toward unit goals, and adjust teaching and learning in response to students' evolving performance:**

**Jointly construct texts with students:** Explore and experiment with linguistic structures and choices for specific purposes, intended effects, and particular audiences.

After students have had abundant opportunities to engage in shared experiences around new content and language, and after heavily supported reading and deconstruction of text, support students to write a similar text.

For example...

- As with the heavily scaffolded reading, engage in heavily scaffolded writing.
- Set the purpose for writing and coach students to build on ideas they've already been developing.
- Employ teacher and peer-modeled writing and think-alouds of selected sections of texts (e.g., introduction only, thesis or hypothesis only).
- Serve as a scribe for students as needed.
- Invite peers to build on each other's language.
- Recast language and build metalanguage to talk about texts.
- Show students how drafty, messy writing becomes refined through several rounds of revision.
- Consider whole class, guided, collaborative, and paired writing—as the teacher circulates, observes, and supports students.

**Ideas for collecting artifacts of student learning:**

- Ask students to return to their previous drafts and revise, color-coding or annotating the ways in which their work is evolving.
- Create opportunities for students to share with each other the choices they are making to finesse their work.
- How has student work changed through the joint construction phase?
- Looking at the evidence from the student work, what can teachers and students point to indicate that learning is happening?
- In relation to this evidence, how might instruction be adjusted, in terms of teacher and student moves?

First-grade teachers Ms. Fayed and Mr. Caven engage students in collaborative conversations about how to achieve the purpose of an explanation. What will the audience expect from students' multimodal texts? In one activity, students document sentences that are spoken by group members as they jointly explain the life cycle of a butterfly. They look for key pieces of information, then connect specific and technical vocabulary words to one another in the text. Students look at documented sentences and play with ways to expand them by using connectors.

**For this unit of learning, in relation to the students in my classroom, I will...**



**Ideas for teaching and scaffolding:**



**Ideas to collect artifacts of student learning, notice student growth toward unit goals, and adjust teaching and learning in response to students' evolving performance:**

**Gradually reduce scaffolding** toward student independent practice.

At this point, students have had ample multimodal supports throughout the TLC (e.g., joint reading and writing, graphic organizers, discussions with peers and teacher, exploration of how language works, etc.).

- Continue the gradual release of responsibility, considering evolving student strengths and needs.
- Adjust supports and scaffolding for individual students and/or small groups as they gradually become less dependent on the teacher. Different students are likely to need different types of support.
- At this point, students' gradual move toward independence may still mean writing in groups (with diminished support), pairs, or fully independently.

**Tip:** throughout the TLC, provide opportunities for students to develop metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness. This allows students to reflect on their own learning, gain awareness, take ownership of learning, and to point to their own growth (e.g., What did I learn? How did I learn it? What can I point to in my work that captures this learning? Why did I learn it? What does it mean for my next steps in learning?). As the teacher, you can similarly reflect on how effective your teaching has been to support growth as a result of your design and delivery of units and lessons.

Ideas for collecting artifacts of student learning:

- After heavily supported joint reading and writing, brainstorming, drafting, revising, and conferencing throughout the TLC—what step is each student ready to take toward independent practice?
- What might a final draft look like at this time?
- What multiple and multimodal means of engagement, representation, and expression are available for students to demonstrate their learning?
- At the end of this TLC, collaborating teachers and students can again analyze the progression of student work, using this data to set new goals to drive new development in the next TLC, based on what students have shown they can do.

In Ms. Fayed and Mr. Caven's class, by the end of this TLC, students are creating multimodal books to explain the life cycle of a frog. They are asked to think about what makes a good explanation, the purpose of the text, and its organization. Students use images and diagrams; chunks of language as well as simple and compound sentences; and target vocabulary to communicate new academic concepts. With teacher support, peers discuss what they notice about each other's concepts and language use. Students revise texts based on these collaborative conversations and teacher guidance. Students reflect on what they hear, see, and feel when they read their revised texts.

**For this unit of learning, in relation to the students in my classroom, I will...**



**Ideas for teaching and scaffolding:**



**Ideas to collect artifacts of student learning, notice student growth toward unit goals, and adjust teaching and learning in response to students' evolving performance:**

## Section 3: What Does Implementation Look Like?

Implementation will look different in every context. Differences will be apparent from district to district and school to school, and local needs and priorities will guide the pace of standards implementation. This section includes a compilation of ideas about what Framework implementation could look like.

A continued commitment to multilingual learners and their educators is evidenced by schools and districts that provide time for educators to build understanding together about the Framework and to make decisions together about how to integrate these understandings into their day-to-day work with multilingual learners.



<https://twitter.com/APSESOL/status/1506028812047458308>. Used with permission.

This section includes a one-page chart for each Big Idea and component of the Framework for schools to look at as they build a deeper understanding and discuss practical ways to integrate the Framework into their routine practices. As a team, you may choose to look at the charts to gain insights on how it can look in practice, gather evidence of how it currently looks in practice, and consider ways to deepen your understanding of the Big Ideas and components of the Framework.

Each chart offers:

- Examples and non-examples of practice
- Sample prompts to guide evidence collection in relation to implementation, along with references to specific page numbers in the Framework
- Cross references with the 2020 Edition for further study

As Big Ideas and Framework components are designed to be interwoven with each other, some examples under the Big Idea charts may also naturally echo in the Framework component charts.

## Big Idea: Equity of Opportunity and Access

### What does it mean?

Equity is a broad concept that can mean many things—including removing the predictability of correlating racial, social, economic, cultural, or linguistic factors to success or failure (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Noguera, 2008; Safir & Dugan, 2021). Here we focus on the idea that all students, no matter their language background or English proficiency level, must have equity of opportunity and access to simultaneously learn language and the grade-level curriculum. Actions educators can take include:

- **Enact the asset-based [WIDA Can Do Philosophy](#)** by integrating the full range of students’ linguistic and cultural resources in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Support students to engage through various and equally valid ways of using language—including multiple modalities, languages, and the dynamic varieties of English used by different communities.
  - Use *Standard 1* to connect the personal to the academic as a starting point to nurture the languages, cultures, histories, experiences, and intersectional identities students bring to school.
- **Enhance accessibility** by using the expanded Communication Modes: Interpretive (listening, reading, and viewing) and Expressive (speaking, writing, and representing).
  - Conceptualize language as multimodal and include multimodal ways of engaging with learning (e.g., multiple means of representation and expression; including sensory, graphic, and interactive supports).
- **Separate cognitive expectations from language proficiency levels and engage all multilingual learners in rigorous learning:** Students in early phases of English development can maintain similar cognitive expectations to proficient speakers.
  - Language Expectations are goals for students at all language proficiency levels. Starting with these common goals, use Proficiency Level Descriptors to inform responsive differentiation and scaffolding.

Non-examples	Examples	Sample questions to guide evidence collection
The program, curriculum, instruction, materials, and assessment...		In practice, where can you see, hear, or read about... <i>(Page numbers refer to the 2020 Edition)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discourage students from using home languages.</li> <li>• Position dynamic varieties of language practices as inferior to standard English.</li> <li>• Miss opportunities to reflect student interests, languages, and cultures.</li> <li>• Over-value grammatical correctness, or a particular kind of accent, to the point where student engagement and meaning-making is interrupted because of “imperfect” English.</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate students’ linguistic, cultural, and experiential assets into learning.</li> <li>• Intentionally scaffold learning to tailor support for the heterogeneous strengths and needs of multilingual learners, while also maintaining grade-level rigor and challenge for students at all proficiency levels (e.g., through multilingual and multimodal means).</li> <li>• Support students in developing independence, agency, and critical stance, including by exploring issues that matter to their lives in and outside of school.</li> <li>• Offer multilingual learners opportunities for substantial daily oral interactions.</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The asset-based WIDA Can Do Philosophy, including linguistically and culturally sustainable pedagogies (e.g., students’ languages, cultures, interests, and intersectional identities are reflected in the curriculum; use of multiple languages and translanguaging practices)? (pp. 12, 18, 20, 24, 25, 218, 224, 244, 355–356, 362)</li> <li>• Ways to increase avenues of access, agency, and equity for all multilingual learners? (pp. 18, 356)</li> <li>• High expectations for all multilingual learners along with responsive scaffolding (e.g., support for diverse cognitive and behavioral strengths and needs; tailored support for students for who have disabilities, are gifted and talented, are newcomers, or have interrupted formal schooling)? (pp. 18, 331, 357, 367)</li> <li>• Ample opportunity for oral interaction (e.g., through dialogue, discussion, and inquiry with peers and adults)? (pp. 12, 19, 20, 25, 26, 223, 235, 243, 249, 362)</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>

## Big Idea: Integration of Content and Language

### What does it mean?

Focus on how language is used in service of each grade-level content area.

- **Key Language Uses (KLUs)** reflect the most common patterns of language use across disciplines in K-12 settings.
- Discipline-specific sets of **Language Expectations** are goals for content-driven language development that reflect the linguistic demands embedded in academic content standards and practices.

Non-examples	Examples	Sample questions to guide evidence collection
The program, curriculum, instruction, materials, and assessment...		In practice, where can you see, hear, or read about opportunities for multilingual learners to... <i>(Page numbers refer to the 2020 Edition)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan development as grammar drills that are disconnected from the grade-level curriculum.</li> <li>• Limit language support to frontloading vocabulary for a lesson or unit.</li> <li>• Segregate multilingual learners and do not provide them with the opportunity to engage with peers around grade-level disciplinary learning.</li> <li>• Lack a process to provide multilingual learners at all language proficiency levels with access to grade-level learning.</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan language development in service of grade-level disciplinary curriculum.</li> <li>• Appropriately support multilingual learners at all proficiency levels to access and engage in grade-level learning (e.g., by scaffolding up; through the use of home languages; the use of multimodal means of engagement, representation, and expression).</li> <li>• Prompt various opportunities for interactive learning around grade-level disciplinary learning (e.g., with peers with similar and different language backgrounds; with adults in the building).</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop content and language concurrently, with academic content as a context for language learning and language as a means for learning academic content? (pp. 18-19, 356)</li> <li>• Access rich, standards-based, grade-level content, including through scaffolding up? (p. 18)</li> <li>• Use multiple means to engage, interpret, represent, and express their ideas in the classroom (e.g., by applying Universal Design for Learning guidelines<sup>1</sup> and including multimodality as an essential way for all students to make meaning)? (pp. 18-19, 355-356)</li> <li>• Actively engage with peers while accessing challenging content activities? (pp. 18-19)</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>See [The UDL Guidelines webpage](#).



## Big Idea: Collaboration Among Stakeholders

### What does it mean?

- **Support collaborations** among various groups of stakeholders, for example: peer-to-peer, teacher-student, teacher-administrator, and family/community collaborations.
- **Collaboratively collect, analyze, monitor, plan, and act based on data observable in student work across classrooms.** Content and language teachers can co-plan, co-teach, co-assess, and co-reflect for multilingual learner success. Sample discussion prompts include:
  - How do KLUs show up in each classroom?
  - How might Language Expectations support content goals?
  - Using the Proficiency Level Descriptors as a guide, what might multilingual learners be able to do with language by the end of each level in each classroom context?
  - Given what multilingual learners can currently do in each classroom, what might be the next best instructional moves, in relation to students' learning goals?
- **Guide strategic and operational plans** through collaborative discussions. How can Big Ideas inform...
  - Staffing, resourcing, and scheduling?
  - Curriculum design and instructional approaches?
  - Multilingual learner access to advanced and specialized courses, and extra-curricular activities?

Non-examples	Examples	Sample questions to guide evidence collection
The program, curriculum, instruction, materials, and assessment...		In practice, where can you see, hear, or read about... <i>(Page numbers refer to the 2020 Edition)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place sole responsibility for multilingual learners' development on language specialists and ELD program directors.</li> <li>• Systematically exclude language specialists from collaborative teams (e.g., grade teams) and professional learning opportunities that are available to content teachers.</li> <li>• Lack support for content teachers to learn about language development, or for language teachers to learn about the disciplines.</li> <li>• Schedule, resource, and staff classes without attention to needed structures for sustained collaborative practices.</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support goals for the success of multilingual learners at strategic and operational levels.</li> <li>• Message expectations of shared responsibility.</li> <li>• Encourage content and language specialists (and special educators) to share areas of expertise, co-analyze data, co-reflect, and co-plan next goals and instructional moves (e.g., design schedules to support structured collaboration time).</li> <li>• Encourage students and families to have an active voice in collaborating to inform the design of instructional experiences.</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance for all educators to see themselves as responsible for the success of multilingual learners (e.g., district and school leaders, content and language teachers, specialists, guidance counselors, support personnel)? (pp. 19-20, 358-359)</li> <li>• Guidance for collaboration among stakeholders (e.g., guidance for content and language teachers to work together to reflect, plan instruction, and support one another's areas of expertise)? (pp. 19-20, 358-359)</li> <li>• Guidance for language specialists to support language development in service of grade-level content learning—and likewise, for content teachers to develop insights into and respond to the language development needs of multilingual learners? (pp. 19-20, 358-359)</li> <li>• Inclusion of student and family voices to inform the design and support of multilingual learners' experiences at school (e.g., instructional, extra-curricular, home-school communication wrap-around supports)? (pp. 11, 14, 18-20, 34, 41, 61, 83, 105, 139, 250)</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>

## Big Idea: Functional Approach to Language Development

### What does it mean?

- **Emphasize the use of language for thinking, acting, being, and doing in the world.**
  - Shift from a focus on isolated language forms to functional language use in service of learning.
  - Position multilingual learners as language users who adapt their use of language in ways that are appropriate to context, including topic, purpose, audience, and situation.
- **Teach language systematically to guide students to expand language use in various contexts.**
  - Prioritize language development for effective engagement in disciplinary learning, focusing on what students are doing with language, for what purpose, and what tools and resources they need to achieve that purpose. Language structures are taught in service of this larger purpose.
  - Put discourse first<sup>2</sup> and consider the relationships among the three nested dimensions of language: discourse, sentence, and word/phrase.
- **Leverage a genre-based approach to examine high-leverage patterns of language use in school.**
  - Explicitly teach characteristics and patterns of genre via the lens of Key Language Uses.
  - Use Language Expectations to make visible language for engaging in disciplinary learning.

Non-examples	Examples	Sample questions to guide evidence collection
The program, curriculum, instruction, materials, and assessment...		In practice, where can you see, hear, or read about... <i>(Page numbers refer to the 2020 Edition)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assume multilingual learners will inherently know what language is necessary to be successful and therefore do not plan and support systematic language development.</li> <li>• Do not explore common patterns of language use for specific disciplinary purposes and tasks.</li> <li>• Frame language as a static set of decontextualized grammatical rules.</li> <li>• Lack opportunities for multilingual learners to develop metalanguage and metalinguistic awareness.</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and explicitly teach language with a focus on making meaning (e.g., language for explaining life cycles).</li> <li>• Leverage understandings of genre to highlight typical organizational and linguistic features (e.g., this makes a good explanation).</li> <li>• Provide students with opportunities to analyze how different language resources can be used in different contexts, for different purposes, and with different audiences.</li> <li>• Assist students in developing metalanguage and metalinguistic awareness; uplift choices across languages in addition to English.</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance for systematic, explicit, and sustained language development alongside the academic demands of content? (pp. 19-20, 359)</li> <li>• Explicit teaching of how language works for particular purposes, with particular audiences, and in particular sociocultural contexts? (pp. 18, 20, 355-356, 359)</li> <li>• The framing of language development as an interactive social process that expands what multilingual learners can do with language over time in a diversity of contexts, rather than as a series of decontextualized and isolated grammatical structures? (pp. 356, 359-360)</li> <li>• Support for multilingual learners to develop control over increasing ranges of the registers and genres required both for school and for the learner's own purposes, including highlighting multilingual learners' ability to select, adapt, negotiate, and use a range of linguistic resources? (pp. 356, 359)</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> See the [Putting Discourse First web page](#).

## WIDA ELD Standards Framework Component: ELD Standards Statements

**The five ELD Standards Statements** guide us to develop and deliver instruction that simultaneously develops content and language, where language development is positioned in service of disciplinary learning.

**Standard 1**, Language for Social and Instructional Purposes (ELD-SI) helps teachers become aware of language for social interactions, everyday routines, sense-making, negotiation, and problem-solving. ELD-SI works alongside and blends into **Standards 2-5** that address disciplinary language (ELD-LA for Language Arts, ELD-MA for Math, ELD-SC for Science, and ELD-SS for Social Studies). This interweaving reminds us that students communicate to learn, but also to convey personal needs and wants, to interpret and present different perspectives, to affirm their own identities, and to form and maintain relationships. Furthermore, rather than positioning ELD only as a subset of a single content area (ELA), the Framework provides a mapping of the language demands associated with multiple academic content standards.

Non-examples	Examples	Sample questions to guide evidence collection
The program, curriculum, instruction, materials, and assessment...		In practice, where can you see, hear, or read about... <i>(Page numbers refer to the 2020 Edition)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a deficit-based approach, including by segregating multilingual learners from peers or the grade-level curriculum.</li> <li>• Exclude opportunities for social and instructional language use (including through “messy” language for meaning-making) in favor of always demanding standard, academic language use (e.g., as one would expect for a formal final project or essay).</li> <li>• Frame English language development simply as a subset of language arts without attending to how language is used in other disciplinary contexts.</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend to language development for social and instructional purposes.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for students to be playful and exploratory with language while engaging in dynamic and authentic meaning making.</li> <li>• Attend to language development in a clear and systematic way for content learning.</li> <li>• Attend to both common and distinct ways in which language is used across disciplines.</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strength-based approaches (e.g., related to ELD-SI—leverage students’ experiences, languages, cultures, and intersectional identities as a means of entering new and complex disciplinary topics.)? (pp. 12, 18, 24, 25)</li> <li>• Ample and varied opportunities for multilingual learners to engage in social and instructional interactions (ELD-SI) to simultaneously develop language and conceptual understandings (ELD-LA, ELD-MA, ELD-SC, and ELD-SS) (e.g., through everyday routines, negotiation, problem-solving, and interactive learning with peers and adults)? (pp. 19, 20, 25, 362)</li> <li>• Planning and delivery of language development in a clear, systematic, and explicit way to enhance learning in grade-level disciplinary contexts? (pp. 24, 354, 360)</li> <li>• Support for students in developing metacognitive and metalinguistic competencies? (p. 12)</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>

## WIDA ELD Standards Framework Component: Key Language Uses

**Key Language Uses (KLUs)**—Narrate, Inform, Explain, Argue—emerged from a systematic analysis of academic content standards, disciplinary practices, and research literature. They bring focus and coherence to the language of schooling, helping educators make choices in what to prioritize during planning for content-language integration.

**KLUs leverage a genre-based, functional approach to language development.** By electing to organize the Framework around the four most prominent KLUs in academic content area standards, WIDA is prompting educators to offer students explicit and systematic explanations of how genres are constructed and used (e.g., through commonly recurring characteristics and patterns) within various academic, social, and cultural contexts.

Non-examples	Examples	Sample questions to guide evidence collection
The program, curriculum, instruction, materials, and assessment...		In practice, where can you see, hear, or read about... <i>(Page numbers refer to the 2020 Edition)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer no systematic approach to identify strategic, high-utility language for multilingual learners to engage in grade-level disciplinary practices.</li> <li>• Lack a method or approach to prioritize planning for language development.</li> <li>• Lack a method for analyzing how language is used in service of disciplinary learning (e.g., dimensions of language, genre, organizational patterns).</li> <li>• Present the idea of common linguistic patterns or genres as rigid prescriptions precluding students from exploring voice and variation.</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer opportunities to explore how genres function in relation to a given purpose and audience.</li> <li>• Provide information about the driving KLU for the unit’s culminating tasks and how it is enacted in the given content area.</li> <li>• Employ analysis of mentor texts to model and explore how a KLU is enacted in a particular instance.</li> <li>• Demonstrate similarities and differences within and across KLUs across grades and disciplines.</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The identification of KLUs in relation to academic content standards, practices, texts, or tasks? (pp. 26, 288-290, 363)</li> <li>• Systematic explorations and explanations of how KLUs are constructed and used in particular disciplines (e.g., an argument in language arts is different than a mathematical argument)? (pp. 26, 217, 218, 224, 227, 230, 233, 354)</li> <li>• Systematic explorations and explanations of how KLUs work in a variety of texts, tasks, and purposes (e.g., exposure to various instances of argumentation)? (p. 217 and grade-level cluster materials)</li> <li>• The common and unique organizational patterns and linguistic features of each KLU (e.g., claim, evidence, and reasoning in an argument)? (p. 217, 2020, grade-level cluster materials)</li> <li>• KLUs intersecting, blending, and building on each other (e.g., a student may include aspects of the KLUs Inform and Explain as they develop an overall argument)? (p. 27, 218)</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>

## WIDA ELD Standards Framework Component: Language Expectations

The Framework is designed to closely correspond with the language demands and opportunities found in state academic content standards in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies. Developed from a systematic analysis of academic content standards, Language Expectations represent the priorities, depth, or linguistic complexity of grade-level cluster language demands.

**Language Expectations are goals for content-driven language learning for multilingual learners across all levels of proficiency.** They are most similar to the kinds of statements educators generally find in academic content standards.

Language Expectations are written for each grade-level cluster in expressive and interpretive modes and are built around a set of three to five **Language Functions**, which in turn are supported by example **Language Features** (e.g., types of sentences, clauses, phrases, and words).

Non-examples	Examples	Sample questions to guide evidence collection
The program, curriculum, instruction, materials, and assessment...		In practice, where can you see, hear, or read about... <i>(Page numbers refer to the 2020 Edition)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack language goals that allow students to develop language for performing specific disciplinary tasks.</li> <li>• Lack attention to explicit language development in units and lessons.</li> <li>• Focus on one modality or language domain to the exclusion of others (e.g., attends to writing but not reading or listening).</li> <li>• May have language goals, but they are not sufficiently well structured and supported to drive student language development forward.</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage Language Expectations to closely align language development with disciplinary learning.</li> <li>• Leverage Language Expectations, along with its Language Functions and Features, to inform unit and lesson planning.</li> <li>• Leverage Language Expectations to explore and analyze typical organizational patterns and linguistic features of KLUs.</li> <li>• Leverage Language Expectations to drive language growth, supporting students to expand their linguistic toolboxes and enabling them to do more with language in different contexts.</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connection of Language Expectations to academic content standards and practices? (pp. 29, 266)</li> <li>• Language Expectations for units and lessons? (pp. 28, 237)</li> <li>• Support for students to engage with interpretive and expressive communication modes? (p.28)</li> <li>• Systematic support for students to expand choices they can make with language...               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through exploration of Language Functions related to a Language Expectation? (pp. 29, 364)</li> <li>• Through exploration of effective Language Features to carry out the Language Functions in relation to the task’s purpose and audience? (pp. 30, 365)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>

## WIDA ELD Standards Framework Component: Proficiency Level Descriptors

**Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs)** are an articulation of student language performance across six levels of English language proficiency. PLDs are written in interpretive and expressive communication modes, and represent three dimensions of language use: discourse, sentence, and word/phrase.

**Proficiency Level Descriptors encourage educators to...**

- Have concrete ways to conceptualize a continuum of language development for multilingual learners.
- Start with Language Expectations as goals for multilingual learners at all English language proficiency levels, and then use PLDs to inform responsive differentiation and scaffolding.
- Support multilingual learners to expand what they can do with language to the next level of complexity in alignment with grade-level expectations of academic content standards.
- Consider the relationships among the three nested dimensions of language: discourse, sentence, and word/phrase.
- Monitor language performance and growth: collaboratively collect, analyze, monitor, plan, and act based on data observable in student work across classrooms.

Non-examples	Examples	Sample questions to guide evidence collection
The program, curriculum, instruction, materials, and assessment...		In practice, where can you see, hear, or read about... <i>(Page numbers refer to the 2020 Edition)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect all students to produce language at a predetermined level regardless of where they may be in their language learning continuum.</li> <li>• Set the same language goals and growth targets for all students without differentiating instruction in a responsive manner.</li> <li>• Offer superficial and static supports and scaffolds (e.g., <i>supports are limited to only translations and sentence frames</i>).</li> <li>• Lacks a systematic way to notice, analyze, document, and respond to student language development and growth.</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite multilingual learners at all proficiency levels to participate meaningfully in grade-level content.</li> <li>• Promote analysis of language through the dimensions of language and the PLD criteria.</li> <li>• Include a variety of interactive and responsive scaffolding practices to meet the strengths and needs of a diverse multilingual learning community (e.g., through multilingual and multimodal ways).</li> <li>• Implement practices such as those described in the WIDA Focus Bulletin: <a href="#">Supporting Multilingual Learners' Language Growth through Language Development Portfolios</a> to embed ongoing classroom assessment into instruction to continuously drive language development forward.</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A range of possibilities for language development targets for multilingual learners who may be in various stages of English language development? (pp. 34, 329)</li> <li>• The same grade-level challenge and cognitive rigor maintained for all students while differentiating instruction for multilingual learners at any language proficiency level? (p. 101)</li> <li>• Attention to the three dimensions of language (discourse, sentence, word/phrase) in a variety of tasks and texts? (pp. 31, 366)</li> <li>• Interactional scaffolding of content and language in relation to various factors (e.g., student strengths and needs, interests, prior experiences, level of language proficiency, communicative purpose of the task, etc.)? (pp. 31, 33 57, 248, 249, 331, 333, 362)</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

You now have resources to support your unique journey of implementing the Framework in your context. Hopefully, there are other educators on this journey with you. You may be well on your way, or you may be just getting started. The good news is that you can use the resources in this guide to help guide reflection and planning conversations, and you can choose a different point of focus each time or sustain your focus on one aspect for some weeks or months. The important thing is that you are on your way.

To continue your learning, please return to this guide as often as needed. Also, make sure that you receive quarterly newsletters from WIDA related to the Framework, including Voices from the Field, sharing authentic stories of implementation from across the country. Sign up or update your preferences here: [wida.wisc.edu/about/news/signup](https://wida.wisc.edu/about/news/signup)

For those of you who are school or district leaders, the Administrator Supplement to this guide provides suggestions for planning, supporting, and reflecting on implementation of the Framework from a programmatic perspective within schools and districts.



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# Stories of Practice

INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS  
AREA 1: Take an Asset-Based Approach and Apply the Can Do Philosophy

## Starting the Year Right: Creating an Asset-Based Mindset as Staff

By Anne Heidemann, ELD Teacher, Guadalupe Centers Elementary, Missouri

Our district has taken on **culturally responsive pedagogy** as a professional development topic to focus on throughout the school year. Our entire staff will collaborate in four training sessions related to this initiative. The goal is to focus our instruction on **asset-based teaching** so that our students feel valued and motivated to learn, and ultimately take pride in their previous language experiences and knowledge. We plan to continue this work in the following two school years as well, increasing effectiveness each year.

### Begin with the End in Mind...

Ideally, what would Guadalupe Centers Charter Schools look like for teachers and students as a result of implementing culturally responsive-sustaining education after this 3-year phase of our Roadmap is complete?

Staff
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Students
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**Setting:** Guadalupe Centers School District (GCSD) is a small urban school district with one elementary, one middle, and one high school spread throughout the Kansas City area. Our K-12 district has 1,467 students. A total of 1,001 of these students qualify as English learners who will take the ACCESS test this year. Close in on our Elementary school, and you will find that our students are predominantly native Spanish speakers whose families and cultures come from all over South America, Central America, and Mexico. Eighty percent of our K-5 elementary population are English learners, for a total of 558 students. We have a high population of long-term ELs as well as a small number of newcomers in each grade level.

Slide from GCES asset-based professional development. Teachers worked in groups, capturing their ideas on chart paper preceding a gallery walk.



During our professional development training in September and November, our staff brainstormed what our school would look like if we successfully implemented a three-year plan of **culturally responsive teaching**. Our teachers and staff also discussed how to change a deficit-based teaching mindset to asset-based thinking in the classroom. Issues such as not turning in homework, low participation in class, and rates of parent response were discussed as issues that need to be addressed using an asset-based approach. For example, a student who does not turn in homework may not do so for an appropriate reason. Their caregivers may work in the evening and may not be able to support and monitor assignments. Additionally, the student may be responsible for working in the evenings or taking care of younger siblings. It's vital to understand students' cultures and home lives so that we can give positive support and adapt our teaching practices according to students' needs.

### Celebrating Students' Knowledge and Cultural Experiences

Our Story of Practice comes from the classroom of a second-grade teacher at Guadalupe Centers Elementary (GCE). Ms. Nancy centers her daily lessons on student strengths and cultures, providing opportunities for multilingual students to show their unique personalities and explore activities and issues they value. Ms. Nancy uses asset-based strategies in her classroom, such as supporting multilingual learners as needed with visuals, sentence stems, word banks, and Spanish translations. Interpretive (listening, reading, and interpreting) and expressive (speaking, writing, and representing) modes are incorporated into each activity to facilitate language development for all students.



Staff at GCS D starting the year by working in teams to identify ideal characteristics of staff and students of a fully asset-based learning environment.

### Sharing Experiences through Vocabulary

This year, as GCE teachers are implementing a new English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum, they are focusing their grade level professional learning communities on building language supports within lessons of the new ELA curriculum. One major part of this endeavor includes finding visuals for all vocabulary words, as well as finding ways to connect students with the new words. Making connections allows students to relate to the vocabulary words and helps them to realize that they come to the classroom with unique knowledge of what the word might mean. The teachers noted that it can be challenging to incorporate



Vocabulary visual

strategies for multilingual learners at the earliest language proficiency levels to access grade-level material. Ms. Nancy begins with visuals; however, to deepen students' understanding of the words, she also uses questioning to facilitate conversations, prompts students to discuss the word in either Spanish or English, and encourages them to share their previous experiences with the word using sentence stems. Ms. Nancy also makes sure to point out vocabulary words that are cognates in Spanish and English to help multilingual learners make cross-linguistic connections to the new words.

### Student of the Week

In order to build connections among classmates and to encourage students to learn more about each other, Ms. Nancy has her second graders create a poster giving information about what makes each student unique. Every week, one student is chosen to be featured as the class's Student of the Week. This allows students to learn more about each other, celebrate strengths and interests, and understand what each student brings to the learning environment.



Student of the Week Poster

### What's Your Spark?

One activity Ms. Nancy uses to encourage students to find their strengths is "What's your Spark?" Typically done at the beginning of the year and revisited throughout, this activity supports students in finding hobbies and issues that are important to them. The visual on the right, below, supports students at the earliest English proficiency levels who may need a visual word bank for some of the vocabulary. This activity also allows Ms. Nancy and the class to have a deeper understanding of what each student brings to the community and to the learning environment. Showing students that their talents and interests are valued in the classroom gives them the confidence they need to embrace the learning process.



What's Your Spark Posters



## Student Strengths Through Classroom Jobs

Another way Ms. Nancy has brought the idea of asset-based teaching to her classroom structure is by implementing classroom jobs. Although the idea of classroom jobs in an elementary school is not a new concept, Ms. Nancy aims to redefine the classroom job as a professional responsibility that students must take on in order for their classroom to function in a peaceful, productive way. This reinventing of the classroom job has helped students find their unique role in the classroom community. It has also aided students in recognizing the strengths they bring to the learning environment. Additionally, the use of more complex job titles builds student vocabulary and a better understanding of the world around them.



*Classroom Jobs Poster*

As Ms. Nancy continues to build a classroom community throughout the year using asset-based instructional practices, her students prepare for moving into the next grade level. Strengthening student connections with new vocabulary broadens their conversational and academic vocabulary skills and prepares them for the material they will encounter in third grade. Taking time to recognize and celebrate each individual student and the knowledge they bring with them to the classroom helps students to feel valued in the school community and culture.

# Stories of Practice

INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS  
AREA 1: Take an Asset-Based Approach and Apply the Can Do Philosophy

## The Ripple Effect of Cultural Responsiveness

By *Mónica Farris, EL Teacher at Weeden Elementary School, Alabama*

*Collaboration among Stakeholders* stands as one of the Big Ideas of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework. Weeden Elementary School experiences firsthand the value of teachers, schools, parents, and local businesses collaboratively coming together to celebrate multilingualism and cultural diversity through its annual Heritage Day celebration.

In an effort to get to know students and their families, Weeden houses two bilingual English Language teachers who also serve as liaisons between the school, the families, and the community. They welcome multilingual students and their families, assist with resources, interpret meetings, and build a close rapport with a diverse demographic of families who enroll at Weeden. School phone messages, as well as the weekly newsletter, are sent in both English and Spanish to convey key information in a language parents can understand.

Weeden administration and leadership recognize and prioritize the importance of connecting students' experiences, languages, and cultures to the learning environment. Ms. Hogan, principal at Weeden Elementary, explained it this way:

**Setting:** Weeden Elementary School is an urban Title I school located in a small town in Alabama. It serves 413 students in grades K-4. Students at Weeden come from Hispanic (35%), Black (30%), White (27%), and other (8%) racial and ethnic backgrounds, and over 90% of students qualify for free and reduced-price meals. Multilingual learners make up 35% of the population, with Spanish as the largest incidence language.





*“Because our classrooms are diverse and constantly changing, it is important to support cultural inclusiveness that reflects the current social context. Cultural responsiveness requires that our teachers consider cultures and backgrounds of all students and provide them with literature that addresses the reality of today’s students.”*

As part of this larger effort for linguistic and cultural responsiveness, the school engages in several events, including hosting a Heritage Day celebration during Hispanic Heritage Month. This is when the world comes to Weeden, and all students and staff are able to engage in a celebratory exchange of culture and language. This event offers an opportunity for students and families to showcase their culture, such as wearing traditional clothing. The cafeteria staff serves authentic Hispanic food, and local businesses donate goodies for all to enjoy. Other activities this year included the adult ESL (English as a Second Language) classes hosting the traditional Hispanic game of “Loteria,” the local university sponsoring a traditional craft, and the high school Spanish Club setting up an interactive display of Hispanic countries that students could visit using a “passport” to further contribute to the cultural exchange.

In collaboration with a local church, a beautiful display of flags from around the world adorned the school foyer to welcome multilingual families and school visitors. To showcase the languages and cultures, the art teacher developed a unit on Mexican amate bark paintings where all students created their original piece. The exhibition of the faux amate bark paintings was a hit, creating a stained-glass effect when sun rays shone through the hall windows. After the Heritage Celebration, the display of the paintings remained as the school continued to celebrate multiculturalism.



Heritage Day also creates background knowledge for classroom teachers to integrate cultural responsiveness into their lessons and throughout teaching and learning. For example, in Ms. Hughes’ third grade class, 43% of students are of Hispanic origin. A first-year teacher, Ms. Hughes explained that before Heritage Day, she did not have much

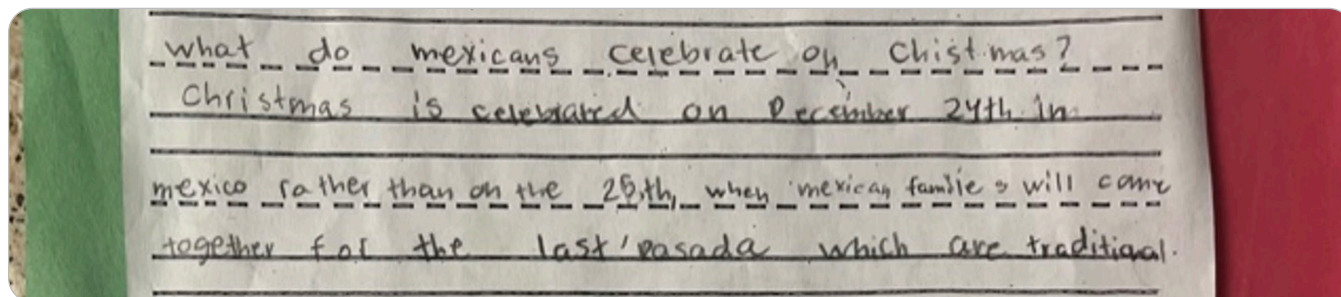
knowledge of Hispanic culture. She believed this meaningful experience *enhanced* her students' cultural assets because the school body was able to "visit" Hispanic countries, engage by making crafts and toys, and experience the warmth of the culture. She also commented on the value of *building* on students' cultural assets:

*"Personally, I'm exposed to diversity in the classroom. Like today, one of my students from Guatemala was able to connect the word 'migrate' to her personal story of when she and her family migrated to the U.S. She made that connection and then took the initiative during the reading block to share her experience with the class."*

During Heritage Day, students learned of Hispanic prominent figures who immigrated to the United States. This connected to the following content and language objectives in Ms. Hughes's lesson plan:

Content and ELD Standards	Standard	Lesson Objectives
State Academic Content Standards	<p>Social Studies Standard 4: Relate population dispersion to geographic, economic, and historic changes in Alabama and the world.</p> <p>Language Arts, Language Standard L.3.5.b Identify Real-Life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe people who are friendly or helpful)</p>	<p>Explain why and how people came to Alabama.</p> <p>Identify real-life connections between words and their use.</p>
WIDA ELD Standards Framework	<p>Language Expectation <b>ELD-SS.2-3. Explain.Expressive:</b> Multilingual learners will construct social studies explanations that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce phenomena or events</li> <li>• Describe components, order, causes, or cycles</li> <li>• Generalize possible reasons for a development or event</li> </ul>	<p>Conduct social studies explanations that introduce phenomena or events.</p>

When teachers build on what students bring to the learning environment, it allows multilingual learners to meaningfully engage in grade-level content learning. Ms. Garner's fourth grade class participated in a "Christmas Around the World" writing activity to implement technology standards. Students researched various countries of their choosing. "I chose to do my research on Mexico because I want to celebrate my friend's culture and language," a native English speaker explained. "I used Spanish words in my writing because my friend is teaching me Spanish and I'm teaching her English," she added. Later in the year, Mexico was one of the countries featured during Heritage Day.





Heritage Day engaged non-English speakers by channeling home language assets. A newly arrived fourth grader said the “Weeden Way School Motto” in Spanish. “Me sentí muy feliz por haberlo dicho en español,” she recalled six months later, explaining how happy she was to speak Spanish to the entire school. Although she had only been in a U. S. school for six weeks, she used her proficient first language skills to challenge the school over the intercom to “Sean respetuosos, sean responsables y estén seguros para que puedan cambiar el mundo. Be respectful, be responsible, and be safe so you can change the world.” At Weeden, students continue to use Spanish in the hallways, in the playground, when trading Pokémon cards, and when learning in classrooms.

Twenty-five percent of students in Ms. Jacks’s fourth-grade classroom are multilingual learners. She recalls their excitement when they heard their home language over the intercom. Ms. Jacks could see that hearing their home language spoken on the school intercom made students feel valued. Ms. Jacks added:

*“Months later, my entire class still talks about the passports they used during Heritage Day. I recently applied for a passport, and I was sharing this life experience with my class as part of our social studies unit on communities and places on a map that goes along with our reading series. My students remembered using a passport during Heritage Day to visit different countries.”*

This positively impacted learning because students were able to build on prior knowledge in a way that facilitated comprehension of new content and allowed Ms. Jacks to apply the WIDA Can Do Philosophy in the context of her lesson. Here is an example of a related lesson objective from Ms. Jacks’s class:



Content and ELD Standards	Standard	Lesson Objectives
State Academic Content Standards	Social Studies [SS2010] LWT1(1) 8: Identify land masses, bodies of water, and other physical features on maps and globes.	Discuss differences and similarities between city life and town life.
WIDA ELD Standards Framework	Language Expectation <b>ELD-SI.K-3.Narrate:</b> Multilingual learners will... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share ideas about one’s own and others’ lived experiences and previous learning</li> <li>• Connect stories with images and representations to add meaning</li> <li>• Ask questions about what others have shared</li> <li>• Recount and restate ideas</li> <li>• Discuss how stories might end or next steps</li> </ul>	Multilingual learners will share ideas about one’s own and others’ lived experiences and previous learning.

Celebrating Heritage Day during Hispanic Heritage Month created a ripple effect of cultural responsiveness upon which classroom teachers can build upon throughout the rest of the school year.



This Heritage Day celebration expanded beyond the surface level of culture which typically stops with food, festivals, and fancy dress. The intentionality of the activities provided opportunities to make connections, reflections, and insights into the diverse cultures of the student body and community.



# Stories of Practice

INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS  
AREA 2: Determine the  
Language Learning  
Destination

## Why Do Countries Need Each Other? Complex Trade Relationships

*By Elizabeth Folberg, English Learner Teacher at Stoner Prairie Elementary, Wisconsin*

In this [video vignette](#), Elizabeth Folberg shares her approach to implementing the WIDA ELD Standards Framework in a third-grade social studies unit. Grounded in the unit's content learning goal, Ms. Folberg systematically teaches language in service of content learning. Click on the video to see how Ms. Folberg plans instruction based on Key Language Uses, Language Expectations, mentor texts, and scaffolding approaches.

**Setting:** Verona Area School District is the public school district for the cities of Verona and Fitchburg, as well as for a small part of Madison, Wisconsin. Stoner Prairie K-5 Elementary School has students who come from rural, suburban, and urban areas within the district. The school serves around 360 students. Close to 30% of Stoner Prairie students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. English learners make up about 15% of the student body. Most of the multilingual students were born in the U.S. and have Spanish as their other language. In total, around 20 home languages are used by Stoner Prairie students. Other languages include Hmong, Somali, Amharic, Arabic, Albanian, and Chinese.



**Social Studies 3rd grade Global Trade: Why do countries need each other?**

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Background Layout Theme Transition

**Teaching Point**

Today you will explore some of the products countries export, ranging from natural resources to capital goods. You will choose three products and look at maps to list the countries that produce and export them.

**ELD-SS.2-3.Argue.Expressive**  
Construct social studies arguments that

- Introduce topic
- Select relevant information to support claims with evidence from one or more sources
- Show relationships between claim, evidence, and reasoning



# Stories of Practice

INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS  
AREA 2: Determine the  
Language Learning  
Destination

## Life Cycles

By Molly Ross, Sheltered English Immersion Instructional Coach, and Kait Zanzerkia, Elementary ELD teacher, Randolph Public Schools, Massachusetts

**When You Know Better, Do Better.** When I think about lesson planning for our multilingual learners, I am reminded of this quote from Maya Angelou: “When you know better, do better.” After working with the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition, I can honestly say that I am empowered to be a better language teacher than I ever have been in the past.

Teachers in the English Language Development Department spent the last year learning about the WIDA ELD Standards Framework and identifying ways to create units of learning based on the Framework.

**Reflective Practice.** As I reflect on past practices, I realize some of the mistakes I made in supporting my multilingual learners. Often my instruction would focus on supporting mainstream content without an emphasis on language or teaching necessary vocabulary words for the content. I planned language lessons that were in isolation which had nothing to do with grade-level content. I didn’t know better and was doing the best I could with the tools at my disposal.

**Setting:** Randolph Public Schools are located just south of Boston, Massachusetts. A district of 2,500, 50% of students identify as African American, 16% Asian, 17% Hispanic, 11% White, 0.3% Native American, and 5% as other. 62% of students qualify for free and reduced-price meals. 37% of students report a first language other than English, and 15% are classified as English Learners.

*“For me personally, the breakdown of Language Expectations, Functions, and Features is the most helpful aspect of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, particularly in planning for learning goals and objectives at discourse, word, and sentence levels. Additionally, having examples of how each might look in different content areas helps me plan English instruction across different academic contexts and better collaborate with general education teachers.”*  
–Kait Zanzerkia, Elementary ELD teacher

**Lifelong Learning.** Our multilingual learners are the reason we show up every day. We want to make sure we are setting them up for the best chance of success. Because of this, our department of ELD teachers spent the last year familiarizing ourselves with the Framework and creating units based on the Framework. While we now know better and are trying to do better, we also know that we will continue to evolve.

### Planning Language Units Using the WIDA ELD Standards Framework

We started with the content to determine the purpose for using language within a particular discipline. From there, we identified the specific language development needed for our students to be successful given the content and purpose. Whether ESL and content teachers are co-planning and co-teaching, or ESL teachers are designing content-driven language development units, we use the same set of guiding questions.

- What is the grade-level content or standard our students need?
- How is language being used in this context? Or what is the purpose for language use?
- What language functions and features are essential to accomplish disciplinary tasks?
- How do we scaffold learning for multilingual learners at different proficiency levels?

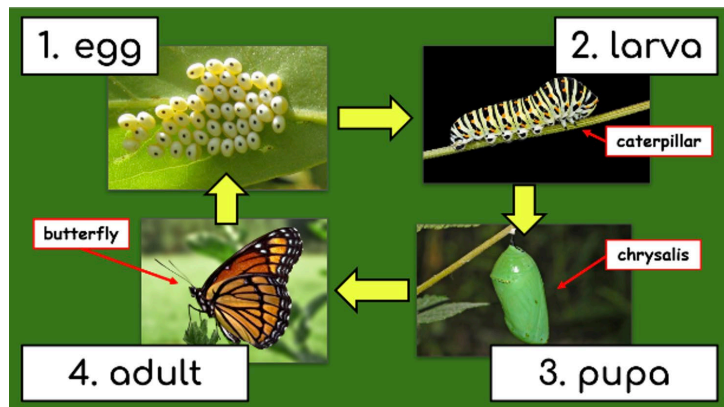
Always start with the grade-level academic content, then look for language development opportunities and demands. What language do students need to accomplish content tasks?

Once the unit goals are established, we plan intentional language practice to meet those goals in our daily lessons. As we teach, we assess how the language goals are being met through formative and mid-unit assessments and adjust our practice accordingly. We are shifting to a much more targeted approach to language learning to empower our multilingual learners to be more fluent and fluid language users.

We are shifting to a much more targeted approach to language learning to empower our multilingual learners to be more fluent and fluid language users.

### Informing in Science: Life Cycles

Kait Zanzerkia, a kindergarten and first-grade ELD teacher, started her unit planning with a science standard focused on the idea that all plants and animals grow and change over time. She identified that the unit focuses on the language to Inform -more specifically sequencing how animals change through their life cycles. To determine the specific language functions and features, Ms. Zanzerkia considered the language proficiency levels of her students.



Ms. Zankerka consulted the Language Expectations for Grade 1 Science for the Key Language Use Inform.

### ELD-SC.1.Inform.Interpretive

Interpret scientific informational texts by

- Determining what text is about
- Defining or classifying concept or entity

### ELD-SC.1.Inform.Expressive

Construct scientific informational texts that

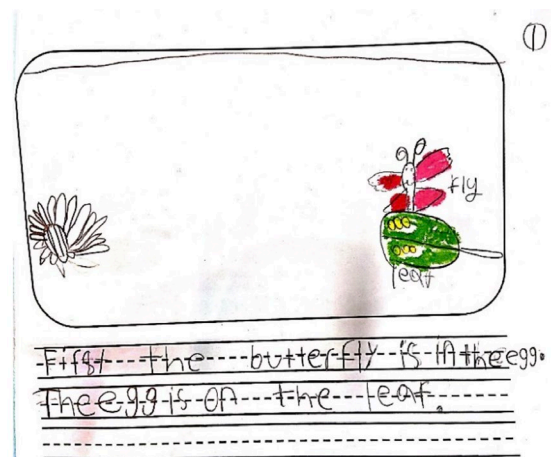
- Introduce others to topic or entity
- Define, describe, and classify concept, topic, or entity
- Summarize observations or factual information

Based on the task and her students' strengths and needs, she selected and finessed the language focus. Some of the language objectives throughout lessons included:

- Declarative simple sentences
- Verbs in present tense to label actions
- Sequence words to clarify sequence of events

When planning her language lessons, she determined ways for her students to meet these language objectives. For example:

- Students read texts on animal life cycles and identified the declarative sentences and verbs
- Students practiced using target language with a partner using realia and a word bank of sequence words and verbs
- Students created a book with a title, labeled pictures, and written declarative sentences using verbs and sequence words they had practiced orally.



As we mentioned in the beginning, we've been teaching with the motto: "When you know better, do better." We're asking our students and teachers to reflect and improve. How are you reflecting on your own practice? How can you use the WIDA ELD Standards Framework to help you reflect on your language instruction?





# Stories of Practice

## INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS AREA 3: Determine How to Assess Language Growth

### Community Helpers

*By Helen Lannie Simpson is English Learner Director at Burke County Public Schools, North Carolina*

To support teachers with understanding and implementing the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, the theme of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's annual Multilingual Learner conference was From Standards to Success. When invited to present on the topic of standards-based data-driven instruction, we jumped at the opportunity. I, Mrs. Simpson, represent the rural district of Burke County Public Schools, and my collaborating partner, Ms. Coburn, represents the urban district of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools. In wrestling with the topic, we decided to shine a light on how teachers can lean on the Framework to yield both formative and summative data. We relied on snapshots of **Key Language Uses (KLU)** for each grade-level cluster (K, 1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-12).

In reviewing the Framework, we realized that the snapshots are very practical! If you are a veteran teacher of a specific grade, these examples will ring true. If you do not work with a specific grade-level cluster, these snapshots can give you a good idea of how multilingual learners in different grade levels might engage with a KLU.

As a starting point, we used the snapshots to create an initial Language Development Portfolio guide for collecting student work samples that would reflect each KLU. We simply created a matrix with the learning activities already

**Setting:** Burke County Public Schools is a medium size rural district in western North Carolina featuring 25 schools. The district is composed of 14 elementary schools, five middle schools, and four high schools, all serving a population of 11,395 students. Approximately 12% of the student population is comprised of multilingual learners. A total of 28 languages are represented in our diverse community. Spanish is the most predominant language other than English at 74%, as many of our students hail from Central America. These students speak English as a third language; they speak indigenous dialects as well as Spanish, the language used in formal schooling at their home countries. The next most prevalent language is Hmong, representing 13% of Burke's 27 home languages other than English. Elementary multilingual learners compose approximately 58% of all English language learners. The other 42% are in secondary schools—out of these students, approximately 60% are classified as long-term English learners and approximately 40% as newcomers to U.S. schools.

listed in the snapshots in the first column and added columns to the right with a heading for each quarter (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4).

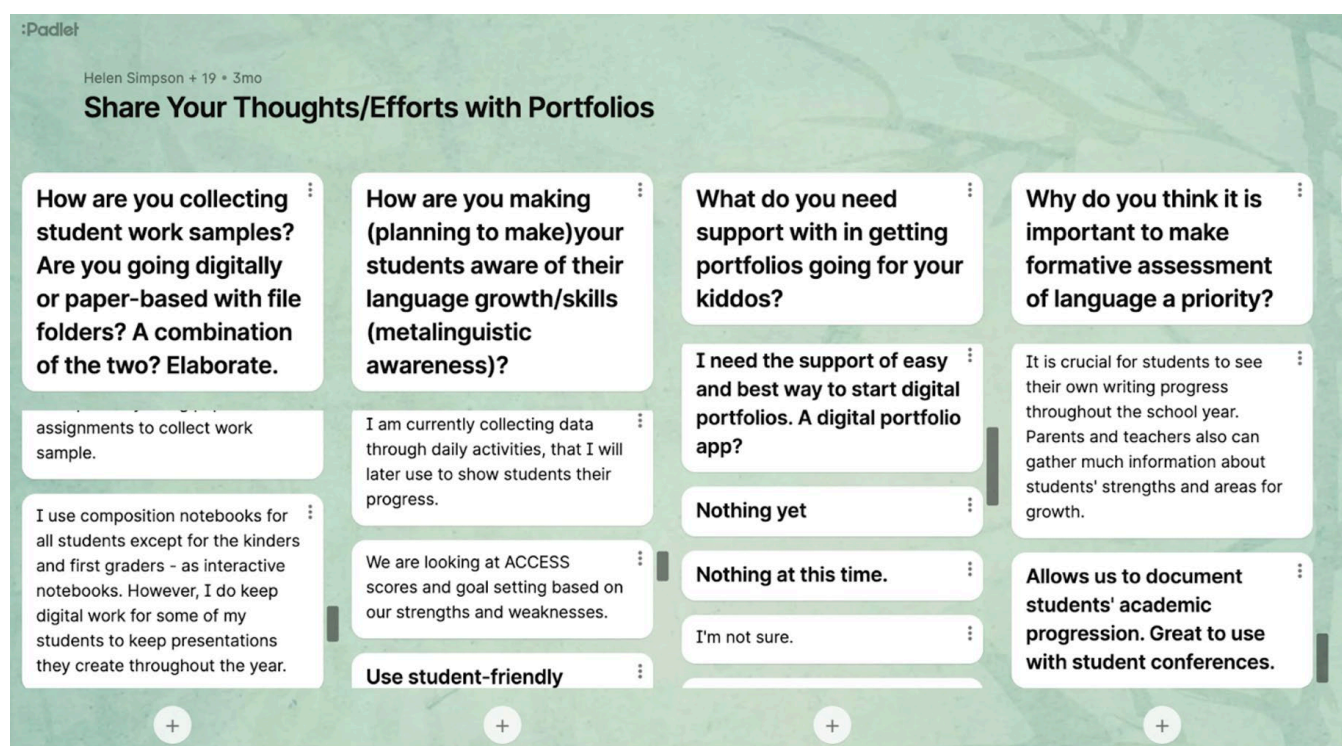
A note of caution—the snapshots are just that: examples of some ways students might engage with a KLU in each grade-level cluster. It is important that these examples alone do not become the only way teachers conceptualize student engagement with the KLUs. Therefore, we also added two blank rows under each KLU, so that teachers could add their own additional or alternate learning activities.

**Snapshots of Key Language Uses in Grades 2-3: A Portfolio Guide**

Place dates in cells of Grades 2-3 portfolio artifacts				
Narrate	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a sense of narrative structure and the purposes for which people use narratives				
<input type="checkbox"/> Structure narratives to express experiences and ideas about familiar places and people				
<input type="checkbox"/> Add interactions and reactions to characters' actions to develop characters' inner and outer worlds				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
Inform				
<input type="checkbox"/> Recognize the difference between imaginative stories and nonfiction informational texts				
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop an emerging sense of text structure as they interpret and create multimodal representations of their knowledge on topics of interest				
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop emerging research skills to build knowledge for reports				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
Explain				
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a sense of some causal, sequential, and cyclical relationships by observing concrete phenomena				
<input type="checkbox"/> Report observations of phenomena to build understanding of the world around them				
<input type="checkbox"/> Interpret and construct multimodal representations, such as diagrams and drawings, to illustrate how or why things work				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
Argue				
<input type="checkbox"/> State opinions or construct tentative claims and offer those in class discussions				
<input type="checkbox"/> Recognize the difference between claims with and without support				
<input type="checkbox"/> Offer observations to support opinions and claims				

How might you use this portfolio guide in your own classroom, or design your own? Context is important. For example, in Burke County, multilingual learners make up 11% of the student population. These students are primarily concentrated within the county seat and otherwise sprinkled across our rural county. Given a different demographic, programmatic, or instructional context, you might use portfolios in a different way in your classroom.

Teachers at Burke County agreed to dip their toes in the water and use portfolios as formative assessment tools, using the matrix above for collecting evidence of language development. We put our heads together and agreed to collaborate with colleagues and co-teachers to collect student artifacts from across classrooms. We discussed on a Padlet<sup>1</sup> how we would collect student work—for example, would portfolios be paper-based, digital, or a combination of both? Teachers also considered how they would develop metalinguistic awareness with students, what support they might need to implement portfolios in their classrooms, and the importance of classroom assessment.



Let’s take a look into how Mrs. Peeler used language development portfolios in her second grade classroom at Forest Hill Elementary School. Mrs. Peeler chose to collect language artifacts digitally. Whereas students were engaging in all four KLU during instruction, as an example, let’s follow how one student’s use of the **KLU Inform** evolved over four months.

<sup>1</sup> Padlet is digital bulletin board software that is popular with educators and students. See [www.padlet.com](http://www.padlet.com)



In **September**, Mrs. Peeler’s second grade class wrote, represented, and orally shared their favorite things in a get-to-know-you activity. Aracely (a pseudonym) recorded and uploaded a video (screenshot below).



*“Hi, my name is Aracely. My favorite book is Pete the Cat, and my favorite color is pink, and my favorite thing is bask...I mean a soccer ball, and my favorite thing is blueberry, and my favorite animal is (a) unicorn.”*

In **October**, Mrs. Peeler’s class read *Quinto’s Neighborhood* by Ina Cumpiano. Second graders learned about members of the community and the unique jobs they do at various buildings, shops, and places within the neighborhood. The students also focused on language to inform—for example, they explored how key details are important to support the main idea that everyone is a valuable, contributing member of the community.

Mrs. Peeler extended the central message of the story, and students considered how other helpers contribute to our community. Students then wrote informational sentences or short text with information and key details about their community helper’s job. Mrs. Peeler integrated both language arts and ELD standards.

State Academic Content Standards: Language Arts	WIDA ELD Standards Framework: Language Expectations
<p>RL.2.1: Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.</p> <p>W.2.2: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.</p>	<p><b>ELD-LA.2-3.Inform.Expressive:</b> Multilingual learners will construct informational texts in language arts that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce and define topic and/or entity for audience</li> <li>• Add details to define, describe, compare, and classify topic</li> <li>• Develop coherence and cohesion throughout text</li> </ul>


Aracely not only represented her thinking with a drawing, but also in writing as shown in the images below. In her video recording, Aracely continued to develop her use of language in service of grade-level disciplinary learning: Mrs. Peeler noticed that Aracely’s oral skills were more developed than her writing skills, and accordingly noted this interpretation in the portfolio.



*"My favorite community helper is the lifeguard. The lifeguard rescues people."*

In **November**, the class wrote about types of communities. In a video recording, Aracely informed: *"My family lives in Morganton. I live (in a) suburban community. It has stuff and people. It has large houses and small houses and yards."* To make the video, Aracely had the support of a partner who would whisper prompts when Aracely needed help reading what she had written.

In **December**, the class continued to focus on writing informative text through exploring the topic of "types of communities." Mrs. Peeler had provided the class with paragraph frames to support their writing. In her video, Aracely informed with the support of whisper prompts from a partner: *"When I grow up, I'm gonna live in (an) urban community. I'm gonna live in (a) skyscraper. I'm gonna ride in the subway. And for the rest of the day, I'm gonna look in the dinosaur museum for fun. I'm gonna skate and camp for fun."*

When I grow up, I will live in a/  
 an \_\_\_\_\_ community. I will  
 live in \_\_\_\_\_. I will ride  
 \_\_\_\_\_.  During the day, I will  
 \_\_\_\_\_(museum/farm). I will  
 \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ for fun.



### Using Proficiency Level Descriptors to Notice Language Growth

To what extent are students using Key Language Uses? Whereas Key Language Uses and Language Expectations offer goals for what students do with language to meet grade-level academic content standards, **Proficiency Level Descriptors** (PLDs) offer agreed-upon criteria to interpret how individual language learners are developing across six levels of English proficiency over time. The PLDs provide a typical (but variable) trajectory

of language development represented through three dimensions of language: discourse, sentence, and word/phrase. The PLDs provide a window into more in-depth analysis of language.

We learned at the 2022 WIDA Annual Conference through Margo Gottlieb's and Fernanda Marinho Kray's work that further analysis of language development can occur through [Teacher-Friendly Proficiency Level Descriptor Charts](#). They guided our conversation about what Aracely could currently do with language and what her next steps for development might be.

We examined Aracely's portfolio through the lens of grade-level cluster 2-3 PLDs, and noticed the following about Aracely's use of Inform over four months:

- At the **discourse** dimension of language, Aracely was producing more quantity of text: we noticed a range of sentences and short texts with emerging organization to convey intended purpose (the purpose was to inform about several things: self, community helpers, and types of community).
- At the **sentence** dimension, we saw Aracely's sentence construction begin to include clauses.
- At the **word/phrase** level, Aracely demonstrated a growing repertoire of words and phrases with increasing precision.

### Looking Forward to the Remainder of the School Year

As we collect artifacts for language portfolios across time, at the end of each quarter and toward the end of the school year, portfolios can serve as a summative assessment, and an additional data point to inform decision-making about instruction and services. Although parents already receive digital language development artifacts, Mrs. Peeler and I agreed that including PLDs would greatly enhance conferencing with parents to shed a light on Aracely's trajectory of language development.



# Stories of Practice

INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS  
AREA 3: Determine How to  
Assess Language Growth

## Collaboration Among Teachers and Districts: Adding Framework Components to Portfolios

*By Tamara Coburn, Lead ESL Teacher at Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, North Carolina*

Our WSFCS department's excitement for the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition, preceded its final publication. One of our first steps towards implementation included an extended close look at the **Key Language Uses** (KLUs—Narrate, Inform, Explain, and Argue).

Gathering a team of curriculum writers from among our district ESL teachers, we embarked on a professional learning journey towards understanding KLUs. Our theme for the year 2021–2022 was “Getting a KLU.” We became language detectives by exploring how KLUs serve as

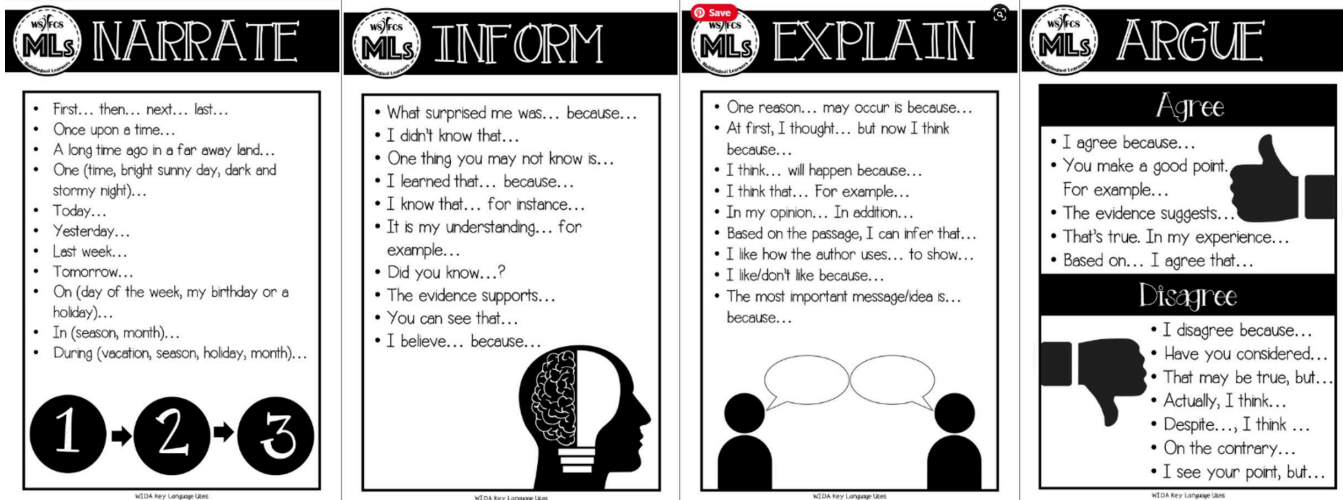
- A great place to start with educators who are just beginning to learn about the Framework
- A way to prioritize and organize the integration of language and content
- An organizing principle for the Framework's Language Expectations
- An entry point into the Framework's functional, genre-based approach to language development.

Our next step was to identify where KLUs appeared in WSFCS' grade-level academic content curriculum. We then wrote four model unit plans for each grade-level cluster (K, 1, 2–3, 4–5, 6–8, 9–12), also providing model lessons with specific strategies matched to each KLU.

**Setting:** Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools (WSFCS) was formed in 1963—it is the fourth-largest school system in North Carolina and the 81st largest in the nation. WSFCS serves more than 53,000 students in grades Pre-K through 12 in 42 elementary schools, 15 middle schools, 16 high schools, and 8 specialty schools. Over 8,000 students are identified as current English Learners, representing over 80 languages, including Spanish, Karenni, Swahili, Vietnamese, and Chinese.



As a result of this work, one of the most popular contributions from our instructional team to support teachers' emerging integration of the KLUs was this poster set with sample sentence starters and frames, designed in conjunction with Rebecca Olsen (reproduced with permission).

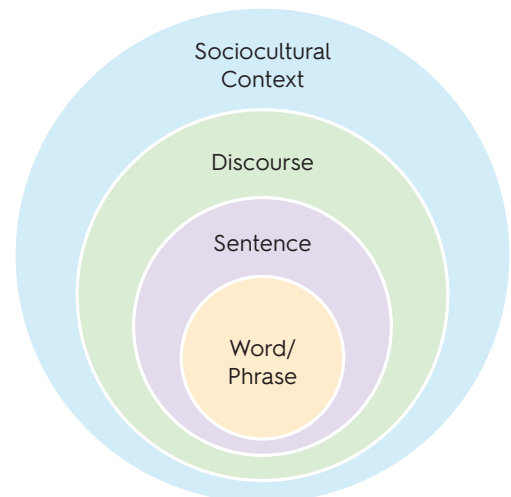


Next, we continued to support the integration of content and language by ensuring **Language Expectations** were added to WSFCS' unit planning organizer template.

Key Language Uses
overarching communicative purposes that are associated with language and content learning <b>NARRATE / INFORM / EXPLAIN / ARGUE</b>
Narrow to 1 or 2 primary language expectations for the unit. Provide examples of language functions and features.
<p><b>Language Expectation 1: ELD-SS.6-8.Explain.Interpretive</b> Multilingual learners will interpret social studies explanations by determining multiple points of view in sources for answering compelling and supporting questions about phenomena or events  <i>Example: By looking at both Malcom X and Martin Luther King we can a more complete understanding of the civil rights movement.</i></p>
<p><b>Language Expectation 2: ELD-SS.6-8.Argue.Interpretive</b> Multilingual learners will interpret social studies arguments by analyzing relevant information from multiple sources to support claims.  <i>Example: The AntiFederalist and Federalist helped create a strong constitution because of their different views on government.</i></p>

One elementary school with a large ESL teacher team began to assess English Learner artifacts for growth using the **Proficiency Level Descriptors** (PLDs). It soon became evident that we needed a more focused approach to the PDLs.

We found that teachers still learning about the Framework found more success by narrowing their evaluation of student work to one particular dimension of language rather than focusing on all the three dimensions at once (discourse, sentence, word/phrase). For example, for one project, we used the sentence dimension of the PLDs to evaluate third-grade student artifacts.





### Grades 2-3 WIDA Proficiency Level Descriptors for the Interpretive Communication Mode (Listening, Reading, and Viewing)

Toward the end of each proficiency level, when scaffolded appropriately, multilingual learners will...

Criteria	End of Level 1	End of Level 2	End of Level 3	End of Level 4	End of Level 5	Level 6
<b>SENTENCE Grammatical complexity</b>	<b>Understand how meanings are extended or enhanced through...</b>					
	chunks of language ( <i>stick to rocks and coral</i> )	simple sentences ( <i>They stick to rocks and coral.</i> )	related simple sentences ( <i>They look like plants. They stick to rocks and coral.</i> )	multiple related simple sentences ( <i>They are called anemones. They look like plants. They stick to rocks and coral.</i> )	simple and compound sentences with familiar ways of combining clauses (using coordinating conjunctions: <i>They are called anemones and they look like plants.</i> )	compound sentences with frequently used ways of combining clauses (coordinating conjunctions: <i>Anemones look like plants but they are sea animals.</i> )

### Grades 2-3 WIDA Proficiency Level Descriptors for the Expressive Communication Mode (Speaking, Writing, and Representing)

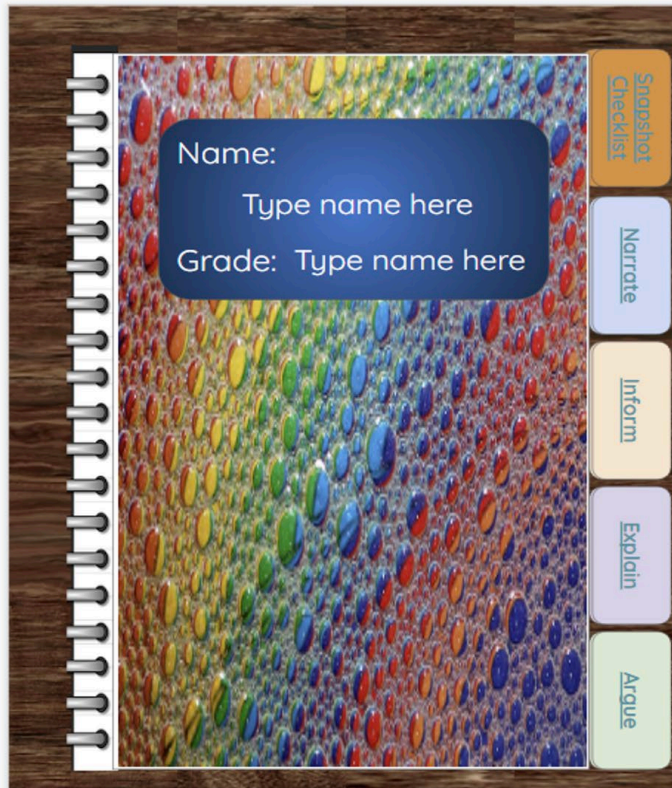
Toward the end of each proficiency level, when scaffolded appropriately, multilingual learners will...

Criteria	End of Level 1	End of Level 2	End of Level 3	End of Level 4	End of Level 5	Level 6
<b>SENTENCE Grammatical complexity</b>	<b>Extend or enhance meanings through...</b>					
	sentence fragments ( <i>triangles and rectangles</i> )	sentence fragments and emerging use of simple sentences ( <i>triangle has three sides</i> )	simple sentences ( <i>A square has 4 right angles.</i> )	sentences with emerging use of clauses ( <i>We put triangles, then rectangles</i> )	simple or compound sentences with familiar ways of combining clauses (with some coordinating conjunctions: <i>We put blue triangles, then we put red triangles.</i> )	compound and complex sentences with frequently used ways of combining clauses (with a broad range of coordinating conjunctions: <i>We put blue triangles, then red triangles, but there was no pattern.</i> )

This year, WSFCS Instructional Technologist Tammy Padgett collaborated with Helen Lannie Simson of Burke County Schools to create digital portfolios for multilingual learners. Tammy created full-color hyperlinked tabs for each of the KLU for each grade-level cluster. With clear instructions and illustrations, students can add work samples to their individual portfolios. Our hope is that as students self-evaluate for their own language development goals, this adds to student efficacy and ownership of learning. Additionally, we hope that this becomes a tool to support collaboration between language and content teachers as they look for opportunities to highlight the genre-specific language of their lessons and units of study, spiraling language development and support within academic content.

To further support content teachers, I analyzed PLDs for each grade-level cluster to determine which language skills and practices mark our state's English Language Education program exit levels. Our state-determined exit criterion is a composite ACCESS score of 4.8, so I pulled from PLDs 4 and 5 to develop a list of suggested instructional strategies to support those specific desired language skills and practices. These strategies are the foundation of district- and school-wide professional learning offerings, connecting classroom practice to specific language development goals within the sentence dimension.

- ❑ Type your name and grade on the cover.
- ❑ Add a photo of a hobby or something you like

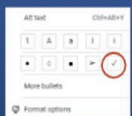


Checking off your Key Language Uses

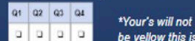
1. Locate the Key Language description you have mastered.
2. Identify the current quarter.
3. Place cursor over the box then right-click on the box.



4. The following option box will appear, select the checkmark.



5. Now you have checked off one of your Key Language Uses.



Snapshots of Key Language Uses in Grades 6-8: A Portfolio Guide

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Narrate</b>				
Describe people, objects, and scenes using imagery, metaphors, and other stylistic devices				
Manipulate pace to bring attention to key points in the narrative				
Underscore the significance of events				
Create tension and suspense				
Interpret and use historical narratives as primary source evidence in constructing arguments				
<b>Inform</b>				
Manage information about entities according to their composition, taxonomy, and classifications				
Identify and describe various relationships among ideas and information				
Interpret multiple sources of information to develop knowledge before reporting on topics				
Construct research reports that require multiple sources of factual information				
<b>Explain</b>				
Identify, analyze, and give account for causal, consequential, or systems relationships				
Apply scientific reasoning to show how or why something works				
Construct explanations using models or representations				
Use evidence in the construction of scientific explanations				
<b>Argue</b>				

- ❑ You need to zoom to 100% to read your descriptions

WSFCS Digital Portfolios created by Tammy Padgett at North Forsyth High School

Moving forward, we will continue our curriculum development by coordinating and collaborating with content areas to complete and improve the KLU section of our WSFCS unit planning organizers. [North Carolina's standards implementation of the Mapping and Unpacking documents](#) provides increasing support for content area teachers of multilingual learners.

Taking an iterative design approach to our implementation of the Framework, the coming summers will present an opportunity for curriculum writers to develop and refine our model unit plan offerings. Using KLUs as an organizing principle for the integration of content and language, as well as the primary entry point for educators just beginning to learn about the Framework, we'll be able to further focus our lesson design, delivery, and assessment by setting goals with Language Expectations and PLDs, and the support of the digital language development portfolios.



# Stories of Practice

## INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS AREA 4: Lesson Planning Considerations and Scaffolding Approaches

### Coaching Reflections about Scaffolding When Using the WIDA ELD Standards Framework

*By Paula Merchant, coach for the Transformative Learning Collaborative and for the Southeastern Massachusetts Bilingual Hub based in the Brockton Public Schools, Massachusetts, and Allison Audet, coach for the Transformative Learning Collaborative, Massachusetts*

As coaches, we have an important role to play in helping our schools and teachers explore and implement the WIDA ELD Standards Framework. We value learning together with our teacher colleagues in classrooms to deepen our knowledge of how the Framework is being used to support students and engage in scaffolding in daily practice.

#### Clarity of Lesson Level Objectives

In our work with educators in a range of contexts, we support teachers to *actively monitor student language development* in the context of the lesson, and in *identifying appropriate supports* for students.

We ask teachers to begin by ensuring clarity of the lesson level language objective(s). Our lesson objectives are derived by unpacking **Language Expectations**. Lesson objectives also take into consideration the **Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs)**. Attention to the larger goals represented by Language Expectations and PLDs is a critical step to help educators monitor and support student learning within the lesson.

Once there is a clear articulation of the language objective(s) for the lesson, educators are able to:

- Identify assessments that allow students to demonstrate learning in relation to objectives
- Plan for formative assessment to gauge learning throughout the lesson, and
- Promote student monitoring of their own learning.

Having a clearly articulated objective enables educators to identify ways to leverage the assets that students bring to the classroom and identify supports to adjust instruction accordingly.

## Use of Formative Assessment and Contingent Pedagogy

In addition to clearly articulated lesson level objectives, it is important to utilize formative assessment and contingent pedagogy—a pedagogy that is responsive to changes in student performance—to move students forward in their language growth.

The need to provide flexible adjustments to instruction often presents challenges for educators given the fluid nature of language development, the unpredictability of the intersection of students with the content and genre, and the reality that student needs vary from lesson to lesson, unit to unit, and genre to genre. Despite these challenges, educators can position themselves to flexibly adjust in-the-moment instruction to support students using the PLDs to monitor student expressive language.

In our coaching sessions, we work with educators to plan instruction and organize lessons around Key Language Uses and Language Expectation(s)—and through these mechanisms, to enable ample classroom opportunities for teacher and peer modeling, joint deconstruction of text, and joint construction of text. We highlight the need for the teacher to actively support learning by circulating, assessing, using scaffolds, and providing actionable feedback in the moment. These in-the-moment classroom assessment practices, paired with contingent pedagogy, enable educators to individualize instruction and assist all students to successfully demonstrate their learning, providing students with equitable opportunities to demonstrate their learning.

Through flexibly applied scaffolding in relation to the lesson objective, educators can provide students with equitable opportunities to demonstrate their learning.

In a coaching session with Ms. Touati, a high school social studies teacher, we considered the linguistic strengths and needs of students, and entry points for all students to engage with the lesson. Through an analysis of recent student performance, the lesson objectives, and upcoming assessments, Ms. Touati identified and applied in-the-moment support. Ms. Touati found that some students benefited from

- Using a graphic organizer to frame their thinking and plan a public service announcement (PSA)
- Using sentence frames to support their understanding of the genre
- Recording themselves practicing the PSA and listening to their own recording
- Practicing their PSA orally with a peer prior to sharing with the class
- Having individual meetings with the teacher for additional modeling and opportunities to practice

By having a) clear lesson objectives, b) knowledge of student strengths and needs, c) knowledge of the PLDs, and d) formative assessment structured throughout the lesson to monitor student learning, Ms. Touati was able to meet the needs of all students in the room.



## Building Oral Language Tasks and Interaction Systematically into Instruction

All students, and especially multilingual learners, need ample opportunities for daily oral language use. Oral interaction is also a central mechanism for responsive, dynamic scaffolding between a teacher and student, and among students themselves.

During a coaching conversation, Mr. Wesley, a second-grade teacher, shared that he was concerned some of his multilingual learners were not talking as much as he had hoped, despite having planned group work tasks and supports for different academic conversations. Together, we brainstormed possible changes. We discussed ideas for grouping strategies and for how components of the Framework might be used to structure small group tasks, so Mr. Wesley would be better positioned to interact, support, assess, and scaffold learning.

In a follow up coaching session, Mr. Wesley’s students were working on constructing scientific explanations about how and why volcanoes erupt.

The heart of forging scaffolding approaches, and for providing different pathways for students to reach learning goals, resides in the moment of instruction—as students and teachers talk, build relationships, and work together interactively.

State Academic Content Standard	WIDA ELD Standards Framework:
2-ESS2-3 Use examples from informational text to explain phenomena	<p><b>ELD-SC.2-3.Explain.Expressive:</b> Multilingual learners will construct scientific explanations that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe observations and data about a phenomenon</li> <li>Develop a logical sequence between data or evidence and claim</li> <li>Compare multiple solutions to a problem</li> </ul>

Mr. Wesley had incorporated some new moves to support academic interactions and responsive scaffolding including:

- Creating a chart using grade-level 2-3 **PLDs** to thoughtfully plan groupings of students for different purposes and tasks (e.g., home language groups with students at varying English language proficiency levels, buddy groups, triads of support, English language proficiency range groups for targeted scaffolding, etc.).
- Using **PLDs** to think (and write) about what he might see and hear from students at different ranges of language proficiency working through the task at hand.
- Creating sentence frames to support students’ scientific explanation of how volcanoes erupt using **Language Functions** and sample **Language Features**.

While working jointly with a group of newcomers, Mr. Wesley opened up opportunities to directly assess and thereby more responsively scaffold learning. By being part of the group and guiding the task interactively based on what he heard and saw from students, Mr. Wesley responded to what students needed in the moment, and using scaffolding strategies such as...

### Modeling

- Reframing language
- Checking for student comprehension and supporting deepening of understanding
- Leveraging home languages, metalinguistic awareness, and bridging between languages

Mr. Wesley was able to document how students processed the content and developed language. This important documentation of student growth that stems directly from observation of current student performance provides evidence over time to support longer term planning. In our coaching approach, we see scaffolding as an important daily professional learning focus. Skillful classroom management and planning undergirds our ability to engage in dynamic, in-the-moment, micro-scaffolding practices. Some of the most valuable moments of instruction are supported by this intersection of macro and micro-scaffolding practices.

The expertise and guidance of the teacher determines when scaffolds are provided or removed when no longer needed, thereby supporting students to reach lesson objectives and to continue to progress toward other longer-term learning benchmarks.

**Stories of Practice** describe how real educators and administrators from across the U.S. are taking action to implement aspects of each focus area. For more resources on implementation, see the [Implementation Guide](#) and the [Administrator Guide](#).

**IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE:**  
WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework

**wida.wisc.edu**

