Essential Actions

A Handbook for Implementing WIDA's Framework for English Language Development Standards

A Companion to the 2012 Amplification of the ELD Standards

Margo Gottlieb

WIDA™

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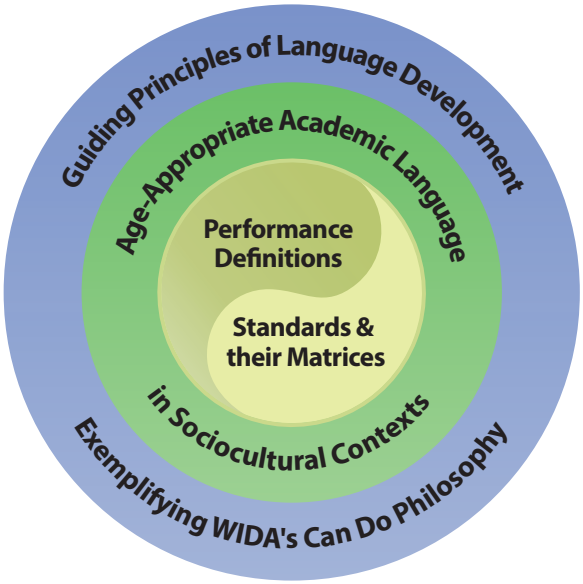
FOREWORD: WIDA's Framework for Language Development Standards

Essential Actions is a response to three frequently asked questions about WIDA's Framework for language development standards: "Why are there so many components?," "What is the reasoning behind each component?," and "What is important to consider in implementing English language development standards?" The framework is designed for use across multiple contexts and settings and represents language development in English and Spanish of the youngest dual language learners from age 2.5 through language learners at the high school level.

WIDA's framework for language development standards, depicted below, consists of a set of interactive and interdependent components that exemplify WIDA's vision for academic language development. This framework is the foundation for WIDA's ongoing work in the area of language development standards and assessment.

Figure A: WIDA's Framework for Language Development Standards



The conceptualization of academic language and language development in academic contexts has been and continues to be upheld by WIDA's Can Do Philosophy and Guiding Principles of Language Development. WIDA's Can Do Philosophy is based on the belief that all students bring to their learning cultural and linguistic practices, skills, and ways of knowing from their homes and communities. WIDA believes that an educator's role is to craft instruction that capitalizes on and builds upon these assets. This belief is based on a synthesis of the literature related to working with culturally and linguistically diverse students. Using this work as a frame, WIDA drafted its Guiding Principles from a synthesis of literature and research related to language development and effective instructional practices for language learners. These Guiding Principles represent WIDA's core beliefs about language development.

Using the Can Do Philosophy and Guiding Principles of Language Development as a foundation, WIDA identified prominent Features of Academic Language. Academic language, in this framework, is viewed as a vehicle for communicating and learning within sociocultural contexts; in other words, the interaction between different people for specific purposes and across different learning environments influence how language is used.

At the core of WIDA's framework are the Performance Definitions along with the five language development standards and their representative matrices. The Performance Definitions delineate what the various levels of language proficiency look like, informed by the Features of Academic Language. The standards matrices help educators envision what language development might look like in K–12 classrooms scaffolded across levels of language proficiency within the five standards. These matrices are used in conjunction with the Performance Definitions to describe possible student trajectories for academic language development.

The components of WIDA's framework interact and influence each other in the design of curricula, language instruction, and assessment of language learners. Teachers and school leaders are encouraged to emphasize specific elements of the framework in their language instruction to fit the specific needs of individual students and contexts. In doing so, all stakeholders can participate in shaping the education of an increasingly diverse student population.

Essential Actions is a call for teachers and teacher educators to take action and collaborate in designing and implementing curriculum, instruction, and assessment through standards. Through this coordinated effort, all students can benefit from a personalized and challenging standards-referenced education that is geared towards advancing their individual and collective academic success. As a result, language learners, by having exposure to both language and content standards, will build stronger academic language to use inside and outside of school.

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SECTION 1: Overview of the Handbook

Introduction

World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment's (WIDA's) mission, to support academic language development and academic achievement for linguistically diverse students through high quality standards, assessments, research, and professional development, is exemplified in its Can Do Philosophy. Our ten Guiding Principles of Language Development provide the theoretical and research bases for extensive standards work. And now, our 15 Essential Actions for unlocking academic language use in school will help educators better understand the multiple facets of standards-referenced education for English language learners (ELLs).

This handbook is an outgrowth of much conversation around how to enhance the representation of our English language development standards in preparation for the release of our 2012 Amplification. We wished to make more explicit what was implicit in our previous editions, and create clear connections to academic content standards, including the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards.

Since their inception in 2003, WIDA's five English language development standards have remained unaltered and foundational to our work, enhancing educational opportunity and excellence for ELLs.[1] With input from our members, including thousands of educators, we at WIDA have continuously refined and improved how we represent language standards. In that way, teachers and instructional leaders have gained a richer and deeper appreciation of the complexities of language learning.

Purpose and Audiences

This handbook is designed to be a resource to share among educators who work directly with or are impacted by ELLs. It is a guide that describes and illustrates the standards-referenced components and elements of language learning within WIDA's standards framework.

Purpose

The overall purpose of this handbook is to promote collaboration, mutual understanding, and use of language development standards among all educators who work with ELLs. The Essential Actions, derived from current theory and research, provide a rationale for each component and element of WIDA's standards framework. They may be used in conjunction with WIDA's 2007 or 2012 Standards books or independently, once teachers have familiarity with the components and elements.

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[1] In reading this handbook, you might note several changes in reference to the standards. First, we now refer to the overall language expectations for ELLs as language *development* standards. We believe that "language development" better captures the description of the cumulative process of language learning while "language proficiency" is a snapshot of that development measured at one point in time and interpreted as a level along a continuum.

Audiences

Various audiences may choose different ways to use the Essential Actions in order to implement WIDA's language development standards.

Teachers, in professional learning teams or communities, may share experiences related to the Essential Actions that lead to sound instruction and classroom assessment for ELLs.

Instructional and school leaders may use the Essential Actions to gain a global sense of students' language development within and across classrooms and be attuned to the effectiveness of language education programs.

Teacher educators may find this resource a springboard for deep discussion about the role of language development standards in the achievement of language learners.

The following table specifies the uses of the handbook for these audiences.

Figure B: Audiences and Uses of the Handbook

Audiences	Uses of the Handbook
Teachers, including language and content teachers, special education teachers, and "specials" teachers	Plan for students' language learning Collaborate with one another and share information on language learners Apply to the design of standards-referenced instruction and classroom assessment
Instructional leaders, including superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, and instructional coaches	Provide a common ground for discussing issues related to academic language learning Guide curriculum, instruction, and school-based assessment for language learners Use in the design of standards-referenced curriculum and common assessment
Teacher educators, including pre-service teachers and professional development providers	Provide a theoretical basis for the Framework for Language Development Standards Use as a needs assessment for districts or schools Offer deeper understanding of the components of the framework

This handbook is limited in scope in relation to its purposes and audiences. To avoid misunderstanding on the uses of the Essential Actions, the following table specifies what the handbook is and what it is not.

Figure C: What this Handbook Is and Is Not

The Handbook is a…	The Handbook is NOT a…
Resource to help educators plan for academic language success of their students	"How to manual" for designing curriculum
Complement to the Resource Guides for Language Development Standards	Compendium of instructional strategies
Set of suggestions that is in accordance with WIDA's mission, vision, and Can Do Philosophy	Mandate for instruction and assessment for ELLs
Theoretical rationale for WIDA's Framework for Language Development Standards	Set of classroom practices

The Role of Academic Language in School Contexts

> In the end, academic language is not just academic…it is life giving when it extends through the length, width, and depth of all that we can learn (Heath, 2008, pp. xiii).

Research and theory provide guidance about the experiences of language learners in schools and the important role of academic language in this context. Language shapes the sociocultural contexts in which it lives and in turn, these sociocultural contexts, including the actors in them, shape the language. Schools are no exception. For many students, schooling is primarily a linguistic experience, as learning language and learning through language are simultaneous endeavors (Halliday, 1993). For all students, but particularly for ELLs, school brings new situations, new ways of interacting, and new forms of text (Schleppegrell, 2004). These unfamiliar contexts for learning are filled with academic language. With every ring of a bell, there is new academic language for students to learn, whether it is oral and written interaction of science lessons, mathematics problem solving, or social studies tasks (Bailey, Butler, Stevens, & Lord, 2007).

Academic language is at the heart of standards and serves as the crosswalk between grade-level expectations delineated in academic content standards and their corresponding language development standards. This handbook emphasizes these connections to ensure that ELLs, as all students, take challenging, yet realistic, steps along their pathway to academic success. By integrating language with content and content with language through a shared lens, teachers can prepare students to be active participants in 21st century learning.

It takes a coordinated effort among teachers and school leaders to implement standards-based reform. The 15 Essential Actions exemplified in this handbook are a starting point for rich conversations among professionals working with ELLs. Centered on the academic rigor surrounding the language of school,

the Actions afford educators of ELLs insight into the academic language of the competitive world of college and career.

Architecture of WIDA's Framework for Language Development Standards

WIDA's Framework for Language Development Standards includes three major components. The Features of Academic Language in Sociocultural Contexts overarch and shape the Performance Definitions for receptive and productive language, which, in turn, interact with the language development standards and their matrices.

Features of Academic Language in Sociocultural Contexts

Academic language does not operate in isolation—it is always associated with and is embedded in a sociocultural context. It is the sociocultural context that frames academic language and gives meaning to oral and written communication. This relation is dialogic in that the language used in particular contexts also shapes those contexts. In school, the classroom is the venue that provides the sociocultural context in which language learning occurs (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2013). The sociocultural context is multifaceted in that it represents the interaction or relationship between what the student brings to the learning environment (e.g., languages, cultures, experiences) and the language of the task at hand, including the register, genre, and topic. Schools shape the expectations for language use by the students, while at the same time, students and their ways of knowing and using language also have tremendous influence on schools.

Language permeates school and is fundamental in educating youth. Language development standards provide a window for educators of language learners into the systematic treatment of language within and across content areas. The new elements and components of WIDA's standards matrices, as illustrated in the 2012 Amplification, will help all educators organize curriculum, instruction, and assessment around language.

Performance Definitions

The Performance Definitions work together with the English language development standards to shape WIDA's vision of the language expectations of ELLs as they move along the **five levels of English language proficiency**—Entering, Emerging,[2] Developing, Expanding, and Bridging. Performance Definitions specify the academic language features included in its three sets of criteria—Linguistic Complexity, Language Forms and Conventions,[3] and Vocabulary Usage—that operate within a

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[2] Another change from WIDA's 2007 Edition to 2012 is that we now refer to English language proficiency level 2 as "Emerging" rather than "Beginning." We believe that teachers, in differentiating language instruction, often set up three groups of language learners; the most logical divisions are Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced students. Therefore, we thought it would be wise to replace Beginning, which at times was confused with Level 1-Entering, with a more descriptive label.

[3] The criterion "Language Forms and Conventions" is replacing "Language Control" to better define sentence-level features of academic language and to ensure a stronger correspondence with academic content standards, including the Common Core.

sociocultural context within a classroom setting. These criteria, delineated for each level of language proficiency, and reflected in the Common Core State Standards, are an overall description of the language ELLs process and produce (see Essential Action 2 for more details); they entail:

- **Linguistic Complexity**—the organization, cohesion and relationship between ideas expressed in a variety of sentences that make up different registers, genres, and text types in oral or written language.
- **Language Forms and Conventions**—the grammatical structures, patterns, syntax, and mechanics associated with sentence level meaning and use.
- **Vocabulary Usage**—the specificity of words, phrases, or expressions, along with multiple meanings, cognates, and collocations, applied to given contexts.

Language Development Standards and their Matrices[4]

English Language Development Standards

Content standards, including the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), by definition, set common expectations for learning. Academic content standards delineate what students should understand (conceptual knowledge) and are able to do (practices) for each discipline. On the other hand, English language development standards illustrate:

- A developmental pathway to English language proficiency.
- Scaffolding from one language proficiency level to the next along the continuum of language development.
- The necessary academic language for accessing and achieving grade-level content.
- Academic language use in school within and across content areas.

WIDA's language development standards remain constant and the components within its matrices are always presented within a fixed format. The matrices are one way to portray the language expectations for each of the five levels of language proficiency within a particular context. The expectations are described through statements called model performance indicators or MPIs. As the context varies, the language will probably vary as well. For this reason, the ways in which the standards are represented are intended to be dynamic to fit the language learning context. In fact, to customize teaching and classroom assessment so that it is better synchronized with content instruction in your classroom, encourages exchanging elements of the MPIs and other components, such as the language domains, through transformations.[5] With the tremendous heterogeneity of language learners, teachers should be able to craft curriculum, instruction,

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[4] For example standards matrices, see the *WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards and Resource Guide, 2007 Edition, PreKindergarten–Grade 12* and the *2012 Amplification of the English Language Development Standards, Kindergarten–Grade 12.*

[5] See the *WIDA ELP Standards and Resource Guide, 2007 Edition* (pp. RG34–38) for an explanation and examples of transformations.

and assessment based on representations of the English language development standards that:

- Best mirror the academic language of their classrooms.
- Are compatible and interweave with content learning.
- Reflect the differentiated language needs of their students.
- Include a variety of built-in instructional supports (i.e., sensory, graphic, and interactive).

Strands of Model Performance Indicators

WIDA's representation of English language development through its standards framework is unique. The central structure consists of the **strands of model performance indicators (MPIs).** Each strand exemplifies how language is processed (for the language domains of listening or reading) or produced (for the language domains of speaking or writing) for example grade-level content topics that are differentiated across five levels of language proficiency. The strands of model performance indicators are representations of how the standards may be implemented in classrooms with a heterogeneous mix of ELLs.

A strand of MPIs illustrates one of many ways in which language may be scaffolded across the levels of language proficiency for a given content topic and context for language use. The following strand shows how language development builds over time from language proficiency level 1, Entering, to level 5, Bridging.

Figure D: A Strand of Model Performance Indicators

GRADE 4

WIDA

ELD STANDARD 4: The Language of Science — **EXAMPLE TOPIC: Earth history/materials**

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Emerging	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	
LISTENING	Match processes or events with their effects on earth materials based on oral descriptions using photos, illustrations, or videos with a partner in L1 or L2	Identify and sort the effect of processes or events on earth materials based on oral descriptions using photos, illustrations, or videos with a partner in L1 or L2	Categorize the effects of processes or events on earth materials based on oral descriptions using photos, illustrations, or videos and graphic organizers with a partner	Distinguish between effects of processes or events on earth materials based on oral descriptions using photos, illustrations, or videos	Interpret the effects of processes or events on earth materials using videos based on grade-level oral discourse	Level 6 – Reaching

This handbook addresses the four new components to the standards matrix. Each new component surrounding the strand of MPIs provides an additional dimension of language learning to be considered in planning curriculum, instruction, and assessment for ELLs. **The new components to the standards matrix introduced in the 2012 Amplification are:**

- A Connection to academic content standards, including the Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards.
- Representative grade-level, Topic-Related Language.
- A uniform Cognitive Function across the five levels of language proficiency.
- An Example Context for Language Use for the strand of model performance indicators.

The 2012 Amplification also introduces different types of strands. The new types of strands illustrate the flexibility in the ways standards are portrayed and the importance of ELLs' development of academic language outside of the traditional core content areas. **The additional types of strands are:**

- Expanded strands, illustrating the three performance criteria across the levels of language proficiency.
- Integrated strands, encompassing multiple language domains, grade levels, and standards.
- Complementary strands, extending the language of the content areas to Visual Arts, Physical Education and Health, and Technology and Engineering, to name a few.

These new components and additional types of strands offer a much broader range of language learning possibilities that typify classrooms with language learners. The next section outlines the theoretical backgrounds for these components and illustrates how they are converted into Essential Actions.

SECTION 2: Taking Action!

Essential Actions for Academic Language Success

Fifteen **Essential Actions for academic language success** provide the organizing structure for this section of the handbook. The Essential Actions are evidence-based strategies for educators to apply in implementing standards-referenced, language-centered education. In particular, they are intended to help identify the academic language of grade-level content through WIDA's language development standards. In that way, ELLs can have greater opportunities to experience success and thrive in elementary and secondary schools in preparation for college and careers.

The Essential Actions are evidence-based strategies for educators to apply in implementing standards-referenced, language-centered education.

The first 12 Essential Actions are arranged according to their presentation in WIDA's standards matrix, from the most global, the Performance Definitions, to the most discrete, the elements of the model performance indicators: language functions, content stems, and instructional supports. Essential Actions 13–15 emphasize how all teachers have a shared responsibility for the education of ELLs and how they are to support each another in working toward a more comprehensive, inclusive educational system.

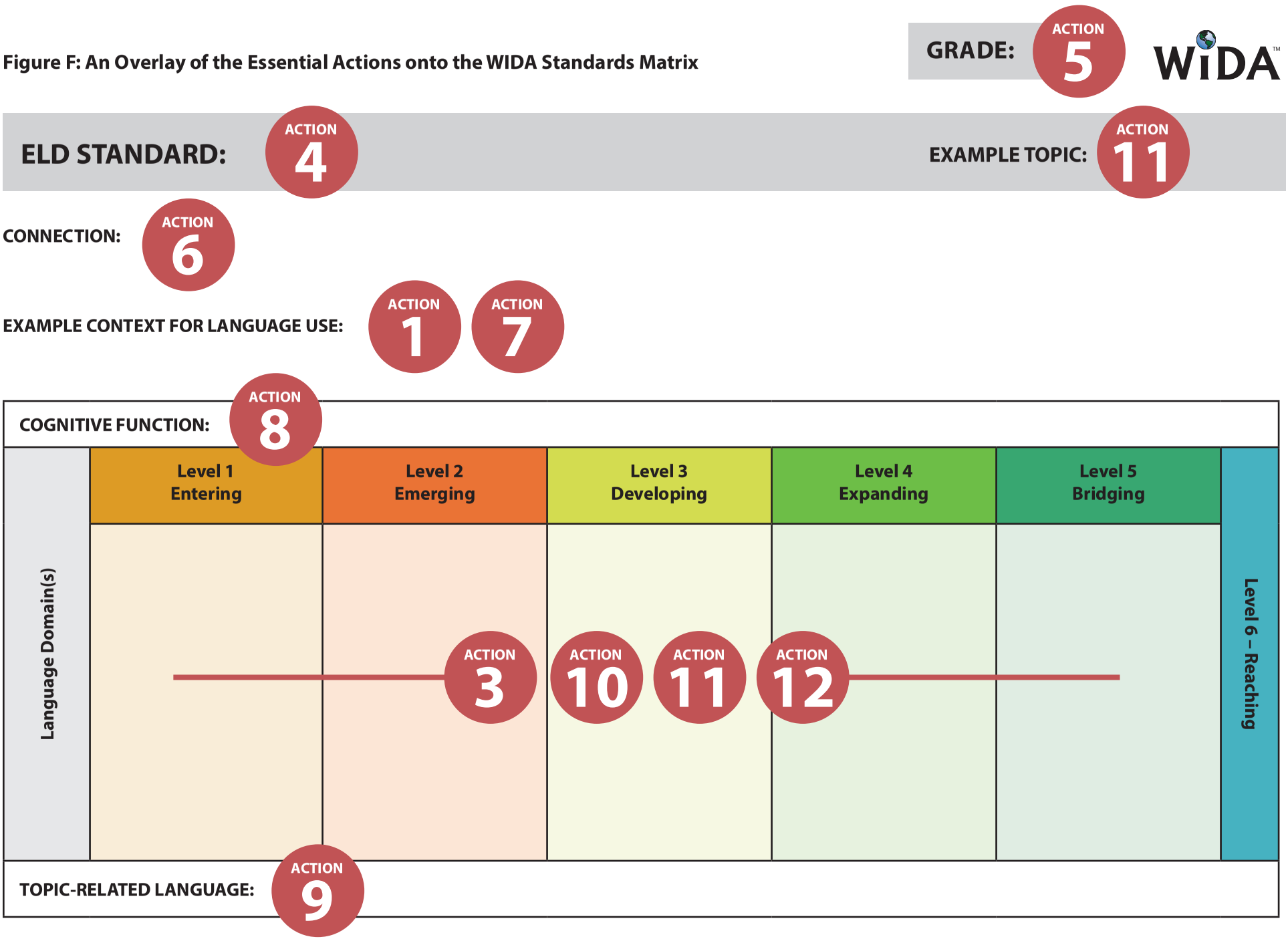
The Essential Actions are intended to stimulate professional conversations among language and content educators about academic language and its role in education. They are not presented in a linear fashion nor are they intended to be followed in a sequential order. The Actions may be rearranged or categorized according to a school's preference or may be used as a point of departure for professional learning teams or communities.

For each Essential Action there is an explanation of its use, background information on its importance or rationale that is supported by research, a description of its relation to WIDA's standards framework for language development, and an example of a practice that is reflective of the Action. Each Action also includes an illustration of the specified standards-referenced component or element. The Actions come alive with teachers' and teacher educators' contributions. Finally, each Action is followed by a set of questions to stimulate discussion among educators working with language learners as they plan the implementation of standards-referenced education. Each set of questions includes opportunities for educators to apply the ideas from the Essential Actions to their practice.

The Essential Actions follow. Their numbers correspond to elements or component shown in the expanded English language development standards matrix.

Figure E: Essential Actions for Academic Language Success

Figure F: An Overlay of the Essential Actions onto the WIDA Standards Matrix



Example Language Features

ACTION 2 ACTION 14

	Levels 1–3	Levels 2–4	Levels 3–5	Level 6 – Reaching
Linguistic Complexity Discourse Level				
Language Forms & Conventions Sentence Level				
Vocabulary Usage Word/Phrase Level				

Action 13 is represented in the Integrated Strands and Action 15 is represented in the Complementary Strands.

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ACTION 1

Capitalize on the resources and experiences that ELLs bring to school to build and enrich their academic language.

Students are the centerpiece of an educational system and the nation's future. Teaching and learning should revolve around who ELLs are, what they can do, and how everyone can benefit from the tremendous assets they bring to school. When the sociocultural contexts students encounter in their schools are in concert with those of their home and community and when the students can recognize their linguistic and cultural identities represented in their school, they feel respected as members and contributors to their learning environment. Therefore, every attempt should be made to incorporate the backgrounds of the students into curriculum design, such as in the selection of topics or themes of units and the genres or text types of materials. Equally important, instructional tasks and activities should provide students with opportunities to take on a variety of identities and social roles to promote more linguistically and culturally responsive instructional practices. As a result of having more positive and connected experiences with schooling, students will more likely acquire and use grade-level academic language in relevant and meaningful contexts.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE FOR ACTION 1

A wealth of linguistic and cultural knowledge exists in local households in diverse communities around the country. These community-based resources can shape a pedagogy that connects to students' life experiences and engages them academically. By using students' "funds of knowledge," we are mobilizing their cultural resources for teaching and learning (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Moll, 1992).

By using students "funds of knowledge," we are mobilizing their cultural resources for teaching and learning (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Moll, 1992).

The complex socio-cognitive processes of meaning making that we use to understand and produce text and talk are embedded within social practices of everyday life (Pérez, 2004). Students acquire these resources in their homes and communities. Empirical studies have shown that ELLs with rich experiences in their home language develop literacy faster in a second language. As educators, we need to nurture dynamic bilingualism by fostering students' exploration of their linguistic identities and their development across languages (Escamilla & Hopewell, 2010, Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010; Hornberger, 2003, among others). For too long, schools have underestimated the contribution of language development at home (Zentella, 2005), envisioning ELLs functioning in two separate worlds rather than realizing that they learn in and across both. Academic language includes multiple literacies (Gee, 2008) and being able to tap two or more languages as the basis for academic language development enriches all students.

A REPRESENTATION OF ACTION 1 IN THE WIDA STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

ELLs are central to WIDA's **standards-referenced system.** Language development standards help frame curriculum, instruction, and assessment while stimulating professional development and research, however, ELLs must always be visible in the overall system. Systemic consideration of ELLs in planning, implementing, evaluating, and refining any and all aspects of education will help ensure their equitable and fair treatment.

WIDA's Can Do Philosophy brings the strengths of ELLs to the forefront of the educational system. As 21st century knowledge and skills take center stage in today's standards-referenced arena, teachers and school leaders of ELLs must step up and act on the positive contributions that these students make to the U.S. educational enterprise. By taking action toward improving educational opportunities and academic outcomes of this fastest-growing student population, educators will help pave the way for ELLs' academic language success.

PUTTING ACTION 1 INTO PRACTICE

By Marylin Low and Emily Lam, Honolulu, HI

ELLs have diverse language and cultural backgrounds, learning styles, and life experiences that are often different from those of their peers. When teachers build on these diverse assets through intentionally designed learning plans, ELLs' academic performance is enhanced (Ladson-Billings, 1995; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Below is an example of how Kimi, an elementary teacher in Hawai'i, capitalizes on the resources and experiences of the ELLs in her classroom.

Kimi is co-planning a project-based unit on the topic of weather.[6] Students will learn about the water cycle, weather elements, measuring changes in weather, and data collection through a variety of interactive activities. The culminating product will be an event, planned by students, to teach the school community about what they have learned. Kimi has different images of Pacific weather patterns she wants to display and use to activate prior knowledge about weather.

Capitalizing on the varying kinesthetic, visual, and oral learning styles of her students, Kimi wants the final event to be performed for the community—a performance with a message. Knowing that some parents of her ELLs are fishers, Kimi invites them as guest speakers and, with assistance from interpreters at school, they share with her class the methods they have used to forecast weather and determine the impact of weather on their livelihood. A group of students is intrigued by the idea of predicting the weather. They list important terms such as water, wind, and rain in the languages of their group members. They seek clarification of local meanings from the community and family and decide to teach each other the words in context. They discuss their ideas in more than one language. Soon this group is ready to connect words to music and begin animating the deep meaning of the multilingual lyrics.

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[6] See Kindergarten–Grade 5 Integrated Strand on weather on pp. 18–19 of the *2012 Amplification of the English Language Development Standards, Kindergarten–Grade 12.*

The questions below provide an opportunity to consider how to apply the ideas from Action 1 to practice.

1. How do the resources and experiences of students impact their engagement with the curriculum and their learning?

2. What might you do to learn more about students' resources and experiences?

3. What are some examples of how you might incorporate students' resources and experiences into the curriculum?

ACTION 2

Analyze the academic language demands involved in grade-level teaching and learning.

Throughout the school day, ELLs are surrounded by the academic language of oral and written discourse. The specialized discourse of each content area challenges students to understand and engage with ideas and concepts. Teachers and instructional leaders must be aware of the complexities of language development and consider the features of academic language in planning and implementing curriculum and instruction.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE FOR ACTION 2

Students' mastery of grade-level academic language is key to academic success (Freeman & Freeman, 2008; Zwiers, 2008; Frances, et. al., 2006). It is a foundation for college and career readiness for all students, including ELLs. The communication goals of each content area guide the choice of language structures, register, and discourse (Askehave & Swales, 2001; Anstrom et al., 2010). At school, students need opportunities to play the expert and do the communicative work of a particular discipline (Gee, 2008; Hart & Lee, 2003; Irujo, 2007) in order to learn the discipline-specific language. For ELLs in particular, academic language must be made explicit (Valdés, 2001).

At school, students need opportunities to play the expert and do the communicative work of a particular discipline (Gee, 2008; Hart & Lee, 2003; Irujo, 2007) in order to learn the discipline-specific language.

Language features can be organized at three levels: discourse, sentence, and word/phrase, which emphasize linguistic complexity, language forms, and vocabulary (Halliday & Hassan, 1989; Bailey & Huang, 2011). Empirical studies have shown how each of these features of language impact students' overall language proficiency and that language proficiency grows when these features are explicitly taught (Snow & Uccelli, 2009; Echevarría, Short, & Powers, 2006).

A REPRESENTATION OF ACTION 2 IN THE WIDA STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

The **Features of Academic Language** identify the major characteristics of academic language that WIDA has identified for its three performance criteria: Linguistic Complexity at the discourse level, Language Forms and Conventions at the sentence level, and Vocabulary Usage at the word/phrase level. **Linguistic Complexity** entails the quantity, quality, and variety of sentences involved in processing or producing language related to ideas and concepts. **Language Forms and Conventions** take into account the grammatical structures and associated mechanics typically encountered in each discipline or content area. **Vocabulary Usage** involves general academic words and phrases used in school, specialized content words

and words with multiple meanings applicable across one or more content areas, and technical words unique to topics within each content area.

The Features of Academic Language, in conjunction with the Performance Definitions, provide the broad set of language expectations for ELLs to be used in interpreting the language development standards and grade-level strands of model performance indicators.

Figure G: The Features of Academic Language in WIDA's Framework for Language Development Standards

The Features of Academic Language operate within sociocultural contexts for language use.

	Performance Criteria	Features
Discourse Level	**Linguistic Complexity** *(Quantity and variety of oral and written text)*	Amount of speech/written text Structure of speech/written text Density of speech/written text Organization and cohesion of ideas Variety of sentence types
Sentence Level	**Language Forms and Conventions** *(Types, array, and use of language structures)*	Types and variety of grammatical structures Conventions, mechanics, and fluency Match of language forms to purpose/ perspective
Word/Phrase Level	**Vocabulary Usage** *(Specificity of word or phrase choice)*	General, specific, and technical language Multiple meanings of words and phrases Formulaic and idiomatic expressions Nuances and shades of meaning Collocations

The sociocultural contexts for language use involve the interaction between the student and the language environment, encompassing the…

- Register
- Genre/Text type
- Topic
- Task/Situation
- Participants' identities and social roles

PUTTING ACTION 2 INTO PRACTICE

By Joanne Marino, Raleigh, NC

Being able to analyze academic language and its role in grade-level teaching and learning are paramount in order to ensure educators have a deep understanding of the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards and how to implement them to improve student outcomes. With this in mind the English as a Second Language (ESL) team in the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) joined with those involved in the rollout of the new Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics and the N.C. Essential Standards to delve into the academic language represented in those standards using the WIDA ELD Standards as a guide.

The result of this work was the development of blended professional learning opportunities for teachers. These blended opportunities included face-to-face and online learning opportunities using a variety of presentational modes including conference presentations, regional sessions, summer institutes, webinars, "live chats", online modules, and an online toolbox.

In these professional development activities, educators came to see that language is the bridge that enables ELLs to access the content standards and be successful academically. The WIDA ELD Standards clarify features of academic language to be explicitly taught such as general, specific, and technical language; multiple meanings of words and phrases; idioms; cohesion of ideas, and nuances and shades of meaning. Furthermore, the WIDA standards framework for language development frames language within sociocultural contexts that can support a school-wide literacy program.

The toolkit for the WIDA ELD Standards, provided on the NCDPI website, deepens educators' understanding of academic language as it delves into each of the five ELD standards and provides specific examples of the academic language found in the various disciplines. The professional development delivered by the NCDPI ESL team addressed all educators of ELLs, both ESL and content teachers. To increase the impact of the trainings, the ESL consultants frequently teamed with English Language Arts and mathematics consultants. Such a multi-tiered approach assisted North Carolina's educators in analyzing academic language of their grade level(s) and improved their teaching and learning.

The questions below provide an opportunity to consider how to apply the ideas from Action 2 to practice.

1. How might educators analyze the academic language demands of the curriculum?
2. What resources exist at your school or district to help educators analyze the academic language demands of the curriculum?
3. How can the Features of Academic Language be used in curriculum design?

ACTION 3

Apply the background knowledge of English language learners, including their language portraits, in planning differentiated language teaching.

Every student has a distinct personality, life history, and educational background. Influenced by these experiences and opportunities, every language learner, at any given time, has a unique language learning profile with varying levels of proficiency in each of the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. By understanding students' strengths and current levels of language proficiency, educators can plan for and monitor their progress along the language development continuum.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE FOR ACTION 3

The complexity of vocabulary and linguistic patterns increases as language develops from a beginning stage of the language to native-like language proficiency (Goldenberg, 2008). Empirical research indicates that progress from beginning to mid levels of English language proficiency is relatively rapid in comparison with middle to upper levels of proficiency (Hakuta et al., 2000; Howard et al., 2003; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Thomas & Collier, 2002). Different amounts of time are necessary to reach proficiency depending on where a student begins on the scale (Cook & Zhao, 2011).

Information about student background, including linguistic and content abilities, is key to plan and deliver instruction to optimize opportunities for learning (Tomlinson, 2003; Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2010).

Once students' level of language proficiency is known, scaffolding may be used to help the learner "move toward new skills, concepts, or levels of understanding" (Gibbons, 2002, p. 10). In his work on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), Vygotsky (1978) described learning opportunities as interactions that are challenging but also within reach for the learner. Information about the backgrounds of the students, including their linguistic and content abilities, is key to plan and deliver differentiated instruction to optimize opportunities for learning (Tomlinson, 2003; Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2010).

A REPRESENTATION OF ACTION 3 IN THE WIDA STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

The Performance Definitions are central to understanding and implementing language standards as they describe the milestones of language development, from level 1, Entering, through level 5, Bridging. In essence, the Definitions holistically illustrate what constitutes each level of language proficiency according to three criteria: 1. Linguistic Complexity, 2. Language Forms and Conventions, and 3. Vocabulary Usage. These criteria delineate the expectations of receptive language (listening and reading) and productive language (speaking and writing) across the language development continuum, always within a sociocultural context.

The Performance Definitions apply to all ELLs from Kindergarten through Grade 12; therefore, educators need to ensure that their interpretation is developmentally appropriate for their students' ages. For example, producing "organized, cohesive, and coherent expression of ideas," which typifies level 5, Bridging, looks much different for a 7-year-old than a 17-year-old. Additionally, the youngest ELLs in Kindergarten and grade 1, like their peers, are just beginning the road to literacy; therefore, the language expectations for these students must take into account their early stage of literacy development.

The Performance Definitions are shown on the following pages.

PUTTING ACTION 3 INTO PRACTICE

By José Reyes, Gadsden, NM

Schools throughout New Mexico are challenged to meet the needs of ELLs as well as those of students who are fluent in English. New Mexico classrooms serve the highest percentage of Hispanic students in the nation and a high percentage of Native American students, second only to Alaska. In addition to Spanish, there are eight different indigenous languages spoken in New Mexico, some of which are traditional oral languages that have existed for hundreds of years and are not written. Many students bring to their school classrooms cultures and linguistic structures that are fundamentally different from a "standard" English-speaking tradition. The diversity that students bring to school must be highly valued as resource to build upon.

Our district is located in southernmost part of the state, bordering with Mexico. In fact, the language minority (Spanish) is the majority in this region of the state. Our kindergarten teachers make a home visit at the beginning of each school year to make observations of home life and home language to inform instruction. Our district policies ensure that teachers have information about students' language use to make appropriate program and school placement appropriate to their language goals and language proficiency in their various languages. This practice allows educators to broaden their view of the language profile of students to include all of the languages in their lives.

By Martha Mason Miller, Roseville, MN

Many ELLs who enter American secondary schools for the first time do so with limited formal education, but also rich experiences, often beyond our imaginations. When I plan content instruction, I strive to connect it to their lives and to honor their experiences. Building the academic background that is assumed in American high schools is a great challenge for educators. The key to ELLs' learning is to differentiate using language that is appropriate to their language proficiency levels.

In order to introduce basic science vocabulary and the concept and procedures of scientific investigation illustrative of scientific discourse to students at the entering or emerging levels, our class engages in hands-on real life science. Students practice new skills in a cooperative environment. They also engage in critical thinking as they question their results and participate in intense discussions in their first languages, and later explain their outcomes to me in English. In their science notebooks, they draw and label diagrams and write simple hypotheses, materials, procedure, and results. The group works together with the stronger students clarifying complex ideas in their L1 to other students.

Figure H: WIDA Performance Definitions Listening and Reading, Grades K–12

WIDA™

At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will process…

	Discourse Level	Sentence Level	Word/Phrase Level
	Linguistic Complexity	**Language Forms and Conventions**	**Vocabulary Usage**
Level 6 – Reaching Language that meets all criteria through Level 5, Bridging			
Level 5 Bridging	• Rich descriptive discourse with complex sentences • Cohesive and organized related ideas	• Compound, complex grammatical constructions (e.g., multiple phrases and clauses) • A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	• Technical and abstract content-area language • Words and expressions with shades of meaning for each content area
Level 4 Expanding	• Connected discourse with a variety of sentences • Expanded related ideas	• A variety of complex grammatical constructions • Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	• Specific and some technical content-area language • Words and expressions with multiple meanings or collocations and idioms for each content area
Level 3 Developing	• Discourse with a series of extended sentences • Related ideas	• Compound and some complex (e.g., noun phrase, verb phrase, prepositional phrase) grammatical constructions • Sentence patterns across content areas	• Specific content words and expressions • Words or expressions related to content area with common collocations and idioms across content areas
Level 2 Emerging	• Multiple related simple sentences • An idea with details	• Compound grammatical constructions • Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas	• General and some specific content words and expressions (including cognates) • Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas
Level 1 Entering	• Single statements or questions • An idea within words, phrases, or chunks of language	• Simple grammatical constructions (e.g., commands, Wh- questions, declaratives) • Common social and instructional forms and patterns	• General content-related words • Everyday social and instructional words and expressions

…within sociocultural contexts for language use.

Figure I: WIDA Performance Definitions Speaking and Writing, Grades K–12

WIDA™

At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will produce…

	Discourse Level	Sentence Level	Word/Phrase Level
	Linguistic Complexity	**Language Forms and Conventions**	**Vocabulary Usage**
Level 6 – Reaching Language that meets all criteria through Level 5, Bridging			
Level 5 Bridging	• Multiple, complex sentences • Organized, cohesive, and coherent expression of ideas	• A variety of grammatical structures matched to purpose and nearly consistent use of conventions, including for effect • A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	• Technical and abstract content-area language • Words and expressions with precise meaning related to content area topics
Level 4 Expanding	• Short, expanded, and some complex sentences • Organized expression of ideas with emerging cohesion	• A variety of grammatical structures and generally consistent use of conventions • Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	• Specific and some technical content-area language • Words and expressions with multiple meanings or common collocations and idioms across content areas
Level 3 Developing	• Short and some expanded sentences with emerging complexity • Expanded expression of one idea or emerging expression of multiple related ideas	• Repetitive grammatical structures with occasional variation and emerging use of conventions • Sentence patterns across content areas	• Specific content words and expressions (including content-specific cognates) • Words or expressions related to content areas
Level 2 Emerging	• Phrases or short sentences • Emerging expression of ideas	• Formulaic grammatical structures and variable use of conventions • Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas	• General content words and expressions (including common cognates) • Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas
Level 1 Entering	• Words, phrases, or chunks of language • Single words used to represent ideas	• Simple grammatical constructions (e.g., commands, Wh- questions, declaratives) • Phrasal patterns associated with common social and instructional situations	• General content-related words • Everyday social and instructional words and familiar expressions

…within sociocultural contexts for language use.

As students develop their English language proficiency beyond level 3, Developing, they are expected to write several related sentences describing their observations, stating findings, and suggesting reasons for the differences, independently using key academic vocabulary.

At all levels, the students use critical thinking, practice academic skills, build background, and become familiar with or use academic vocabulary and sentence structures. The difference from level to level is the increasing complexity of the language and increasing individual responsibility for work. Discussion and collaboration in the students' home language may continue through the levels as they grapple with new concepts.

The questions below provide an opportunity to consider how to apply the ideas from Action 3 to practice.

1. How might you use the Performance Definitions to help formulate instructional strategies (e.g., in grouping students or differentiating language objectives)?

2. How might you use the Performance Definitions to help scaffold content instruction for ELLs?

3. When might educators use a student's overall composite language proficiency level (from ACCESS for ELLs) versus the language proficiency level for each language domains?

ACTION 4

Connect language and content to make learning relevant and meaningful for English language learners.

The explicit interaction between language and content is fundamental to the effective schooling of ELLs. Over last several decades, there has been a growing recognition of the construct of academic language, referring to the unique discursive, grammatical, and vocabulary features that pertain to each academic discipline. Indeed, academic language is the common ground between language and content learning. Acknowledging and intentionally addressing content-area specific language, in addition to social and instructional English, ensures that ELLs, like all students, have access to grade-level concepts throughout the school day.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE FOR ACTION 4

Language learning is a social activity as well as the basis for new conceptual understandings. Learning academic language and academic content knowledge are interrelated processes for all students (Yore & Treagust, 2006; Yore, 2000), and it is the reciprocal relationship between language and content that contributes to the academic achievement of these students (Gottlieb, 2012a; Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Kaufman & Crandall, 2005; Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Mohan, 1986). Academic language refers to specific language associated with particular content knowledge, concepts, and topics (Bailey, Butler, Stevens, & Lord, 2007; Rosebery & Warren, 2008) and language is used differently in each content area, including, for instance, mathematics (Moschkovich, 2007; O'Halloran, 2000), science (Lemke, 2000; Hand, Prain, & Yore, 2001), and social studies (Schleppegrell, Achugar, & Oteíza, 2004). Instructional approaches should be designed with academic language in mind, not only for language-related content areas such as language arts, but for student achievement in all content areas (Snow & Uccelli, 2009). Moreover, recent findings suggest that the systematic integration of language, content, and thinking skills often results from activities that are planned and implemented with attention to both language and content (Short, Echevarría, & Richards-Tutor, 2011; Gibbons, 2008).

…it is the reciprocal relationship between language and content that contributes to the academic achievement of these students (Gottlieb, 2012a; Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Kaufman & Crandall, 2005; Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Mohan, 1986).

A REPRESENTATION OF ACTION 4 IN THE WIDA STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

In its five English language development standards, WIDA recognizes the critical role of academic language in academic success. Standard 1: Social and Instructional Language serves as the experiential foundation and springboard for standards 2–5, which address the language of the core content areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Figure J: The English Language Development Standards

Standard		Abbreviation
English Language Development Standard 1	English language learners **communicate** for **Social** and **Instructional** purposes within the school setting	Social and Instructional language
English Language Development Standard 2	English language learners **communicate** information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Language Arts**	The language of Language Arts
English Language Development Standard 3	English language learners **communicate** information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Mathematics**	The language of Mathematics
English Language Development Standard 4	English language learners **communicate** information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Science**	The language of Science
English Language Development Standard 5	English language learners **communicate** information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Social Studies**	The language of Social Studies

PUTTING ACTION 4 INTO PRACTICE

By Carrie Sorensen, Bloomington, MN

Learning involves both understanding the language and applying the content knowledge. We must balance providing access to the content while developing academic language. There is not enough time to wait until ELLs have mastered English to start teaching science, social studies, and math. When English learning is connected grade-level content learning, ELLs feel a part of the learning community, have the opportunity to learn grade-level material, and develop English—all at the same time.

As a fourth grade ELL teacher at an International Baccalaureate school, learning content and language through inquiry is the foundation of learning for all students. Through differentiated tasks, students are able to show me their content knowledge and develop their academic language. My newcomers draw and label pictures while my advanced students write essays using a graphic organizer. The classroom teacher is able to assess the content knowledge while I assess the language development. ELLs feel a part of the learning community when they are able to show content knowledge alongside their language development.

Another way I connect language and content is by analyzing the language of the content so that the students can understand the content. For example, after watching a short video or reading a few paragraphs, we brainstorm a list of important people, places and things and talk about how they are connected using power verbs. Then, we make connections between the nouns and the pronouns. We create sentence stems that allow students to say the same thing many different ways. ELLs need to be taught how to comprehend the content text. Science texts tend to explain how and why things happen. In social studies, students have to be able to analyze how the text is structured, determine what has happened, and identify the perspective of the author. In order to solve math story problems, students must first be able to understand what they have to do.

The questions below provide an opportunity to consider how to apply the ideas from Action 4 to practice.

1. How can ELD standards work in conjunction with content standards?

2. What are some resources at your school or district to guide educators in integrating language and content instruction within the general education curriculum?

3. What are some unique features of language within each content area?

ACTION 5

Focus on the developmental nature of language learning within grade-level curriculum.

Students' maturation and age, along with their language proficiency, have to be taken into account in planning instruction and interpreting their performance; in other words, language expectations for ELLs may cluster around a grade-level span rather than a definitive grade. Often it is difficult to pinpoint exact ages or grades when ELLs typically acquire specific words, expressions, and forms of language in English. Language development is variable and contingent on many factors; it is a constellation of factors that determines where students fall on the second language continuum.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE FOR ACTION 5

Students develop language and literacy skills at different rates and in different sequences. Influences on second language acquisition include students' age, age of arrival in U.S. schools, motivation, attitudes, and educational background (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, Spolsky, 1989). Students' varied backgrounds and experiences shape their linguistic and academic profiles and determine their entry points into language development, resulting in a wide range of language proficiencies among ELLs. Teachers' recognition of each student's stage of language development is one of the first steps in pairing where students are with relevant instructional practices (Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan 2009). Since language development is a complex, long-term process, students should have access to grade-level curriculum concurrently with language instruction. Empirical research indicates that with access to grade-level content, students' academic literacy development and performance improves on standardized assessments (Short et al., 2011).

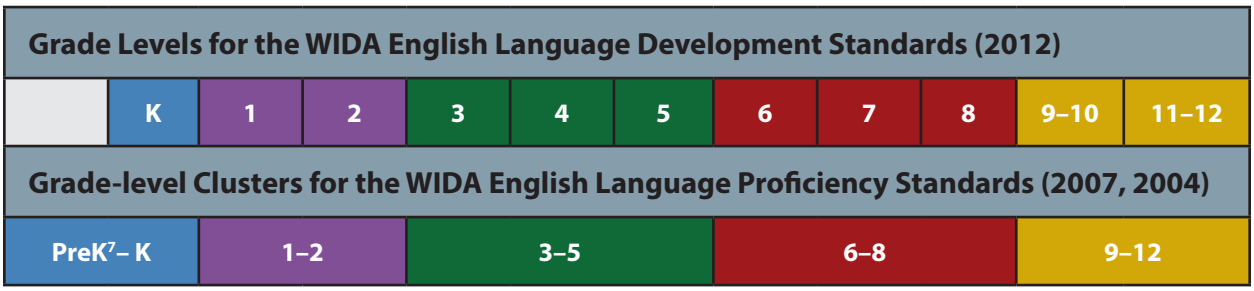
Influences on second language acquisition include students' age, age of arrival in U.S. schools, motivation, attitudes, and educational background (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, Spolsky, 1989).

A REPRESENTATION OF ACTION 5 IN THE WIDA STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

Academic content standards, including the Common Core State Standards, are grade-level specific; however, topics often span several grade levels, shifting their focus and depth as students mature. Likewise, as a means of ensuring correspondence with content standards, WIDA has designed a series of example topic-related strands at each grade level. However, it is important for teachers to understand that although instruction must be age and developmentally appropriate, English language development for ELLs occurs over multiple years and therefore, it is valuable to look at examples of language development across a grade level cluster. Among the adjacent grade level examples, educators will find that the language expectations and kinds of support will be quite similar. In sum, teachers should be aware that language development is a lengthy process that unfolds over time and is not necessarily tied to particular grades.

The figure on this page shows the configuration of **grades and grade-level clusters** for WIDA's English language development standards. Corresponding to the Common Core State Standards, the top row has individual grades, combined at grades 9–10 and 11–12, for which there are example strands of model performance indicators (see the *2012 Amplification of the English Language Development Standards).* The bottom row reflects the grade-level clusters used in WIDA's 2007 representation of the language standards, which are still useful to educators for their examples of strands of model performance indicators.

Figure K: Grade-level Representation in WIDA's English Language Development Standards



PUTTING ACTION 5 INTO PRACTICE

By Hilda Connell, Greenville, NC

As an ESL teacher who taught first grade, fourth grade, ninth grade, and tenth grade ESL students during the same academic year, my challenge was working with grade-level content from multiple grade levels.

After obtaining the language that I knew my students had to learn to use in a given situation or in a conceptually knowledgeable manner, I used several activities to provide them with practice in using the words and phrases. One thing I did with the younger kids was the use of project-based learning activities. If the kindergarten students were learning about colors and shapes, I added labeled pictures to the class word wall such as red circle, green square, blue triangle. Through meaningful, interactive activities like taking photos of objects that match each shape throughout the school to create a poster, the students were using the academic language their teacher was using in class in a real-world activity.

For my high school students, I also used project-based learning but I added personal word walls that they created with a file folder and small sticky notes. Every time they came across a word or phrase they didn't know, they put it on their personal word walls and the first thing they could do was ask someone else what it meant, how to use it, and the different forms of the word or phrase, or they could look it up in the dictionary. They kept their personal word walls with them so they could ask not only the ELLs in our class but also their content area teachers and other students in those classrooms. These personal

[7] PreKindergarten is represented in the W*IDA Early English Language Development Standards for dual language learners ages 2.5–5.5,* released in 2013 at www.wida.us.

word walls allowed the students to focus on words, interact with other students and learn from them, and begin to use these new words in a meaningful way.

Whether it was kindergarten or high school, it was important to engage ELLs with the content appropriate for their particular grade level and to design opportunities for them to participate and interact with their peers. Since both groups of students are developmentally different, the content and the language needed to reflect their age and grade level.

The questions below provide an opportunity to consider how to apply the ideas from Action 5 to practice.

1. Why is it important to consider the age of ELLs in making decisions about instruction?
2. What policies exist in your school or district to ensure ELLs receive access to grade-level language and content instruction?
3. How can awareness of grade-level expectations of surrounding grades (e.g., grades 3, 4, and 5) influence language instruction?

ACTION 6

Reference content standards and language development standards in planning for language learning.

The blending of content and language standards is integral to the achievement of ELLs. The content standards, including the Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards, provide the necessary grade-level concepts and skills while the language development standards offer examples of the associated language critical for understanding the content. Content standards, in conjunction with language development standards, enable teachers to design curriculum, craft instruction, and plan classroom assessment for ELLs. Both language and content standards recognize academic language as essential to learning; however, it is the language development standards that provide for differentiation based on students' levels of language proficiency.

There must be direct connections between language development standards and content standards to create a crosswalk for academic language learning. While the most apparent correspondence between language and content standards is having shared topics, the cognitive and linguistic demands in both sets must also be compatible.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE FOR ACTION 6

In curricular frameworks for ELLs, there must be college and career readiness standards, including the Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards, alongside language development standards. A correspondence between or among these sets of standards helps create an aligned instructional assessment system (Gottlieb, 2012c). In addition, matching content standards to language standards encourages collaboration among teachers serving ELLs (Morita-Mullaney, 2007). Approaches to standards-referenced learning that include challenging and engaging instruction, deep examination of student work, and recognition of the language required of content-based learning enhance opportunities for academic success for ELLs (Lachat, 2004).

Approaches to standards-referenced learning that include challenging and engaging instruction, deep examination of student work, and recognition of the language demands of content-based learning enhance opportunities for academic success for English language learners (Lachat, 2004).

The acceptance of common sets of standards can, in some contexts, support more careful assessment of student learning, better professional development for teachers, and a more equitable school experience for all students. Standards play a central role in understanding and improving school quality (Porter & Smithson, 2001; Supovitz, 2001).

A REPRESENTATION OF ACTION 6 IN THE WIDA STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

There is specific language associated with particular content knowledge, concepts, and topics. Therefore, cross-referencing multiple sets of standards is critical in designing curriculum and planning for instruction and assessment for ELLs. In matching language to content-area expectations, teachers can help ensure continuity of educational experiences and high academic expectations for language learners. In the example strands, WIDA shows direct **Connections** between how language is embedded in content learning and how students can reach for that content goal. Example **Connections** to academic standards, including the Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards, are illustrated below.

Figure L: Examples of Connections from WIDA's Standards Matrices

Grade(s)	ELD Standard	Connection
3	**ELD Standard 3:** The Language of Mathematics	*Common Core Standards for Mathematics, Measurement and Data #5–6 (Grade 3):* Recognize area as an attribute of plane figures and understand concepts of area measurement…Measure areas by counting unit squares (square *cm*, square *m*, square *in*, square *ft*, and improvised units).
6	**ELD Standard 4:** The Language of Science	*Next Generation Science Standards, Life Sciences, Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics LS 2–1, 2–2, 2–3, 2–4 (Middle School):* Analyze and interpret data to provide evidence for the effects of resource availability on organisms and populations of organisms in an ecosystem. Construct an explanation that predicts patterns of interactions among organisms across multiple ecosystems. Develop a model to describe the cycling of matter and flow of energy among living and nonliving parts of an ecosystem. Construct an argument supported by empirical evidence that changes to physical or biological components of an ecosystem affect populations.
11–12	**ELD Standard 1:** Social & Instructional Language	*Common Core Reading Standards for Informational Texts, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas #7 (Grades 11–12):* Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Making these **Connections** explicit within WIDA's standards matrix gives content teachers insights into language expectations within the content standard, possible instructional supports for scaffolding language, and reminds language teachers of the academic concepts students are expected to meet.

PUTTING ACTION 6 INTO PRACTICE

By Margot Downs, Yarmouth, ME

When working with content and language development standards, I know it is essential to identify the key language that my ELLs need in a specific learning context. Using the content and language development standards as a starting point for lesson planning helps my colleagues and I focus on identifying essential language for tasks within a lesson (the language demand) so students can access and interact with the content.

In my middle school teaching context when students are introduced to new topics it is often by making a visual representation of some of the key concepts. In order to engage linguistically on the topic, students need to be explicitly exposed to the language of the content standard. Once my colleagues and I are aware of the language required of the learning task, we can identify the appropriate supports for ELLs and provide for differentiation based on levels of language proficiency. Even though all students will be explicitly taught and interact with the essential language of the task and will be working towards the same content standard, not every student will be producing or processing the same language to demonstrate understanding of the concept.

This practice of identifying the language demands of a content standard and the tasks designed by teachers to engage students in learning the key concepts has also helped me improve the quality of my feedback to students. If I have a clear understanding of the language demand, then I can communicate explicitly and effectively to students appropriate language targets for their proficiency level. This allows students to take more ownership of their learning.

The questions below provide an opportunity to consider how to apply the ideas from Action 6 to practice.

1. How do you analyze content standards to gain insight about language demands and ideas for possible instructional supports for ELLs?

2. How does the Connection encourage content teachers to use language development standards for their ELLs?

3. How does the Connection inform the strand of model performance indicators?

ACTION 7

Design language teaching and learning with attention to the sociocultural context.

Language learning occurs within a social context that serves as the backdrop for knowing what to communicate (the task), how to communicate (the register), and why communicate (the purpose). The context for language learning is significant within the classroom environment because it provides the reasons for academic language use. The classroom context should:

- Honor and build upon students identities and experiences.
- Connect school to home, community, and other venues in the real world.
- Offer authenticity and meaning to communication.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE FOR ACTION 7

School provides contexts for students to construct both social and academic knowledge. Within school, there are shared assumptions and expectations as well as multiple contexts for language use in which language choices vary. ELLs learn language through meaningful use and interaction (García & Hamayan, 2006; Kramsch, 2003; Halliday & Hasan, 1989 among others). Authentic contexts that center on content contribute to ELLs' learning particular forms of language. There is empirical evidence that ELLs who engage in learning activities that mirror the work of a discipline (e.g., explaining an article, interpreting historical artifacts, making a presentation, working a math problem) are able to produce, recognize, and evaluate salient academic language features (Bunch, 2006; Gebhard, Harman, & Seger, 2007; Gee, 2008; Schleppegrell, 2005). The context for classroom language use extends to tasks and interactions among students. Inquiry-based, authentic activities can be thought of as more accessible because they draw on gestural and visual modes of communication (Hart & Lee, 2003). Literacy development happens as students construct new knowledge in engaged interactions with peers and through supportive interactions with adults (Spivey, 1997).

Literacy development happens as students construct new knowledge in engaged interactions with peers and through supportive interactions with adults (Spivey, 1997).

A REPRESENTATION OF ACTION 7 IN THE WIDA STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

Language learning does not occur in isolation but is motivated by a need to communicate for a given purpose. Some possible purposes are illustrated in the **Example Context for Language Use** within WIDA's standards matrix. A variety of contexts are presented across the strands, ranging from a specific classroom activity to end-of-unit projects. These examples, emphasize the importance of students having opportunities to assume different roles or voices, become familiar with a variety of registers, and work with different genres or text types. Here are Example Contexts for Language Use from three grades:

Figure M: Example Contexts for Language Use from WIDA's Standards Matrices

Grade(s)	ELD Standard	Example Context for Language Use
1	**ELD Standard 5:** The Language of Social Studies	Students participate in role-play activities (e.g., with costumes/ puppets) involving different members of their community using information from classroom guest speakers, field trips, videos, stories, or posters.
6	**ELD Standard 3:** The Language of Mathematics	Students justify their decisions in real-life scenarios (e.g., choosing items to buy based on discounts and local tax, determining miles per gallon for different models of cars, or selecting players for a fantasy team based on sports average).
9–10	**ELD Standard 2:** The Language of Language Arts	Students learn how to choose appropriate sources for a research project by examining texts (e.g., speech transcripts, websites, editorials) to identify authors' bias.

PUTTING ACTION 7 INTO PRACTICE

By Michelle Niska, Shakopee, MN

Human beings are social creatures by nature. We learn by communicating and interacting with each other; this interaction always occurs within a sociocultural context. A student learning a new language and subject matter discourse can be taught through their need to be social with those around them. A teacher who can capitalize on this natural social process of learning will see students who are better informed of not only the subject content, but are also better able to problem solve in a variety of situations. Using a social context for learning will also produce students who are better able to use language to express their own knowledge, thoughts, and opinions.

One way in which teachers can be intentional about creating sociocultural contexts is in strategically designed learning groups. Teachers can design lessons that incorporate many chances for students to interact with each other as well as with their teacher. In this way, teachers coach their students through a project, questioning and challenging them to expand their thinking. Generally, students also find working with each other more interesting than traditional, and perhaps passive, methods of learning. ELLs need these social interactions to support their language growth. In a learning group, students are also offered a chance to use some content-centered language in very interactive ways.

Teachers using a grouping method of learning need to spend significant time helping their students become competent in the roles and responsibilities of group work. Students can learn group roles such as facilitator, note-taker, or fact checker. Students can learn about group work dialogue and the importance of each person making a contribution to a group. Group work provides motivation and authentic contexts for language learning.

The questions below provide an opportunity to consider how to apply the ideas from Action 7 to practice.

1. Why is it important for teachers to be aware of the contexts for language use in instruction?
2. How can educators help ELLs be aware of the context for communication and how it impacts language use?
3. What are some ways in which you integrate the contexts in which you teach with those of the community, home, and other spaces in which students interact?

ACTION 8

Provide opportunities for all English language learners to engage in higher-order thinking.

With ample and varied instructional supports, every English language learner can engage in cognitively demanding tasks to demonstrate understanding and use of academic language and content. Even newcomer ELLs can be challenged using higher-order thinking when responding to different commands or questions, such as, "Show me how to _____." There is no reason why ELLs cannot make decisions based on evidence, produce creative work, construct original models, or invent using their imaginations.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE FOR ACTION 8

Academic language can grow from instructional tasks that nurture higher-order thinking, and, conversely, higher-order thinking is fostered through developing language proficiency (Himmele & Himmele, 2009). In addition, tasks that are engaging and provide a reasonable challenge will be both cognitively involving and motivating for ELLs (Ellis, 2005).

Academic language can grow from instructional tasks that nurture higher-order thinking, and, conversely, higher-order thinking is fostered through developing language proficiency (Himmele & Himmele, 2009).

Students learn a great deal of language and engage in higher-order thinking as they study content, particularly in upper grades (Zwiers, 2008). Research on mathematics teaching points to the benefits of having students wrestle with mathematical concepts and processes (Hiebert & Grouws, 2007; Moschkovich, 2008). One of the tenets of sheltered instruction is that there is a focus on higher-order thinking at all levels of language proficiency (Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010); this practice is also consistent with content-based language teaching (Reyes & Vallone, 2007).

Although there is a well-recognized relationship between language and cognition, its definition has historically been debated. For ELLs, this tie is a bit more complex as students are generally thinking in their home language while developing English. Therefore, to the extent feasible, the explicit transfer between languages should be recognized and incorporated into instruction (Beeman & Urow, 2012).

A REPRESENTATION OF ACTION 8 IN THE WIDA STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

For each strand of model performance indicators in the 2012 Amplification, there is a uniform Cognitive Function across the five language proficiency levels. Although there are various ways to represent cognition, WIDA draws from Bloom's revised taxonomy (Anderson, et al., 2000). For each of the six cognitive functions, (remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating), there are a variety of language functions that students employ to demonstrate their cognitive involvement. In other words, a taxonomy of language functions does not exist as: 1. There is not a hierarchical ordering

of how language is used; 2. Language functions are contingent on the sociocultural context in which they are used; and 3. Language use for ELLs is dependent, in part, on their levels of language proficiency. As a result, many of the same academic language functions can reflect multiple cognitive functions.

Students at different levels of language proficiency may draw on a variety of language functions to demonstrate their cognitive processing of an instructional task, and that level of cognition should remain consistent across all language proficiency levels to ensure academic rigor for all students. Cognitive functions are typically represented using language for particular purposes. For example, in analyzing (a cognitive function), we might explain (a language function); in applying, we might discuss. Thus, the means for cognitive processing of complex thoughts, concepts, and information is often through academic language use.

PUTTING ACTION 8 INTO PRACTICE

By Jessica Costa, Newport News, VA

One activity I often have used to help students analyze information (a higher-order thinking skill) across the language proficiency levels is to compare and contrast processes, people, or other objects as appropriate to the specific context of a lesson (e.g., characters/plot, solving for volume vs. surface area, habitats, or historical events). For example, in the reading domain, students sort information using a partially completed Venn diagram. Before we start, I have added in certain terms from an illustrated word/phrase bank to get them started, and we discuss where the information would belong while continuing to reference the text. For students approaching parity with their English-proficient peers, I may not give a word bank, but students would still work in pairs or small groups (interactive supports) to be able to navigate the text and negotiate what they believe to be important information to use when comparing and contrasting ideas.

Modifying the text itself is also a strategy to employ to make reading material accessible at students' respective levels. By staying with simple sentences and simple tenses, focusing on only the key information, and by adding graphic and visual stimuli, a dense text can be transformed into a manageable one for Beginning and Emerging ELLs. I add to the complexity of the text with expanded and more complex sentence structures and vocabulary as appropriate for Developing and Expanding students. I reference the Performance Definitions to know what type of language structures, complexity, and academic vocabulary to include. For Bridging level students, I continue to provide graphic supports and allow student interaction, but would keep the text as true to its original, grade-level form as possible. This is one practice to ensure that all students have the opportunity to engage in the same high-level of content analysis.

The questions below provide an opportunity to consider how to apply the ideas from Action 8 to practice.

1. How can educators provide opportunities for ELLs at level 1, Entering and level 2, Emerging to engage in higher-order thinking?

2. How might you share with your colleagues how to differentiate language for ELLs without taking away their opportunities to learn that involve higher-order thinking?

3. What instructional and assessment strategies support higher-order thinking?

ACTION 9

Create language-rich classroom environments with ample time for language practice and use.

Language development is facilitated when students are surrounded by authentic texts (oral, written, and visual) related to their own interests, when classrooms are filled with original student work, and when teachers encourage students to explore new ways of discovering the world around them. Language-rich classrooms can serve as a stimulus for academic discussion when ELLs can utilize the resources around them such as word/phrase walls and print or technology-based references to seek answers to questions that they generate. The role of both language and content teachers is to incorporate the academic language of each discipline into meaningful tasks and projects and to pinpoint how to use that language for their students. Working together, teachers can create inviting classrooms filled with students' oral language and literacy experiences and students, in turn, can have ample opportunities to use language in meaningful ways throughout the day.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE FOR ACTION 9

A language-rich environment surrounds students with print and different forms of text that they have produced (New Levine & McCloskey, 2008), provides opportunities for ongoing interaction and engagement in academic conversations (Frey, Fisher, & Rothenberg, 2008; Zwiers, 2008), and encourages writing for a variety of purposes. Direct and frequent opportunities to interact in English are needed for English language development (Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2002) and it is through negotiation of meaning in these interactions that ELLs extend their productive capabilities.

All students, regardless of English language proficiency level, must be exposed to grade-level specific and technical lexicon within each academic register (Scarcella, 2003).

All students, regardless of their English language proficiency level, must be exposed to grade-level specific and technical lexicon within each academic register (Scarcella, 2003). Categories of academic vocabulary are based on their context for use and include: general academic vocabulary that occurs across content areas, discipline-specific academic vocabulary, and topic-specific academic vocabulary (Egbert & Ernst-Slavit, 2010, Stevens, Butler, & Castellon-Wellington, 2000). Vocabulary acquisition occurs most robustly in active environments in which students use language for receptive and expressive understanding (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2000; Pressley, 2002).

In addition to print materials, exposure to language by reading aloud has been shown to have a positive effect on vocabulary development (Ulanoff & Pucci, 1999) as well as reading and writing achievement (Elley, 1991; Tsang, 1994; Tudor & Hafiz, 1989). Also linked to increases in language skills are ELLs reading with other, more skilled readers (Li & Nes, 2001), participating in literature circles (Martinez-Roldan & López-Robertson, 2000) and being exposed to accessible literacy-related materials (Ramos & Krashen, 1998).

A REPRESENTATION OF ACTION 9 IN THE WIDA STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

Topic-Related language is a component of the standards matrix that names a few grade-level words and expressions (although not exhaustively by any means) that are sparked by the Example Topic that all students, including ELLs, should experience within an instructional unit. It specifically includes topic-related language that is challenging for ELLs, including words with multiple meanings, cognates, idiomatic expressions, and collocations.

ELLs who are at the earliest levels of language proficiency, including those who might be considered Students with Interrupted Formal Schooling (SIFE), and ELLs with disabilities need to become acclimated to the academic language of their grade level. While all ELLs should have ample opportunities to interact with topic-related language, only those who have reached a threshold of English language proficiency should be held accountable for using it. Here is a sampling of the Topic-Related Language from the English language development standards matrices.

Figure N: Examples of Topic-Related Language from WIDA's Standards Matrices

Grade(s)	ELD Standard	Example Topic	Topic-Related Language
2	**ELD Standard 3:** The Language of Mathematics	Money	Students at all levels of English language proficiency interact with grade-level words and expressions, such as: total, enough, cost, change, left over, solve
6	**ELD Standard 4:** The Language of Science	Ecosystems	Students at all levels of English language proficiency interact with grade-level words and expressions, such as: consumers/ predators, producers, decomposers, scavengers, function, species
11–12	**ELD Standard 1:** Social & Instructional Language	Informed decisions (College & career)	Students at all levels of English language proficiency interact with grade-level words and expressions, such as: priorities, vocation/ trade, merit scholarship, cost of living, room and board, professional reference, résumé-building

PUTTING ACTION 9 INTO PRACTICE

By Jean Burke, Aurora, CO

"Students need to talk about, read about, write about and interact and connect with important ideas of instruction," says Nancy Commins (2012).

In Aurora, Colorado's public schools, teachers are creating language-rich classroom environments that support students' language practice. In addition to the long-term English language learner population, an increasing influx of refugees and other newcomer students from a variety of countries, cultures, and languages has amplified the need for explicit language supports. Teachers explore the use of visual mediation for essential concepts, content-related word walls, proficiency exemplars with annotations, as well as invitations to interact and connect with key ideas.

To build capacity with both school-wide leadership and teachers focused on what a supportive classroom environment can look like, Aurora Public Schools is working towards creating a repository of examples of best practice so they can be replicated. For example, in one classroom a model poster was posted; the classroom teachers then added labels, annotations, and illustrations so that students can clearly see quality examples of language use. Students at all levels of language proficiency are then able to see and hear grade-level academic language as part of their classroom routine.

The questions below provide an opportunity to consider how to apply the ideas from Action 9 to practice.

1. How can educators identify topic-related language related to particular content topics?
2. How can educators ensure that all students can interact with grade-level topic-related language?
3. What specific strategies do you use to create language-rich environments in your classroom or school?

ACTION 10

Identify the language needed for functional use in teaching and learning.

What we say and what we write are for distinct purposes, such as expressing an opinion, apologizing, reflecting on an incident, or asking for advice; these examples illustrate some reasons for using language. In school, language functions refer to the linguistic processes students use to convey meaning as well as to create an interpersonal stance. To sound or write like a scientist involves a certain way of speaking and writing. In essence, language functions set up what students are expected to do with language within a particular context.

Teachers who understand a functional approach to instruction are sensitive to the context of language learning and apply language use to real or authentic situations. They use language functions to guide their planning for learning, including setting language targets for a unit, language objectives for lessons, and matching them to performance-based instruction and assessment tasks.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE FOR ACTION 10

Functional language helps us organize communication around a relevant purpose. The advantage of a functional approach is that language is not taught for its own sake; "rather, it demonstrates how language operates in all areas of the curriculum" (Derewianka, 1990, p. 4).

The advantage of a functional approach is that language is not taught for its own sake; "rather, it demonstrates how language operates in all areas of the curriculum" (Derewianka, 1990, p. 4).

Within curriculum, each content area has its own language or communicative functions (Schleppegrell, 2004) and each of these functions is related to a set of grammatical rules and organizational patterns. When teachers make language functions explicit, they define more fully the tasks that students must be able to perform in the content areas (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994). In addition, language functions help focus classroom communication between teachers and students. A focus on function can help negotiate a shift between language for everyday purposes and the language needed to be precise about conceptual knowledge (Moschkovich, 2002). To the extent that teachers link language functions to academic practices, attention to language functions can help students and teachers concentrate on meaning making (Gee, 2008; Moschkovich, 2002).

A REPRESENTATION OF ACTION 10 IN THE WIDA STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

In the standards matrix, the language function is the first element of a model performance indicator and signals how students are to process or use language. The language functions work in conjunction with the Performance Definitions, therefore, one language function, such as "describe," may be used across multiple language proficiency levels with increasing linguistic complexity. For instructional planning,

teachers are to approach language functions by asking, for example, "What is the language needed for ELLs, at their levels of language proficiency, to describe or predict an event?"

Language functions, along with the Connection and Example Context for Language Use, contribute to selecting text types or genres, the kinds of language structures, and accompanying vocabulary for instruction. Included here is a strand of model performance indicators that shows a variety of language functions across the levels of language proficiency.

Figure O: A Strand of Model Performance Indicators with a Variety of Language Functions

COGNITIVE FUNCTION: Students at all levels of English language proficiency ANALYZE the results of change over time due to processes affecting earth materials.				
Level 1 Entering	**Level 2 Emerging**	**Level 3 Developing**	**Level 4 Expanding**	**Level 5 Bridging**
Match processes or events with their effects on earth materials based on oral descriptions using photos, illustrations, or videos with a partner in L1 or L2	**Identify** and sort the effect of processes or events on earth materials based on oral descriptions using photos, illustrations, or videos with a partner in L1 or L2	**Categorize** the effects of processes or events on earth materials based on oral descriptions using photos, illustrations, or videos and graphic organizers with a partner	**Distinguish** between effects of processes or events on earth materials based on oral descriptions using photos, illustrations, or videos	**Interpret** the effects of processes or events on earth materials using videos based on grade-level oral discourse

PUTTING ACTION 10 INTO PRACTICE

By Amy King, Liberty, MO

At the beginning of the school year, I teach my first grade ELLs about the importance of school safety. The topic of school safety involves how to be safe in the hallway, on the playground, and on the bus. In one lesson, my first graders were to analyze the effects of dangerous behavior on their own safety and the safety of other students. Several language functions were utilized to engage in the cognitive function of analysis. First, students *matched* picture cards illustrating safe and dangerous actions with words and phrases, then they *sorted* the cards into groups of safe and dangerous. Then working with the group of pictures illustrating dangerous actions, they *predicted* effects of dangerous behavior. Some students *described in detail,* others *recalled* previous events that happened to them or their friends. Finally, they watched a video about safe and dangerous behaviors in the hallway, on the playground, and on the bus, and *described* the effects of what happens when we run in the hallway, rock on the chair, bother the bus driver, do not fasten seat belts, do not wear a helmet when riding bike, etc. By using a variety of these language functions, students carried out the cognitive function of analyzing the effects of dangerous behavior on their own safety and the safety of others using illustrations.

The questions below provide an opportunity to consider how to apply the ideas from Action 10 to practice.

1. How do you use functional language during instruction?

2. How can educators use language functions to identify potential language targets for instruction?

3. How can you help students become aware of language functions and how to use them?

ACTION 11

Plan for language teaching and learning around discipline-specific topics.

Topics gathered from content standards, including the Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards, form the basis of curricular units for learning, instruction, and assessment. These content topics also need to correspond with language development standards since they are pivotal in contextualizing the language development process for ELLs. This common ground around discipline-specific topics within student standards is a natural meeting point for content and language teachers to plan for student learning.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE FOR ACTION 11

The integration of language and content brings authenticity and meaning into subject-specific genres with curricular topics providing the contexts for language learning. Discipline-specific topics provide the rationale for what language to teach. However, teachers must be aware that every content area or discipline organizes information differently and has distinct academic registers. Science genres include procedural recount and explanation, social studies genres center on historical recount and explanation, and mathematics has its own forms for recounting and explanation (Schleppegrell, 2004).

It is not possible to "do" science, "do" economics, or "do" mathematics with only ordinary language (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Lemke, 1990).

It is not possible to "do" science, "do" economics, or "do" mathematics with only ordinary language (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Lemke, 1990). Thus, at the level of classroom instruction for ELLs, "one must do discipline-specific work with academic and discipline-specific language" (Scarcella, 2003, p. 9). To participate successfully in mainstream classrooms, students must command three knowledge bases: the knowledge of the English language, knowledge of the content topic, and knowledge of accomplishing topic-based academic tasks which also constitute the major components of academic literacy (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

A REPRESENTATION OF ACTION 11 IN THE WIDA STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

The **Example Topic** is a component in WIDA 2007 and 2012 standards matrices; the sources of the Example Topics are academic content standards and college and career readiness standards. The topics represent broad curricular concepts for each grade level and illustrate the rich content with which all students interact. The Example Topics set the stage for content-based language learning.

The initial lists of Example Topics by standard and grade-level cluster are found in the WIDA's 2007 Edition of its English language proficiency standards. Example Topics are just that—examples of grade-level concepts. One of the most common transformations, or substitutions, for teachers to make within

the standards matrix across a strand of model performance indicators is to exchange the Example Topic and the content stems to best match their curriculum.

Related to the Example Topic, the **content stem** is an element of a model performance indicator. It carries the Example Topic across the strand, but may appear as a subtopic. For example, the Example Topic, "Animals" might appear as "Prehistoric animals" or "Vertebrates" in the content stem. The language function and content stem work as a unit so teachers can identify examples of academic language use for each level of language proficiency. The following is a sampling of example topics and their related content stems from a variety of grades.

Figure P: Example Content Topics and Corresponding Content Stems

Grade(s)	Example Topic	Associated Content Stem
1	Measurement of objects	Lengths of objects
5	Solar system	Earth's rotation
6	Interpretation of oral histories	Events and traditions of the local community
11–12	Historical figures & times	Impact of significant individuals or events

PUTTING ACTION 11 INTO PRACTICE

By Laura Tucci, Roseville, MN

This vignette comes from a class I taught to Level 1 ELLs about the American Civil War. The course was a trimester-long class in which we covered three Minnesota state high school social studies standards pertaining to the causes, course, and ending of the Civil War. The example topic of Civil War would fall under ELD Standard 5, the language of Social Studies.

This final unit exam was based on describing the course of the Civil War and took place over two days at the end of a unit. We began all together as a class, working on the written portion of the exam, where students were allowed to use their timeline (with pictures linked to key vocabulary terms and concepts) to fill in sentence frames using a word bank. Individual students were then called up to my desk, where they were presented with pictures and video clips, and using their timeline, orally described to me the course of the Civil War. As students finished their written exams, they then transitioned to the back of the room where they watched the film *The Red Badge of Courage.* For the written exam, students were expected, using the word bank and sentence frames, to describe: the Battle of Fort Sumter and its importance; the concept of secession; the causes of the Civil War; and Bleeding Kansas. In the oral exam, students were presented with images of: Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, the Battle of Antietam, and the surrender at Appomattox, and were expected to identify them and explain their importance to the Civil War, using their timeline with pictures and key vocabulary words. The students were also presented with a 3-minute video clip of the Battle of Gettysburg and expected to identify and explain its importance.

By using visual and graphic supports such as a video clip, historical photographs, a timeline created in class, as well as a word bank and sentence frames to recount battles and events, my students were successful with grade-level content.

The questions below provide an opportunity to consider how to apply the ideas from Action 11 to practice.

1. Why should language educators select topics from content standards?
2. How can educators approach topics in culturally and linguistically relevant ways?
3. How do you choose topics that will maximize learning opportunities for students?

ACTION 12

Use instructional supports to help scaffold language learning.

Sensory, graphic, and interactive supports, when integrated into instruction, provide ELLs additional pathways to constructing meaning. When extended into assessment, instructional supports are also valuable in assisting students in demonstrating what they have learned. In essence, instructional supports facilitate students' access to grade-level material and enhance their opportunities to achieve academically.

The use of instructional supports has always been an integral to teaching ELLs as many students simply do not have enough English to process or produce large amounts of discourse or to show their comprehension in English in traditional ways. While sensory and graphic supports have historically been utilized in classrooms with ELLs, there has been underutilization of student interaction strategies that promote practicing and learning language with partners or in small groups.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE FOR ACTION 12

In school, scaffolds are temporary support mechanisms to facilitate learners' handling of complex language and developing new concepts, skills, and understandings (Walqui, 2003; Gibbons, 2008). In recognition of the multiple pathways of language development, teachers use scaffolding to "amplify and enrich the linguistic and extralinguistic context" of a learning task (Walqui, 2008, p. 107) to make it possible for ELLs to successfully complete it.

In school, scaffolds are temporary support mechanisms to facilitate learners' handling of complex language and developing new concepts, skills, and understandings (Walqui, 2003; Gibbons, 2008).

In order to advance language development in classrooms, a variety of instructional supports provide the leverage for students to engage in grade-level learning (Ebert & Ernst-Slavit, 2010; Gottlieb, Katz, & Ernst-Slavit, 2009; Himmele & Himmele, 2009). Use of manipulatives, real objects, and multimedia materials builds their visual experiences (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002). Graphic organizers, used across content areas, are powerful instructional assessment tools as they allow students to express their ideas with reduced dependence on text (Gottlieb, 2006). Also included in types of instructional supports are organizational structures, such as pair work and small group work, with active roles for both students and teachers (Gibbons, 2008).

A REPRESENTATION OF ACTION 12 IN THE WIDA STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

Instructional supports are so important to language learning that they are built into the model performance indicators, from level 1, Entering, through level 4, Expanding. When developmentally appropriate for all students, especially in the primary grade levels, instructional supports are present

throughout the entire strand. Often, at the lower levels of language proficiency, students are afforded multiple supports, such as working with real-life objects in small groups. Instructional supports are the final element of a model performance indicator, introduced after the language function and content stem. The following chart gives teachers some ideas of the range of instructional supports available in implementing language development standards.

Figure Q: Examples of Types of Instructional Supports

Sensory Supports	Graphic Supports	Interactive Supports
Real-life objects (realia)	Charts	In pairs or partners
Manipulatives	Graphic organizers	In triads or small groups
Pictures & photographs	Tables	In a whole group
Illustrations, diagrams, & drawings	Graphs	Using cooperative group structures
Magazines & newspapers	Timelines	With the Internet (websites) or software programs
Physical activities	Number lines	In the native language (L1)
Videos & films		With mentors
Broadcasts		
Models & figures		

PUTTING ACTION 12 INTO PRACTICE

By Jennifer Daniels, Grand Junction, CO

Whenever I design instruction for my ELLs, I always keep my students' levels of English language proficiency and home language skills front and center. It helps me determine the kinds and amount of supports my students will need to be successful with the grade-level material.

In one unit on teaching how to debate, at first, I explained that debates are a type of healthy argument of making sure that both sides are heard and that perspectives are represented equally. Some cultures avoid debate and seek harmony. I explained that in a democratic society, debates and disagreements are healthy and helpful to hear perspectives on both sides. For this lesson, it was very natural to use interactive supports. Interactive supports included small group work, partner work, videos, and use of my students' home languages. We started with group work and chose an issue we were passionate about. Students chose the issue of cell phone use in the school. Then we sorted sentences that illustrated both sides of a debate. Students used their home language to deeply engage with the issue of cell phone use at school. Then many students brought up the issue of cell phone affordability, cell phone coverage, and

fees associated with cell phone use. I did not ignore those issues, and the debate took on another twist: whether cell phones should be less advanced but affordable or highly advanced and too expensive.

Students were highly engaged talking with each other, using their home languages and sentence frames to push more academic language production at higher levels of language proficiency. Some groups used a graphic organizer (a T-chart) to help record both sides of the debate. As a group, they read the sentences and discussed which side of the debate they were on. I provided several sentence frames and a written sample of how debates are organized at the discourse level. Later, students watched a poorly crafted debate and analyzed its weak points and then they saw a video of a well-articulated debate as a model of success. As a teacher, I am always mindful of showing students models of success, realizing that even a good rubric may not suffice. Then students created a rubric to use in the self and peer-assessment and they proceeded to debate an issue. Overall, it was a successful lesson. I watched students leave the classroom still talking about the issue of cell phone affordability and technological advances.

The questions below provide an opportunity to consider how to apply the ideas from Action 12 to practice.

1. What should educators consider when determining and using supports for ELLs?
2. How is language support different from or similar to other types of support for learning?
3. How can you design instruction where ELLs can use their home language as a support even if you do not speak the language?

ACTION 13

Integrate language domains to provide rich, authentic instruction.

Although in practice, language domains are naturally integrated for instruction, federal legislation has influenced how English language development standards are organized. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2002 requires that state accountability for ELLs be based on an annual English language proficiency assessment that is grounded in English language development standards. It specifies independent measurement of listening, speaking, reading, and writing along with reporting comprehension, a combined listening and reading score. As a result, English language development standards have separate language domains.

Recently, with increased attention to the use of multiple measures and greater recognition of formative classroom practices has come a greater acceptance of more authentic language assessment at the local level. Teachers are designing instructional tasks that revolve around interwoven language domains, such as writing in response to reading, multi-media presentations, and research-based debates. Consequently, teachers have realized that by integrating language domains, students are able to probe deeply into language and content learning.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE FOR ACTION 13

It is widely accepted that students develop language through interdependent, long-term processes that entail a mix of language domains amidst a mingling of languages (Anstrom et al., 2010; Francis, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006; Cummins,1981). Oral language, especially for ELLs, is foundational to literacy and impacts its development (August & Shanahan, 2006) and the empirical literature providing evidence of a positive relation between English oral proficiency and reading achievement is extensive (Carlisle, Beeman, Davis, & Spharim, 1999; García-Vázquez, Vázquez, López, & Ward, 1997; Royer & Carlo, 1991). In summary, language itself represents an integration of the processes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing that are inextricably inter-related (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002).

Language itself represents an integration of the processes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing that are inextricably bound (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002).

Gibbons (2002) stresses the intertextual nature of classroom language, specifically, the interrelationship among listening, speaking, reading, and writing in learning content material, in terms of what a teacher says and what students are expected to read; what students listen to and what they are expected to write; the print displayed in the classroom and the writing that students are to do; the discourse of the lesson and the texts students are expected to work with for homework. Comprehensive literacy programs that promote extended oral and written discourse, interrelated opportunities for speaking, reading, and writing, and the use of texts to construct new knowledge have been shown to contribute to a range of improvements in literacy (August & Shanahan, 2006).

A REPRESENTATION OF ACTION 13 IN THE WIDA STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

The two integrated strands in the 2012 Amplification of the WIDA ELD Standards illustrate how language development standards, grade levels, language domains, and/or grade levels may be combined within the standards matrix and in the design of curriculum. In real life, listening, speaking, reading, and writing do not exist nor are they used in isolation; there is a natural interdependence among the language domains. To make school a more authentic and meaningful experience, when planning units of instruction, combine multiple language domains productively (speaking and writing), receptively (listening and reading), orally (listening and speaking), or through literacy (reading and writing) in selecting one or more language development standards.

The example on the following page shows an integrated strand around a major theme for secondary grades.

Figure R: Integrated Strand of Model Performance Indicators

WIDA™

GRADES 6–12

This integrated strand is intended to capture the imagination of educators who have the opportunity to work in teams and construct interdisciplinary units of study. The ideas contained within the strand are only a fraction of the possibilities for learning that could take place in such a unit. The unit presented here will no doubt require some adaptation to fit local contexts, and students themselves may have ideas for areas of exploration within their communities, making the content and language instruction around green architecture relevant, motivating, and memorable.

As you review the model performance indicators for all four domains, consider the direct language instruction and support required to allow ELLs at all levels of proficiency to take an active role in their group's final project. Please note that the domains of listening and reading showcase how students will gather information in earlier phases of the project, and the productive domains present differentiated expectations for how students will develop (writing) and present (speaking) the final product. If referring to this strand to plan instruction, please keep in mind that students' levels of language proficiency vary across the domains, so educators can best serve students if they differentiate and scaffold for that variety rather than using only the MPIs for each students' overall proficiency level. For example, if a student in your class has an overall proficiency level of 4, but performs consistently at level 2 in writing, level 3 in reading, level 4 in speaking, and level 5 in listening, make sure to look at the level corresponding to each domain and not just the MPIs for level 4.

ELD STANDARDS 1–5

EXAMPLE TOPIC: Green architecture

CONNECTIONS: *Common Core College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading (# 7) and Writing (#1–2) for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects:* Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, the Number System (Grades 6–8), Number and Quantity, Modeling (Grades 9–12), Geometry, Statistics and Probability (Grades 6–12)

Next Generation Science Standards, Earth and Space Sciences; Engineering, Technology, and Applications of Science MS-ETS1-1, HS-ESS3-2, HS-ESS3-4, HS-ETS1-3: Define the criteria and constraints of a design problem with sufficient precision to ensure a successful solution, taking into account relevant scientific principles and potential impacts on people and the natural environment that may limit possible solutions. Evaluate competing design solutions for developing, managing, and utilizing energy and mineral resources based on cost-benefit ratios. Evaluate or refine a technological solution that reduces impacts of human activities on natural systems. Evaluate a solution to a complex real-world problem based on prioritized criteria and trade-offs that account for a range of constraints, including cost, safety, reliability, and aesthetics as well as possible social, cultural, and environmental impacts.

Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies, Civics #1, Economics #1, Geography #2 (Grades 6–12): Democratic government depends on informed and engaged citizens who exhibit civic skills and values, practice civic discourse, vote and participate in elections, apply inquiry and analysis skills, and take action to solve problems and shape public policy. People make informed economic choices by identifying their goals, interpreting and applying data, considering the short- and long-run costs and benefits of alternative choices, and revising their goals based on their analysis. Geographic inquiry is a process in which people ask geographic questions and gather, organize, and analyze information to solve problems and plan for the future.

EXAMPLE CONTEXT FOR LANGUAGE USE: Students working in heterogeneous groups draft and present plans to local government and community members for green architectural development for their community including, for instance, social action efforts, scientific needs assessments, budgets, and design and construction blueprints.

COGNITIVE FUNCTION: Students at all levels of English language proficiency EVALUATE information and CREATE a green architectural plan.

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Emerging	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	Level 6 – Reaching
LISTENING	Select possible components of green architectural plans from videos, interactive presentations (e.g., from Internet), and guest speakers	Categorize information on components of green architectural plans from videos, interactive presentations, and guest speakers using graphic organizers	Compare and contrast possible components of green architectural plans from videos, interactive presentations, and guest speakers using graphic organizers	Identify details that support selection of components of green architectural plans from videos, interactive presentations, and guest speakers	Connect ideas and reasons that support selection of components of green architectural plans from videos, interactive presentations, and guest speakers	
SPEAKING	Present green architectural plans using multimedia with visuals and captions based on research, original blueprints, and business plans in small groups	Describe features of green architectural plans based on research, original blueprints, and business plans in small groups	Explain the need to adopt green architectural plans based on research, original blueprints, and business plans in small groups	Defend choices made in designing green architectural plans based on research, original blueprints, and business plans in small groups	Persuade stakeholders to adopt green architectural plans based on research, original blueprints, and business plans	
READING	Select possible components of green architectural plans (e.g., community gardens, high-tech building materials) from a variety of informational texts and models using L1 or L2	Find exemplars of different components of green architectural plans from a variety of informational texts and models using L1 or L2	Classify information on components of green architectural plans (e.g., by usefulness, efficiency, cost) from a variety of informational texts and models in small groups	Identify details that support selection of components of green architectural plans from a variety of informational texts and models in small groups	Find research-based evidence supporting selection of components of green architectural plans from a variety of informational texts and models in small groups	
WRITING	Label and caption materials for multimedia presentations on green architectural plans in small groups	Compose bulleted text for slides or handouts for multimedia presentations on green architectural plans in small groups	Describe green architectural plans for multimedia presentations in small groups	Summarize positions or approaches in green architectural plans for multimedia presentations in small groups	Produce and edit scripts for multimedia presentations on green architectural plans in small groups	

TOPIC-RELATED LANGUAGE: Students at all levels of English language proficiency interact with grade-level words and expressions across the content areas.

PUTTING ACTION 13 INTO PRACTICE

By Ayanna Cooper, Atlanta, GA

For content teachers to teach and develop both content and language, a shift must occur. This shift needs to occur not only in classroom practice, but also as part of teacher education. All teachers teach language. They teach the language of their content area. Exactly how language is taught is essential in developing academic language and literacy across all content areas.

ELLs do not learn English by focusing on isolated grammatical structures. All domains of language, speaking, writing, reading and listening (SWRL) are part of the language development process. They can be developed simultaneously, however, not at the same rate. While some students will develop their receptive language more rapidly, others will develop their expressive language at a quicker pace. How all language domains are incorporated within content area instruction varies.

While working with secondary level math and science teachers and instructional coaches, I introduced them to concepts and theories of second language acquisition. Then we began to evaluate teaching practices and highlight examples of when students were "SWRLing." This process is multifaceted in that when questions and answers arise, they lead to additional questions and answers. Some of the questions about language learning and domains include:

Speaking

- What kinds of questions require students to think and respond critically?

Writing

- What opportunities are students afforded to write across genres and content areas?
- What types of writing am I expecting from students in science and math?

Reading

- How can we foster independent reading for ELLs?

Listening

- How is listening taught and assessed across content areas?
- What types of support do teachers need to be able to teach listening?

General

- What opportunities are ELLs afforded on a daily basis to develop all domains of language?
- How do we use formative assessments to monitor student progress in all domains?

Assuring ELLs speak, write, read, and listen every day will require intentional teaching. The process of becoming intentional practitioners who develop both content and language will be different for everyone but necessary for all students to be academically successful.

The questions below provide an opportunity to consider how to apply the ideas from Action 13 to practice.

1. How might educators use information about ELLs' levels of language proficiency for the different domains when grouping for various activities?

2. How can educators use students' strengths in a particular language domain to scaffold the development of another language domain?

3. How do you balance language instruction to ensure students practice language use in various domains?

ACTION 14

Coordinate and collaborate in planning for language and content teaching and learning.

With ever growing numbers of ELLs, both language and content experts have critical roles in ensuring students' academic success. Teachers have to share responsibility, coordinate instruction, and engage in a cooperative process to reach common goals for their students. In order to do so, teachers must work together in planning for learning. Language teachers depend on content teachers' expertise to identify grade-level concepts and skills. Likewise, content teachers rely on the expertise of language teachers to point out the language of their lessons that is likely to be challenging to students and thus require scaffolding and support.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE FOR ACTION 14

Although there is great diversity in school structures and policies, language and content teachers can and must engage in collaborative professional practices for the benefit of ELLs (Lacina, New Levine, & Sowa, 2006). In turn, these practices must be endorsed by school leadership who support the effort by providing dedicated time and resources (Pawan & Sietman, 2007). Collaborative practices for educating ELLs include having language and content teachers engage in co-teaching (Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008), collaborative teaching (York-Barr, Ghere, & Sommerness, 2007), or professional learning teams (Gottlieb, 2012). Systematic integration of language and content requires co-planning and monitoring by language and content teachers. Research on professional development suggests that the design of coherent programs of instruction for ELLs is related to the involvement of all staff and supportive leadership (Haager & Windmueller, 2001; Ruíz, Rueda, Figueroa, & Boothroyd, 1995).

> Research on professional development interventions suggest that the development of a coherent programs of instruction for ELLs is related to the involvement of all staff (Haager & Windmueller, 2001; Ruíz, Rueda, Figueroa, & Boothroyd, 1995).

A REPRESENTATION OF ACTION 14 IN THE WIDA STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

The expanded strands of model performance indicators in the 2012 Amplified ELD Standards can serve as a tool for collaboration between language and content teachers. By examining the uniqueness of the academic language used in particular content areas, teachers can work together to design instruction and classroom assessment for their ELLs. The expanded strands can serve as a model for how language and content teachers might break down lessons within units of instruction according to the three criteria of WIDA's Performance Definitions: Linguistic Complexity, Language Forms and Conventions, and Vocabulary Usage. Here the five levels of English language proficiency are collapsed into three (levels 1–3, 2–4, and 3–5) to facilitate differentiation of language instruction. In that way, together teachers can plan

more explicit use of language around a central content topic or theme for students at differing levels of language proficiency.

In applying language from the Performance Definitions within the standards matrix, the expanded strands are the fullest representation of the English language development standards. There is one expanded strand for each grade level, Kindergarten through grade 8, and grade level bands, 9–10 and 11–12. See the expanded strand for grade 6 on the next page.

Figure S: Expanded Strand of Model Performance Indicators

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GRADE 6

This expanded strand showcases an opportunity for students to hone their writing skills within Standard 3, the Language of Mathematics. Students at all levels of language proficiency are asked to evaluate, a demanding cognitive function, and they must justify their decisions based on computation and reasoning. The example topic of ratio and rate can be made relevant for students using a variety of real-life applications, as shown in the example context for language use. Educators should be mindful of some of the specific and technical language that can be present in such specialized topics as taxes, cars, and sports, and make a point to teach it to students explicitly. ELLs can be more successful when provided linguistic supports. In levels 1 and 2 of this strand, students are supported by the use of a template. In the row for Linguistic Complexity, students' writing is underlined to show that they have filled in blanks with words, phrases, and simple sentences, while the template provided by their teacher is shown in italicized text. At the higher levels of language proficiency, students can draft all text independently using the support of graphic organizers that remind them of comparative and explanatory language.

ELD STANDARD 3: The Language of Mathematics

EXAMPLE TOPIC: Ratio & rate

CONNECTION: *Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, Ratios and Proportional Relationships #3 (Grade 6):* Use ratio and rate reasoning to solve real-world and mathematical problems… b. Solve unit rate problems including those involving unit pricing and constant speed… c. Find a percent of a quantity as a rate per 100 (e.g., 30% of a quantity means 30/100 times the quantity); solve problems involving finding the whole, given a part and the percent. d. Use ratio reasoning to convert measurement units; manipulate and transform units appropriately when multiplying or dividing quantities.

EXAMPLE CONTEXT FOR LANGUAGE USE: Students justify their decisions in real-life scenarios (e.g., choosing items to buy based on discounts and local tax, determining miles per gallon for different models of cars, or selecting players for a fantasy team based on sports average).

COGNITIVE FUNCTION: Students at all levels of English language proficiency EVALUATE their options and make choices.

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Emerging	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	Level 6 – Reaching
WRITING	List choices based on rate calculations in real-life situations using templates and word banks with a partner	Describe choices based on rate calculations in real-life situations using templates and word banks with a partner	Compare choices based on rate calculations in real-life situations using graphic organizers with a partner	Explain choices based on rate calculations in real-life situations using charts with partners	Elaborate on choices based on rate calculations in real-life situations with partners	

TOPIC-RELATED LANGUAGE: Students at all levels of English language proficiency interact with grade-level words and expressions, such as: sales tax, discount, percentage, ratio, proportion

Example Language Features

	Levels 1–3	Levels 2–4	Levels 3–5	
Linguistic Complexity Discourse Level	*Selection: We chose* the computer. *Price:* It costs $750. *Discount: Today it is* 15%. *Reason:* The price is cheap.	There are many phones. We selected the smart phone. Some phones are cheaper, but the smart phone can do more. The price was $400 plus tax. It was on sale for 15% off.	We had a choice of buying a tablet or a smart phone. We looked for a good deal. We selected the tablet because it was the best value at the discounted rate. It had a greater percentage off. The price of the tablet, including the 20% discount and sales tax, was $495. The final price of the smart phone was $340 after taking 10% off.	Level 6 – Reaching
Language Forms & Conventions Sentence Level	choose → chose cost → costs	cheap → cheaper expensive → more expensive Some phones are cheaper, but… on sale 15% off	The price of the tablet, including the 20% discount and sales tax, was $495. after taking	
Vocabulary Usage Word/Phrase Level	costs discount price cheap/expensive	plus tax on sale	a good deal best value discounted rate percentage off final price	

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PUTTING ACTION 14 INTO PRACTICE

By Andrea Parent, Burnsville, MN

As an ESL teacher co-teaching in a kindergarten class for an hour a day, I find the integration of language instruction and content instruction a necessity. When planning with my co-teacher for social studies and science, it is clear that she is the content expert as well as the expert in developmentally appropriate expectations of young learners. I provide the expertise on language. We begin with the content standards and the benchmarks for success at the end of a unit. After identifying the content needs, we examine the language instruction that will need to be embedded by looking at the three performance definitions.

Typically we look at vocabulary usage first. By making intentional decisions about which words and expressions we'll teach explicitly and which words will be included for exposure, we can model conversations and writing that would include the specific vocabulary and content concepts. With this modeling or practicing the language input and output we expect from students, we can identify the language forms and conventions will we teach. As we add the linguistic complexity, we return to individual students and their language proficiency levels. We use the amplified matrix to plan for the unit of study. Using the matrix, we are able to match our lesson objectives to the language proficiency levels of our students.

Our goal is to have each of the four modalities or domains practiced in every lesson and we will be sure to assess student performance in all four modalities over the course of the unit. With the model performance indicators, we can ensure that language instruction isn't lost in the content instruction. As a language teacher, I enjoy this content and language planning process with my co-teacher not just for the hour we teach together, but because I know that it influences her language instruction the remainder of the day. By knowing students and their language levels, she can infuse the same types of language instruction throughout her day and help build the academic language of our students in all content areas.

By Ben Kollasch, Middleton, WI

Collaboration between ESL teachers and core-content teachers to provide content-rich language instruction for our ELLs is critical in the high-stakes environment of today's classroom. However, this is difficult, especially at high school level, which I taught. My school created professional learning communities (PLCs) and provided times for groups of teachers to meet during the school day. In my group, I defined my role as an ESL expert sitting around a table with content (in this case 9th grade Social Studies) experts who needed my help to teach ELLs. I was most successful when I could clearly show how the best practices in teaching ELLs overlapped with best practices for teaching. When I defined my role as an ESL expert, I could advocate for assessments that would authentically show what content the ELLs had mastered. I could advocate for teaching practices that included explicit teaching of academic vocabulary for all students including ELLs. In my opinion, the most important factors for success in my practice included:

- Developing a well-defined professional relationship with collaborating teachers to clarify respective roles.

- Developing a culture of shared responsibility for teaching language and content.
- Assessing my own limitations in a given situation and deferring to another teacher who has the necessary content knowledge.

When defining your role as an ESL teacher you should make sure you are seen as the language expert that can modify curriculum (not helping students complete worksheets or homework). You have much more to decide though, such as:

- How comfortable you are with the content.
- What role the students should see you in (support or teaching).
- Where you will be in the room (e.g., front, back, side, one-on-one).
- What portion of classroom management you are responsible for and how much grading you do.

Leaving any of these to chance can create situations that are damaging to the relationship. Don't forget to review your roles periodically to see if they are working. You need to invest some precious planning time to keep the relationship healthy. This is as important for you and your mental health as it is for your students and their academic outcomes.

In my experience, teaching relationships take time to grow and evolve. Be prepared to invest time and effort into your collaborative relationships and don't be discouraged if you aren't satisfied right away.

The questions below provide an opportunity to consider how to apply the ideas from Action 14 to practice.

1. How could the expanded strands be used to promote collaboration between content teachers and language specialist?

2. How do you dedicate attention to all three dimensions (discourse, sentence, and word/phrase) of academic language?

3. In what settings might you use or design expanded strands?

ACTION 15

Share responsibility so that all teachers are language teachers and support one another within communities of practice.

Growing numbers of classroom teachers feel the pressure of teaching ELLs without having the specialized training to do so. By having language teachers work side-by-side with content teachers, everyone benefits, especially students. The language teacher brings the expertise in the process of language development and differentiated language strategies while the content teacher has the curricular knowledge of the content areas.

Although academic content standards are tremendously important in today's pressure-packed classrooms, the education of the whole child cannot be ignored. ELLs are exposed to new language throughout the school day in diverse areas, including fine arts, physical education, or technology. Consequently, all educators should have a firm sense of the language of their grade level or discipline with language specialists being an equal partner in educating ELLs. In the end, all teachers have a role in students' language development in school.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE FOR ACTION 15

For years there have been claims that all teachers should have a thorough grounding in language and its critical role in teaching (Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2002). Today, it is of upmost importance given the growing numbers of ELLs in schools. In practice, a focus on language is essential in all classrooms to access content (Egbert & Ernst-Slavit, 2010). One of the hallmarks of an effective learning environment for ELLs is to have teachers understand the language demands of their own content areas and how language is used in that subject (Gibbons, 2008).

Research on professional development interventions suggest that the development of a coherent programs of instruction for ELLs is related to the involvement of all staff (Haager & Windmueller, 2001; Ruíz, Rueda, Figueroa, & Boothroyd, 1995).

Teachers working together act as communities of practice around a shared interest, the welfare of all students. Through the process of sharing knowledge and expertise among active practitioners, members of the group learn from each other and develop professionally (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Schools that participate as communities of practice around topics relevant to ELLs witness a shared experience over time and develop a mutual understanding of the issues (Eckert, 2006). Because of the distributed nature of knowledge among education professionals, much can be learned about ELLs through interactions in class (Yedlin, 2007) and outside the classroom (Verplaetse, 2008). Ongoing collaboration between language and content teachers can further the academic development of all students (Davison, 2006).

A REPRESENTATION OF ACTION 15 IN THE WIDA STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

The majority of WIDA's strands of model performance indicators reflect its five English language development standards. **Complementary strands** are also necessary to acknowledge and address other language-dependent aspects of schooling. A complementary strand at each grade level and grade-level band for high school illustrates how language learning extends beyond the core content areas.

To maximize flexibility in using these matrices, educators should transform or substitute the elements of the model performance indicators to meet their instructional and assessment needs. As educating students is a whole-school effort, all teachers should be aware of the language required in understanding grade-level content so that all students, especially ELLs, have opportunities not only to succeed, but excel academically. Here is a list of the complementary strands for each grade level.

Figure T: A Grade-Level List of Complementary Strands of Model Performance Indicators Along With Their Language Domains and Example Topics

Complementary Strands	Grade Level(s)	Language Domain	Example Topic
Language of Music and Performing Arts	Kindergarten	Listening	Rhythm
	5	Reading	Song lyrics
	11–12	Speaking	Musical genres
Language of Humanities	1	Reading	Multiculturalism
	6	Speaking	Interpretation of oral histories
Language of Visual Arts	2	Speaking	Visual characteristics
	7	Listening	Art media, techniques, & processes
Language of Health and Physical Education	3	Listening	Healthy choices
	8	Writing	Personal health and fitness
Language of Technology and Engineering	4	Writing	Multimedia publishing
	9–10	Reading	Technology and ethics

PUTTING ACTION 15 INTO PRACTICE

By Christopher Powers, Madison, WI

Learning music is like learning language, so music class provides great learning opportunities for ELLs. In dual language immersion schools, everyone is learning an additional language, so the opportunities for language development are always there. When I teach music, I do it based on things children like to do: sing, chant rhymes, dance, and play instruments. This gives all students, including ELLs, opportunities to hear and make music first, then read and write it later. This is the same way we all learned our home languages. As an Orff Schulwerk trained music educator, I provide my students opportunities for learning through four stages—imitation, exploration, improvisation, and visualization. To help all students, but especially ELLs, I use real instruments when possible in addition to pictures and demonstrations that are both verbal and visual. The last few years, I have started to create more anchor charts and bulletin board displays that provide additional language support. I have noticed a lot of students using them when answering questions in class. Even when students do not know the exact word they are looking for, they can point to the picture and then associate the wording with the picture to help build the academic language for music.

As students gain language proficiency, I design different activities for them to play with language, like using a consistent system of fruits and vegetables to practice rhythm. The fruits are used for duple meter and vegetables are used for triple meter. From time to time, 4th or 5th grade students write poetry and ask to turn it into a rap—I ask them to write down their fruits or vegetables for the words they used. Eventually, students transition to knowing the true musical terms for the rhythms.

The questions below provide an opportunity to consider how to apply the ideas from Action 15 to practice.

1. Why is it important for teachers outside the core content areas to understand the language of their discipline?

2. What professional learning opportunities about working with ELLs are available to all teachers who work with ELLs in your school or district?

3. How might you introduce the complementary strands to educators in their respective content areas?

APPENDICES

Appendix A: WIDA's Implementation Survey for Taking Action

This survey may be used as a needs assessment to examine the relevance and appropriateness of the Essential Actions in your local school or district. The purpose of these rating scales is to help inform the implementation of WIDA's 2012 Amplification of the English Language Development Standards around the Actions.

Please indicate the extent to which these Actions are a priority and their projected level of use for your grade, department, school, or district.

Column A: Rate the Priority in Implementation from 0 to 5.

0 = I don't understand this Action. I need more information to decide!

1 = Not relevant to my context. We are not doing this!

2 = Good idea but not a priority, maybe later!

3 = Good idea, we need to implement this Action, but we don't know how and need help!

4 = Good idea, we need to implement this Action and will get started right away!

5 = Doing it already, we just need some tweaking on this Action during the year!

Column B: Rate the Projected Level of Implementation from 0 to 5.

0 = Not applicable. We do not plan on implementing this Action.

1 = I plan on implementing this Action in my classroom.

2 = We plan on implementing this Action at our grade level (or as a professional learning team).

3 = We plan on implementing this Action school-wide.

4 = We plan on implementing this Action across our language education program.

5 = We plan on implementing this Action district-wide.

Action	A. Priority in Implementation (Rate from 0–5)	B. Level of Implementation (Rate from 0–5)	Comments
1. Capitalize on the resources and experiences that ELLs bring to school to build and enrich their academic language.			
2. Analyze the academic language demands involved in grade-level teaching and learning.			
3. Apply the background knowledge of ELLs, including their language portraits, in planning differentiated language teaching.			
4. Connect language and content to make learning relevant and meaningful for ELLs.			
5. Focus on the developmental nature of language learning within grade-level curriculum.			
6. Reference content standards and language development standards in planning for language learning.			
7. Design language teaching and learning with attention to the sociocultural context.			
8. Provide opportunities for all ELLs to engage in higher-order thinking.			

Action	A. Priority in Implementation (Rate from 0–5)	B. Level of Implementation (Rate from 0–5)	Comments
9. Create language-rich classroom environments with ample time for language practice and use.			
10. Identify the language needed for functional use in teaching and learning.			
11. Plan for language teaching and learning around discipline-specific topics.			
12. Use instructional supports to help scaffold language learning.			
13. Integrate language domains to provide rich, authentic instruction.			
14. Coordinate and collaborate in planning for language and content teaching and learning.			
15. Share responsibility so that all teachers are language teachers and support one another within communities of practice.			
(Insert your own Action not found in the list above.)			

Appendix B: Glossary of Terms and Expressions Related to WIDA's Language Development Standards and Essential Actions

academic content standards: the skills and knowledge expected of students in the core content areas for each grade level

academic language: the oral and written text required to succeed in school that entails deep understanding and communication of the language of content within a classroom environment; revolves around meaningful application of specific criteria related to Linguistic Complexity at the discourse level, Language Forms and Conventions at the sentence level, and Vocabulary Usage at the word/phrase level within the particular context in which communication occurs

amplified strands: a framework for representing the WIDA English Language Development Standards that extends to include examples of the three performance criteria of academic language (Linguistic Complexity, Language Forms and Conventions, Vocabulary Usage) across levels of language proficiency

cognitive functions: the mental processes involved in learning

cohesion: a feature of academic language at the discourse level involving the grammatical and lexical elements within and across sentences that hold text together to give it meaning

collocations: words or phrases that naturally co-occur with each other, (e.g., "peanut butter and jelly," or "a strong resemblance")

Common Core State Standards: the skills and knowledge expected of students in English language arts, mathematics (Kindergarten–Grade 12), and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects, (Grades 6–12); adopted by the vast majority of states in the U.S. in 2010

complementary strands: the use of the standards framework to represent critical areas of schooling outside the five English language development standards, including music and performing arts, the humanities, visual arts, health and physical education, technology, and engineering

complex sentence: one independent clause joined by one or more dependent clauses with a subordinator such as because, since, after, although, or when or a relative pronoun such as that, who, or which (e.g., "When school started, the students were excited.")

compound sentence: two or more independent clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions (e.g., for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so), semicolons, or a semicolon followed by a conjunctive adverb (e.g., "School started today; the students were excited.")

content stem: the element of model performance indicators, derived from state and national content standards, including the Common Core State Standards and Next Generation of Science Standards, that provides a standards-referenced example for contextualizing language development

connections to academic content standards: examples of the association or correspondence of content to language standards

discourse: extended oral or written language conveying multiple connected ideas; its language features are shaped by the genre, text type, situation, and register

domains: see language domains

English language learners (ELLs): linguistically and culturally diverse students who have been identified (by a WIDA screener and other placement criteria) as having levels of English language proficiency that require language support to achieve grade-level content in English

example context for language use: element of the standards matrix situating the representation of the English language development standards within a sociocultural setting that considers the register, genre/text type, topic, and task

example topic: element of the standards matrix listing a theme or concept derived from state and national content standards that provides a context for language development

expanded sentences: complete thoughts that contain descriptive language or two ideas that are combined using connectors (and, but, or)

features of academic language: the performance criteria of oral and written communication that include Linguistic Complexity at the discourse level, Language Forms and Conventions at the sentence level, and Vocabulary Usage at the word/phrase level

formulaic expressions: a feature of academic language at the sentence level that represents a string of words acquired as a single chunk, such (e.g., "How are you?")

framework: see standards framework

general language: words or expressions not typically associated with a specific content area (e.g., describe or book)

genres: socially-defined ways in which language (e.g., oral and written) is used to participate in particular contexts to serve specific purposes

instructional language: the language that typifies classroom discourse from teacher to teacher across content areas, such as "Open your books to page ___."

instructional supports: sensory, graphic, and interactive resources embedded in instruction and assessment that assist students in constructing meaning from language and content

integrated strands: a framework for representing the WIDA ELD Standards in which grade levels, language domains, and standards are combined in different configurations

L1: the first language a student acquires; usually refers to a home language(s) other than English, although for some English language learners, L2 (English) may be developing simultaneously alongside L1

L2: the second language a student acquires; usually refers to English as an additional language

language development standards: language expectations for English language learners represented within progressive levels of language proficiency

language domains: the modalities of language; listening, speaking, reading, and writing

language function: the purpose for which oral or written communication is being used; language functions guide the choices in language use and structure as well as the social relationships being established; first element of model performance indicators that indicates how English language learners process or use language to demonstrate their language proficiency

language proficiency: a person's competence in processing (through listening and reading) and producing (through speaking and writing) language

Language Forms and Conventions: the grammatical structures, patterns, syntax, and mechanics associated with sentence level meaning; one of three criteria that constitute the Performance Definitions

levels of language proficiency: the division of the second language acquisition continuum into stages descriptive of the process of language development; the WIDA ELD Standards have six levels of language proficiency: 1–Entering, 2–Emerging, 3–Developing, 4–Expanding, 5–Bridging, and 6–Reaching

Linguistic Complexity: the organization, cohesion, and relationship between ideas expressed in the variety and kinds of sentences that make up different genres and text types in oral or written language at the discourse level; one of three criteria that constitute the Performance Definitions

model performance indicator (MPI): a single cell within the standards matrix that is descriptive of a specific level of English language development for a language domain within a grade or grade-level cluster

Next Generation Science Standards: the skills and knowledge expected of students in science and engineering; draft released for states' review in May 2012

Performance Definitions: the criteria that define the Linguistic Complexity, Language Forms and Conventions, and Vocabulary Usage for receptive and productive language across the five levels of language proficiency

productive language: communicating meaning through the language domains of speaking and writing

proficiency: see language proficiency

realia: real-life objects used as instructional supports for language and content learning

receptive language: the processing of language through listening and reading

register: features of language that vary according to the context, the groups of users and purpose of the communication (e.g., the speech used when students talk to their peers versus their principal)

scaffolding: careful shaping of the supports (e.g., processes, environment, and materials) used to build on students' already acquired skills and knowledge to support their progress from level to level of language proficiency

simple sentence: an independent clause with a subject and a predicate; can also have a compound subject and/or predicate (e.g., "The students and teachers were excited.")

social language: the everyday registers used in interactions outside and inside school

sociocultural context: the association of language with the culture and society in which it is used; in reference to schooling, understandings of sociocultural context revolve around the interaction between students and the classroom language environment, which includes both curriculum and those involved in teaching and learning

specific language: words or expressions used across multiple academic content areas in school (e.g., chart, total, individual)

standards framework: the components representing WIDA's five ELD Standards, including the standards themselves, the Features of Academic Language, the Performance Definitions, and the strands of model performance indicators (standards matrix)

standards matrix: the basic framework for representing the English language development standards including a strand of model performance indicators, connection to state content standards, example context for language use, cognitive function, and topic-related language

strands of model performance indicators (MPIs): the five sequential or scaffolded levels of English language proficiency for a given topic and language domain within the standards matrix

supports: see instructional supports

technical language: the most precise words or expressions associated with topics within academic content areas in school

text types: categories of text that employ particular language features for specific purposes

topic-related language: grade-level words and expressions, including those with multiple meanings and cognates, that are associated with the example topic within the standards matrix

visual support: accompanying the use of written or oral language with illustrations, photographs, charts, tables, graphs, graphic organizers, etc. to give ELLs additional opportunities to access meaning

Vocabulary Usage: the specificity of words or phrases for a given topic and context; one of three criteria that constitute the Performance Definitions

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