

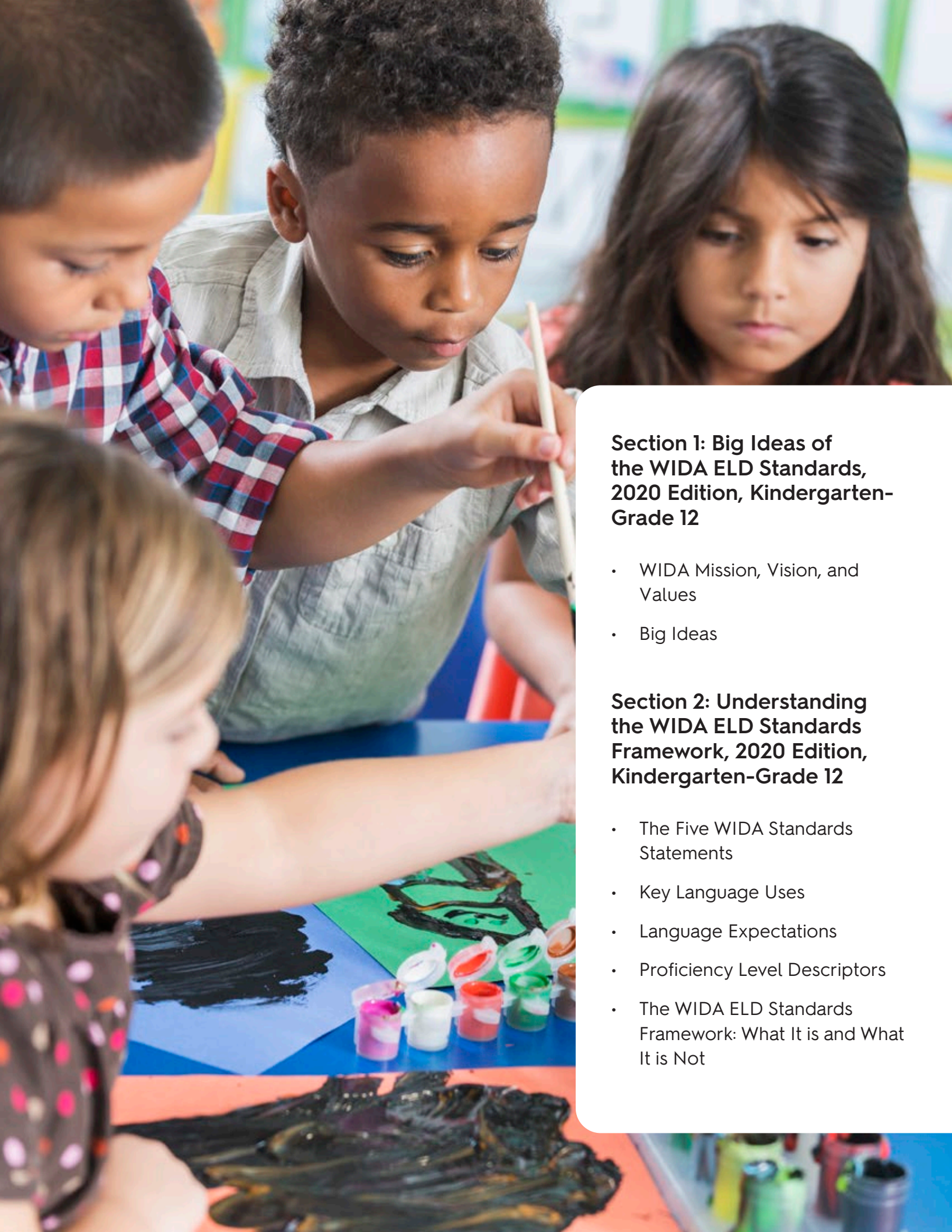


WIDA English Language Development Standards

Kindergarten – Grade 12

Promote equity for multilingual learners • Teach language and content together

2020
EDITION



Section 1: Big Ideas of the WIDA ELD Standards, 2020 Edition, Kindergarten-Grade 12

- WIDA Mission, Vision, and Values
- Big Ideas

Section 2: Understanding the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition, Kindergarten-Grade 12

- The Five WIDA Standards Statements
- Key Language Uses
- Language Expectations
- Proficiency Level Descriptors
- The WIDA ELD Standards Framework: What It is and What It is Not

WIDA English Language Development Framework, 2020 Edition

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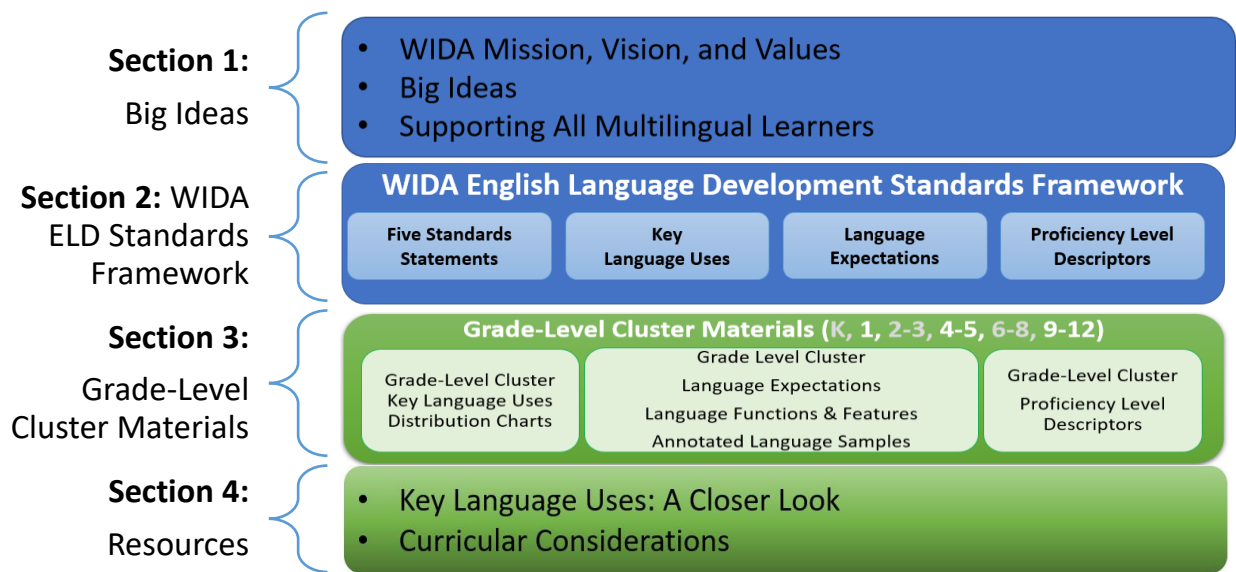
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Orientation to Document

Organization of the Document

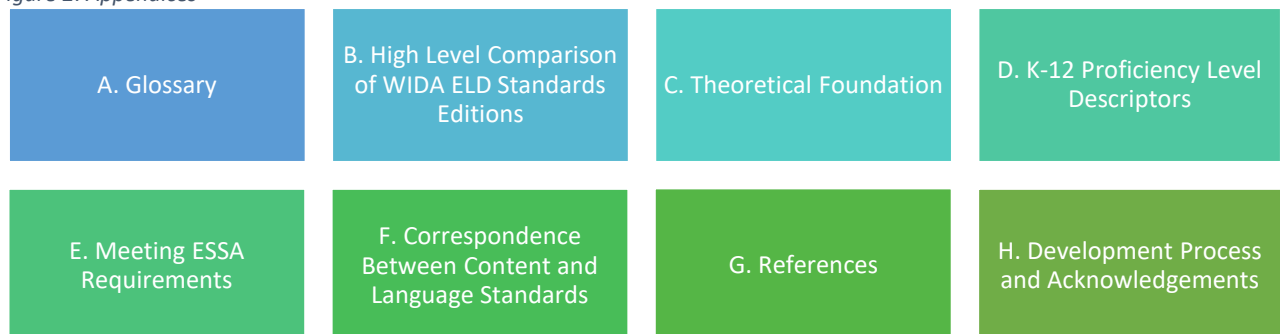
The 2020 Edition of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework is organized in four main sections:

Figure 1: Overall Organization of the Document



Eight appendices accompany this document.

Figure 2: Appendices



The table below provides brief descriptions of what you will find in each section of this document.

Figure 3: Brief description of each document section

Section 1: Big Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big Ideas build on WIDA's mission, vision, and values and anchor the standards framework: • Equity of access and opportunity to ensure the success of all multilingual learners for college, career, and civic participation • Integration of language and content in the planning and delivery of instruction • Collaboration among stakeholders in shared responsibility for multilingual learners • A functional approach to language development focusing on the purposeful use of language
Section 2: WIDA ELD Standards Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WIDA ELD Standards Framework consists of four interactive components: • The Five WIDA ELD Standards Statements provide the broadest conceptual framing of language and content integration • Key Language Uses summarize language uses across disciplines, helping educators organize and prioritize instruction • Language Expectations are goals for content-driven language learning • Proficiency Level Descriptors describe the language multilingual learners can process and produce as they near the end of each proficiency level
Section 3: Grade- Level Cluster Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade-Level Cluster Materials add specificity and supporting details to the Standards Framework: • Language Functions and Features are building blocks of language that help craft each Language Expectation • Annotated Language Samples illustrate Language Expectations, Functions, and Features in the context of a grade-level text • Proficiency Level Descriptors describe language development trajectories of multilingual learners
Section 4: Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Language Uses: A Closer Look provides extended definitions and examples for each Key Language Use, including common features and unique aspects across grade-level clusters and disciplines • Curricular Resources offer a sample unit design process and a sample unit of learning to help audiences begin to envision how they might use the WIDA ELD Standards Framework in curriculum design

Terminology: from English Language Learners to Multilingual Learners

Throughout the field of K-12 education, various terms are used to describe multilingual learners. Commonly used terms include “English language learners” (ELLs), “emergent bilinguals,” and “dual language learners” (DLLs), the latter also referring to children ages birth to five. ESSA (2015) uses the term “English Learners” (ELs).

For policy purposes, the five original WIDA standards statements maintain the term “English Language Learners” (see page 12). Yet, encouraging the field to use terminology that is asset-based and inclusive, WIDA has introduced the term “multilingual learners” that is used throughout the document.

Multilingual learners, as defined by WIDA, is an overarching term for the vast numbers of students who come in contact with and/or interact in languages in addition to English on a regular basis. The term includes students who are commonly referred to as newcomers, Students with Interrupted Formal Schooling (SIFE), Long Term English Learners (LTELs), English Learners with Disabilities, Gifted and Talented English Learners, Heritage Language Learners, and students who speak varieties of English or indigenous languages.

Multilingual learners refers to all children and youth who are, or have been, consistently exposed to multiple languages. It includes students known known as English language learners (ELLs) or dual language learners (DLLs); heritage language learners; and students who speak varieties of English or indigenous languages.



Photo

Audiences and Uses of the WIDA ELD Standards, 2020 Edition

The WIDA ELD Standards, 2020 Edition, is a consortium-wide K-12 guide for national and international audiences. In response to WIDA's many stakeholder groups, the following figure outlines an array of uses for the document. While there is some overlap, emphasis has been placed on the distinct nature and responsibilities of each group and its contribution to the education of multilingual learners.

Figure 4: Audiences and Uses of the WIDA ELD Standards, 2020 Edition

Audience	Uses of the WIDA ELD Standards, 2020 Edition
State Education Agencies (SEAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with federal mandates, including Peer Review requirements • Assure alignment with ACCESS, the English language proficiency assessment • Guide state policy and informational documents referenced to standards • Inform state standards resources inclusive of equity for multilingual learners • Organize professional learning opportunities for educators of multilingual learners
Local Education Agencies (LEAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide professional learning to infuse language and culture into extant curriculum design • Spark collaboration between leadership and educators of multilingual learners • Work with teachers and other school leaders to provide guidance on language development • Prompt coordination of services for multilingual learners and outreach to families • Share ideas with teachers and families to advance teaching and learning of multilingual learners
School Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote partnerships between language and content teachers with dedicated planning time • Forge partnerships with multilingual communities • Support teachers in enacting linguistically and culturally sustainable curriculum • Stimulate discussion and consensus-building among staff re: standards-based education of multilingual learners
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner to coordinate learning for multilingual learners • Collaborate with colleagues around curriculum design and integration of content and language instruction • Provide standards-referenced feedback to students and families • Model end-of-unit products, projects, and performances to illustrate evidence of meeting learning expectations • Share standards materials for monitoring multilingual learners' language growth
Teacher Educators and Professional Learning Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use as a resource for courses for pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, and administrators • Guide professional learning around assets-driven education for districts and schools • Partner in conducting classroom, school, and district research • Model the process for integrating language and content in instruction and assessment
Test Developers and Assessment Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use as a source for large-scale annual and interim ELP assessment development • Use as a source for alignment and standards-setting studies • Guide in interpreting score reports and in updating interpretive and scoring rubrics • Expand framing of test specifications around Key Language Uses and Language Expectations
International Schools and Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed language into curriculum, instruction, and classroom assessment • Craft a school-wide language policy • Collaborate with colleagues to coordinate language services • Share with grade-level teams to create seamless learning experiences for multilingual learners
Students, Families, and Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit from clear learning goals that promote equity for all • Benefit from a coherent educational experience based on a standards-aligned system • Benefit from having clarity on what teachers should be teaching and what students should be learning • Understand the language development process and how the ELD standards represent the joining of grade-level content and language

Section 1: Big Ideas of the WIDA ELD Standards, 2020 Edition: Grades Kindergarten–12

WIDA Mission, Vision, and Values

WIDA draws its strength from its [mission, vision, and values](#). These beliefs act as a unifying force that gives the consortium its strength of conviction and action throughout the PreK-12 education community.

Mission

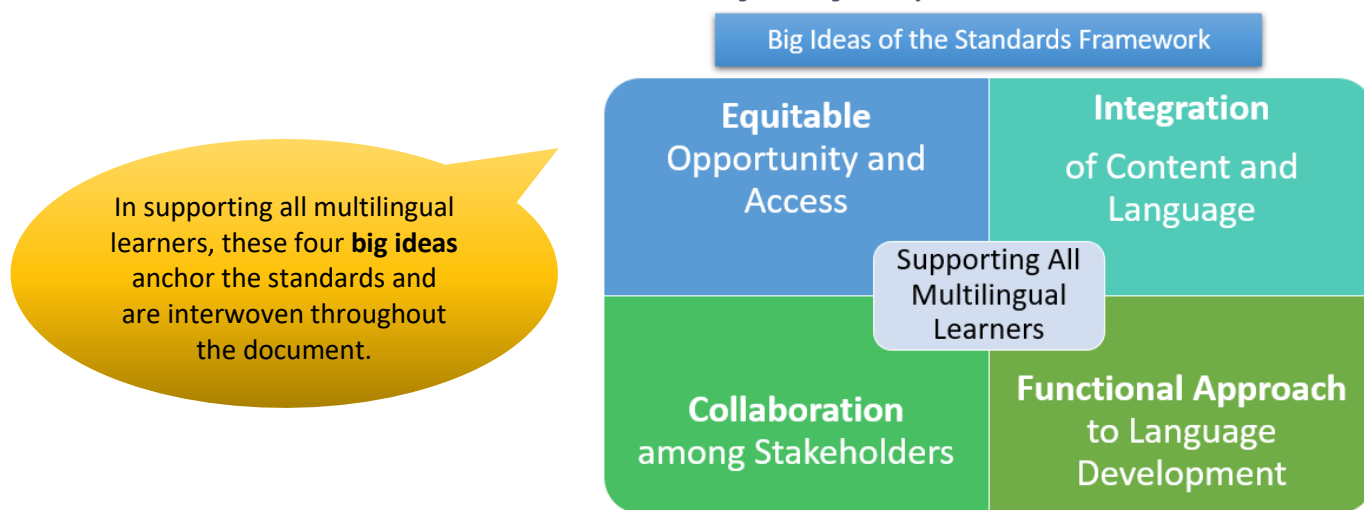
WIDA advances academic language development and academic achievement for children and youth who are culturally and linguistically diverse through high quality standards, assessments, research, and professional learning for educators.

Since its inception in 2003, WIDA has been steadfast and committed to its [Can Do Philosophy](#), an underlying belief in the cultural, social, emotional, and experiential assets and resources of multilingual learners, families, and educators. The Can Do Philosophy serves as an inspiration for all of WIDA's thinking. The updated WIDA [Guiding Principles of Language Development](#) (2019) underscore the importance of language in learning. Together, the ELD Standards, the Can-Do Philosophy, and the Guiding Principles provide the foundation for all that WIDA does.

Photo

Big Ideas of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition

Figure 5: Big Ideas of the ELD Standards Framework



Supporting all Multilingual Learners

The four big ideas of the WIDA Standards Framework converge around supporting the success of multilingual learners in school. Multilingual learners represent a wide range of cultural, linguistic, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds and have many physical, social, emotional, and/or cognitive differences. All bring assets, potential, and resources to school. Teaching is a complex and dynamic act, and increasing avenues of access, equity, agency, and success for all multilingual learners requires educators to be knowledgeable, skillful, imaginative, and compassionate to help all students reach their potential. The big ideas in this document support the design of standards-based educational experiences that are student-centered, culturally and linguistically sustaining, and responsive to multilingual learners' strengths and needs. For more on Supporting All Multilingual Learners, see Section 4: Resources (under development).

Equitable Opportunity and Access

WIDA is rooted in **equity** for multilingual learners, their families, and educators. Multilingual learners' exposure to and knowledge of multiple languages and cultures are advantages that help them build metalinguistic (understanding how languages work), metacultural (understanding the interplay among cultures), and metacognitive (understanding ways of thinking) awareness.

Drawing on students' linguistic and cultural resources is essential to helping them navigate life in a diverse world, but also, as they advance through school, to respond to the demands of disciplinary learning in the academic content areas.

Integration of Content and Language

The WIDA ELD standards have always represented **language and content together**. The 2020 Edition makes the language-content connection more specific and explicit. It foregrounds the ways disciplinary language is used in academic content standards, concepts, and practices. The integration of content and language in well-designed classrooms for multilingual learners maximizes their opportunities to

- interact with each other in challenging activities
- deeply engage in learning
- understand the connections between language and content
- make meaning in disciplinary contexts
- reach the high expectations of rigorous content

Disciplinary language includes **multimodal** means of communication in specific content areas and expression in multiple languages.

Multimodality is an essential way for all students to make meaning and engage in disciplinary practices. In addition to the use of spoken and written words, students also communicate through gestures, facial expressions, images, equations, maps, symbols, diagrams, charts, videos, graphs, computer-mediated, and other means.

Collaboration among Stakeholders

Districts and schools are complex educational systems. Stakeholders have different areas of expertise and are often responsible for different aspects of educational planning and delivery; however, they are collectively responsible for the success of multilingual learners.

Collaboration among stakeholders (e.g. district and school leaders, content and language teachers, specialists, support personnel, students, families) is a prerequisite to providing multilingual learners with a high-quality educational experience that is coordinated and comprehensive.



In particular, as **content and language teachers work together** to plan and deliver standards-based instruction, they support one another, share unique fields of expertise, and take collective responsibility ensuring the success of multilingual learners. In this way, multilingual learners benefit from a coherent and shared understanding of expectations and common goals for learning.

Functional Approach to Language Development

Historically, the WIDA Standards Framework has presented **language** as a dynamic meaning-making resource that is realized through three dimensions: discourse, sentence, and word/phrase (for more on the three dimensions of language, see the Features of Academic Language on page 21).

WIDA’s functional approach to language development has consistently highlighted effective communication, focusing on how language is used for particular purposes, with particular audiences, and in particular **sociocultural contexts**.

*WIDA defines **sociocultural context** as the association of language with the culture and society in which it is used. In reference to schooling, sociocultural context refers to the interaction between students and the classroom environment, and the influences that shape that classroom environment (e.g., purpose, topic, situation, participant’s identities and social roles, audience).*

Understanding that language a) varies according to context and b) serves a social purpose – can help educators focus on functional language use. With success in school as the ultimate goal, the Standards Framework presents language as a dynamic set of tools for multilingual learners to make meaning in the ways of the discipline, its concepts, and practices.

As language is used in various contexts, for various purposes, and for different audiences, it necessitates different levels of technicality, formality, authority, density, coherence, and the like – in essence, language is more than a collection of isolated grammatical forms.

To illustrate WIDA’s functional approach to language development, students make choices with language when they

- Adjust communication and delivery appropriate to discipline-specific tasks
- Use additional linguistic and cultural resources to delve into deep learning
- Attend to social norms and roles in communicating to build co-membership in school
- Exchange ideas, information, and feelings in the students’ preferred language(s)
- Translanguage (Translanguaging refers to the dynamic and natural interaction between languages, where students use multiple languages to communicate, often simultaneously.)

Teachers can foster students’ abilities to make choices with language when they

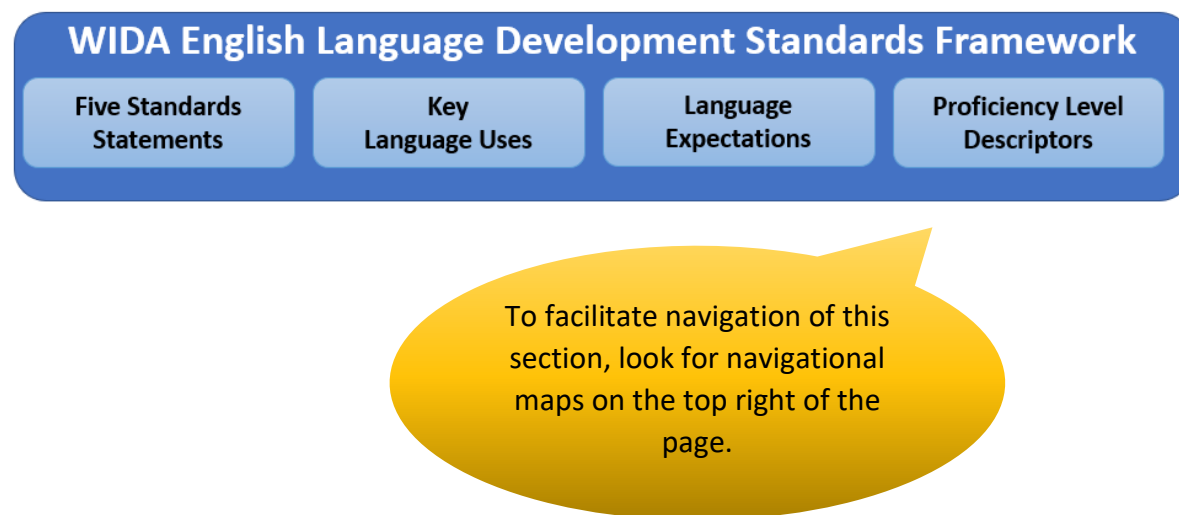
- Scaffold grade-level learning and language development for effective communication according to disciplinary literacies and practices
- Continuously deepen knowledge and sensitivity to the social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds of multilingual learners
- Recognize and make explicit the cultural nuances of linguistic cues and register, such as volume, tone, and intonation
- Support multilingual learners’ individual identities and variation in expression
- Validate and support the use of multiple languages for thinking and acting with others



- For more on WIDA’s functional approach to language development and sociocultural context of learning, see Appendix C: Theoretical Foundation.
- See also WIDA’s [Guiding Principles of Language Development](#)

Section 2: Understanding the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition Kindergarten–Grade 12

Figure 6: The Components of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework



The WIDA ELD Standards Framework, in partnership with cross-disciplinary academic content standards, define the language multilingual learners need for engaging in learning and preparing for college, career, and civic readiness.

The WIDA ELD Standards Framework consists of four interactive components.

- **The five WIDA standards statements** provide the broadest conceptual framing of language and content integration
- **Key Language Uses** summarize the most prominent language uses across disciplines, helping educators organize and prioritize curriculum and instruction
- **Language Expectations** add specificity to the five standards statements to provide goals for content-driven language learning
- **Proficiency Level Descriptors** describe the interpretive and expressive language multilingual learners can use as they near the end of each language proficiency level

Each component is explored more in depth in the following pages.

The Five WIDA Standards Statements

In the past decade K-12 education has undergone major changes. To remain current with policy, theory, and practice, representations of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework have evolved; however, since 2004, WIDA has maintained its original five standards statements.

The five standards statements – the first component of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework for the 2020 Edition – provide the broadest conceptual framing of language and content integration. They represent social, instructional, and academic language for students to engage with peers, educators, and the curriculum in schools.

Figure 7: The Five English Language Development Standards Statements

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

The 2020 Edition builds on the foundation of the five standards statements. Drawing on research, literature, and international models, it has carefully considered various sources, including state departments of education, scholars, assessment developers, professional organizations, and educators from kindergarten through college. Using the five Standards Statements as its backbone, the 2020 Edition is the culmination of an extended, broad-based effort to ensure that all multilingual learners have equitable access and opportunity for success in school and beyond.

The abbreviations for the ELD standards statements (“the language **for** ...”) in Figure 7 exemplify WIDA’s functional approach to language development. The abbreviations point to

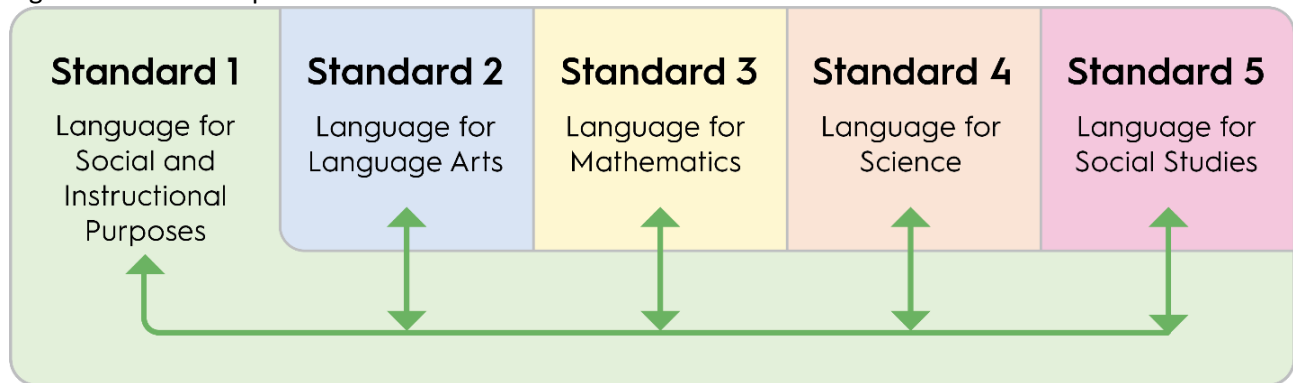
- the dynamic nature of language
- communicative purposes of the discipline or content area
- the use of language as a set of tools to communicate and make meaning
- language use in the service of learning – in other words, language **for** thinking and doing

The Positioning of Standard 1: Language for Social and Instructional Purposes

ELD Standard 1 represents language that is integral to the social and instructional experiences of multilingual learners in school as they interact with others, build relationships, offer and gain multiple perspectives, problem-solve, and investigate a range of topics and issues. Standard 1 takes multilingual learners' linguistic and cultural resources into account as the bases for their engagement in deep learning.

Language for Social and Instructional Purposes is connected to the language of WIDA's other four standards and applies across a range of educational contexts and language proficiency levels

Figure 8: Relationship of WIDA ELD Standard 1 to ELD Standards 2-5

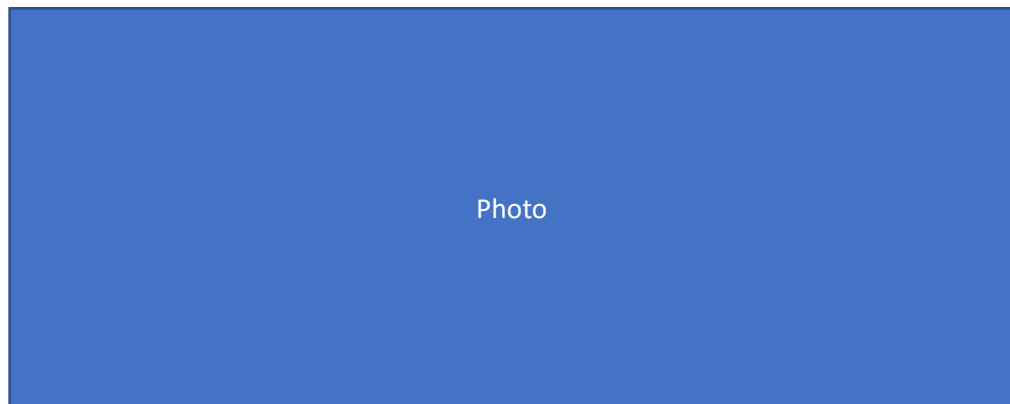


Students communicate to learn, but also to convey personal needs and wants, to affirm their own identities, and to form and maintain relationships. Rooted in sociocultural theory, developmental science, and the science of learning, ELD Standard 1 emphasizes the importance of multilingual learners' access to equitable learning throughout the school day, with appropriate scaffolds as needed.

ELD Standard 1 encompasses multilingual learners' use of language:

- **As they expand their linguistic repertoire from Level 1-Entering through Level 6-Bridging and progress through every grade level.** Standard 1 is not just for newcomers and young children, and it is not a precursor to learning disciplinary language. Rather, it encompasses opportunities for multilingual learners to develop language for social and instructional purposes at all language proficiency levels, all grade levels, and in all content areas.
- **Across all disciplines and school settings.** Language for social and instructional purposes is foundational for engagement and learning content in every discipline – from core disciplines like language arts and mathematics to visual and performing arts; health and physical education; cross-disciplinary endeavors like use of technology, library/media center time; and school-wide activities and events. Language is a part of the entire school day and all educators share responsibility for engaging multilingual learners in rich opportunities to simultaneously learn content and language.

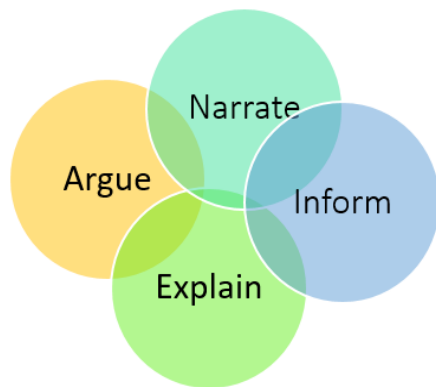
- **Across numerous topics, tasks and situations.** ELD Standard 1 presents Language Expectations that apply to a range of activities and interactions. Some examples include setting classroom norms, establishing routines, following procedures, asking for clarification, discussing with peers, relating personal ideas and perspectives, and exploring languages, cultures, and perspectives. See the ELD Standard 1 section of each grade-level cluster for more contexts where students use language for instructional purposes.
- **In interacting with others.** Language is, after all, a social practice that is dependent on an awareness of one's own and others' identities, the unique roles and objectives that participants have in communicating, and ways of making meaning with different members of a learning community, including peers, teachers, administrators, counselors, paraprofessionals, interpreters, family and community liaisons, other support staff, and visitors to the school.
- **Within learning initiatives focused on cultivating students' identities as learners and/or awareness of self and others.** Many multilingual learners are doing extra work to expand their language repertoire as they learn new academic content. They are also learning about the culture of school and how it is similar to or distinct from their past experiences and life outside of school. ELD Standard 1 promotes WIDA's [Can Do Philosophy](#), encouraging everyone to acknowledge multilingual learners' culture and identities as assets, and supporting their ability to use language to advocate for their own needs while feeling assured of their social-emotional well-being.



Key Language Uses

The second component of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework are Key Language Uses.¹ Key Language Uses emerged from a systematic analysis of academic content standards and research literature. Whereas the analysis showed that many *genre families* are used in school, in order to prioritize and organize a representation of language in the academic content standards, WIDA selected **the most high-leverage** ones as **Key Language Uses**.

Figure 9: The Four Key Language Uses



Key Language Uses exemplify the Big Idea: Functional Approach to Language Development (see page 10). Key Language Uses highlight language use for particular purposes, with particular audiences, and in particular sociocultural contexts. They

- Bring focus and coherence to the language of schooling
- Represent prominent language use across content standards
- Help educators make choices to prioritize and organize content and language integration
- Serve as an organizing principle for the Language Expectations

WIDA recognizes that Key Language Uses are one of many different configurations for connecting language to content through standards. The increased emphasis on genre-centered pedagogy (teaching that highlights genres as a way of organizing communication) provides a natural point for collaboration between content and language educators, with Key Language Uses serving as a focal point for that partnership.

Key Language Uses (*Narrate, Inform, Explain, Argue*) are select **genre families** that appear across content areas.

Genre Families are major categories of **genres** (e.g. *explanation*) with many “members” (e.g., *causal explanation, cyclical explanation, factorial explanation*).

Genres, or the “members” of the Key Language Use families (e.g., *causal explanation, cyclical explanation, factorial explanation*), are multimodal types of texts (oral, written, visual) that recur frequently for specific purposes, with specific discourse organization and language features.

¹ WIDA introduced Key Language Uses in 2014 with the K-12 Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition. In the 2020 Edition of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, Recount has been divided into Narrate and Inform, and Discuss has been embedded throughout the document (as for example in interactive learning).

Note that Key Language Uses share some common aspects across disciplines, and yet each discipline also has unique ways of applying Key Language Uses. Key Language Uses afford multilingual learners ample opportunities to interact and discuss with their peers.

Below are brief definitions for each Key Language Use.

NAR

Narrate highlights language to convey real or imaginary experiences through storytelling. Narratives serve many purposes, including to instruct, entertain, teach, or support persuasion. As students narrate, they orient audiences to time and place. Narratives may include visual details, depict actions, manipulate pace, and use dialogue.

INF

Inform highlights language to provide generalized information and facts. As students convey information in nonfiction contexts, they define, describe, compare, contrast, organize, categorize, or classify concepts, ideas, or phenomena.

EXP

Explain highlights language to give account for *how* things work or *why* things happen. As students explain, they substantiate the inner workings of natural, man-made, and social phenomena, often searching for causal relationships and overarching theories to construct understandings.

ARG

Argue highlights language to develop claims, counterclaims, and the selection of convincing evidence to support them. As students argue, they clarify, challenge, generalize, and justify conclusions and reasoning. Argue can be used to change the audience's point of view, to bring about action, and to accept a position or evaluation of an issue.

*As genre families, Key Language Uses can overlap, blend, and build on each other. They are not strict categorical divisions. For example, as students develop complex explanations, they may **Inform** (by naming, defining, describing, or comparing and contrasting something), and even **Narrate** (e.g., include an anecdote) as they work to help their audiences accurately understand the how or why of a concept (**Explain**). Narratives can be embedded within other expository structures, such as those in the families of **Argue** and **Explain**. **Argue** can incorporate elements of many Key Language Uses as it seeks to show an audience the validity of a position.*



Learn more about each Key Language Use across the grades and disciplines in Section 4: Resources – Key Language Uses: A Closer Look.

Key Language Use Distribution Charts

Key Language Uses² come from a review of the literature and systematic analysis of the language demands of academic content standards. They represent the most prominent genre families in academic content standards.

All Key Language Uses are present across all grade levels and disciplines, and yet at each grade-level cluster and discipline, some are more prominent than others.

It is essential to understand that the emphasis placed on these four Key Language Uses is not intended to restrict curriculum and instruction, but to highlight the most prominent genre families as an organizing principle for the ELD standards.

The **most prominent Key Language Uses** identified in the analysis of academic content standards for each grade-level cluster are the **basis for its Language Expectations**. They are marked with an “x” in the dark blue boxes of the charts below. The medium and light shades of blue indicate lesser degrees of prominence of each Key Language Use.

Figure 10: Distribution of Most Prominent Key Language Uses, Grades K-12

Distribution of Most Prominent Key Language Uses in Grades 9-12 Across WIDA ELD Standards Statements					
WIDA ELD Standard		Narrate	Inform	Explain	Argue
1	Language for Social and Instructional Purposes	x	x	x	x
2	Language for Language Arts	x	x		x
3	Language for Mathematics			x	x
4	Language for Science			x	x
5	Language for Social Studies			x	x

Distribution of Most Prominent Key Language Uses in Grades 6-8 Across WIDA ELD Standards Statements					
WIDA ELD Standard		Narrate	Inform	Explain	Argue
1	Language for Social and Instructional Purposes	x	x	x	x
2	Language for Language Arts	x	x		x
3	Language for Mathematics			x	x
4	Language for Science			x	x
5	Language for Social Studies			x	x

Distribution of Most Prominent Key Language Uses in Grades 4-5**Across WIDA ELD Standards Statements**

WIDA ELD Standard		Narrate	Inform	Explain	Argue
1	Language for Social and Instructional Purposes	x	x	x	x
2	Language for Language Arts	x	x		x
3	Language for Mathematics			x	x
4	Language for Science			x	x
5	Language for Social Studies			x	x

Distribution of Most Prominent Key Language Uses in Grades 2-3**Across WIDA ELD Standards Statements**

WIDA ELD Standard		Narrate	Inform	Explain	Argue
1	Language for Social and Instructional Purposes	x	x	x	x
2	Language for Language Arts	x	x		
3	Language for Mathematics			x	x
4	Language for Science			x	x
5	Language for Social Studies			x	x

Distribution of Most Prominent Key Language Uses in Grade 1**Across WIDA ELD Standards Statements**

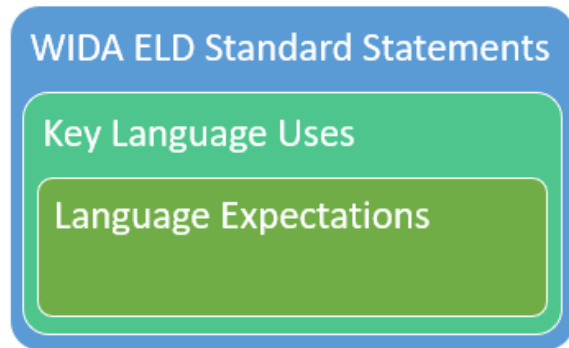
WIDA ELD Standard		Narrate	Inform	Explain	Argue
1	Language for Social and Instructional Purposes	x	x	x	x
2	Language for Language Arts	x	x		
3	Language for Mathematics		x		
4	Language for Science		x	x	
5	Language for Social Studies		x		x

Distribution of Most Prominent Key Language Uses in Kindergarten**Across WIDA ELD Standards Statements**

WIDA ELD Standard		Narrate	Inform	Explain	Argue
1	Language for Social and Instructional Purposes	x	x	x	x
2	Language for Language Arts	x	x		
3	Language for Mathematics		x		
4	Language for Science		x	x	
5	Language for Social Studies		x		

Language Expectations

Figure 11: WIDA ELD Standards Statements, Key Language Uses, and Language Expectations



The third component of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, **Language Expectations**, adds greater specificity to the five standards statements and Key Language Uses. The Language Expectations are the statements most similar to what educators generally find in academic content standards. They make visible the language associated with academic content standards, concepts, and practices.

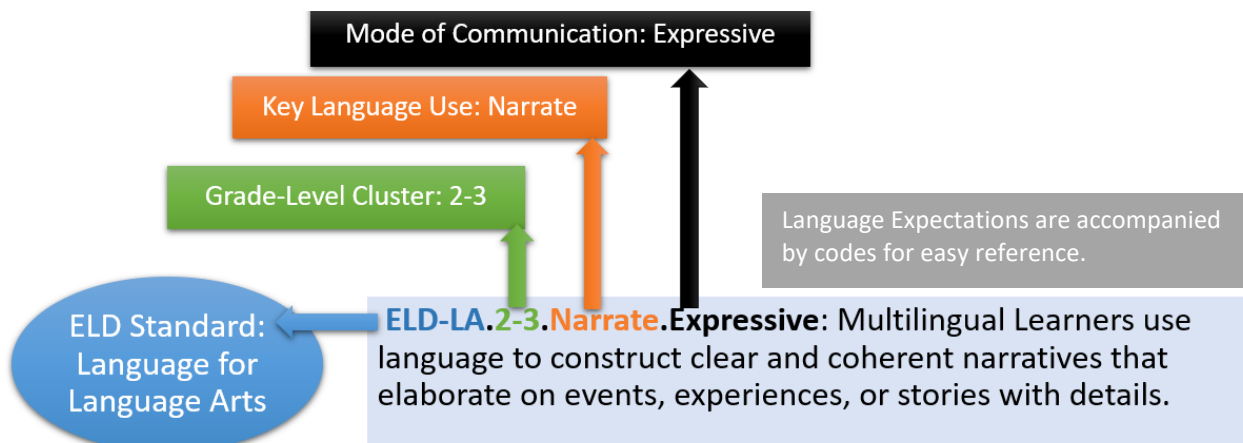
Language Expectations are goals for content-driven language instruction.

They identify what students need to do with language to meet the academic content expectations.

Language Expectations combine the four individual language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) into two broader modes of communication: **interpretive** and **expressive**. The two broader modes of communication increase accessibility options.

- The **interpretive communication mode** encompasses listening, reading, and viewing
- The **expressive communication mode** encompasses speaking, writing, and representing

Figure 12: Codes for Language Expectations



Proficiency Level Descriptors

Proficiency Level Descriptors are the fourth and last component of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework. They are descriptions of how multilingual learners' linguistic repertoires expand as they move across six levels of English language proficiency.

Proficiency Level Descriptors

- Provide a description of language use in the interpretive and expressive communication modes across content areas and other social/instructional contexts
- Reflect language development of multilingual learners at designated grade-level clusters that correspond to those used with WIDA ACCESS for ELLs.
- Are anchored in the K-12 Performance Definitions (WIDA, 2012)

Educators should keep in mind...

Proficiency Level Descriptors show how multilingual learners use language at each of the six English language proficiency levels.

- Language use occurs within a sociocultural context. This context impacts both the message and the language used to convey that message.

- The Proficiency Level Descriptors are designed to be contextualized in activities that target the WIDA Language Expectations (e.g., disciplinary texts that have been adapted by purpose, topic, participants' identities and social roles, audience, and situation).

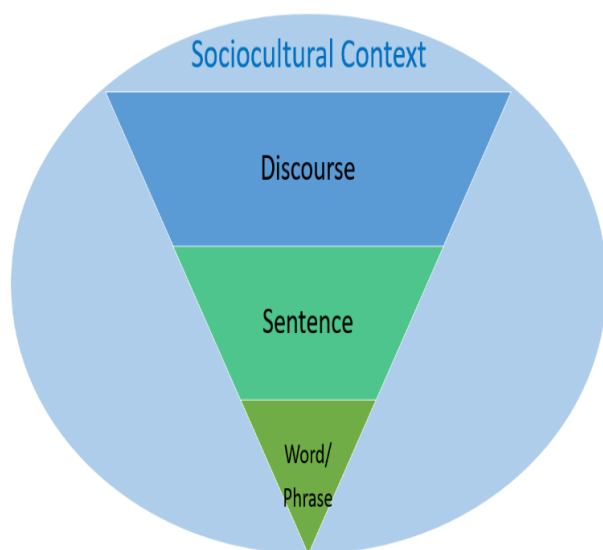
- The Proficiency Level Descriptors describe a progression of language use in concrete, shared contexts to increasing abstract, distant contexts [along the mode continuum]

- Each language proficiency level includes and builds on previous levels (e.g., student proficiency descriptors for the end of PL4 include the three previous sets of descriptors. $PL4 = PL1 + PL2 + PL3 + PL4$)

- Language development is not always linear. Multilingual learners may take various pathways to arrive at the end-of-level descriptors.

- The choice of scaffolding and multimodal communication (e.g., visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic)

for multilingual learners, including those with disabilities, should be based on both the communicative purpose of the situation and the student's level of language proficiency.



As multilingual learners gain proficiency in English, their abilities to effectively use language across each of the criteria increases accordingly.

As the figure below shows, the Discourse, Sentence, and Word/Phrase Dimensions of Language contain six interlocking criteria, each of which highlights an increasing range of linguistic resources and choices that multilingual learners can use to make meaning in context.

Figure 13: Features of Academic Language: Criteria Foci and Sample Features

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

Dimension	Criteria	Focus on . . .	Sample Features
Discourse	Organization of language	How language is organized to fulfill communicative purpose(s) and additional adjustments to language based on topic, participants' identities and social roles, audience, and situation	text that conveys integrated purposes; arrangement of relationships in elaborated or condensed sequences
	Cohesion of language	How language connected within and across sentences and discourse using a range of cohesive devices	repeated words, synonyms, pronoun substitution, transition words, connectors, given/new information
	Density of language	How important information in noun groups is expanded or contracted	added adjectives, added prepositional phrases, pre-and post modifiers to noun groups, nominalization
	Amount of language	How overall linguistic complexity progressively increases in discourse	clauses, sentences, a series of sentences, expanded or concise discourse
Sentence	Grammatical complexity of language	How sentence patterns vary and expand from simple to complex, with a focus on verb forms and different combinations of clauses	auxiliary verbs, infinitives, dependent clauses, passive structures, relative clauses
Word/Phrase	Precision of language	How everyday, general, and disciplinary language more precisely conveys a range of concrete-to-abstract contexts	cognates, collocations, shades of meaning, technical and abstract terms

Appropriate Uses of the WIDA Proficiency Level Descriptors

The Proficiency Level Descriptors might be used during . . .

- Collaboration between language development and content area educators
- Professional learning activities about language development
- School team discussions about a student's language instruction educational program (LIEP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Conversations with families in their preferred language

The Proficiency Level Descriptors might be used to . . .

- Design and differentiate classroom instruction assessment tasks and materials
- Get ideas for the appropriate complexity for linguistic supports and models at the next developmental/proficiency level
- Inform choices of text selection
- Empower teachers and students to discuss language performance and goals
- Monitor student progress (formative assessment) across activities that target the Language Expectations
- Evaluate evidence from student work (portfolio of speaking and writing samples) as part of special services eligibility processes

Inappropriate Uses of the WIDA Proficiency Level Descriptors

The Proficiency Level Descriptors should not be used as a sole source to define or categorize the multilingual learner or teacher.

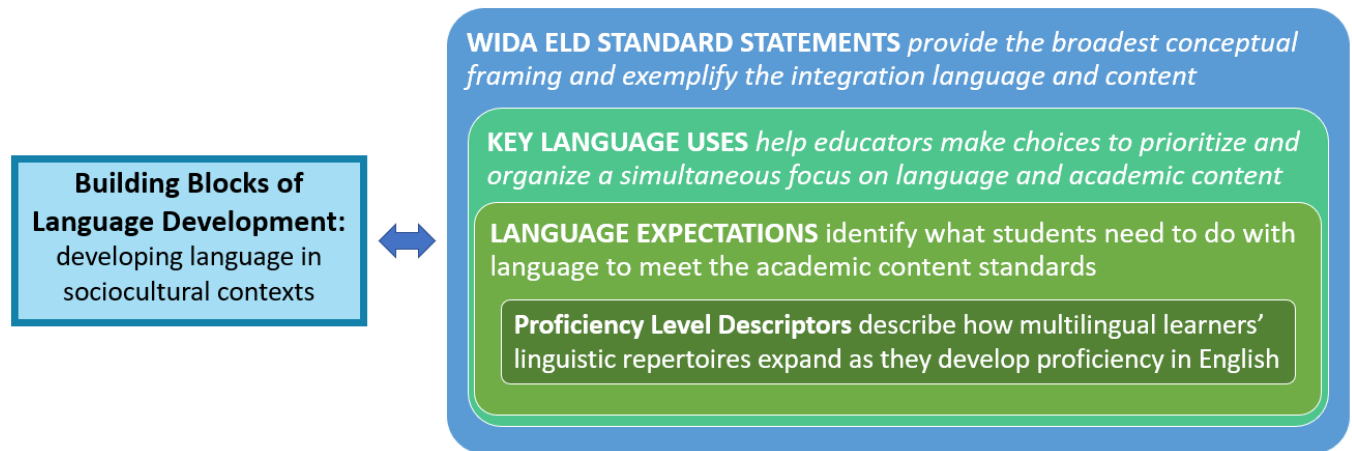
The Proficiency Level Descriptors should not be used as restrictive examples or as a finite list of student abilities. Nor should they be used to limit or prohibit access to opportunity to learn, rigorous, complex texts, conversations, or materials. Finally, the grade-level cluster Proficiency Level Descriptors should not be used as an excuse to lower expectations or slow student growth.

Proficiency Level Descriptors SHOULD NOT be used as the single document or as the only evidence in high-stakes situations such as . . .

- Identification for special education services, for example, trying to obtain cognitive support services solely based on Level 1 status
- Description of cognitive ability
- Identification of student readiness abilities
- Tracking for remediation or enrichment
- Grading in report cards
- Consideration for grade placement or retention
- Evaluation of teachers

Building Blocks of Language Development in the WIDA ELD Standards Framework

The four components of the WIDA ELD Framework can be conceptualized as building blocks of language development in sociocultural contexts, starting from the ELD standards statements.



Photo

The WIDA ELD Standards Framework: What It is and What It is Not

The WIDA ELD Standards Framework, in partnership with cross-disciplinary academic content standards, define the language multilingual learners need as they move toward college, career, and civic readiness. It is designed to accentuate the linguistic and cultural assets of multilingual learners, and can readily work in conjunction with other resources for students who are developing multiple languages.

The Standards Framework does not—indeed, cannot—enumerate all or even most of the language of school. The standards must therefore be complemented by a well-developed, content-rich curriculum (see resources for curriculum design on Section 4: Curricular Considerations) and effective pedagogical approaches for multilingual learners.

Figure 14: What the WIDA ELD Framework is and What it is not.

The WIDA ELD Standards Framework is	The WIDA ELD Standards Framework is NOT intended to be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of clear and measurable goals for language learning represented by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Language Expectations for interpretive and expressive modes of communication ◦ Grade-level cluster Proficiency Level Descriptors of what multilingual learners can do at consecutive language proficiency levels • A guide for informing the design of linguistically and culturally sustaining curriculum, instruction, and assessment • A resource for state, district, and school accountability • A central component of the comprehensive WIDA research-based system of language standards, assessment, and professional learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements of grade-level knowledge and skills • A prescriptive document to be enacted without consideration for the local context • A de facto curriculum or course of study • Specific lessons associated with units of learning with a series of language objectives • A step-by-step process for teaching and learning • An endorsement for any particular language pedagogy • A form of evaluation or a basis for grading • A compendium of academic content standards and disciplinary practices