

Next Generation ESL Curriculum Development Process: Collaboration Tool as Foundation

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# 3 The Next Generation ESL Curriculum Development Process: Collaboration Tool as Foundation

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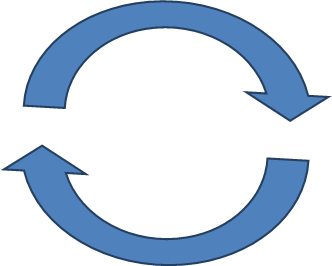


## 3.1 Resources for Curriculum Development

The Next Generation ESL Project’s approach to curriculum development encourages the simultaneous development of language (systematic, explicit, and sustained) and analytical practices embedded in content area standards. Sections 3 through 5 of this guide of this guide (Collaboration Tool as foundation, ESL MCU development at the unit level (see Section 4.0), and ESL MCU development at the lesson level (see Section 5.0) include various resources to support the development of next generation ESL units using the [UbD framework](http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/understanding-by-design-resources.aspx). Because of the iterative nature of curriculum development, educators are encouraged to carefully review these resources before unit design, refer to them during the drafting stage, and refer to them again after units are drafted for self-assessment and unit review.

The flow chart below shows a high-level view of the UbD-based next generation ESL curriculum development process. Each step in the chart has many layers of development underneath—explored later in this guide—to be considered and developed over time by educator teams.

This flow chart can help the reader see the curriculum design process in a linear manner, but we caution that curricular design is an *iterative process that often does not happen linearly*. Whatever your individual design process may be, make sure that you end up with tight alignment across all components of your instructional design.



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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Steps** |  | **Tools associated with each step** |
| **Create FLGs, transfer to stage 1 of the unit template** |  | **Collaboration Tool**  **Process for creating FLGs** |
|  |  |  |
| **“Dissect” the FLGs** |  | **FLG Dissection Tool**  **Micro Function Dissection Tool**  **Unpacking Academic Language Chart** |
|  |  |  |
| **Develop an initial, working draft of Stage 1** |  | **Annotated unit template** |
|  |  |  |
| **Develop an initial, working draft of Stage 2** |  | **Annotated unit template**  **Assessment framework**  **CEPA Development Tool** |
|  |  |  |
| **Develop an initial, working draft of Stage 3** |  | **Annotated unit template**  **Sociocultural implications** |
|  |  |  |
| **Review and revise the unit plan** |  | **Unit validation protocol**  **Unit rubric** |
|  |  |  |
| **Design lessons** |  | **Micro Function Dissection Tool**  **Unpacking Academic Language Chart**  **Language objectives**  **Sociocultural implications**  A**nnotated** l**esson** p**lan** t**emplate**  **Lesson planning protocol** |

Overview of Tools, Processes, and Protocols

* **The** [**Collaboration Tool**](#Collaboration)**.** A multi-layered, multi-use resource that embodies this project’s curriculum design philosophy. One of its primary purposes is the development of unit-level [FLGs](#_3.3_Focus_Language_1), and thus it lays the foundation for the next generation ESL curriculum design framework.
* **The Next Generation ESL Project unit template (see Section 4.1).** A blank template used to develop ESL MCU Stages 1–3. It integrates key frameworks: the [WIDA Standards](https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards/eld), the [Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html), and the [UbD framework](http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/understanding-by-design-resources.aspx).
* **The Next Generation ESL Project annotated unit template (See Section 4.2).** A template with step-by-step support to the writing of Stages 1–3. The annotated unit template describes each component within the unit template, with thinking prompts to facilitate the development of each component. It also includes tips for checking for alignment between all three stages and a unit self-check. The self-check can be used during unit development and after the development of Stages 1–3 to ensure that all components and criteria articulated in the unit template are present and fully developed. Using this method of self-assessment helps the team identify areas of the unit that may further development.
* **The Next Generation ESL Project assessment framework (See Section 4.3).** Provides an overview of assessment practice recommended for ESL MCUs. Offers general guidelines for pre-assessment (see Section 4.3.2), language checkpoint (see Section 4.3.2), and formative assessment (see Section 4.3.2), as well as a drafting resource and for creating end-of-unit assessment performance tasks [CEPA Guidelines (see Section 4.3.2) and CEPA Development Tool (see Section 4.3.3)].
* **The Next Generation ESL Project lesson plan template (see Section 5.1).** A blank template used to develop ESL lessons that supports contextual language development, meaning-making, and the use of standards-based analytical practices.
* **The Next Generation ESL Project annotated lesson plan template (see Section 5.2).** An annotated lesson plan template with step-by-step support. It describes each component within the template and offers thinking prompts to facilitate the development of each.

Additional tools at the unit level:

* [**Process for creating FLGs**](#_3.3.2__Process). This document presents the process that the ESL and content area educator(s) may move through when creating FLGs for an ESL curriculum unit.
* **FLG Dissection Tool (see Section 4.4.1).** Similar to unpacking content standards, this tool helps educators “dissect” the FLGs to identify verbs, nouns, and adjectives that further clarify what you would like your students to do, and leads educators to express what kinds of skills, knowledge, and observable pieces of evidence of student work they will be looking for in the unit.

**Micro Function Dissection Tool (see Section 4.4.2).** In addition to forms and features of language, it is important to highlight cognitive tasks that must also be considered when thinking about the subcomponents of the micro functions. This tool helps educators “dissect” the micro functions to make their subcomponents more explicit, and to identify the relevant embedded academic language needs.

* **Unpacking Academic Language Chart (see Section 4.4.3).** This tool helps educators consider the [three dimensions of academic language](https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/Features-of-Academic-Language.pdf) (as presented by the WIDA Standards framework) at both the unit and lesson levels. It is meant to be revisited at various points of the unit and lesson design processes. As educators choose standards-based contexts, topics, themes, and texts for units and lessons, they should consider what contextualized language features in the word/phrase, sentence, and discourse dimensions students will be processing and producing throughout the unit. The Unpacking Academic Language Chart facilitates the dissection of [FLGs](#_3.3_Focus_Language_1). It can also help educators identify and make choices to prioritize specific areas of academic language and help to calibrate language expectations for students at different proficiency levels.
* **Sociocultural implications (see Section 4.4.4)**. This resource includes points to consider when addressing the needs of specific groups of students for whom curriculum is being designed. This is an introductory resource; in practice, sociocultural aspects need to be continuously considered and addressed in terms of the real students who are in front of you.
* **Unit validation protocol** (see section 4.4.5) The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that units of study validly support high-quality, efficient, and cohesive instruction and assessment.
* **Unit rubrics (see Section 4.5)**. Review rubrics with indicators showcasing significant shifts in college and career readiness (CCR) standards. These can be used both at the beginning of the unit development process (to gain a sense of expectations for curriculum design) and after units are drafted (to evaluate whether expectations have been met).

Additional tools at the lesson level:

* **Language objectives (see Section 5.3.1)** Offers a rationale and some models for writing language objectives.
* **Lesson planning protocol (see Section 5.3.2).** This protocol is designed to help educators collaboratively develop standards-based and objective-driven lessons.
* **Text complexity analysis tool (see Section 6.2)**. This adaptation of the Text Complexity Analysis Tool was designed to help educators analyze and select appropriate texts for their Next Generation ESL units and lessons
* **Looking at student work protocol (see Section 5.3.3).** This protocol can be used to examine student work samples throughout the ESL MCUs.
* **Preparation sheet for presenters at collaborative meetings (see Section 5.3.4)**. This document helps educators get the most out of the limited time to collaborate. It offers checklists and meeting objectives to help everyone arrive prepared and to have a clear goal in mind. Adapt protocols as needed for specific meetings.

## 3.2 Collaboration Tool

The collaboration Tool appears on the next two pages, followed by an explanation of its contents.

| **English Learner Education Collaboration Tool**  **Content Area Connection:** This unit will address the language of the content area / or the equivalent of one of the five broad [**WIDA Standards**](https://www.wida.us/standards/eld.aspx)(SIL, LoLA, LoMa , LoSc, LoSS) **Specific Academic Context:** Language development for this ESL unit will be contextualized in the following substantive topic derived from **grade-level** units, themes,  or cluster of standards: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ***\*View an Interactive Guide to the Collaboration Tool!*** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [**Key Academic Practices**](http://ell.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/VennDiagram_practices_v11%208-30-13%20color.pdf) **and/or** [**Standards**](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html)*Key academic practices may be replaced with the* ***state standards*** *themselves.*  In **listening, speaking, reading, and writing** with **literary** and **informational** language…  ***\*Engage with complex academic language***   * Participate in grade-appropriate exchanges of information * Produce clear and coherent language in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience * Support analyses of a range of complex texts with evidence * Use English structures to communicate context-specific messages   ***\*Use evidence-based communication*** *(with opinions, claims, concepts, arguments, or ideas)*   * Paraphrase * Analyze * Summarize * Challenge * State (name) your own * Support with reasoning and evidence   ***\*Carry out research***   * Plan and carry out inquiries * Evaluate sources * Build and present knowledge through research by integrating, comparing, and synthesizing ideas * Communicate research findings   ***\*Take part in collaborative interactions***   * Build on the ideas of others and articulate your own * Request clarification * Discuss key points | **Language:** [***Key Uses***](https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/Can-Do-Descriptors-Key-Uses-K-12-FAQs.pdf) ***of Academic Language*** | | [**Performance Definitions**](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/definitions.docx)**\*:** *Language development is fluid and dynamic. Levels are not static, and can be different in different domains.* | | | | |
| **Macro Functions**  [**Recount**](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/keyuse-recount.docx)  [**Explain**](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/keyuse-explain.docx)  [**Argue**](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/keyuse-argue.docx)  [**Discuss**](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/keyuse-discuss.docx)  *“Discuss” points to the importance of the oral, interactive component of all the academic practices.* | **Micro Functions**  *Micro functions can be mixed or created according to need and context. Click on the links below for* ***sample progressions****.*   * [Cause/effect](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/01-causeeffect.docx) * [Classify](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/02-classifycategorize.docx) * [Compare/ contrast](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/03-comparecontrast.docx) * [Contradict/ disagree](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/04-contradictdisagree.docx) * [Describe](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/05-describe.docx) * [Elaborate](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/06-elaborate.docx) * [Evaluate](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/07-evaluate.docx) * [Identify/ name/label](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/08-identify.docx) * [Inquire](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/09-inquire.docx) * [Justify](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/10-justify.docx) * [Predict](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/11-predict.docx) * [Sequence](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/12-sequence.docx) * [State opinion / claim](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/13-stateopinion.docx) * [Summarize](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/14-summarize.docx) * *Insert any micro function as necessary* | **ELP 5**   * Multiple complex sentences, presented in a cohesive and coherent manner. * Multiple phrases and clauses with patterns characteristic of specific content areas.   Academic, content-specific, and technical vocabulary. | **ELP 4**   * Expanded related ideas in connected discourse with a variety of sentences. * A variety of complex grammatical constructions with patterns characteristics of specific content areas. * Content-specific and some technical academic vocabulary. | **ELP 3**   * A series of extended sentences and related ideas. * Repetitive and *some* complex grammatical structures with patterns characteristics of specific content areas.   Some content-specific and academic vocabulary, including cognates.  **Thinking Space 1: Develop unit-level Focus Language Goals (FLGs) in the context of grade-appropriate topics and standards. FLGs should always include at least a language FUNCTION and a KEY ACADEMIC PRACTICE or content STANDARD stem.**  **Below are adaptable “formulas” for creating FLGs to arrive at UbD unit Stage 1 goals.**  **Key Use (macro) + key academic practice**  **Discuss by building upon ideas of others and articulating your own claims**  **Key Use (macro) + micro function + key academic practice**  **Argue by stating a claim supported with reasoning and evidence. Key Use (macro) + state standard stem  Recount to delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not. (ELA-Literacy SL.6.3) Key Use (macro) + micro function + key academic practice + substantive topic  EXPLAIN by describing cause and effect to participate in grade-appropriate exchanges of information about the role that human activities have played in causing the rise in global temperatures. (STE 8.MS-ESS3-5)** | **ELP 2**   * Emerging presentation of ideas in phrases or short sentences. * Repetitive, formulaic grammatical structures across specific content areas. * General social, instructional, and content words and expressions, including cognates. | **ELP 1**   * Single words, phrases, or language chunks to represent ideas. * Phrase-level patterns and structures. * Everyday social, instructional, and content words and expressions. |

***English Learner Education Collaboration Tool: PAGE 2***

***\*Please note:*** *“Students may demonstrate a range of abilities within and across each ELP level; second language acquisition does not necessarily occur in a linear fashion within or across proficiency levels.  
…. At any given point along their trajectories of English learning, ELLs may exhibit some abilities (e.g., speaking skills) at a higher proficiency level while exhibiting other abilities (e.g., writing skills) at a lower proficiency level. …. Since, by definition, ELL status is a temporary status, an ELP level does not categorize a student (e.g., ‘a Level 1 student’), but, rather, identifies what a student knows and can do at a particular stage of ELP (e.g., ‘a student at Level 1’ or ‘a student whose listening performance is at Level 1’)” (Shafer Willner, 2013b).*

**THINKING SPACE: Language as Action and Contingent Feedback**

**Consider:** *If we plan language teaching with the end goal of college and career readiness in mind, we must consciously develop the key academic practices and habits of thinking that support student success in general education and ESL classrooms.*

| 1. Established goals | What are the desired learnings/FLGs? (At the lesson level, consider this in terms of your lesson’s language objectives.) |
| --- | --- |
| 2. Gather evidence | In relation to instructional goals: what do I observe in my students’ work? What can my students currently do? |
| 3. Teacher moves | What do I do with student evidence?  Based on observable student actions, how do I plan my next moves to most effectively support my students’ development?  What pieces come first, second, third, etc., as we focus on language development through Key Uses of Academic Language and key academic practices?  How do I support my students and scaffold their learning?  What types of contingent feedback might I give to students based on what I see in their performance?  How will my teacher feedback help students take action to achieve established learning goals? |
| 4. Student moves  *For particular purposes, in specific contexts, together with other learners, and with certain outcomes.* | What types of moves do my students need to make to increase language proficiency and advance toward college and career readiness?  What language will I hear and/or read from students as they engage in different activities?  How will students monitor and assess their own individual progress toward established goals? |

**Thinking Space for FLG Development:** Unit-Level Focus Language Goals (FLGs) in the context of Grade-Appropriate topics and standards should always include **at least a language FUNCTION and a KEY ACADEMIC PRACTICE or content standard stem**.

### 3.2.1 **Introduction to the Collaboration Tool**

The Collaboration Tool is a multi-layered, multi-purpose tool, whose name reflects the inherent necessity and expectation for collaborative planning to support ELs’ needs across language and content area classrooms. The tool brings together various multifaceted systems to support educators as they provide instruction that cultivates ELs’ higher-order thinking skills while also developing their ability to process and produce increasingly complex language. The Collaboration Tool was created in response to the need for a more practical, teacher-friendly way to operationalize the WIDA Standards for instructional planning and delivery. It helps educators prioritize high-leverage language that is critical for student success across academic areas and provides specific guidance for how to develop clear FLGs for Stage 1 of the UbD curriculum development process.

ELs at all proficiency levels have the same ability as native and proficient speakers of English to engage in cognitively complex tasks. The 12 ESL MCUs developed as part of this project attempt to demonstrate ways in which, even at beginning proficiency levels, language teaching can be designed to develop analytical practices and engage students in higher-order thinking. Feedback from unit piloting corroborated this belief. Foundational ELs (WIDA ELP levels 1 to low 3) in pilot classrooms across the state were able to strategically work toward the simultaneous development of key academic habits of thinking and cognitive skills expected at the students’ particular grade levels when provided with appropriate support to access complex ideas, texts, and concepts expressed in English.

The eight components of the Collaboration Tool (described in detail in Section [3.2.3](#CompofCollabTool), “Components of the Collaboration Tool”) are designed to generate collaborative discussion and planning between content and ESL teachers. They are:

1. Connection to the language of an academic area(s)/WIDA Standards

2. Grade-level content connection

3. Key Uses of Academic Language (macro functions)

4. Micro functions

5. Key academic practices

6. Performance Definitions

7. Thinking space 1: creating FLGs

8. Thinking space 2: language as action and contingent feedback

The interactions and relationships among the eight components prompt discussions that can inform rich, contextualized, language-driven curriculum planning as the Collaboration Tool strategically interweaves cross-cutting academic practices with linguistic prioritization strategies.

**Purposes of the Collaboration Tool and Connection to the ESL Unit Template**

A primary function of the multi-layered, multi-use Collaboration Tool is to provide a mechanism for establishing and prioritizing [FLGs](#_3.3_Focus_Language_1) to begin populating Stage 1 of the UbD process for unit design as presented in the ESL MCU unit template (see Section 4.1). As previously mentioned, ESL educators across the state highlighted that creating clear, language-focused unit goals based on WIDA Standards was a major challenge for curriculum development. The Collaboration Tool offers a useful approach to this challenge.

When content and ESL educators meet to discuss curricular planning for ELs, the Collaboration Tool may prompt discussions about the following topics:

* Clarification of teacher roles and responsibilities for promoting academic language development and content instruction across classrooms.
* Identification of curricular priorities across content and language classrooms in the form of key academic practices expected by grade-level content area standards and related prioritized academic language required for ELs at different proficiency levels.
* Identification of driving language demands within content area standards, discipline-specific practices, lessons, and materials for which ELs require explicit teaching.
* Development of FLGs and priorities for ESL units of instruction, helping teachers focus on strategic teaching of high-leverage language functions grounded in the context of key academic practices across multiple content areas.
* Development of language objectives for content instruction and ESL lessons.
* Brainstorming unit plans, and answering questions such as: What are my goals? What aspect of language will I focus on? Within what key academic practice? At what grade level? What can my students currently do? How are my planning and delivery of instruction responsive to evidence gathered about students’ needs?
* Consideration of language complexity for given uses of language, answering questions such as: What might developing language complexity for a particular key function look like at each ELP level? How does this change across content areas? Are there aspects common to more than one content area?
* Unpacking of academic language embedded in academic talk, texts, and tasks ELs are expected to engage with in both language and content classrooms.
* Consideration of WIDA Performance Definitions alongside unit and lesson planning, to calibrate and revise expectations as educators use sample micro function progressions.
* Identification and sharing of scaffolds and supports for language development and content learning.
* Evaluation of criteria for EL assessment and scoring approaches.
* Examination of assessment constructs for validity and access.
* Analysis of student data and progress.
* Vertical alignment of FLGs across grade spans and/or proficiency levels.
* Balancing of instructional focus (e.g., instructional time devoted to each Key Use of Academic Language: Recount, Explain, Argue, Discuss).

In addition, the Collaboration Tool includes a field-based approach for making various components of academic language more explicit. The Tool includes hyperlinks to sample progressions of 14 language [micro functions.](#MicroFunctionSampleProg) These are evolving, non-exhaustive examples of how ELs use language in school, and can help educators unpack aspects of academic language in the context of the Frameworks[[1]](#footnote-1) to create clear but flexible instructional paths. In this way, this resource can support development of general—or more discipline-specific—academic language goals and objectives and can be used by both language and content area teachers when planning instruction for ELs.

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| **A Note on Curricular Maps**  Language standards in the WIDA framework represent long-term outcomes that can be particularly difficult to measure in the short term. Language acquisition is a non-linear, variable, developmental process that takes time. Furthermore, there is great variation among ELs in background, proficiency levels, and other factors that influence how we should structure instruction for language development.  Although we do not have an empirically validated language progression—and the ESL MCU Project acknowledges that there is no one correct order for a language curriculum—language teaching should not be random or arbitrary. Educational programs with a clear, well-thought-out sequence of instruction are often better poised for success. Best practices tell us that it makes sense to have a clearly laid-out curricular system to provide systematic, explicit, and sustained language instruction.  While a teacher or curriculum writer should plan for a long-term projected trajectory of language development, the role of formative assessment and contingent pedagogy (Heritage, Linquanti, & Walqui, 2013) is an equally central consideration in curriculum development. In other words, longer-term curriculum maps for a language development process that is non-linear, varied, and dependent on multiple factors must always balance intentional planning with the necessary and continuous real-time expert assessment and adjustment of instruction based on student needs. As Walqui (2006) notes, teachers designing long-term curricular goals must keep in mind that all levels of curricular scaffolds (lesson, unit, or longer-term map) must be “contingent, collaborative and interactive, involving a blend of the planned and the improvised, the predictable and the unpredictable, routine and innovation.” |

### ****3.2.2**** Development of the Collaboration Tool

The Collaboration Tool was developed as the Planning Committee looked for a way to create a high-leverage tool that would give educators a way to more concretely work with WIDA Standards to develop ESL units. It was developed in three stages:

1. **Research**. Planning Committee members began by researching academic standards, asking questions such as: *What are the language demands in our academic standards?*

*What do recent “shifts” in academic standards mean for ELs? What do new text complexity expectations mean for ELs at various proficiency levels? How does language development relate to the development of academic concepts and analytical practices? What pieces of language have the highest leverage across and within each discipline?*

The Committee also researched language standards and instructional planning for language development, asking questions such as: *How are the other 37 states within the WIDA Consortium operationalizing the WIDA Standards? What case studies can we review? How do states outside the WIDA Consortium (CA, NY, ELPA21, etc.) break down their language standards? How do they explicitly and systematically plan language instruction around academic state standards? What are state and national experts and initiatives telling us about language standards? What insights can we glean from examining various sets of language development standards? How are the driving language demands of academic standards mapped to WIDA’s identified “Key Uses of Academic Language”? How can we better understand the theoretical framework and theory of action behind WIDA and other language standards? What insights can our local educators share about language standards and their operationalization?*

Additionally, committee members engaged in formal consultations and informal conversations with various state and national experts (see Section 7.4 of this document).

1. **Development of prototypes.** ESL and content educators, EL directors, language experts, and consultants met multiple times to experiment with curriculum development approaches, models, and iterations.
2. **Development of final documents,** based on the selected criteria:

* Identification of ***key academic practices*,** narrowed down from content area standards. These help the ESL teacher prioritize what language to teach.
* Identification of ***Key Uses of Academic Language*,** narrowed down from common ways students use academic language across content areas. These help ESL and content educators prioritize critical language that students engage with regularly across content areas.
* Identification of ***micro functions***, following WIDA’s advice to combine the macro and micro functions.[[2]](#footnote-2) The micro functions expand upon and offer greater specificity to WIDA’s Key Uses of Academic Language.
* Development of ***sample linguistic progressions of the micro functions*** to help ESL and content educators envision how language complexity might develop in key micro functions for academic purposes. To develop these, educator teams reviewed literature and progression models. Drawing on WIDA’s Performance Definitions, teams experimented with various models of sample language progressions. Teams also used their own field expertise to develop the current version of the progressions, which are not a definitive tool but rather a support for teachers.
* ***Content connection,***based on grade (or grade-band) level, to ensure that instruction is developmentally appropriate and planned with grade-level expectations in mind.
* ***Truncated Performance Definitions,***a reminder to educators to calibrate expectations of language use for various ELP levels, with caveats regarding the variability and fluidity of language development.
* ***Thinking spaces,*** to highlight that the Collaboration Tool is meant to be used as a thinking tool in the development process, helping educators come up with FLGs and to beginning to pre-plan a unit using the UbD framework.
* ***Contingent, evidence-based pedagogy*,** highlighting goal-driven, evidence-based, contingent teacher moves and student moves.

### ****3.2.3**** Components of the Collaboration Tool

The following sections describe each component of the Collaboration Tool, discuss how they have been used in the development of ESL MCUs, and suggest ways for educators to use them in the future.

Connection to the Language of an Academic Area(s)/WIDA Standard(s)

The top row includes a place to designate the WIDA Standard(s) a unit will focus on.

Grade-Level Content Connection

The second row from the top notes the connectionthat will serve as thestandards-based, grade-level academic **context** for language development for a given ESL unit. The content connection will generally be a **grade-level** content unit, topic, theme, or cluster of standards. It should be chosen through collaborative conversations between language and content teachers. Note that the dedicated ESL unit will not be the same as an SEI unit or a watered-down content unit. The ESL unit focus on systematic, explicit, sustained language development, but it will use content topics and analytical practices as a context for that development. It is crucial for ESL and content area teachers to work together to coordinate language development based on grade-level content topics, themes, and/or analytical practices.

If the ESL teacher is planning a unit for ELs from multiple grade levels in the same class, the teacher can begin planning by considering the WIDA [ACCESS](https://wida.wisc.edu/assess/access) grade-level clusters.

In cases where ESL is delivered as part of a program designed for [SLIFE](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/guidance/SLIFE-Guidance.docx), who by definition are below grade level, teachers should keep in mind additional background considerations for creating curricula, language goals, and contexts for learning for this special EL population.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Each ESL MCU has been written with a particular WIDA grade-band in mind (K, 1–2, 3–5, 6–8, 9–12). As educators deepen their knowledge of grade-level expectations in mixed-grade classrooms, they become more adept at addressing the outcomes for students accordingly.

Key Uses of Academic Language (Macro Functions)

The four macro functions of language highlighted in the Collaboration Tool (Recount, Explain, Argue, and Discuss) are drawn from [WIDA](https://www.wida.us/standards/eld.aspx)’s[[4]](#footnote-4) research about how students use language in school contexts.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Key Uses (macro functions) | **Key Uses of Academic Language** (macro functions)  **Recount**  **Explain**  **Argue**  **Discuss**  *“Discuss” points to the importance of the oral, interactive component of all the academic practices.* |

WIDA has worked to understand the language demands of content standards over the last 10 years, review current literature, and analyze linguistic expectations in CCR standards. While working with the [Center for Applied Linguistics](http://www.cal.org/) and other experts on this research, WIDA and its partners decided to focus on a smaller number of Key Uses of Academic Language that typify ways in which students are expected to use language recurrently in and across academic and social contexts. WIDA defines these Key Usesas overarching “big idea” academic purposes (Center for Applied Linguistics, n.d.).

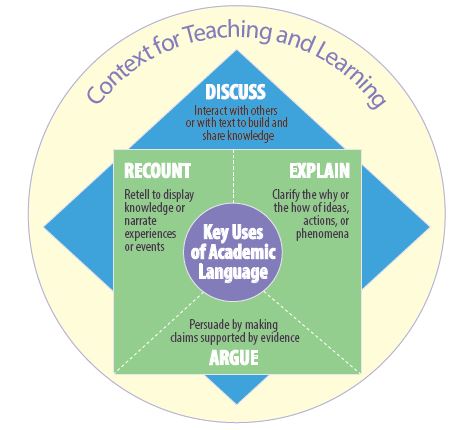


Figure 4: Key Uses of Academic Language

The Key Uses represent *meta* or *macro* functions,[[5]](#footnote-5) often involving more than one single language function. They occur in every discipline and are essential for language learners to participate meaningfully in the classroom and access the content of CCR standards (Castro, 2015).

As a result of this research, WIDA plans to embed the Key Uses in every part of its framework over the next few years (M. Gottlieb, information session at WIDA board meeting, June 2015). WIDA’s recently released [K–12 Can Do Descriptors: Key Uses Edition](https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/Can-Do-Descriptors-Key-Uses-K-12-FAQs.pdf) and [ACCESS](https://wida.wisc.edu/assess/access) assessment already incorporate the Key Uses. WIDA also plans to release a series of [focus bulletins](https://wida.wisc.edu/memberships/isc/newsletter/latest-research-wida-focus-bulletins) on the Key Uses soon.

We encourage educators to keep a lookout for materials that WIDA may release in the future to support instructional application of the Key Uses.

The Can Do Descriptors: Key Uses Edition are intended to be used in conjunction with the [WIDA Performance Definitions](https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards/eld). They are not exhaustive, but serve as examples of what students can do with academic language for a given content task, ELP, and grade level. WIDA suggests, among other possibilities, that educators use the new Can Do Descriptors to differentiate curriculum, instruction, and assessments based on language learners’ ELP levels (WIDA, 2016a).

Educators are encouraged to examine their instructional planning through the lens of the Key Uses. They can serve as an initial organizing principle for unit design, but also for planning a series of connected and logically sequenced units of study. When developing a curriculum, for example, educators could consider*: Is the curriculum intentionally planning to support students in developing their understanding and production of all four Key Uses? Over time, are students doing a lot of work with RECOUNT but not much with DISCUSS? How can we increase students’ analytical practices to actively support a deepened engagement in the language of explanation and argument, as connected to the shifts in the disciplinary practices?* Furthermore, w*hat does participation and interaction look and sound like in argument and explanation for our students, at their respective levels of proficiency?*

Micro Functions and Sample Progressions

The Collaboration Tool’s 14 micro functions continue to focus on the critical language and skills embedded in CCR standards. They align to the key academic practices (described in the next section), and highlight language expectations within the key shifts identified in the Common Core State Standards:[[6]](#footnote-6)

* Engage with complex oral and written language to synthesize, construct, and communicate knowledge across the curriculum.
* Use evidence to understand, analyze, argue, and inform.
* Engage in collaborative activities, develop an awareness of multiple perspectives, and produce language appropriate to a particular content area or community.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Micro functions | **Micro Functions**  *Micro functions can be mixed or created according to need and context. Click on the links below for sample progressions.*   * [Cause/effect](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/01-causeeffect.docx) * [Classify](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/02-classifycategorize.docx) * [Compare/ contrast](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/03-comparecontrast.docx) * [Contradict/ disagree](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/04-contradictdisagree.docx) * [Describe](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/05-describe.docx) * [Elaborate](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/06-elaborate.docx) * [Evaluate](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/07-evaluate.docx) * [Identify/ name/label](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/08-identify.docx) * [Inquire](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/09-inquire.docx) * [Justify](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/10-justify.docx) * [Predict](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/11-predict.docx) * [Sequence](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/12-sequence.docx) * [State opinion / claim](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/13-stateopinion.docx) * [Summarize](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/14-summarize.docx)   Insert any micro function as necessary |

Each Key Use (Recount, Explain, Argue, Discuss) is a macro function that often involves more than one language function. For example, in order to help students engage with the “ARGUE” Key Use, an educator would need to think of the different pieces of language that together make up an argument for a specific purpose in a particular sociocultural context.[[7]](#footnote-7) To build an argument proposing a solution for the identified problem, the teacher might want students to first define the problem, then describe the situation, and finally justify their claim using evidence. Each one of these actions represents a different way of using language for a specific communicative purpose, so each represents a language micro function (define, describe, and justify). The three micro functions in this example could be considered part of the larger Argue macro function. Other Key Uses also incorporate multiple micro functions: for example, in a particular application of Recount, a student might need to be able to sequence events and also elaborate on what happened, where, when, and who was involved. Educators can break down the components of language as appropriate for the purpose and task at hand, and determine which micro functions best serve the instructional needs for each communicative act.

All micro functions within the Collaboration Tool are hyperlinked to documents containing sample progressions of how ELs at each proficiency level may process and/or produce language related to that particular function.

The 14 sample micro function progressions were created by local educators.[[8]](#footnote-8) These sample progressions offer one way to envision what each micro function might look like at the next level of complexity, sophistication, nuance, and proficiency, and can help educators unpack aspects of academic language in the context of the Frameworks[[9]](#footnote-9) to create clear but flexible instructional paths. In this way, this resource can support development of general—or more discipline-specific—academic language goals and objectives and can be used by both language and content area teachers when planning instruction for ELs.

The sample progressions are based on the WIDA Performance Definitions and incorporate WIDA’s [Features of Academic Language](https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/Features-of-Academic-Language.pdf) (WIDA, 2012a, p. 7) (word/phrase, sentence, and discourse dimensions) at each ELP level.

The hyperlinked micro function documents also include a definition of each micro function, sample tasks, words, sentence frames, and question stems associated with each micro function. As samples, these progressions may need to be adjusted to reflect appropriate grade expectations and developmental levels of specific groups of students, as well as more discipline-specific ways in which students are expected to use language in particular contexts. Because the progressions represent *samples* and not comprehensive or exhaustive language development trajectories, educators should feel free to add other micro functions or to further complete the sample progression charts as needed.

The sample progressions, in conjunction with the productive and receptive Performance Definitions, can help educators calibrate language expectations at various ELP levels. They can also help educators envision with greater linguistic specificity how they can support and scaffold a student’s use of a particular micro function as it increases in complexity. The sample progressions can also be particularly useful as educators unpack and break down the components of language needed to communicate within specific classroom tasks and contexts. They can help educators make choices about “next steps” in curricular planning, as educators consider a contextualized and flexible language proficiency continuum. On the other hand, content teachers can further expand and refine the micro function sample progressions by identifying more specific ways in which the function is used within a particular content area task, text, or academic practice.

Finally, when using the sample progressions, teachers should keep in mind that language development is fluid, and that there is a great range in variability in how each student develops language. As Shafer Willner (2013b) points out,

students may demonstrate a range of abilities within and across each ELP level; second language acquisition does not necessarily occur in a linear fashion within or across proficiency levels. Differences in abilities within ELP levels are based upon ELs’ native language proficiency, their academic background in their first language, and their individual differences. For the purposes of presentation and understanding, the Levels 1–5 descriptors describe proficiency at the end of each ELP level in terms of a linear progression across the proficiency levels of an aligned set of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

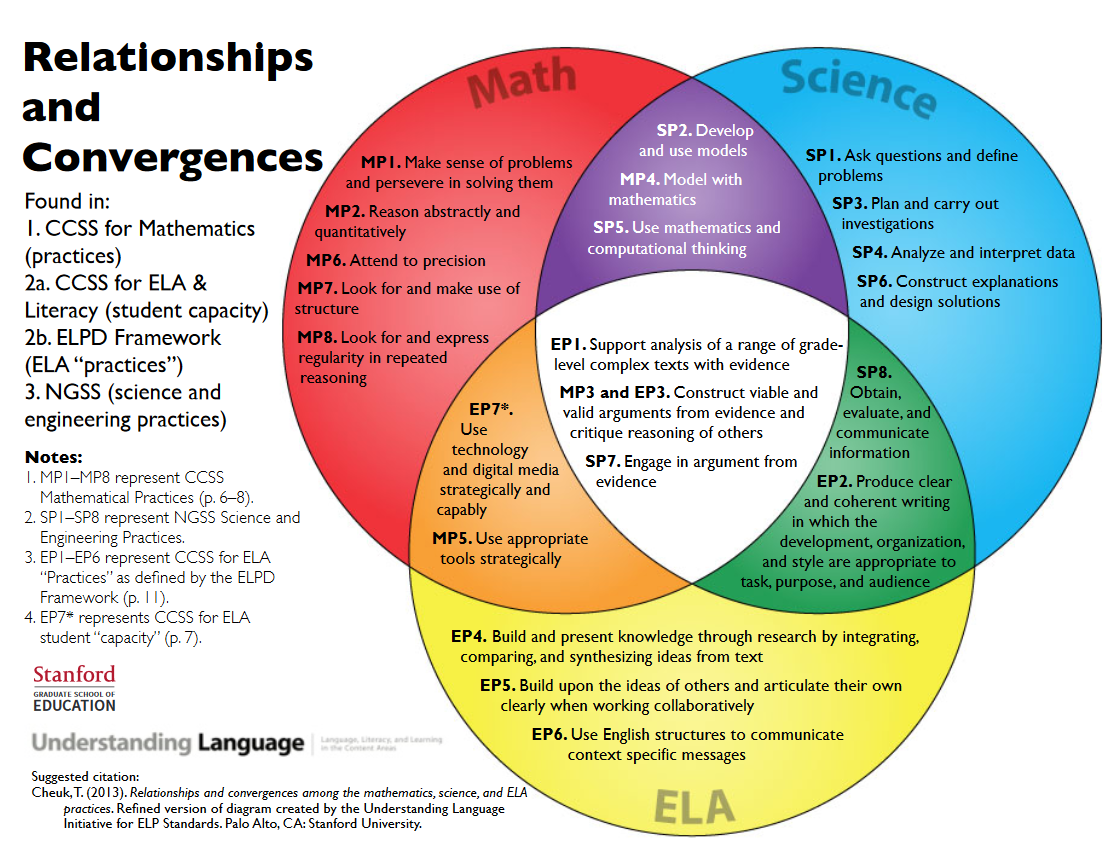
At any given point along their trajectories of English learning, ELs may exhibit some abilities (e.g., speaking skills) at a higher proficiency level while exhibiting other abilities (e.g., writing skills) at a lower proficiency level. Additionally, a student may successfully perform a particular task at a lower proficiency level but need review at the next highest proficiency level when presented with a new or more complex type of task. Since, by definition, EL status is a temporary status, an ELP level does not categorize a student (e.g., “a Level 1 student”), but, rather, identifies what a student knows and can do at a particular stage of ELP (e.g., “a student at Level 1” or “a student whose listening performance is at Level 1”).

Therefore, educators must be cautious to avoid reinforcing static notions of students’ abilities. Instead, they should use continuous formative assessment practices, contingent pedagogy, and a nuanced approach to scaffolding language to identify and flexibly respond to students’ needs (Heritage, Linquanti, & Walqui, 2013, 2015).

**Key Academic Practices**

The fifth component (and third column) of the Collaboration Tool is populated with *a representation* of the key academic practices derived from “Relationships and Convergences among the Mathematics, Science, and ELA Practices” (Figure 5)*.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Key Academic Practices and Standards | **Key Academic Practices and Standards**  In **listening, speaking, reading, and writing** with **literary** and **informational** language…  *Key academic practices may be replaced with the* ***state standards*** *themselves.*  ***…engage with complex academic language***   * Participate in grade-appropriate exchanges of information * Produce clear and coherent language in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience * Support analyses of a range of complex texts with evidence * Use English structures to communicate context-specific messages   ***…use evidence-based communication*** *(with opinions, claims, concepts, arguments, or ideas)*   * Paraphrase * Analyze * Summarize * Challenge * State (name) your own * Support with reasoning and evidence   ***…carry out research***   * Plan and carry out inquiries * Evaluate sources * Build and present knowledge through research by integrating, comparing, and synthesizing ideas * Communicate research findings   ***…take part in collaborative interactions***   * Build on the ideas of others and articulate your own * Request clarification * Discuss key points * Problem-solve/apply to other situations |



*Source: Cheuk, 2013*

Figure 5: Relationships and convergences among the mathematics, science, and ELA practices

The “Relationships and Convergences” Venn diagram illustrates the overlap and grouping of student practices and capacities from four sets of seminal documents, all of which form the basis of our current [state standards](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html): the [CCSS for Mathematics](http://www.corestandards.org/Math/); the [CCSS in English Language Arts](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/); the [Framework for English Language Proficiency Development (ELPD) Standards](https://ccsso.org/resource-library/english-language-proficiency-development-elpd-framework); and the [Next Generation Science Standards](http://www.nextgenscience.org/framework-k%E2%80%9312-science-education) (NGSS).

As ESL educators are asked to integrate various sets of standards when planning language curricula and instruction, this diagram becomes a useful tool in highlighting similarities in what students are expected to do across the disciplines in general education classrooms.[[10]](#footnote-10) Highlighting these common student practices helps educators prioritize high-leverage language that will support students in a variety of classrooms. Therefore, the key academic practices are strong starting points for developing units, lessons, and activities that leverage correspondences between language development and academic standards.

However, it is important to keep in mind that these are just examples of correspondence between language and content standards—not an exhaustive list.

When using the Collaboration Tool, educators can also use academic standards directly instead of this sample list, and expand this section of the Collaboration Tool as they become more familiar with the various standards in the [Frameworks](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html).

[Performance Definitions](https://www.wida.us/standards/eld.aspx) (Shafer Willner, 2013a; WIDA, 2009a)

Making sure language expectations for ELs are on target can be a challenging task. At times educators set expectations that are too low or too high. While acknowledging that great variability exists in how students develop language, the Collaboration Tool’s truncated version of WIDA’s Performance Definitions was included to remind educators to calibrate their expectations of what students can generally process or produce at each ELP level. When designing curricula for ELs, educators must always ask: *Are we expecting too much or not enough for a particular student at any given level?* The answer should be guided both by the Performance Definitions and by multiple points of current evidence for how a student is continuously processing and producing language.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance definitions | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Performance Definitions**  *Language development is fluid and dynamic. Levels are not static, can be different in different domains* | | | | | | | **ELP 1** | **ELP 2** | **ELP 3** | **ELP 4** | **ELP 5** | | * Single words, phrases, or language chunks to represent ideas. * Phrase-level patterns and structures * Everyday social, instructional, and content words and expressions | * Emerging presentation of ideas in phrases or short sentences * Repetitive, formulaic grammatical structures across specific content areas * General social, instructional, and content words/ expressions, including cognates | * A series of extended sentences and related ideas * Repetitive and *some* complex grammatical structures with patterns characteristic of specific content areas * Some content-specific and academic vocabulary, including cognates | * Expanded related ideas in connected discourse with a variety of sentences * A variety of complex grammatical constructions with patterns characteristic of specific content areas. * Content-specific and some technical academic vocabulary. | * Multiple complex sentences, presented cohesively and coherently * Multiple phrases and clauses with patterns characteristic of specific content areas * Academic, content-specific, and technical vocabulary | |

According to WIDA (2009a), the Performance Definitions “provide a concise, global overview of language expectations for each level of English Language Proficiency.” They can be viewed as a slice of a language development trajectory that can help educators set language learning goals and objectives, plan instruction, and assessment. The Performance Definitions provide criteria by which to gauge and shape expectations of each of the stages of language proficiency, but it is important to remember that these stages are socially constructed and therefore a sample projection, not always representative of what a real student’s trajectory may look like. Educators should use the Performance Definitions to inform planning of instruction, but also focus on the variable trajectory of language development rather than to think of the divisions of levels as static markers.

This is especially important since the Performance Definitions are written for grades K–12, which means that “educators must interpret the meaning of the Definitions according to students’ cognitive development due to age, their grade level, their diversity of educational experiences, and any diagnosed learning disabilities (if applicable)” (WIDA, 2012b). Because the expected level of language complexity also increases through the grades, a student who is at ELP level 3 in the second grade and a student who is at ELP level 3 in 11th grade will have different expectations for language use. When using the Performance Definitions, educators should also keep in mind Shafer Willner’s caveats presented above: language development is fluid and dynamic, proficiency levels are not static. Therefore, students’ proficiency levels can be different in different language domains (reading, writing, speaking, listening).

Finally, this condensed version of the Performance Definitions is included in the Collaboration Tool for ease of reference only, and to bring the various tools together in one place. Educators should internalize the complete receptive and productive Performance Definitions and, when in doubt, always refer to the complete WIDA Standards framework.

Thinking Space 1: Create Focus Language Goals in the Context of Grade-Appropriate Topics and Standards

This component highlights how the Collaboration Tool is not a worksheet or a checklist, but a thoughtful decision-making process for instructional design. Thinking Space 1 is a brainstorming and design space for teachers to create unit-level [FLGs.](#ThinkSpace2) A definition of FLGs and a process for creating them appear in [Section 3.3.](#FocLangGoals)

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| --- | --- |
| Thinking space 1 | **THINKING SPACE 1: Create Unit-Level Focus Language Goals in the Context of Grade-Appropriate Topics and Standards**  *Flexible formula—examples of how to create UbD unit Stage 1 goals (adapt to purpose).*  ***Language Focus Goal must always include at least a language FUNCTION and a KEY ACADEMIC PRACTICE* or *content standard stem.***   1. **Key Use (Macro) + key academic practice** 2. **Key Use (Macro) + micro function + key academic practice** 3. **Key Use (Macro)** + **CCSS STEM** 4. **Key Use (Macro) + micro function + key academic practice + content connection** |

Thinking Space 2: Language as Action and Contingent Feedback

Unit-level FLGs, described in Section [3.3](#FocLangGoals) of this guide, reflect intentional choices and priorities about what language to teach. Thinking Space 2, on the back of the Collaboration Tool, prompts teachers to begin considering the FLGs in terms of current student performance. By identifying what students can do, given evidence from student work, teachers can begin to envision “teacher moves” and “student moves” to best support the next steps in development toward the unit’s FLGs in terms of language development and meaning-making. This data-analysis and assessment helps teachers determine possible entry points for the new unit.

Thinking Space 2 can be used at different times of unit and lesson design, and it prompts teachers to brainstorm what language they would like to hear or see from students as they engage in a unit, and in what context (key academic practice, analytical skill, content topic, texts, etc.). This is driven by the FLG and knowledge of what their students can currently do. This early thinking about possible unit performance expectations is validated with the shared expertise of different educators.

Language is defined as “action” in next generation ESL and takes place within a context of communication and interaction for meaning-making. Therefore, Thinking Space 2 includes consideration of both student moves and teacher moves, as well as a shared ownership of the learning process. Thinking Space 2 prompts planning for student self-assessment and emphasizes the importance of metacognitive and metalinguistic aspects of learning related to the desired outcomes and explicit learning expectations. This pre-planning encourages educators to engage in a design process for responsive and dynamic curriculum.

**THINKING SPACE 2: Language as Action and Contingent Feedback**

**Consider:** *If we plan language teaching with the end goal of CCR in mind, we must teach language with intentionality to also consciously develop the key academic practices and habits of thinking that support student success in general education and ESL classrooms.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Established goals | What are the desired learnings/FLGs? (At the lesson level, consider this in terms of your lesson’s language objectives, which are also aligned to the FLGs) |
| 2. Gather evidence | In relation to instructional goals: what do I observe in my students’ work? What can my students currently do? |
| 3. Teacher moves | What do I do with student evidence?  Based on observable student actions, how do I plan my next moves to most effectively support my students’ development?  What pieces come first, second, third, etc. as we focus on language development through Key Uses of Academic Language and key academic practices?  How do I support my students and scaffold their learning?  What types of contingent feedback might I give to students based on what I see in their performance?  How will my teacher feedback help students take action to achieve established learning goals? |
| 4. Student moves  *For particular purposes, in specific contexts, together with other learners, and with certain outcomes.* | What types of moves do my students need to make to increase language proficiency and advance toward CCR?  What language will I hear and/or read from students as they engage in different activities?  Student responsibility: How will students monitor and assess their own individual progress toward established goals? |

For more ways to consider teacher moves and student moves, look at “Doing and Talking Math/Science,” a project led by Rita Macdonald and sponsored by the [National Science Foundation](http://www.nsf.gov/), soon to be published on Foundation’s website.

Although MacDonald’s current focus is to support ELs in math and science classrooms, her approach is helpful to ESL educators, as they also work to build communities of meaning-making discourse in their classrooms, making choices to prioritize high-leverage language in the context of key academic and analytical practices. MacDonald has created tools to support teacher moves and student moves around the language of collaborative reasoning and for making the “language of thinking” more explicit with ELs positioned, first and foremost, as meaning-makers within their communities.[[11]](#footnote-11)



## 3.3 Focus Language Goals

### ****3.3.1**** Defining Focus Language Goals

The Next Generation ESL Project Planning Committee believes that language is a socially constructed, complex, adaptive system that shifts according to need and context. The Project is also grounded on the premise that one of the goals of public education is to prepare students for post-graduate readiness and success in colleges and/or careers in a global world. Therefore, the Planning Committee believes that FLGs in ESL units must be inherently connected to the [key academic practices](http://ell.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/VennDiagram_practices_v11%208-30-13%20color.pdf) drawn from the [Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html), which reflect CCR standards. This perspective stands against decontextualized, isolated language teaching: it favors a deeper, richer approach in which ESL teachers help their students develop analytical and critical thinking skills through linguistic practice. This is not to say that ESL teachers should become multi-disciplinarians in all content areas, but that through development and collaboration they can connect ESL instruction to content area topics, standards, and academic thinking practices as meaningful contexts for language learning; this in turn can help ELs engage with language as a meaning-making tool across a variety of content area classrooms.

FLGs are one method for creating content-connected, clear language learning goals to drive ESL unit development in the context of the [Understanding by Design](http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/understanding-by-design-resources.aspx) model. UbD promotes a “backward” process of curriculum development, beginning with clear learning goals and specific results (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 56). Therefore, before ESL MCUs could be designed using the UbD framework, the Planning Committee had to create a method for establishing these clear unit-level language learning goals. This method had to include two sets of standards frameworks: the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (containing multiple sets of content area standards) and the [WIDA English Language Development Standards](https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards/eldhttps:/wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards/eld) (composed of five broad standards and accompanying tools).

Educators typically unpack standards from the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks to create unit goals. The Frameworks’ standards were designed with several purposes in mind that facilitate the creation of unit-level goals. For example, they clearly set forth the skills, competencies, and knowledge which students are expected to possess at the conclusion of individual grades or clusters of grades; set high expectations of student performance; provide clear and specific examples that embody and reflect these high expectations; express standards in terms that lend themselves to objective measurement, defining performance outcomes expected; and facilitate comparisons with students of other states and other nations (ESE, 2015d).

As discussed earlier in this guide, the WIDA Standards are of a different nature. They were purposely designed to be dynamic and generative, which means many ESL teachers can try to unpack the standards and still wonder how they can create clear, concrete, and measurable language learning goals for Stage 1 of the UbD curriculum design process. We acknowledge that language learning is not linear and includes great variability—but curriculum developers must be cautious to avoid what Wiggins and McTighe (2005) have described as the “twin sins” of curriculum design: “aimless coverage of content [ESL in this case], and isolated activities that are merely engaging (at best) while disconnected from intellectual goals in the learners’ minds.” If ESL teachers are to provide systematic, explicit, and sustained language development in the context of state academic standards, then the teaching of language must not be aimless or isolated from a purposefully planned, yet adaptable, learning continuum.

Creating explicit learning goals always means making choices about what to teach and what to leave out of focus, and these decisions must be based on agreed-upon priorities. For the ESL MCUs, the Planning Committee sought to integrate academic and language standards, but—because language development is a variable, complex, lifelong endeavor for ELs and native speakers alike—it would be impossible to unpack and explicitly teach every aspect of academic language students across all core content areas. Thus, from the UbD perspective, the five broad WIDA Standards alone (the Language of Language Arts, the Language of Math, etc.) are too global to be concretely helpful to educators and curriculum writers.

FLGs, as conceptualized within the Next Generation ESL Project, encourage educators and curriculum writers to make intentional choices to prioritize what language to teach using WIDA’s four [Key Uses of Academic Language](https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/Can-Do-Descriptors-Key-Uses-K-12-FAQs.pdf) (and related micro functions in the Collaboration Tool), and to dissect them as derived from and in the context of specific standards-based, grade-level content connections. This means that educators and curriculum writers following the Next Generation ESL Project unit development approach must choose larger conceptual lenses, key pieces of language, and core tasks. Although language educators could never cover all the aspects of academic language within all content areas and grade-level standards with which their students interact, they can make deliberate and thoughtful decisions to set explicit priorities for language learning given the normal constraints of instructional time available.

FLGs can help educators plan a balanced language curriculum that privileges high-leverage academic language to support students as they learn and use the types of language they encounter across general education classrooms. FLGs are the equivalent of Wiggins and McTighe’s “desired results” that establish priorities for instruction and assessment. They become unit-level goals in Stage 1 of UbD, which then guides the nature of assessment and evidence of learning chosen for Stage 2, and the types of instruction and learning experiences planned in Stage 3. FLGs also provide a rationale for shorter-term lesson objectives.

FLGs can be instrumental in delivering systematic, explicit, and sustained language instruction in the context of the [Frameworks](https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards/eld).

### 

### ****3.3.2**** Process for Creating Focus Language Goals

This document presents the process that the ESL and content area educator(s) may move through when creating FLGs for an ESL curriculum unit. “Thinking through the Process” boxes below show how one team of educators created FLGs for one ESL MCU, [Access to Clean Water](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/mcu/eslg6-8-clean-water.docx).

1. **Know your audience.**

The first step in developing FLGs is for the ESL teacher to identify the audience, an essential move for planning a responsive curriculum with the student at the center.

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| --- |
| **Steps**   * The ESL teacher identifies: * ELP range in the classroom. * Grade level or (for a mixed-grade class) grade-band level. * Sociocultural considerations, which come into play continuously and iteratively. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Thinking through the Process: Access to Clean Water**   * ELP range: **levels 1–2.** * Grade level: students from **grades 6, 7, and 8 in the same ESL class.** |

1. **Choose the WIDA Standard(s) that this unit will focus on.**

How do we begin selecting what language to teach? You may begin by choosing the language of the content area you’d like to focus on, or the equivalent of the five broad WIDA Standards.

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| **Steps**   * Consider your district’s curriculum maps, and/or * From the ESL educator’s perspective, consider how the language of the various content areas (or the five WIDA Standards) will be balanced and taught throughout the year. * The ESL teacher chooses the content area(s)/WIDA Standard(s) that this unit will be based on. |

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| **Thinking through the Process: Access to Clean Water**  The team chose to focus on the **Language of Social Studies (LoSS**) as well as **Social and Instructional Language (SIL)**. |

1. **Discuss upcoming content units/themes and expectations with the content teacher.**

From the broad range of language represented in LoSS and SIL, how do I decide which pieces of language to teach? How do I strategize, prioritize, and choose aspects of academic language what will help my students succeed in general education classrooms?

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| **Steps**  Once a WIDA standard has been chosen:   * ESL and content educators set a meeting. The ESL teacher sends the content teacher an agenda that includes specific objectives, notes for preparation to be completed before the meeting, and a list of materials that should be brought to the meeting (i.e., relevant content standards, units, salient lessons, samples of student work, etc.). This helps to maximize time and maintain focus on the meeting objectives. * At the meeting, the content educator shares the focus of upcoming grade-level (or grade-band-level) units of instruction, content standards, skills, and knowledge the content class will focus on. The content teacher may discuss recurring themes through the year, a unit that is particularly poignant to students, and areas of student strength and opportunities for growth. * ESL and content educators discuss and evaluate the grade-level content expectations for reading, writing, listening, and speaking tasks and assessments, and identify key academic practices for one or more future units of instruction. * The ESL educator notes possible language development priorities. * ESL and content educators collaboratively choose the content that will serve as thestandards-based **academic** **context** for language development for this ESL unit. The content connection generally will be a grade-level content unit, topic, theme, or cluster of standards. We recommend using a content unit as the academic context/content connection for the ESL unit being developed. * Note that the dedicated ESL unit will not be the same as an SEI unit, or a watered-down content unit. It will focus on systematic, explicit, and sustained language development, but it will use content topics and analytical practices as a context for developing language. * Once a topic for the unit has been chosen, initial sociocultural implications come into play. |

|  |
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| ***Thinking through the Process: Access to Clean Water***  The team of educators set meetings with clear goals, came prepared, and were cognizant of how they used their time. After considering several social studies units, they decided to use the grade 7 social studies MCU “[Model United Nations: Access to Clean Water](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/mcu/eslg6-8-clean-water.docx)” as the content connection for the ESL unit. They cited reasons including the unit’s global perspective, potential for student engagement, and social justice themes.  The final, specific choice of a topic for the ESL unit was reserved for the next step, but the team did begin to discuss the general topic area suggested by the existing social studies unit. How might discussing access to clean water—or a similar resource—affect students who had experienced a lack of access to essential resources? How might different students interact with the notion of universal human rights?  Other considerations that came up at the beginning: Will students be familiar with public service announcements as a genre of communication? Will they be comfortable delivering oral presentations about human rights issues? What cultural intersections might our classroom community need to navigate to help all students succeed in this unit? |

1. **Collaboratively identify the driving language demands of the unit.**

Once the content area unit has been chosen as the academic context for the ESL unit, the ESL and content area educators discuss what they see as the driving language demands of the unit.

They make deliberate choices in selecting the language they believe will have the highest leverage for ELs as they move through different classrooms and content areas throughout the day.

To identify these driving language demands, educators may look at the content standards in the unit, the goals, and the skills and knowledge. It is particularly useful to analyze the driving language demands of the Curriculum Embedded Performance Assessment (CEPA), since it generally represents a culmination of the unit.

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| **Steps**   * ESL and content educators analyze the selected unit’s key academic practices, CEPA requirements, and content standards to focus on. * Educators agree on priority linguistic expectations/Key Uses of Academic Language that will support student learning. * The ESL educator suggests possible themes for context for the ESL unit that will support future linguistic content expectations, but not supplant or directly shelter the content unit. * The content educator gives feedback regarding how the potential topic and linguistic focus will affect student performance and academic achievement in the content classroom. |

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| **Thinking through the Process: Access to Clean Water**  After discussing the selected content unit and examining its standards and CEPA, the team of ESL and content educators decided on the topic through which they would teach the agreed-upon driving language demands.  Although the original content unit focused on clean water, they could have designed the ESL unit around another topic—e.g., access to clean air—that would address those demands. The team stuck with clean water, but they were careful to create a dedicated ESL unit rather than an SEI unit that would belong in the realm of the content classroom.  The team then chose two salient content standards from the unit that the ESL educator was comfortable with incorporating into the ESL unit. They decided that the ESL unit would work on developing the analytical practices and language for meaning-making embedded in those standards.  They also began to discuss some possible priority linguistic expectations to use in the ESL unit. |

1. **Collaboratively identify the Key Uses, micro functions, and key academic practices.**

Using the Collaboration Tool, continue to finesse and prioritize driving language demands and key academic practices that will form the basis for the ESL unit.

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| **Steps**  Look at the CEPA or other selected aspects of the unit to identify:   * Key Uses (macro functions). * Micro functions. * Key academic practices. * Create a coding method and use highlighters of different colors to mark the text selection (s). Use a dark green to mark Key Uses of language, a light green to mark micro functions, and blue to mark key academic practices or salient content standards. * Educators make notes of what they have noticed in the past as areas of student strength and opportunities for growth in relation to the selected linguistic and academic practices. Samples of student work serve as concrete evidence to support this analysis. |
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| ***Thinking through the Process: Access to Clean Water***  The team of educators analyzed the CEPA of the content unit (“[Model United Nations: Access to Clean Water](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/mcu/eslg6-8-clean-water.docx)”). Selections from the CEPA appear below in green(for more details, visit the complete unit). Using the Collaboration Tool, the educators looked for the driving language demands in the content unit. They found it helpful to look for language functions, especially in the form of WIDA’s Key Uses (Recount, Explain, Argue, Discuss) and the 14 micro functions provided in the Collaboration Tool. The team also chose academic practices they felt should be emphasized. All of these are **boldfaced** below.  *Goal:*  You goal is to represent one of the 193 members of the United Nations and **Argue** passionately for the interests of your country on the issue of **access to clean water**. You willcraft resolutionson this critical global issue.  *Role:*  You are a delegate to the UN representing one of 193 member nations called to analyze and **Discuss** the critical global issue of access to clean water.  *Audience:*  The audience is the member nations represented in the conference.  *Situation:*  You have been asked to debate, negotiate, and plan actions to solve the human rights issue of access to clean water. You will use parliamentary procedure to present your nation’s perspective and interests on the issue. Delegates will form coalitions with other nations who share common goals on the issue. Coalitions will **collaborate** to create resolutions that address and take action to solve the issue of access to clean water.  *Product Performance and Purpose:*  You need to research your country and topic in depthand get into the shoes of a UN ambassador. You will:   * **Collaborate** with a partner and use your research to prepare a **position** paper, opening speech, and counterarguments for debate. * Use parliamentary procedure strategically to represent your country’s interests and persuade other member nations to agree with your nation’s goals. * **Argue** your position knowledgably and with passion. * Negotiate and **collaborate** with other nations to create resolutions that address, and **take action in solving, the issue of access to clean water**.   *Reflect on the conference experience and outcomes.*   * Select one of the Essential Questions and create a Pinterest post and written statement in response to that question. Use your experience from the simulation as evidence to support your claim.   Q.1 Can **human rights** be protected? At what cost?  Q.2 How effective is the United Nations in solving world conflicts?  Q.3 Is it the **right** or responsibility of a country to promote its values around the world?  Q.4 **Is access to clean water a human right?**  The team of educators collaboratively made strategic choices to prioritize the following language demands and academic practices, taken from the text above:   * **Argue** passionately on the issue of **access to clean water**. * Analyze and **Discuss** the critical global issue of access to clean water. * **Collaborate** to create resolutions that address and take action to solve the issue of access to clean water. * **Argue** your position knowledgably and with passion. * Negotiate and **collaborate** with other nations to create resolutions that address and **take action to solve the issue of access to clean water**. * Can **human rights** be protected? At what cost? * Is it the **right** or responsibility of a country to promote its values around the world? * **Is access to clean water a human right?** | |

1. **The ESL educator uses a flexible formula to create FLGs for the ESL unit.**

Create the unit’s FLGs using the **Collaboration Tool** using the [flexible formulas](#_3.3.3__Flexible) below.

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| **Steps**  The ESL and content area educators work together to create one or two FLGs for the ESL unit. Each goal must include a language function (preferably a [Key Use](https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/Can-Do-Descriptors-Key-Uses-K-12-FAQs.pdf)) and a key academic practice **or** [state standard](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html).   * + - * Educators look at their color-coded CEPA (or other text selection). One approach may be to create columns with the possible Key Uses, micro functions, and key academic practices that you highlighted in the CEPA. Examples from the text excerpt above:  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Key Uses** | **Micro functions** | **Key academic practices** | | Argue  Discuss  Explain | Identify  Describe  Summarize  Elaborate  Cause/effect  State an opinion  Predict  Disagree  Evaluate  Justify  Inquire | Participate in grade-appropriate exchanges of information  Produce clear and coherent language...  Use English structures to communicate context-specific messages  Paraphrase  Analyze  Summarize  State your opinion/claim  Support with reasoning and evidence  Plan and carry out inquiries  Build and present knowledge...  Build on the ideas of others and present your own |  * + - * Teams should answer these questions: * For this unit, what will students do with language in a particular context? * What language would you like to see and hear from your students as they engage in meaning-making? * What key language use(s) are you targeting? (Consider function/genre/topic/context within key academic practices.) * How is the language that students’ practice being balanced out throughout the year? * There is no single right choice here. Educators will make selections based on agreed-upon goals and student need. * You can use Thinking Space 1 in the [Collaboration Tool](#Collaboration) as a brainstorming and design space to create FLGs. * Once the FLGs are created on the Collaboration Tool, they should be transferred to the unit template as Stage 1 goals. |

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| ***Thinking through the Process: Access to Clean Water***  After the collaborative discussion and analysis with the content area educators, the ESL educators used the Collaboration Tool to make strategic choices to finalize prioritization of high-leverage language.  The ESL educators created the following unit FLGs. (During the process, they continued to discuss any questions with the content educator as necessary.)  **FLG 1**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Discuss** | **by stating opinions/claims about** | **a substantive topic** | | Key use | Stating opinions/claims is both a micro function and a key academic practice, so the language teaching is contextualized in academic demand. | Access to clean water is a grade-level, substantive academic topic that also links to social justice. |   *What is the language of discussion in this sociocultural context regarding access to clean water? (Consider register, genre/text type, topic, task/situation, and the speaker’s relationship to other participants’ identities and social roles)?*  *What is the language of stating opinions and claims in this context?*  *What language do students need to be able to access this substantive topic, given their current English proficiency levels?*  The team continuously revisited these kinds of questions about language as they chose particular texts and topics and dissected the FLGs to gain greater clarity about the prioritized language they would like students to process and produce.  **FLG 2**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Explain** | **causes and effects** | **to create evidence-based claims** | | Key Use | Micro function | Key academic practice |   *What is the language needed to explain the issues around access to clean water? (Consider register, genre/text type, topic, task/situation, and the speaker’s relationship to other participants’ identities and social roles)?*  *What is the language needed to express the causes and effects of lack of access to clean water in this context?*  *What is the language needed to create evidence-based claims about the universal need for access to clean water?*  Once the FLGs were created on the Collaboration Tool, they were transferred to the Stage 1 goals in the [unit template](#AnnotatedUnit).  The ESL educator, periodically consulting with the content educator, continues to develop the ESL unit to deliver systematic, explicit, and sustained language instruction in the context of the Frameworks. |

### ****3.3.3 Flexible Formulas for Creating Focus Language Goals****

Educators can use the Collaboration Tool to create unit-level FLGs by employing the following flexible formulas:

* 1. **Key Use (macro) + key academic practice**

Example: **Explain** X to **participate in grade-appropriate exchanges of information**.

*What is the language needed to Explain X (e.g.,* the collapse of the Soviet Union*) to participate in grade-appropriate exchanges of information, at your students’ current language proficiency levels, and in a particular sociocultural context? (Consider register, genre/text type, topic, task/situation, and the speaker’s relationship to other participants’ identities and social roles.)*

*(X = the ESL unit’s grade-band-level, standards-based content connection/topic/theme.)*

* 1. **Key Use (macro) + micro function + key academic practice**

Example: **Argue** by **justifying** X to **support your reasoning with evidence**.

*What is the language needed to Argue when supporting your reasoning about X, at your students’ current language proficiency levels, and in a particular sociocultural context? (Consider register, genre/text type, topic, task/situation, and the speaker’s relationship to other participants’ identities and social roles.)*

*What is the language needed to justify your reasoning of X with evidence, at your students’ current language proficiency levels, and in a particular sociocultural context? (Consider register, genre/text type, topic, task/situation, and the speaker’s relationship to other participants’ identities and social roles.)*

* 1. **Key Use (macro)** + **CCSS STEM**

Example: **Recount** to **describe how characters in a story respond to major events and changes** (RL.2.3).

*What is the language needed to Recount by describing characters’ responses to major events within the ESL unit’s topics and texts, at your students’ current language proficiency levels, and in a particular sociocultural context? (Consider register, genre/text type, topic, task/situation, and the speaker’s relationship to other participants’ identities and social roles.)*

**Recount** by **writing narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences** (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3).

**Explain** [by writing] to **examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content** (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2).

**Argue** [by writing] **to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence** (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1).

**Discuss** to **participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively** (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1).

* 1. **Key Use (macro) + micro function + key academic practice + content connection**

Example 1: **Recount** by **summarizing another’s claims, concepts, or ideas (Thomas Jefferson’s claims in the “Declaration of Independence.”**

*What is the language needed to Recount by summarizing Jefferson’s claims in the “Declaration of Independence,” at your students’ current language proficiency levels, and in a particular sociocultural context? (Consider register, genre/text type, topic, task/situation, and the speaker’s relationship to other participants’ identities and social roles.)*

*The ESL educator works with the context of the content connection/theme/topic of historical documents, but focuses on how one uses language to Recount by summarizing Jefferson’s main claims.*

Example 2: **Discuss** by **inquiring to request clarification about why a classmate holds X opinion about**

**airport security**.

*What is the language needed to Discuss a classmate’s opinion, at your students’ current language proficiency levels, and in a particular sociocultural context? (Consider register, genre/text type, topic, task/situation, and the speaker’s relationship to other participants’ identities and social roles.)*

*What is the language needed to inquire to request clarification about a classmate’s opinion about a particular topic, at your students’ current language proficiency levels, and in a particular sociocultural context? (Consider register, genre/text type, topic, task/situation, and the speaker’s relationship to other participants’ identities and social roles.)*

*The ESL educator works with the context of the content connection/theme/topic of controversy in current events, but focuses on how one uses language to inquire in order to Discuss airport security.*

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| **Examples from ESL MCU: The Language of Addition and Subtraction**  **Kindergarten,** ELP levels 2–3  FLG 1: **Recount** by **sequencing** in **grade-appropriate exchanges of information**.  FLG 2: **Explain addition and/or subtraction situations represented by objects** in **grade-appropriate exchanges of information**. |

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| **Examples from ESL MCU: Justice, Courage, and Fairness**  Language of Social Studies  **Grades 1–2**, ELP levels 1–2  FLG 1: **Recount** by **sequencing** **events in stories** to **communicate context specific messages**.  FLG 2: **Explain** **the contributions of characters/historical figures** **with reasoning and evidence**. |

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| **Examples from ESL MCU: Describing and Explaining Weathering and Erosion**  Language of Science  **Grades 3–5**, ELP levels 1–2  FLG 1: **Discuss** by **identifying evidence from a given landscape that includes simple landforms and rock layers**.  FLG 2: **Argue to support a claim about the role of erosion or deposition in the formation of the landscape**. |

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| **Example from ESL MCU: The Art of the Persuasive Speech**  Language of Language Arts  **Grades 9–12**, ELP levels 2–3  FLG 1: **Argue** to **state one’s opinion or claim** **supported by reasoning and evidence**. |



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Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner

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1. The Collaboration Tool can also be used with other state frameworks. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. WIDA’s visit to Massachusetts on August 11, 2015; WIDA’s Can Do Event, November 12, 2014, Chicago, Illinois. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For more on SLIFE students, see OLA’s [SLIFE guidance](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/guidance/SLIFE-Guidance.docx) and [WIDA’s focus bulletin on SLIFE](https://wida.wisc.edu/resources?keys=slife&=Apply+Filters). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. WIDA is housed at the[**Wisconsin Center for Education Research**](http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/)**,** which is part of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. “Language function” refers to how students use language to accomplish content-specific tasks, or the purpose for using language. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. For more discussion of these shifts in terms of ELs, see Bunch, Kibler, & Pimentel (2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. “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” (WIDA, 2012a, p. 7). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Local educators opted to use the 14 micro functions largely based on a consultation with WIDA in August 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The Collaboration Tool can also be used with other state frameworks. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Cheuk (2014) has noted that the diagram “is not necessarily a perfect model of how the priorities of the three disciplines (ELA, Math, Science) are mapped out. That is, the *discussions and debate that arise from unpacking this diagram can help educators make sense of the standards and spotlight the literacy/language implications* these new standards have on their student populations.” [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. MacDonald’s project is not yet published, but is discussed in MacDonald, Miller, & Lord (in press). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)