This document provides guidance for developing Next Generation ESL (NGESL) unit-level Focus Language Goals (FLGs).

* [Part 1](#_Part_1:_Process) presents a process ESL and content area educator(s) can use to create Focus Language Goals (FLGs) for an ESL unit. “Thinking through the Process” boxes below show how one team of educators created FLGs for one NESL Model Curriculum Unit (MCU), [Access to Clean Water](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/mcu/eslg7-clean-water.docx).
* [Part 2](#_Part_2:_Flexible) outlines flexible formulas educators can use to create Focus Language Goals based on those presented in the [Collaboration Tool](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/collaboration-tool.docx).

## **Part 1: Process for Creating Focus Language Goals**

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.

*Steps - to be completed by the ESL teacher:*

* Identify the English language Proficiency (ELP) range in the classroom.
* Identify the grade level or grade-band level (for a mixed-grade class).
* Identify sociocultural considerations, which come into play continuously and iteratively.

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| **Thinking through the Process: Example from *Access to Clean Water* ESL MCU**   * 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 teachers begin selecting what language to teach? Educators can begin by choosing the language of the content area they would like to focus on, as represented in one of the [WIDA English Language Development Standards Statements](https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/WIDA-ELD-Standards-Framework-2020.pdf).

*Steps - to be completed by the ESL teacher:*

* Consider your district’s curriculum maps and/or units
* Consider how the language of the various content areas and social and instructional language (WIDA ELD Standard 1) will be balanced and taught throughout the year.
* Choose the content area(s)/WIDA Standard Statement(s) that will serve as the focus for the ESL unit.

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| **Thinking through the Process: Example from *Access to Clean Water* ESL MCU**  The team chose to focus on the **Language for Social Studies (WIDA ELD Standard 5)** and **Social and Instructional Language (WIDA ELD Standard 1)** |

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

From the broad range of language represented in each WIDA ELD Standard Statement, how do educators decide what pieces of language to teach? How can teachers strategize, prioritize, and choose aspects of academic language what will help my students succeed in general education classrooms?

*Steps - to be completed by ESL teacher in collaboration with content area teacher(s):*

* 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 (relevant content standards, units, salient lessons, samples of student work, etc.). This helps to maximize time and maintain focus on the meeting objectives.
* During 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. The NGESL approach recommends educators use a content unit as the academic context/content connection for the ESL unit being developed. The dedicated ESL unit will not be the same or a watered-down version of the content unit chosen. Rather, the ESL unit will focus on systematic, explicit, and sustained language development using content topics and analytical practices as a context for developing language.

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| **Thinking through the Process: Example from *Access to Clean Water* ESL MCU**  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[[1]](#footnote-1) 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. They pondered the following questions:   * *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?* * *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 what students will be expected to know and be able to do by the end of the unit.

*Steps - to be completed by ESL teacher in collaboration with content area teacher(s):*

* 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 Language Uses 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: Example from *Access to Clean Water* ESL MCU**  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 Language 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.

*Steps - to be completed by ESL teacher in collaboration with content area teacher(s):*

* Look at the CEPA or other selected aspects of the unit to identify:
  + Key academic practices,
  + Key Language Uses, and
  + Micro functions and relation to WIDA ELD Standards, 2020 Edition Language Expectations.
* Create a coding method and use highlighters of different colors to mark the text selection (s). Use a dark green to mark Key Language Uses, a light green to mark micro functions, and blue to mark key academic practices or salient content standards.
* Note any areas of student strength and opportunities for growth in relation to the selected linguistic and academic practices based on what you know about the students who will be engaging with the unit. Samples of student work serve as concrete evidence to support this analysis.

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| **Thinking through the Process: Example from *Access to Clean Water* ESL MCU**  The team of educators analyzed the Curriculum Embedded Performance Assessment (CEPA) of the content unit (Model United Nations: Access to Clean Water). Selections from the CEPA appear below in **bold.** Using the Collaboration Tool, the educators looked for the driving language demands in the content unit. They found it helpful to look for ways students would be using language, or language functions, especially relationships to the Key Language Uses from the WIDA ELD Standards 2020 Edition (*Narrate, Inform, Explain, Argue*) and the 14 micro functions in the Collaboration Tool. The team also chose academic practices they felt should be emphasized. All of these are underlined below.  **Model United Nations: Access to Clean Water CEPA**   * ***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 will craft resolutions on 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 depth and 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.**   * **Can human rights be protected? At what cost?** * **How effective is the United Nations in solving world conflicts?** * **Is it the right or responsibility of a country to promote its values around the world?** * **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**[[2]](#footnote-2) the critical global issue of access to clean water. |

1. **Use flexible formulas to create FLGs for the ESL unit.**

Create the unit’s Focus Language Goals using the flexible formulas in the [**Collaboration Tool**](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/collaboration-tool.docx). To learn more about the flexible formulas see [Part 2: Pathways and Flexible Formulas for Creating Focus Language Goals](#_Part_2:_Pathways).

*Steps - to be completed by ESL teacher in collaboration with content area teacher(s):*

* The ESL and content area educators work together to create one or two FLGs for the ESL unit. Each goal must include a prominent language use (Key Language Use, macro function, micro function or Language Expectation) and a key academic practice or [content area standard](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html).
* Look at color-coded CEPA (or other text selection) to identify prominent language uses. For example, educators can create columns with the possible key academic practices, Key Language Uses, macro and micro functions highlighted in the CEPA as shown below (language drawn from the content area MCU excerpted above):

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| **Key academic practices** | **Key Language Uses** | **Micro Functions** |
| * 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 | * Argue * Explain | * Identify * Describe * Summarize * Elaborate * Cause/effect * State an opinion * Predict * Disagree * Evaluate * Justify * Inquire |

* + - * Next, answer these questions. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers - just decisions to make and priorities to decide based on student needs:
* What will students do with language in this unit?
* What language would we like to see and hear from students as they engage in meaning-making?
* What Key Language Use(s) do we want to target? (Consider language functions, genre, topic, context within key academic practices or content standards)
* How is the language students learn about and practice going to be balanced across prominent language uses (Key Language Uses, micro functions, Language Expectations) throughout the year?
* Use the [Collaboration Tool’s](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/collaboration-tool.docx) Thinking Space 2 as a brainstorming and design space to create FLGs. Once the FLGs are created on the Collaboration Tool, transfer them to the NGESL Unit Template as Stage 1 goals.

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| **Thinking through the Process: Example from *Access to Clean Water* ESL MCU**  After the collaborative discussion and analysis with the content area educators, the ESL and content educators used the Collaboration Tool to make strategic choices to finalize prioritization of high-leverage language.  The ESL educators created the following unit FLG. They continued to discuss any questions with the content educator as necessary.  **FLG: Explain causes and effects to create evidence-based claims.**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Explain** | **causes and effects** | **to create evidence-based claims** | | Key Language Use | Micro Function | Key academic practice |   *Next step questions to consider:*   * *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?* * *What language do students need to be able to access this topic given their current English proficiency levels?*   The team continuously revisited these kinds of questions about language as they chose texts and topics and dissected the FLGs to gain greater clarity about the prioritized language they would like students to process and produce.  Once the FLGs were created on the Collaboration Tool, they were transferred to the Stage 1 goals in the [NGESL Unit Planning Template](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/esl-toolkit/tools-resources/unitplanning-template.docx).  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. |

## **Part 2: Pathways and Flexible Formulas for Creating Focus Language Goals**

Educators can use the Collaboration Tool to create unit-level FLGs by following one of the provided pathways and related flexible formulas:

**Pathway 1: Use or adapt a WIDA Language Expectation**

In the [WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition](https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards/eld), Language Expectations are goals for content-driven language instruction, adding specificity to the ELD Standards Statements and Key Language Uses (WIDA, 2020, p. 30). Below are two sample WIDA Language Expectations:

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| **WIDA Language Expectations** |
| ELD-MA.K.Inform.Expressive: Construct mathematical informational texts (with prompting and support) that describe a concept or entity. |
| ELD-MA.K.Inform.Interpretive: Interpret mathematical informational texts (with prompting and support) by identifying concept or object**.** |

This pathway was added to the Collaboration Tool in response to updates in the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition. When using this pathway to develop FLGs, educators should keep in mind the following:

* Use the appropriate grade level cluster materials in the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition to identify Language Expectations that align with the overarching purpose of the existing content area unit and/or standards that the ESL unit will connect to.
* Analyze the Language Expectations identified to determine if they may need to be adapted to align with the ESL unit’s purpose. This is important because WIDA Language Expectations serve as examples of most prominent language uses but do not provide an exhaustive list. Therefore, educators may have to refine existing Language Expectations further. Pathway 2 below can help educators in this endeavor.
* Educators using an existing WIDA Language Expectation as a unit-level Focus Language Goal should further unpack and prioritize the language functions and features needed to accomplish selected Language Expectations. This will help select which language functions and features will be explicitly taught, practiced, and assessed in the ESL unit.
* The WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition consolidates language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) into two communication modes: interpretive (reading, listening, and viewing) and expressive (representing, speaking, writing). To be successful in school and beyond, students need opportunities to develop language across all language domains or communication modes. Therefore, when developing unit-level Focus Language Goals, select a balance of interpretive and expressive goals.

**Pathway 2: The Flexible Formulas**

The flexible formulas outlined below can help educators develop Focus Language Goals using tools and resources in the Collaboration Tool.

1. **Key Language Use + key academic practice**

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

*Next steps planning prompts:*

* *What is the language needed to Explain X (X represents a grade level or grade level band content area topic, theme, or content area connection, such as* the collapse of the Soviet Union*) and to participate in grade-appropriate exchanges of information?*
* *What language can students use at their current English language proficiency levels and in a particular sociocultural context? (Considering register, genre, text type, topic, task/situation, and the speaker’s relationship to other participants’ identities and social roles)*

1. **Key Language Use + *Micro Function* + key academic practice**

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

*Next steps planning prompts:*

* *What language will students need to Argue as they support their reasoning about X given their current language proficiency levels, and in a particular sociocultural context? (Considering register, genre, text type, topic, task/situation, and the speaker’s relationship to other participants’ identities and social roles.)*
* *What language will students need to justify their reasoning of X with evidence, given their current language proficiency levels, and in a particular sociocultural context? (Considering register, genre, text type, topic, task/situation, and the speaker’s relationship to other participants’ identities and social roles)*

1. **Key Language Use +** **content area standard**

Example 1: **Narrate** to **describe how characters in a story respond to major events and changes** (RL.2.3).

*Next steps planning prompt: What is the language needed to Narrate by describing characters’ responses to major events within the ESL unit’s topics and texts given students’ current language proficiency levels, and in a particular sociocultural context? (Considering register, genre, text type, topic, task/situation, and the speaker’s relationship to other participants’ identities and social roles)*

Other examples:

* Example 2: **Narrate** by **writing narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences** (ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3).
* Example 3: **Explain** (in writing) to **introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section** (ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2).
* Example 4: **Argue** (in writing) **to state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, connect opinions and reasons using linking words, and provide a concluding statement or section about a topic or book** (ELA-LITERACY.W.2.1).

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| 1. **Key Language Use + *Micro Function* + key academic practice + substantive topic.** |

Example 1: **Inform** by ***summarizing* another’s claims, concepts, or ideas (Thomas Jefferson’s claims in the *Declaration of Independence*)**

*Next steps planning prompts:*

* *What is the language needed to Inform by summarizing Jefferson’s claims in the Declaration of Independence given students’ current language proficiency levels, and in a particular sociocultural context? (Considering register, genre, text type, topic, task/situation, and the speaker’s relationship to other participants’ identities and social roles)*
* *In this case, the ESL unit works within the context of social studies, but focuses on how students can use language to Inform others by summarizing Jefferson’s main claims in a historical document.*

Example 2: **Argue** by***inquiring* to request clarification about why a classmate holds a stated opinion about**

**airport security**.

*Next steps planning prompts:*

* *What is the language needed to discuss a classmate’s opinion, given students’ current language proficiency levels, and in a particular sociocultural context? (Considering 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 given students’ current language proficiency levels, and in a particular sociocultural context? (Considering register, genre, text type, topic, task/situation, and the speaker’s relationship to other participants’ identities and social roles)*
* *In this case, the ESL unit works within the content topic of controversy in current events but focuses on how students can use language to inquire in order to discuss classmates’ opinions about airport security.*

Other examples from existing ESL MCUs:

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| ***ESL MCU: The Language of Addition and Subtraction* Kindergarten,** ELP levels 2–3  WIDA ELD Standard 3: Language for Mathematics  FLG 1: **Narrate** 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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| **ESL MCU: Justice, Courage, and Fairness Grades 1–2**, ELP levels 1–2  WIDA ELD Standard 5: Language for Social Studies  FLG 1: **Narrate** 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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| **ESL MCU: Describing and Explaining Weathering and Erosion Grades 3–5**, ELP levels 1–2  WIDA ELD Standard 4:Language for Science  FLG 1: **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 Grades 9–12**, ELP levels 2–3  WIDA ELD Standard 2:Language for Language Arts  FLG 1: **Argue** to ***state one’s opinion or claim*** **supported by reasoning and evidence**. |

## **References**

WIDA. (2020). WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition: Kindergarten–grade 12. Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System.

1. This content area MCU developed between 2010 and 2015 is no longer available on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and secondary Education website. For a copy of this MCU, email the [Center for Instructional Support](mailto:instructionalsupport@doe.mass.edu). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The original version of the Collaboration Tool articulated and defined Key Uses of Language (Recount, Explain, Argue, and Discuss). The Key Uses of Language have been updated to align with the [WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition](https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/WIDA-ELD-Standards-Framework-2020.pdf) Key Language Uses. In this new edition, WIDA has updated the Key Language Uses to mean genre families and the Key Language Uses reflect the “most high-leverage genre families across academic content standards. They are Narrate, Inform, Explain, and Argue.” (WIDA, 2020, p. 27). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)