Data Informed Action for ELLs: Practices, Perceptions and Shared Responsibility

Participant Handouts

MSAN Institute
Madison, WI
April 28, 2015

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University of Wisconsin Madison
WIDA values and believes in the assets, contributions, and potential of linguistically diverse students.

SESSION DESCRIPTION
Through a focus using a data analysis process to analyze school and district practices and perceptions, this session seeks to reinforce MSAN’s mission to create inclusive and culturally responsive schools in which ELLs are valued, supported, and can be successful.

SESSION OBJECTIVES
Participants will be able to:
• Discuss how the intersections of language, race, culture, and identity impacts learning
• Discuss potential root causes and areas contributing to inequity and deficit perspectives in schools and districts using WIDA Essential Actions and a Cultural Proficiency Continuum
• Discuss possible solutions for building a collective cultural awareness, a Can Do philosophy, and shared responsibility for the academic and social success of linguistically, racially, and culturally diverse students (ELLs)

The WIDA Can Do Philosophy
Everyone brings valuable resources to the education community. Linguistically and culturally diverse learners, in particular, bring a unique set of assets that have the potential to enrich the experiences of all learners and educators. As these young children and students learn additional languages, educators can draw on these assets for the benefit of both the learners themselves and for everyone in the community. By focusing on what language learners can do, we send a powerful message that students from diverse linguistic, cultural, and experiential backgrounds contribute to the vibrancy of our early childhood programs and K–12 schools.

| WIDA Believes in Language Learners’ Assets, Contributions, and Potential |
|---|---|---|
| **Assets** | **Contributions** | **Potential** |
| Linguistic | Knowledge of multiple languages, varying representation of ideas, metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness, diverse strategies for language learning | Bi- or multilingual practices, abilities which learners utilize to communicate effectively across multiple contexts, multiple ways of expressing their thinking |
| Cultural | Different perspectives, practices, beliefs, social norms, ways of thinking | Bi- or multicultural practices as well as unique and varied perspectives, ability to develop relationships in a global society, ability to navigate a variety of sociocultural contexts |
| Experiential | Varied life and educational experiences, exposure to unique topics, diverse approaches to learning and expressing content knowledge | Enrichment of the school curriculum, extracurricular, and community opportunities, success in school and beyond |
| Social and Emotional | Personal interests and needs, awareness of empathy for diverse experiences, knowledge and enrichment of community resources | Ability to form and sustain positive relationships, and broker meaningful interactions among peers and others within and beyond school |
Establish a Purpose:
Identify a purpose for data analysis and gather the data you need for the task.

Take Action:
Identify additional data needed, steps to improve patterns and/or ways to build on positive trends.

Create a Visual:
Summarize the data by organizing it in ways that help your analysis.

Make Hypotheses:
Suggest reasons or causes for the patterns you observe in the data. Continue to record questions.

Identify Trends:
Document observable patterns that emerge in the data and questions that arise.

WiDA values and believes in the assets, contributions, and potential of linguistically diverse students.
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**General**

Step 1: *Establish a Purpose* - What is your purpose for analysis?

Step 2: *Create a Visual* - How will the data be visualized?

Step 3: *Identify Trends* - What do you see?

Step 4: *Make a Hypothesis* - What meaning does the data have?

Step 5: *Take Action* - What are your next steps?

**Specific**

| Step 1: Establish a Purpose | What questions will be addressed?  
|                            | What is the focus of inquiry?  
|                            | What data do we have?  
|                            | What data do we need?  

| Step 2: Create a Visual | Which graphic representation of our data best meets our needs?  
|                        | How can we summarize our data?  

| Step 3: Identify Trends | What patterns do we see in the data?  
|                        | How can best document our observations?  
|                        | What questions and assumptions are raised by our data?  

| Step 4: Make a Hypothesis | Why are we seeing these data patterns?  
|                          | What might be contributing to these patterns?  

| Step 5: Take Action | What can we do to address our hypotheses of practice  
|                    | What needs to change?  
|                    | How can we take action?  

**Important Note:** During the workshop, you will go through Step 1 through Step 3 with multiple data sources before making hypotheses or a plan of action.
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You will take a focused look at specific data sources at this particular workshop (listed in the circle). Other data sources should be considered for follow-up and future analysis outside of the workshop context. Examples of other data sources are below (listed outside the circle).

**Other Programming & Demographics Data Sources:**
- Gender, enrollment, attendance, prior schooling

**Other Practices Data Sources:**
- Analysis of instructional materials & assessments for cultural and linguistic bias/relevance; observation of classroom practices, information on the success of family & community partnerships, evaluation of professional learning.

**Other Perceptions Data Sources:**
- Focus groups, interviews, surveys, home & community visits focused on perceptions of students, families, staff, community members

**Other Student Results Data Sources:**
- Graduation rates, differentiated classroom assessments, teacher observations, student work, standardized state or district content assessments **disaggregated** by ELP level or time in U.S.

**Other Data Sources:***
- Analysis of instructional materials & assessments for cultural and linguistic bias/relevance;
- Observation of classroom practices, information on the success of family & community partnerships, evaluation of professional learning.

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Sociocultural context refers to the idea that language, rather than existing in isolation, is a part of the culture and society in which it is used. This means when language is learned, the sociocultural context in which it is used needs to be taken into consideration as well (adapted from http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/knowledge-database/socio-cultural-context)

From their inception, one purpose of American schools has been to socialize children so they will become productive citizens and contributing members of society. Some schools and teachers have used this socialization purpose to justify an expectation that children learn and assimilate the mainstream social practices in order to participate in classroom activities. However, we know from studies conducted over the last thirty years that an assimilationist stance can, at a minimum, create misunderstandings and, at its worst, create a hostile context that may hinder the literacy attainment of English language learners. (Bertha Perez, Creating a Sociocultural Context for School Literacy, nd)

Equity can’t be achieved by students surrendering their cultural (and linguistic) heritages, but by building skills including English (Gil, Real Equality in Education Remains Elusive, 2014).

Race, ethnicity, class, culture, gender, and other differences among people cannot, and more important, should not be avoided when examining data and engaging in a collaborative inquiry. Our responses and reactions to these differences deeply affect how we interpret data and have a profound impact on student learning... Diversity is a reality in all schools. It can be dealt with constructively—in ways that reflect deep respect and understanding of students from diverse backgrounds...—or destructively—reinforcing damaging racist and classist attitudes and other stereotypes and continuing a long-standing pattern of doing harm to students who do not fit the mold of the dominant culture. (Love, Stiles, Mundry, & DiRanna, 2008, The Data Coach’s Guide to Improving Learning for All Students)
1. Go around the Identity Wheel and identify yourself according to the categories.
2. Reflect on how items in the inner circle influence items in the outer circle.
3. Select one item in the inner circle to change – for example, if you are white, change your race. How do you think that might influence some of the items in your outer circle?
4. Think of an ELL student and how they would complete this Diversity Wheel. What types of instructional strategies and supports would enhance their learning? Discuss your thoughts with a partner or your team.
## Practices & Perceptions Data Gathering
### Cultural Proficiency Continuum

WIDA values and believes in the assets, contributions, and potential of linguistically diverse students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>EXPLANATION</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
<th>MY EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Cultural Destructiveness | See difference in culture and eliminate it                                  | - “Our scores would be better if we didn’t have ELLs.”  
- “Please, you cannot speak (language) here.” |             |
| Cultural Incapacity   | See the difference as wrong, belief in the superiority of one’s own culture and behavior in ways that devalue others | - Lowered expectations.  
- “My way or the highway.”  
- “Over here are my ELLs. They aren’t as talented as my native speakers, but they do the best they can.” |             |
| Cultural Blindness    | See the difference and act like you don’t                                  | - Actions assume the world is fair and achievement is based on merit  
- “I treat all kids the same.”  
- “Why should we disaggregate data?” |             |
| Cultural Precompetence| See the difference and respond inadequately                                | - Quick fixes, packaged short-term programs.  
- “What should we do for MLK day?” |             |
| Cultural Competence   | See the difference and understand how that makes a difference              | - Support and modeling  
- “With the addition of our new Muslim students to my classroom, the discussions among the students is so much richer.”  
- “Our demographics are very different from the students we teach. We have some work to do to become more responsive to their cultures.” |             |
| Cultural Proficiency  | See the difference and respond positively                                  | - Advocacy for culturally proficient practices in all arenas.  
- Openness to increase self-awareness  
- “Let’s find a way to make them and their families feel more welcome here.” |             |

WIDA Performance Definitions, **Listening and Reading**, Grades K-12

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Level</th>
<th>Sentence Level</th>
<th>Word/Phrase Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Linguistic Complexity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Language Forms and Conventions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Vocabulary Usage</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Level 6 – Reaching** Language that meets all criteria through Level 5, Bridging

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 5</th>
<th>Bridging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Rich descriptive discourse with complex sentences</td>
<td>• Compound, complex grammatical constructions (e.g., multiple phrases and clauses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cohesive and organized related ideas</td>
<td>• A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Expanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Connected discourse with a variety of sentences</td>
<td>• A variety of complex grammatical constructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expanded related ideas</td>
<td>• Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Developing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Discourse with a series of extended sentences</td>
<td>• Compound and some complex (e.g., noun phrase, verb phrase, prepositional phrase) grammatical constructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Related ideas</td>
<td>• Sentence patterns across content areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Multiple related simple sentences</td>
<td>• Compound grammatical constructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An idea with details</td>
<td>• Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Entering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Single statements or questions</td>
<td>• Simple grammatical constructions (e.g., commands, Wh- questions, declaratives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An idea within words, phrases, or chunks of language</td>
<td>• Common social and instructional forms and patterns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...within sociocultural contexts for language use.
WIDA Performance Definitions, **Speaking and Writing**, Grades K-12

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Level</th>
<th>Sentence Level</th>
<th>Word/Phrase Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Linguistic Complexity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Language Forms and Conventions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Vocabulary Usage</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Level 6 – Reaching  
Language that meets all criteria through Level 5, Bridging | | |
| Level 5  
Bridging  
• Multiple, complex sentences  
• Organized, cohesive, and coherent expression of ideas | • A variety of grammatical structures matched to purpose  
• A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas | • Technical and abstract content-area language, including content-specific collocations  
• Words and expressions with shades of meaning across content areas |
| Level 4  
Expanding  
• Short, expanded, and some complex sentences  
• Organized expression of ideas with emerging cohesion | • A variety of grammatical structures  
• Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas | • Specific and some technical content-area language  
• Words and expressions with expressive meaning through use of collocations and idioms across content areas |
| Level 3  
Developing  
• Short and some expanded sentences with emerging complexity  
• Expanded expression of one idea or emerging expression of multiple related ideas | • Repetitive grammatical structures with occasional variation  
• Sentence patterns across content areas | • Specific content language, including cognates and expressions  
• Words or expressions with multiple meanings used across content areas |
| Level 2  
Emerging  
• Phrases or short sentences  
• Emerging expression of ideas | • Formulaic grammatical structures  
• Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas | • General content words and expressions  
• Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas |
| Level 1  
Entering  
• Words, phrases, or chunks of language  
• Single words used to represent ideas | • Phrase-level grammatical structures  
• Phrasal patterns associated with common social and instructional situations | • General content-related words  
• Everyday social and instructional words and expressions |

...within sociocultural contexts for language use.
The Defining Features of Academic Language in WIDA’s Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Criteria</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discourse Level</td>
<td>Linguistic Complexity (Quantity and variety of oral and written text)</td>
<td>Voice, Mood, Cohesive forms (referential, repetition), Coherence (e.g., topic and comment and key words for written language; relevance, sequencing, and closing relevant to topic for oral language), Logical connectors, Parallelism, Organizational types (e.g., narration, exposition, description)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Types and variety of grammatical structures, Conventions, mechanics, and fluency, Match of language forms to purpose/perspective</td>
<td>Tense, Aspect (e.g., progressive, perfect tenses), Simple, compound, and complex sentences, Word order, Parallelism, Denotation and connotation, Formulaic expressions, Interrogatives, Prosodic features (e.g., stress, intonation, rhythm of speech), Agreement (e.g., subject/verb)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Level</td>
<td>Language Forms and Conventions (Types, arrays, and use of language structures)</td>
<td>Sound-symbol-spelling correspondence, Word formations (e.g., affixes, compounding), Count/non-count distinctions, Denotation and connotation, Possession (e.g., possessives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word/Phrase Level</td>
<td>Vocabulary Usage (Specificity of word or phrase choice)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sociocultural context for language use involves the interaction between the student and the language environment, encompassing the…

- Register
- Genre/Text type
- Topic
- Task/Situation
- Participants’ identities and social roles
**WIDA Essential Actions**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action 1</th>
<th>Capitalize on the resources and experiences that English language learners bring to school to build and enrich their academic language.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action 2</td>
<td>Analyze the academic language demands involved in grade-level teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 3</td>
<td>Apply the background knowledge of English language learners, including their language proficiency profiles, in planning differentiated language teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 4</td>
<td>Connect language and content to make learning relevant and meaningful for English language learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 5</td>
<td>Focus on the developmental nature of language learning within grade-level curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 6</td>
<td>Reference content standards and language development standards in planning for language learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 7</td>
<td>Design language teaching and learning with attention to the socio-cultural context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 8</td>
<td>Provide opportunities for all English language learners to engage in higher-order thinking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. What do these actions look like for you as a school/district?

2. Check your top 3 priorities

✔✔✔
# Practices & Perceptions Data Gathering: WIDA Essential Actions

WIDA values and believes in the assets, contributions, and potential of linguistically diverse students.

Fill out this table as a team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action 9</td>
<td>Create language-rich classroom environments with ample time for language practice and use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 10</td>
<td>Identify the language needed for functional use in teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 11</td>
<td>Plan for language teaching and learning around discipline-specific topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 12</td>
<td>Use instructional supports to help scaffold language learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 13</td>
<td>Integrate language domains to provide rich, authentic instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 14</td>
<td>Coordinate and collaborate in planning for language and content teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 15</td>
<td>Share responsibility so that all teachers are language teachers and support one another within communities of practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. What do these actions look like for you as a school/district?

2. Check your top 3 priorities ✔✔✔

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Use the Essential Actions Handbook to explore specific actions you want to take. It is available at [http://www.wida.us/standards/eld.aspx#essentialactions](http://www.wida.us/standards/eld.aspx#essentialactions). Other WIDA resources available online are described below.
Consider the following actions for supporting equity work for ELLs:

- **Focus on diversity**—awareness of the diversity in communities is critical to fostering social justice.
- **Address real consequences of oppression**—when discussing social justice in lessons or staff meetings, it is important to acknowledge the real social and economic disadvantages that oppressed people face in society, not simply the psychic harm of oppression.
- **Understand the mechanisms that perpetuate oppression**—i.e., those attitudes and behaviors (e.g., racism, sexism, ageism, heterosexism) from a position of privilege; challenge colorblind or deficit statements.
- **Resist hierarchies of oppression**—form strategies to foster justice with an inclusive mindset: who is being left out?
- **Learn more about the social construction of race and racism in the United States**, including how race provides systems of advantage and disadvantage; consider how ideologies about languages, language varieties, accents, and nativeness intersect with race and affect equity for ELLs.
- **Analyze data** (demographics, practices, perceptions, student learning) including whether instructional materials, assessments, and teaching methods are culturally and linguistically relevant; access to classes; access to highly qualified teachers; perceptions of school climate, family & community partnerships, etc.
- **Reflect on your own racial identity and how it has shaped your life experiences**—personal inquiry is a necessary prerequisite to facilitating inquiry among others.
- **Foster a sense of safety** around conversations on race by encouraging participants to take responsibility for their own learning and interactions, to respect each other, to avoid blame and snap judgments, and to allow for mistakes.
- **Create a meaningful blueprint** that includes sustained inquiry, examination of challenges, and a plan to meet the needs of colleagues or students as they explore the emotional territory of race.
- **Seek to address social justice on three levels**—personal (self), institutional (school) and societal (community).

Adapted from the National Education Association (www.nea.org)
Instructional leadership practices to develop equity consciousness include:

- Use equity focused professional development materials such as:
  - Guided book studies
  - Films
  - Interactive media
  - Commercial curricula
  - Equity audits

- Promote reflection of and learning about race, language, and culture through data gathering and analysis involving a variety of stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, community members, staff):
  - Focus groups
  - Journals
  - Videotaped lessons
  - Peer observations
  - Critical friends groups

- Use social persuasion including:
  - Constant repetition of the equity message
  - Guest speakers who reinforce the message
  - Reframing deficit comments into acknowledgements of assets

- Prescribe actions and behaviors to increase understanding of students’ cultures and homes as well as authentic partnerships with families and communities:
  - Positive phone calls
  - Home visits
  - Neighborhood walks

- Directly address negative attitudes & low expectations including:
  - Deficit thinking/dialogue
  - Inconsistent logic about students’ potential based on faulty assumptions
  - Stereotypes
  - Blaming the students, their families, or culture for the students’ lack of success

- Model respectful and culturally responsive interactions:
  - Caring principal-teacher relationships
  - Principal modeling respect and cultural responsiveness
  - Skilled mentor-teacher modeling respect and cultural responsiveness

Adapted from Skrla, McKenzie, & Scheurich (2009). *Using Equity Audits to Create Equitable and Excellent Schools*, pp. 85-86.