Supporting Multilingual Students with WIDA and International Baccalaureate Resources

Two Systems, Working Together

What happens when an independent or international IB school wants to use WIDA resources to support their multilingual students' language development? What factors should educators consider? In adopting any new resources, educators must determine how best to integrate them into existing curriculum frameworks to create a coherent program.

At every school, teachers must assemble a multifaceted curricular jigsaw puzzle, integrating standards from a number of different national or international contexts, planning across subject areas, and aligning content vertically across grade levels. Many schools find that using WIDA standards and assessments to support this complex process is not necessarily about adding new pieces to the jigsaw puzzle, but rather is like turning on the lights to better see how the puzzle pieces go together. WIDA helps educators to see the language that's already present in academic contexts. When teachers connect the pieces of this complex curricular jigsaw puzzle, they can provide opportunities for students to use language meaningfully in the service of their own learning.

WIDA Focus Bulletins are resources for practitioners and educators who support, instruct, and assess multilingual learners in early care and education, and K-12 settings. To see other Focus Bulletins, please visit wida.wisc.edu/resources/types.

This is what is happening in hundreds of schools worldwide. Drawing from these experiences, this Focus Bulletin explores how educators in some International Baccalaureate (IB) schools are integrating WIDA frameworks and tools as they design lessons for multilingual learners. The following information is based on a survey of schools within the WIDA International School Consortium. We briefly examine key themes common to WIDA and IB. We then describe how some international schools have incorporated WIDA tools into their IB program and provide some examples that can guide other schools as they incorporate WIDA resources into existing learning frameworks.

WIDA and International Baccalaureate: Two Perspectives

As teachers and administrators of Three Rivers International School gathered together prior to the start of a new school year, they focused their attention to the shifting demographics of their student population. Increasingly, their students are multilingual and represent many cultural backgrounds. While the growing diversity is a resource for the school, it also presents challenges, as many of the educators struggle with knowing how to best support their multilingual students for academic success and language development. They are confident that the IB program they follow is comprehensive and rigorous, but they are in search of a framework for language development that complements the philosophy of teaching and learning inherent in the IB curricula.

Ms. Horning recently arrived at Three Rivers from teaching in an IB public school in Baltimore, Maryland. Her colleague, Mr. Kwan, joined the school from a different international school in the region. From two different contexts and experiences, both of these educators were able to introduce WIDA as a resource for helping to navigate the complex world of engaging students in rigorous academic content learning while simultaneously supporting their development of the English language, the primary language of instruction at Three Rivers.

Ms. Horning reported that she used the WIDA Can Do approach at her previous school. She liked that it emphasizes building on student assets, focuses on language development for learning in the content areas, and values equal opportunity and social justice. While it took several years, the staff at her Baltimore school shifted their attitudes and approaches to leverage students' multiple languages and experiences to enhance their engagement. Ms. Horning saw how, using WIDA English Language Development Standards and Can Do Descriptors, ESOL teachers and content teachers began to develop a shared understanding of how they can work as a team to support all students, but especially multilingual learners.

Mr. Kwan's experience with WIDA was more recent. He got to know WIDA through his school's use of WIDA MODEL and WIDA Screener, assessments for placement and progress monitoring. He appreciated the focus on academic language in context evident in the tests and found the scores helpful in seeing how his students were progressing. Mr. Kwan also began using the WIDA Speaking and Writing Interpretive Rubrics as formative assessment tools in the classroom. While Mr. Kwan was less familiar with IB, he was confident that WIDA assessments and tools would enhance language learning.

With Ms. Horning and Mr. Kwan as teacher-leaders taking the initiative, Three Rivers began exploring how to integrate WIDA with IB.

The schools and teachers mentioned here are pseudonyms and composites of some who participated in the interview phase of the WIDA survey.

WIDA	International Baccalaureate
WIDA is a research center at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. WIDA resources are used with a variety of curriculum models, including Common Core and NGSS, in 40 states and educational agencies in the U.S. The WIDA International School Consortium is a global community of more than 400 accredited, PreK-12 independent and international schools in more than 100 countries. WIDA serves educators worldwide with standards, assessments, research and professional learning to support multilingual students.	International Baccalaureate (IB) offers comprehensive, rigorous educational programs. More than 1,700 U.S. public schools offer IB programs, as do many independent schools around the world. The IB program is respected for both its high academic standards and attention to students' personal development. The IB framework describes specific approaches to teaching and learning, and focuses on how learning occurs, but decisions about implementation are left to individual schools. **International Baccalaureate Programs** Primary Years Program (PYP) - Ages 3–12 Middle Years Program (MYP) - Ages 11–16 Diploma Program (DP) - Ages 16–19 Career-related Program - Ages 16–19

WIDA and IB are Compatible

Within the WIDA International School Consortium, approximately one-third of schools use at least one of the IB programs. To develop an understanding of how international schools have been integrating WIDA resources into an IB curriculum, we surveyed member schools within the WIDA International School Consortium. We received responses from 24 schools across geographical regions, including Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. In follow-up interviews, teachers indicated they used an array of WIDA resources to support IB programs.

We found four key themes that were common to IB and WIDA:

1. Inclusive learning environments for all learners
2. Language development as an integral part of teaching and learning
3. Academic rigor and meaningful access
4. Assessment as an integral aspect of teaching and learning

WIDA FOCUS BULLETIN >> CLOSER LOOK

WIDA and IB Integration Tool

The following tool helps you figure out how WIDA and IB frameworks can be utilized together. Teacher teams can use these four organizing themes and the accompanying guiding questions to explore how multilingual learners are currently served at your school and how WIDA and IB frameworks might be leveraged for strategic planning and program improvement.

ASSET-BASED APPROACH: Inclusive environments that build on learners' strengths	**LANGUAGE & CONTENT INTERDEPENDENCE:** Language development as an integral part of learning
WIDA Resources • Can Do Philosophy • Can Do Descriptors **IB Resources** • Learner Profile *How do we learn about our students in order to build on their assets?*	**WIDA Resources** • Guiding Principles of Language Development **IB Resources** • Language Policy *How do we provide opportunities for students to use their entire linguistic repertoire in service of learning?*

How do WIDA and IB frameworks complement one another to enhance teaching and learning?

MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT: Academic rigor for all students through collaboration and accessibility	**BALANCED ASSESSMENT:** Measuring language development as part of teaching and learning
WIDA Resources • WIDA Standards • Matrices/Strands of MPIs **IB Resources** • Learner Profile • Access Arrangements & Accommodations *What opportunities do we provide for students to interact in meaningful, substantial ways?*	**WIDA Resources** • Performance Definitions • WIDA MODEL Interpretive Guide • WIDA Screener Interpretive Guide **IB Resources** • MYP Phases of Language Acquisition • Assessment Criteria *How do we collect and use evidence of student learning to guide next steps?*

Theme 1: Asset-Based Approach—Inclusive environments that build on the learners' strengths

Educators from the international schools emphasized that their programs are designed to meet the needs of all students through flexible approaches to learning, particularly in the Primary Years Program and the Middle Years Program. Through this focus on inclusion, the curriculum is designed to make sure that all students, including multilingual learners, receive scaffolding as needed through innovative and accessible approaches to teaching and learning.

The WIDA Can Do Philosophy facilitates inclusive learning environments by building on students' contributions and viewing students' developing languages as resources for learning. In doing so, teachers validate students' home, school, and community experiences, and recognize students' ability to relate their own histories to their language and content knowledge development. In other words, what students bring to school influences their language development and academic success.

The WIDA Can Do Philosophy encourages teachers to learn about and build on the assets students bring to school. One way in which this philosophy is made explicit is in the WIDA Can

> WIDA tools help teachers do what IB says you should do—ensure that all students are included on the cognitive and linguistic levels. IB programs are about analysis and synthesis, and the teacher's job is to ensure students engage in these processes. WIDA helps teachers provide access. WIDA shows teachers how to include learners by scaffolding learning.
>
> —Barbara Wrightson, Chadwick International School

Do Descriptors, which offer a starting point for designing instruction based on what students can do with language.

Barbara Wrightson, from Chadwick International in South Korea, describes how WIDA and IB help to create inclusive learning for all students in the content areas:

> The WIDA Can Do Descriptors and the Model Performance Indicators [available on the WIDA website] show all teachers, including content area teachers, how to include students. For content areas such as science, it's easier to be aware of the linguistic barriers for ELLs. However, it is important for all teachers to realize that learning content-specific academic language is necessary for success in all classes.

WIDA Can Do Descriptors also help teachers perform other tasks that are part of the instructional routine, such as creating progress reports on students' developing language proficiency. At some schools, teachers use the Can Do statements to communicate about students who are ready to move to the next level of support. Figure 1 shows the Can Do Descriptors for students in Grades 6-8, in the reading domain, for the key use "explain." You can see how students' skills grow as they move through the WIDA Proficiency Levels.

> At WIDA, we believe that 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.
>
> —WIDA Can Do Philosophy

Figure 1. Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition, Grades 6–8. Key Use: Explain. Domain: Reading. WIDA Consortium.

6-8

By the end of each of the given levels of English language proficiency* English language learners can...

	ELP Level 1 Entering	ELP Level 2 Emerging	ELP Level 3 Developing	ELP Level 4 Expanding	ELP Level 5 Bridging	ELP Level 6 Reaching
READING	Process explanations by • Matching content-related objects, pictures, or media to words and phrases • Identifying social or academic topics highlighted in text	Process explanations by • Comparing ideas on the same topic in a series of simple sentences • Identifying how content-related phenomena relate to one another in illustrated text or media	Process explanations by • Illustrating relationships between main ideas and details in paragraphs • Sequencing steps or events to describe processes (e.g., solving math problems)	Process explanations by • Matching content-related cause to effect in graphically-supported text • Highlighting text evidence that points to how systems function (e.g., different forms of government)	Process explanations by • Sorting grade-level text by highlighting elements of the genre (e.g., differentiating the "how" from the "why") • Sequencing events based on cause and effect (e.g., how machines operate)	Process explanations by • Comparing and contrasting information from experiments, simulations, videos, or multimedia sources with that of text on the same topics • Identifying factors that contribute to phenomena in explanations

OF EXPLAIN

Using WIDA Model Performance Indicators

Teachers can use the WIDA Model Performance Indicators (MPIs), which are part of the English Language Development Standards Framework to support multilingual learners in a science writing activity. Look at Level 1, Entering. The table in the figure below shows that students at this level of language can report the process and results of a scientific experiment by producing labeled illustrations using graphic organizers and working with a partner. Compare what the Level 1 students can do with what students at other levels can do, and you'll see the way the MPIs help you visualize student performance in different disciplines at different levels.

Grade 7 strand of WIDA Model Performance Indicators with IB MYP connection.

ELD STANDARD 4: The Language of Science				EXAMPLE TOPIC: Scientific inquiry	

CONNECTION: *Next Generation Science Standards, Earth's Systems MS-ESS2-3:* Analyze and interpret data on the distribution of fossils and rocks, continental shapes, and seafloor structures to provide evidence of the past plate motions.

EXAMPLE CONTEXT FOR LANGUAGE USE: Students report on the process and results of a science experiment to construct scientific knowledge.

COGNITIVE FUNCTION: Students at all levels of English language proficiency will UNDERSTAND how to interpret and represent the results of scientific inquiry.

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Emerging	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	
WRITING	Produce labeled illustrations of scientific questions and conclusions using graphic organizers with a partner	Describe scientific questions and conclusions using graphic organizers (e.g., cloze activity) using word banks with a partner	Describe in detail scientific questions and conclusions using words banks and graphic organizers	Organize language about scientific questions and conclusions using graphic organizers (e.g., paragraph frames)	Summarize scientific questions and conclusions	**Level 6 – Reaching**

TOPIC-RELATED LANGUAGE: Students at all levels of English language proficiency interact with grade-level words and expressions, such as: scientific inquiry, hypothesis, hypothesis testing, observations, results

Martha Barraza from Suzhou Singapore International School (SSIP) in China describes their process for using the MPIs to create instructional units:

> *This year, using WIDA MPIs as models, the team has begun to develop MPIs for each grade level based on the content for each unit of inquiry. The team has engaged in a multi-step process to create relevant MPIs. They have reviewed WIDA MPIs to identify any that align with grade-level content in the SSIP curriculum....Eventually, we hope to work collaboratively with homeroom teachers to show them how WIDA aligns with the IB curriculum and to share the resources the EAL teachers have developed.*

Theme 2: Language and content interdependence—Language development as an integral part of teaching and learning

Given its aim to provide students with an international education, it's not surprising that language is one of the main components of IB programs. IB's Language Policy describes an ability to communicate in more than one language as an attribute of a globally engaged individual.

Likewise, the *WIDA Guiding Principles of Language Development* state that:

- Students' languages and cultures are valuable resources to be tapped and incorporated into schooling.
- Students' academic language development in their native language facilitates their academic language development in English. Conversely, students' academic language development in English informs their academic language development in their native language.

The WIDA ELD Standards Framework is developmental, which means that students can enter at many different points and follow unique, individual language learning pathways. The WIDA framework helps to illustrate that students do not need to attain a certain proficiency level before engaging in content learning or meeting language standards. WIDA resources are intended to guide educators—and not only ESL teachers—in a continual process of designing instruction that builds on and expands students' language strengths and competencies.

> The IB is committed to supporting multilingualism as fundamental to increasing intercultural understanding and international-mindedness, and is equally committed to extending access to an IB education for students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
>
> —IB Language Policy (2014)

Theme 3: Meaningful engagement—Academic rigor through collaboration and accessibility

The IB programs are designed to ensure that students develop transdisciplinary understanding in PYP, and in-depth disciplinary knowledge and understanding in MYP and DP. Educators in international schools support multilingual students in connecting their knowledge and understanding across the content areas.

WIDA English Language Development Standards and academic expectations from content standards are fundamentally interrelated, because students use language in the service of learning. All aspects of teaching and learning involve language. When students write a scientific explanation, negotiate roles in a group project, or deliver a presentation on the results of a lab experiment, they also interact with language suited to particular topics, audiences, purposes, and modes of communication. Like turning on the lights so the puzzle can be assembled, WIDA resources help make the language demands of content learning visible to both educators and students. They highlight ways that all learners are language learners, and all teachers are language teachers. For multilingual students, this attention to language use is especially critical.

> IB is about inclusion. It was built to accommodate schools where the language of instruction is not the mother tongue, yet it is also designed to deliver academic rigor. WIDA shares this philosophy about inclusion and that all students can have access to grade-level academic content.
>
> —Barbara Wrightson, Chadwick International School

International educators recognize how WIDA resources help to provide meaningful access to MYP and DP classes based on students' language proficiency level without foreclosing opportunities. By including students with a wider range of English proficiency levels in all classes, both students and teachers benefit from increased linguistic and cultural diversity. "WIDA builds empathy, helping teachers in IB classes," said Barbara Wrightson of Chadwick.

Theme 4: Balanced assessment—Measuring language development as part of teaching and learning

Within the IB, assessment is viewed as a continuous cycle, in which each part informs the next as part of the teaching and learning process. Likewise, WIDA has developed an integrated system of standards and assessments. This system is designed to serve multiple purposes: satisfy accountability requirements, monitor progress, and, most importantly, improve teaching and learning.

> We use WIDA tools to guide the design of our learning intentions. Then we use the WIDA writing rubric as a guide for planning where each EL currently is, in terms of language development, and where they need to go next.
>
> —Kristie O'Brien, Shanghai Community International School

In addition to using WIDA Screener and WIDA MODEL assessments, teachers are also encouraged to use the Model Performance Indicators (see the Closer Look on page 7) in their formative assessment practices. The strands of MPIs are organized along a continuum of language development and provide an example to guide educators in setting language goals and objectives for particular learning activities, determining appropriate expectations for how students will process and produce language in a given situation, and differentiating language and content assessment practices. Assessing students' language proficiency and development in the classroom can provide evidence of what students know and can do with academic language, and illustrate the role language plays in their ability to communicate, develop, and demonstrate content knowledge.

All but one of the IB schools in our survey reported using WIDA assessments for decision making at their schools. While many other English language assessments are based on a model of general English proficiency, WIDA assessments are designed to measure students' language use in academic contexts across the four language domains of speaking, reading, listening and writing. WIDA scores that describe students' proficiency in academic English provide essential information for IB schools where students face the challenge of working with rigorous academic content throughout the curriculum.

IB schools around the world have also found that the WIDA speaking and writing rubrics that are part of the MODEL assessment are useful for guiding classroom assessment throughout the academic year, as teachers monitor students' progress toward achieving demanding academic content objectives. The use of the same assessment criteria across student performances on academic tasks helps ensure that those performances are being judged consistently, thus making these tools even more useful to teachers.

In addition to the many Model Performance Indicators, T*he WIDA English Language Development Standards and Resource Guide, International Edition* provides a sample expanded strand for each grade level. The expanded strands identify examples of academic language in the discourse, sentence, and word/phrase dimensions and at varying proficiency levels that are related to the content topic of the strand. These strands provide a model for planning instruction and help teachers to develop an instructional language framework that is aligned with the IB aims and objectives.

For the past year, teachers at ISS International School in Singapore have been developing unit plans to guide instruction for EAL students in the MYP program. Fiona Edwards, ESL head for K-12, said that her teachers have created plans that are dynamic, since they are stored on Google Drive and can be changed as needed to support each classroom's student needs.

Below is an example of a Unit Plan, modeled on an expanded strand, that combines WIDA standards and an MYP focus for Grade 7 Mathematics. Page 10 provides an overview and page 11 shows an example.

Unit Plan (MYP + WIDA Standards)

Grade 7/ Mathematics	WIDA Standard Standard 3: Language of Mathematics	Unit Title: 1. Number
Statement of Inquiry: Numbers can be expressed in a variety of forms with patterns existing among original and simplified forms		
Key Concept	**Related Concept**	**Global Context**
Form	*Equivalence, pattern, simplification*	*Identities and relationships*
Inquiry questions		
Factual	How can I simplify numerical expressions? How do I calculate percentage?	
Conceptual	How many kinds of numbers do I know? How can two expressions with the same numbers and the same operations be different?	
Debatable	Are addition and subtraction the same or different? What is a "good deal"?	
MYP Command Terms		
Explain Describe Calculate Evaluate Continue Predict		

Features of WIDA Academic Language (Academic language students will be expected to process and produce)		
Discourse Dimension	**Sentence Dimension**	**Word/Phrase Dimension**
The quantity and variety of oral and written text. The organization, cohesion and relationship between ideas expressed in different genres and text types.	The grammatical structures, conventions, mechanics and fluency associated with sentence level meaning.	The specificity of words or phrases for a given topic or content.
Continue patterns numerically and with descriptions *For example: 2, 4, 6, 8.... Or "a number pattern begins with two and then grows by two each step... continue the pattern for 5 more steps"* **Explain and describe calculations in the microlesson** *For example, "To find percentage, we divide the part by the total and then multiply by 100. So if I scored 15/20 on a test, I would calculate 15 divided by 20, then multiply by 100"* *For example, "To find the prime factors of a number, I can use the 'tree method' we used in class. I start by thinking about any two factor pairs that multiply to make, for example, 30. Then I write those pairs down as 'branches' of the tree. I keep writing each number as the product of two other numbers until the ends of all the branches are prime numbers – these are numbers that only have one and itself as a factor. So using my example from before, I would end up with: 30 = 3 x 2 x 5 as a prime factorization"*	*"An example of a (prime number) is ... because... "* *"An example of a number that is NOT a (prime number) is... because... "* *"I wonder if .... is a (prime number)..."* *"I think the solution is.... because...."* *"A pattern I noticed was..."* *"I think this pattern will look like (....) after 100 terms because..."* *"I tested my rule as follows..."*	• Integer • Decimal • Absolute value • Significant figure • Place value • Percentage • Discount, tax, tips • Increase, decrease • Exponent • Square, square root • Factor • Multiple • Prime factorization

In this example, while WIDA expanded strands provided a structure for content and EAL teachers in creating the plan, the content shows the integration of IB and WIDA frameworks. By using Google Docs or other dynamic curriculum mapping tools, teachers can collaborate to develop and link to key instructional tools. In the above example, the **Statement of Inquiry** was created by content area teachers (Mathematics). The **Key Concept, Related Concept** and **Global Context** columns reflect concepts from IB. The **Inquiry Questions** were designed by teachers and drive the direction of the unit. The **MYP Command** terms are from IB, while the Features of WIDA Academic Language were based on WIDA Performance Definitions and designed by the support team: content teachers with the EAL Specialist and the English Acquisition Teacher. Because the Unit Plans are online, they include links to additional resources; for example, in the Sentence Level column, there is a link to "Complete simple sentence starters."
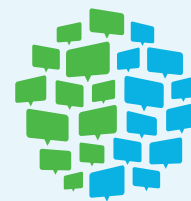
![WIDA]

Conclusion

The WIDA language framework and resources have been welcomed by teachers in IB schools. As Barbara Wrightson noted, there is a philosophical congruence between the two models:

> *IB is about inclusion. It was built to accommodate schools where the language of instruction is not the mother tongue, yet it is also designed to deliver academic rigor. WIDA shares this philosophy about inclusion and that all students can have access to grade-level academic content.*

WIDA resources provide teachers in IB schools with effective tools for working with multilingual students within the IB curriculum. Together, WIDA and IB offer teachers a basis for recognizing what students can do as well as identifying the next steps in their language development—to inform both instruction and curriculum development.

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