

# Strategies for Aligning Your Curriculum to the WIDA ELD Standards Framework

## WIDA Webinar Transcript

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**WIDA Host:** Welcome to WIDA Webinars. This is a free virtual learning opportunity that offers educators insights and resources on a variety of topics relevant to educators of multilingual learners. In this webinar, you'll hear from WIDA's expert staff and researchers. If you want to be notified about upcoming WIDA Webinars, sign up for our newsletters at [wida.wisc.edu/news](http://wida.wisc.edu/news).

**Hannah Haynes:** Hi everyone. Thanks for joining today. It is noon Central, so I'm going to get us started. Christina, you can go to the next slide. We're just going to look at a few logistical things before I hand it off to our host today, Christina. So, connecting to the audio, see that little caret by your mic button. If you're having any issues, you can adjust your settings there. You can go to the next slide. We encourage you to communicate in chat. I see people hopping in there now, sharing where they're from. Continue to do that. Hop in with questions as we go through the webinar. There will be some time at the end for us to answer questions. Go to the next slide. This is being recorded. That recording will be available on the WIDA website in a few weeks. And so just note that this is being recorded. You'll have access to the recording soon. You can go to the next slide. Just a notice here that there is no certificate for completion of this webinar, so we appreciate your attendance and your participation and hope you find the content valuable. And then this next slide is just a disclaimer that because we are a part of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, we cannot allow artificial intelligence in the webinar. If you use an AI tool in the webinar, we will message you and ask you to turn that tool off. And so with that, hello everyone. Welcome to WIDA Webinars. Thanks for joining. In today's webinar, we'll hear from WIDA professional learning facilitator, Christina Nelson. She's got a great presentation for you today. So let's get started. Welcome, Christina.

**Christina Nelson:** Thank you, Hannah, and welcome everyone. I'm seeing all of this interaction already happening in the chat. Thank you for introducing yourselves. It looks like we have people from all over the consortium, all over the country. This webinar is



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really focused on thinking about strategies for aligning your curriculum to the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, which is no small feat. But I will be your facilitator in thinking more specifically about how this can look in your context. I've been in education for over 16 years and as a language arts teacher, English language development teacher, as well as an English language program coordinator, where I got to work with teachers and students from all over the world. And just like Hannah said, if there are any questions that come up, feel free to throw them in the chat box. If for any reason I'm not able to get to your specific question, I am going ahead and putting my email on this slide so you can feel free to email me if you also have any additional questions at [cnnelson2@wisc.edu](mailto:cnnelson2@wisc.edu). And with that, let's go ahead and get started.

All right. So here we are going to be really diving into this topic of content–language integration across the curriculum. So together, we are going to explore the impacts of curricular–level development on student learning and compare it to unit–level and lesson–level development. We will also look at content–language integration as a spectrum, to think about where we are in that spectrum and in which direction we are working to shift our curriculum to meet the specific needs of our multilingual learners. We will also have a chance to explore a tool called the Curriculum Amplification Guide, and I originally designed this guide in conjunction with an elementary teacher here in Kansas City, Missouri, where I am coming to you from. And later, I worked with a high school teacher in Aurora, Colorado, to implement this tool. So I'm pulling from my experience with these educators, with my experience with the tool. And we're going to put in the chat box a link to this focus bulletin that I will be referring to. I encourage you to go ahead and download that focus bulletin. It's a great resource, and also, it's something that you might want to reference as I go through the slides. And we will have an opportunity as well to look at the shifts that this educator made in Aurora, Colorado, in order to really shift their curriculum development to be more integrated and cohesive.

So I want to start us off by thinking about backwards design. When I think about the power of backwards design, I think about my experiences. I think about my experiences with furniture, with putting furniture together and assembling furniture. So in both curriculum development and furniture assembly, the workflow follows a specific logic. If you deviate from that workflow, the structural integrity of your project can suffer. So when you think back to a time when you were tasked to assemble furniture, what supported you to get that work done? What words or phrases or ideas come to mind when you think about what supports you when you're assembling furniture? Maybe IKEA furniture, maybe it's something you've done recently. I'm seeing in the chat box lots of ideas coming through, and I'm seeing them overlap with some of my ideas. So some of the things that came to my mind included seeing the picture. I see some of you also said that. Seeing a picture of that finished product, reading through all those directions



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before I begin, gathering, and organizing those materials. I'm also seeing in the chat, working with another person, collaborating with people is really helpful, and those visuals are really nice. So in prioritizing backwards design, our purpose precedes our actions, and our goal dictates the process rather than the materials dictating the process. But I'm going to be honest with you all here, there are times when I just want to dump out the materials, start with that first step, and immediately begin assembling the furniture, just rummaging through the pieces as I get to them in the instructions. So I get through what needs to be done in the moment without considering how that action might fit in with upcoming instructions. So it allows me to start quicker, which is essentially the point, but once I get deep into the construction process, I will typically begin noticing problems. Forward design in education is an approach which starts by developing the course content and activities, and then afterwards designing those assessments. And this design practice prioritizes activities, it prioritizes learning materials, and instruction, but over student outcomes.

So to expand on our analogy here of furniture assembly, what happens when you don't read through all of the instructions and materials before you begin to take a more forward-- when you do take this more forward design approach? So what happens when you don't do all of those things that could support you? And I'm seeing some ideas come through the chat, which additionally, I have also noticed, because I've been there, and I do. You have pieces left over. I see you make mistakes. Although you initially might go faster, ultimately, it can take longer and be more difficult. There have been times when I have had to go back and reassemble a part, specifically of a nightstand that I was more recently putting together, when I realized I used the wrong piece. And I didn't realize it until I got to the next step. So when parts are assembled incorrectly, you may be left with a wobbly or poorly functioning product. To this day, no lie, I do have a drawer in my nightstand that pulls out crooked, and I have to wiggle it every time I push it back in. Super annoying. But we will not be focusing on forward design, which takes a more teacher-centered approach in centering instruction. We will be thinking more deeply about backwards design in taking a more student-centered approach to centering learning outcomes. So the stages of backwards design starts with identifying the desired results. Here, we are thinking about what knowledge and skills students will master by the end of the learning experiences rather than first focusing on the experiences themselves. So once we've identified the desired outcomes, we determine how students will demonstrate their mastery of the skills and knowledge. So only after we have determined our learning goals and assessments are we ready to plan those learning experiences that will build the knowledge and the skills across the units so that the students feel more prepared to demonstrate their mastery at the end. So lesson-level planning is much like pouring out those pieces of a nightstand, putting it together one instruction at a time. When planning lesson by lesson, using a curriculum maybe I'm



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unfamiliar with, instructions become more about-- my instruction becomes more about covering content rather than supporting students in reaching those long-term learning outcomes. So this often leads to running out of time to cover all units, if I spend too long on a single unit, possibly missing especially important learning opportunities. It could also lead to an assessment that does not line up with the learning experiences that a student might have engaged in throughout the unit. So, for example, during an entire unit, students may be reading non-fiction stories, but at the end, they're asked to write a compare/contrast text about two people or two aspects of the story, which maybe they didn't have opportunities to see models of a compare/contrast text. Maybe they didn't have opportunities to practice the language. So the lesson-level activities may not align directly to the summative assessment.

On the other hand, thinking about unit-level planning, this does typically happen every few weeks, or several weeks, and it can lend itself to backwards design on a smaller scale, since at that unit level, you are still able to see the learning goals. You're still able to see the assessment tasks, and you're able to plan the experiences, the learning experiences backwards from there. However, what we do miss are opportunities to spiral those learning experiences so that students can leverage the knowledge and the skills built in previous units a bit more intentionally to build that more coherent learning experience across all of the units. We also tend to develop materials and activities unit by unit when we're planning at the unit level, rather than having the space to think about ways to adapt pre-existing materials and activities. And in this way, there may be too much time and effort spent on creating new things in the units, and that time could possibly be spent elsewhere in finding student connections to the content. So also, if there are students who benefit from pull-out support classes, as some of you may have experience with, it can be more difficult for that support teacher and those pull-out classes to pre-teach new language and new skills that would support them in being successful in their content without that knowledge. Now, at that curricular-level planning, which is really what the focus of today's webinar is, it's much like thoroughly reading through those instructions to assemble that nightstand, pouring out all the pieces, placing them in organized groups, possibly in the order that I plan on using those materials, and having that picture in front of me as I assemble that nightstand.

So curricular-level planning is that big picture planning that happens yearly. It enhances unit-level and lesson-level planning. So rather than daily or every several weeks, this happens yearly, and it speeds up those planning routines that happen more frequently. So at that curriculum level, we can provide more of a cohesive learning experience by looking across the range of academic and language learning goals, to plan the ways that we can spiral back to important skills and concepts and build on those previous learning experiences across the units. From my experience working with published curricula for



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multilingual learners, there has often been too much content for which I need to get through in a timely manner. And sometimes too many units, depending on that package to that published curriculum. So this can be a good thing in a way because it gives me, as the educator, more opportunities to make some more intentional choices on what to possibly cut or edit or expand on. Or perhaps I'd want to think about how to reorder some of these units to give my students a better experience. When we center our students to make strategic decisions to integrate content and language across the broader curricula, we set the stage for planning those smaller chunks of learning within the units and lessons that will support students as they develop their independent expertise. So taking that bird's-eye view from the curricular level also allows us to reflect on where there may be opportunities to enhance the learning experience as we get to know our students.

So here we can explore where there might be opportunities to bridge our students' home and community experiences and identities to that classroom learning. Depending on our role and priorities and curriculum that we're working with, our curriculum development practices will look different as we think about this idea of the integration of content and language. So some of us may be language specialists, or English language development specialists, working with a language curriculum. Maybe our priority is enhancing our students' linguistic skills. Other educators may be content or classroom teachers here, and working with a content curriculum. And so your priority is really supporting students in reaching content learning objectives. However, all roles and responsibilities include both supporting our multilingual learners to enhance both their content and their language skills, just to different degrees. And honestly, those degrees can shift lesson by lesson. So some lessons may be more content heavy, may feel more content heavy. Some may feel more language heavy, just depending. So throughout our time together, I'm going to ask you to think about which direction are you shifting your curriculum in this amplification process that I'm going to be taking you through. So are you going to be taking a heavy lens in the way that language is intentionally integrated into grade-level content? Or maybe you're more concerned with having that cohesive grade-level content learning experience within your language curriculum. So the ideas that we will talk about can really be applied to anyone coming from either direction. But I want to offer a poll to you all just so that we can get a sense of who's in the room and what contexts we share.

So this poll is just asking you to describe your current context for curriculum development. Feel free to select more than one if you find that more than one describes your current curriculum development work, and our moderator will place that poll in the chat. So maybe you're a math or science or social studies teacher, and you're working from a grade-level content curriculum, and you're thinking more about how to embed



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language development more strategically. Or maybe you are an English language development teacher, and you have your own classes, you have your own curriculum, and you're really thinking about this language curriculum and how you can make it more embedded in content learning. Or, I know from my experience teaching multilingual children, I have been in positions where I have pull-out classes, and I did not have a curriculum. In fact, I was in charge of kind of building it around their needs. Others of you may just be working-- not just, may be working with educators to support them in their curriculum development. So you may not be thinking about your own curriculum, but you might be thinking about ways you can support other teachers. So I'm seeing lots of answers in the chat, or sorry, in the poll. A majority of you are collaborating with educators to support. That's very interesting, and I love to see that. So we're building our own capacity and thinking about how we are doing that work. I see some of you are creating your own curriculum, and my heart goes out to you. I know how challenging that can be, but I also know how amazing that can be because you have a lot of opportunities there. So we are all over in this group, which is wonderful because a lot of the ideas that we will talk about together can be applied to all of these different roles. Thank you so much for engaging in that poll. So now we are going to take a closer look at the Curriculum Amplification Guide and to get a better idea of what it is and how it's organized, and then we'll talk more about how it can be used and how a specific teacher did use it and what decisions that helped her to make.

So the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework was designed for educators to align content curricula across grade levels to the WIDA ELD Standards Framework. So we are placing a link in the chat box to access both the PDF form of this framework as well as the digital explorer. They both have the same content, they're just organized in different ways. So I encourage you to take a look at that. I'll also be referencing specific page numbers, and you'll see in the bottom right-hand corner of the slides when I'm referencing page numbers. Right now, I'll be referencing page numbers of the standards framework. So, the framework offers sample Language Functions, or, what Language Functions are, are examples of how language can work across grade levels and content areas to form those unit-level language goals. And we want all students to reach these unit-level language goals. Now, the framework also offers Language Features, which are specific grammatical and organizational structures that students can learn at the lesson level to achieve those unit-level language goals, those unit-level Language Functions. So for example, a fifth-grade social studies teacher may be planning for all their students to create an argument with a claim and evidence to support that claim. So once it is understood that this is the expectation for all students, the teacher will want to identify the specific Language Features that they will explicitly teach throughout the lessons for students to successfully create arguments with reasons and evidence. Right? So those Language Features can look like this. So a fifth-



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grade social studies teacher may be planning for all their students to create this argument, and these are the different types of connectors that they might use. They might use different types of connectors in order to develop that argument. So the Language Features gives us some specific language that students might use in order to do the work of the Language Function. So then the social studies could look across the Proficiency Level Descriptors, which breaks down . . . here's the Proficiency Level Descriptors that break down what multilingual learners should be able to do by the end of each proficiency level. So then this social studies teacher could look across those Proficiency Level Descriptors, get an idea of how they might support their multilingual students to expand their usage of the language they are focusing on. So the Curriculum Amplification Guide that we will be looking at is designed to be used in conjunction with the framework.

While we work, we are focusing on . . . the work here in this webinar, let's say, is to create more focused and coherent curricula. So we want to look across all units, and to think about how we can formulate those units in a way that'll allow the process at the lesson level, and at the unit level, and make those go a lot quicker. So I encourage you to take a look at the standards framework. The Curriculum Amplification Guide was designed to support teachers to build a language focus within content curricula. However, while developing this tool with an English language teacher, we did realize that her content was more language focused, and that had some embedded content in the form of topics within each unit. So we decided to use this tool to do two things for her. We identified the focus for grade-level content knowledge and skills we wanted to develop, and to take a genre-based approach at focusing on the specific language we wanted to teach. So many of you may be in a similar situation, where you're working with a language curriculum. So as we go through the examples, you may consider how this teacher that you will meet shortly, used this process to guide her work on the integration of content and language to form more focused units across her curriculum. This guide also directs you to dump out and take inventory of all of those pieces and parts that we would . . . just like we would to assemble furniture. But here it's guiding you to take inventory of genres, of activities, and resources used to teach content and language, as well as the assessments used to measure growth. So in doing this, we have an opportunity to find redundancies, opportunities for intentionally reinforcing knowledge and skills previously taught, and where unit-level assessments are assigned, or aligned, or maybe they're not aligned to the lesson-level activities. So that gives us an opportunity to really analyze, take a more analytical perspective of our curriculum. And once all of those large pieces of the curriculum are set, we are better positioned to use our daily and weekly planning time to go deeper and to plan practices more specifically around our students' needs, their interests, their experiences and skills, and ways to really meaningfully make those connections between our students and the curriculum.



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So when I say this guide supports educators to take a genre-based approach, I am referring to what WIDA calls the Key Language Uses. Now, while there are only four of these, each of these can be broken down into smaller genres. We will get to see some examples of this when we see a teacher reflect on her curriculum. But just to give an overview, Key Language Uses are these overarching genres that are covered across content areas and across grade levels to different degrees, and each Key Language Use shares specific characteristics. So they share characteristics like purpose, organization, and patterns of language. So when we're identifying the Key Language Use, the most prominent Key Language Use of a unit, we are really starting the process of pinpointing the specific language patterns and grammatical and organizational patterns. That's what I mean by specific patterns of language. So we're starting the process of pinpointing those just by identifying our Key Language Use. Being exposed to these four Key Language Uses consistently across content areas and grade levels brings more focus and coherence to the language of schooling. It gives students an opportunity to pull from the language resources they've built at other times in other contexts. And as an English language specialist, some content teachers I worked with would struggle with this idea of integrating language into their content units. Often I'd get the question, "Okay, I know I need to do this work, but where do I start?" So Key Language Uses are a great place to start this integration of language into content units. There are few enough for us to choose from, yet they are broad enough to encompass various learning tasks. And in prioritizing a single Key Language Use, we are better able to narrow the scope of resources we want to use, activities we want to facilitate, assessments, tasks we want to design. So while you may only choose one Key Language Use to focus on within a single unit, it is inevitable that you will cover more than one, and it is welcomed. However, we will be explicitly teaching around the language within and expecting the language within a specific Key Language Use. Now many, not all, but many English learner programs include pull-out classes where they may build their language skills in smaller groups with an English language teacher. As an English language teacher myself, it is incredibly helpful for me to know what language they are expected to interpret, what language they're expected to express in their content classes in order for me to support them in building those skills that can be transferred directly to those content classes. So if a content teacher could tell me directly what the major Key Language Use is, that could be super supportive in what decisions I make at an instructional level for those pull-out classes.

Now, these Key Language Uses are present across grade levels and content areas. However, the most prominent Key Language Uses were already identified by our WIDA researchers as they analyzed Common Core, Next Generation Science Standards. This doesn't mean you cannot identify a different Key Language Use as the most prominent in a unit. It's always the educator's choice, of course. As a teacher, you best know the



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curriculum, you best know your students. But if you do want to take a closer look at what those most prominent Key Language Uses are, you'll notice on pages 288 through 290, there's a compilation of all of the different Key Language Use charts, and you can check out which ones have been identified in your content areas and in your grade levels. Another page, the last page of the standards book that I really want to point out to you all is page 219 of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework. It gives a brief overview of those Key Language Uses, with a short definition. Some genre examples are also there, and some sample classroom applications. So when I'm starting to learn about, or even teach other educators about the Key Language Uses, I really like this page. I always recommend having this page handy. It's especially helpful when deciding what is the difference between an informative task and an explanatory task. I feel like those two are often conflated, so you can see some clarity around that as well. And this image is not coming from the standards framework. This image, as well as the next slide, is coming from the Curriculum Amplification Guide and template. So we will place a link to the guide in the chat box again, for those of you who would like to take a closer look.

The Key Language Uses also work as the organizing feature of the standards framework, so it does make sense that it also is the focus of the Curriculum Amplification Guide. This first column here, just looking at the organization of it, it has the three criteria of alignment. The three criteria are match, depth, and breadth. So match is simply identifying the Key Language Use across the units. Depth is looking at the activities and the texts to identify how the Key Language Use is addressed. So there, we're kind of unpacking more of the lesson-level activities. And then breadth is seeing how the Key Language Uses are systematically and consistently addressed across the units. Now, the second column prompts actions that you might take to align the curriculum across the Key Language Uses. And the third column provides ideas for which materials you may want to explore as you engage in those actions. And the fourth column gives some guiding questions that can help prompt you to find connections and disconnections as you search for ways to amplify content-language alignment. So you will see that there is a link in the chat for you to access all of those as well. I just want to keep reiterating that in case the slide is a little small on your screen. So in addition to the guide, we also provide a template that captures important information as you move through the steps of curriculum alignment. So one important piece for analyzing the curriculum is to identify that Key Language Use. We just talked a lot about the Key Language Uses. And we also want to notice where they are addressed throughout the units and how many times they're addressed, to what capacity they're being addressed. So this is why the template is grouped by Key Language Use. So this way, rather than going through the sequential order of units, which is natural, instead here we're looking at them, and comparing them across Key Language Uses. This way, rather than going in sequential order, you're really just able to look across them and think about where you're seeing



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gaps, where you're seeing overlap, where you're seeing those connections. On the very side, it gives you some space to put notes on what you notice that the unit has and what it would benefit from. So really, when I worked with the high school and the elementary school teacher here, we focused on really filling in what we want to do. What are the moves we want to make in order to make this a better, a stronger unit? And we really focused on putting notes like that there. So you'll notice that this document is a Microsoft Word document, so that it can be easily edited across academic contexts.

All right. So now we will get to see what this looks like in action through the lens of a classroom teacher. It will be helpful to have that focus bulletin handy as we go through these slides, just in case you'd like to take a closer look at those pages and at the images that I'll show. So we can put that in the chat again. And yeah, feel free to reference it when you need it. So Maria, I just want to introduce you to Maria. Maria White is a teacher of newcomers. She speaks both Spanish and English, and her classes were mixed grade levels, grades nine through 12. She has seven languages represented in her class. And she was really working with an English language development curriculum. One thing she noticed was a need to have more focused grade-level content development integrated into her unit. So that was a goal that she really had as we went through this process. We will have an opportunity to see the steps that I just highlighted in the previous slides of going through the process and how it looked like when she went through those steps of the process.

So let's first take a closer look at the match criteria. So here we are looking at the content standards, the summative assessments, and any major or reoccurring expressive tasks. So these expressive tasks can be varied across different contexts. So, for example, when working with a science teacher, we noticed that lab reports and summaries were a major reoccurring task across many of her units. A social studies class had database questions as reoccurring tasks in many of their units. So some tasks may be more project- or activity-based. As you look through the standards and the assessments and the reoccurring or those major tasks, you will want to identify what the most prominent Key Language Use is in those tasks. So what language are we expecting our students to produce, and what genre of language does that represent? So the WIDA ELD Standards Framework can help you narrow your decision based on your grade level and the content area that you're focusing on, but you will want to prioritize what genre the assessment elicits. We're assuming here that you have a strong, a well-built assessment here. So you'll want to really prioritize how are we asking students to express their understandings of the grade-level content objectives by the end of the unit. If there is limited time, one way to shorten this process would be to simply look at the assessments and identify the Key Language Use from there. So as you move through the other criteria, you will be guided to notice where that Key Language Use is

reinforced throughout the curricular materials and where there may be some disconnects. Okay.

So now after this, I do want to reflect on this process and what it looked like in Maria's work. Now, what worked for Maria, I just want to preface all of this by saying, what works for her doesn't necessarily work for everyone. This is simply one example based off of her curriculum, the demographic of students that she was working with, and her own goals that she had set as we went through the process of aligning her curriculum a bit more strongly to the WIDA ELD Standards Framework. Yours may look different. So we'll consider how it might look different as we go through these slides. So since Maria is working with an English language development curriculum for her high school newcomers, we approached this match criteria in two ways. First, we wanted to identify a content focus for each unit because the curriculum that she was working with was originally designed to address three to four content areas in each unit. However, we did not find this conducive to creating a focus for language development for her purposes. It didn't provide that cohesive learning experience that we were really looking for across each of the units. So additionally, Maria told me that the units are often-- she did the curriculum before, one year, this was her second year using the curriculum, and that the curriculum was too long. She had to cut parts off as she would go through. So rather than cutting parts out, just as a reactionary thing to do, we decided to make very intentional choices around which content to center each unit on, which naturally cut down the length of the unit, so it helped with that. And then as we dug into the units, we noticed that unit two in her curriculum had a lot of vocabulary and activities around the language of school, which generally was a good thing. The students needed that foundational language, but it didn't tie to any specific content area. So we let that be for the moment because we felt kind of stuck there, and I say that to say, when you start feeling stuck, just keep moving and trust the process, and that's what we did. And we just thought, once we go through the rest of the criteria, maybe some ideas will unfold, and we were right, and you'll get to see those shortly. So as you work through the criteria, it really isn't important that all units are perfectly matched to a Key Language Use. Some units may need a little more work to find that alignment, and other criteria may provide you guidance to do that work.

So once we've identified the most prominent Key Language Use for each unit, or at least attempted to, we were set up better to see how the different texts and activities provide model language that students can reference as they develop their language skills. And also the different planned opportunities to practice that language throughout the units. So again, we are looking at the reoccurring activities, and this time we are looking at both expressive and interpretive materials, including readings, videos, audios, graphs. So we are including those interpretive materials in this analysis. Multilingual



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students, often they benefit from exploring a variety of genres and being exposed to different text structures and different authors' language choices. So this is when we can look at how the units are grouped by Key Language Use and identify other, more specific genres that we use to address those Key Language Uses. Once Maria and I reached the end of analyzing the depth of language development, we had some important discoveries, and here's a reflection of our discoveries. So looking at more of the learning tasks and the materials really didn't help us to create a focus for unit 2. It still felt a little bit too focused on vocabulary words of school, and we were still just unclear of what that content focus could be. Unit 5, we noticed when we were looking through those smaller tasks, especially those interpretive materials, we noticed that there really wasn't a mentor text that aligned with the summative assessment. So the summative assessment was more about writing an informative email, but there were no mentor texts and no opportunities for students to practice. We also noticed in unit 6, it was asking students to produce informative language on their summative assessment. However, the reading materials throughout the lessons were aligned with the Key Language Use of Narrate. So there was a lot more fiction texts rather than informative texts. So at first glance, the summative assessment at unit 10, when we originally just identified the Key Language Use, we saw health and safety. So we thought we knew what we were deciding there, but as we looked through the rest of the materials, we noticed that the unit addressed topics that spanned fiction plays, staying safe at school, describing how they feel. They all started to feel a bit disconnected from each other. So that was something else we wanted to write down as something we want to amplify, make better. Taking time out to make critical observations of the units allowed us to make some decisions for our next moves in order to make this a more cohesive experience for our students, a more integrated experience. So we decided to create a mentor text that aligned with the text structure of an email. In unit 5, that was pretty clear that that's what needed to happen. Although we found mostly fiction texts in unit 6 as mentor texts, we decided to keep them because we noticed within those texts, there was a lot of descriptive language, really rich descriptive language that students could utilize in their informative texts. So we decided to keep the focus on descriptive language, utilize those fiction texts, and use the Language Features that we highlight within those fiction texts to support their informative writing. Since the lessons felt disconnected in unit 10, and then Maria let me know that she was not able to get to unit 10 in the previous year, we realized that maybe it might be a good decision to cut it from the curriculum. We weren't set on it, but we thought that it could be possible.

We also noticed that we have opportunities to tap into students' interests and identities and to find some supplemental activities and readings that could further engage students and make them feel a bit more connected to the units. Now, the breadth criteria allows us to take a more bird's-eye view of the curriculum. So in depth, we're



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really in the weeds. We're really looking at those pieces and parts of the curriculum. And in breadth, we get to fly above, look at everything, and see how it fits together. So while engaging in this criteria, you may want to look at the scope and sequence of your curriculum if you do have a packaged curriculum, a published curriculum, to support that big picture view. You will also definitely want to look at the previous work you did in the match and depth criteria and reflect on what you decided to be the most prominent Key Language Uses and those other, more specific genres that are addressed. This is where we get to notice-- this breadth criteria is where we get to notice which Key Language Uses and other genres are addressed and how we're addressing them across the entire curriculum.

Here is also where we may see opportunities to spiral activities and to build on previous learning. So throughout the alignment work, Maria and I had trouble with unit 2. As we looked across the units, we noticed some connections between unit 2 and unit 1. So we decided it best to combine those two units to create the first unit that the students will encounter. So this made sense for her students, especially since they are all newcomers, and both of these units felt really light on content, but a lot of their vocabulary words built on each other. So like you're at school, you're making introductions to new students. We were thinking this would be a good opportunity to put two light units together, and also it alleviates the issue that Maria was having with getting through all of the units within a given school year. While we only have the Key Language Uses of Inform and Narrate represented throughout this curriculum, we did notice that there are a variety of genres still within those two Key Language Uses that we were addressing. So some of those genres included comics, pamphlets, poems, stories. So we thought that that was actually a really good thing that was happening in the curriculum. And then looking at how one unit flows into the next. So unit 10 continued to stick out to us as one that needed to be cut, not only because she couldn't get to it, because we don't want to just be reactive, but also because of the themes of the unit, and we also noticed a better option, which I'll talk to on the next slide. So since health and safety did not seem like a good place to end the year for her specific students, this reinforced our decision to cut it from the curriculum.

In addition to combining units 1 and 2 that I just talked about, we decided to combine units 4 and 9. So since they both shared fiction stories, this way we were able to expose them to different types of fiction stories. So it wouldn't just be science fiction, it would be science fiction and folktales. And this also helps us with the length of the curriculum again, because we were having challenges with getting through the curriculum in a timely manner. We also decided to end the year on unit 8, which focuses on career and college planning. Now remember, her kids are ninth through 12th graders, mixed grade level class. So it made a lot of sense for this group of high schoolers. Some of them will



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be graduating and thinking about what's to come in the next years after high school. So it actually started to all come together once we got to that breadth level and analyzed the work that we did at the depth and the match level. So throughout this process, Maria was able to do quite a few things. She was able to identify one priority Key Language Use for each unit, and by doing this, the lesson-level language academic learning objectives were better able to build towards that larger unit-level learning goals. So we were able to ensure that by the time students would get to that summative assessment where they're expressing what they understand of those content learning objectives, that they weren't met with a task asking for skills that they were never able to see models of, that they were never able to develop or practice throughout the unit. And since we were working with a language curriculum, we also wanted to create a single content focus for each unit. So in doing this, we were able to design activities that embedded directly into academic content. And this built more cohesion across the learning experiences of each unit. And while taking that bird's-eye view to explore breadth of alignment, we finalized some decisions about rearranging, combining, and cutting units. So this way, instead of making reactive decisions once we realize in the moment that we're running out of time, we intentionally chose where to spend more and less time. And additionally, having a map of the genres and the skills we are focusing on across the units gives us opportunity to reinforce and build on skills that were built in previous units.

So, now that we've had a chance to explore the Curriculum Amplification Guide and how it worked for one teacher, and again, how it works for one does not mean it's going to be how it works for all, I just want to take a little time to reflect on some potential next steps. So a common through line of the Key Language Uses allows teachers across grade levels and across content areas to find connections across their curriculum. So when teachers find these connections, they are better equipped to share resources and ideas and activities to engage students in language development within their content area classes. It also supports educators to find opportunities to expand on the language skills built in other classes and in other grade levels. And it provides a starting point for teachers to collaboratively plan units and lessons. So as an English language teacher working with a content teacher, I know that I'm better able to support my content teacher and the students in that class when I know the genre focus of the unit. Excuse me. Now, not only does it help decide the specific language goals across the unit, but if there are pull-out classes happening, it helps to guide the language instruction within those classes as well.

So I just want to circle back to this analogy that I made earlier, thinking about how the process of backwards design is applied to assembling furniture. So we know that assembling furniture can be time-consuming. So looking for shortcuts is common of

course. And at first it may feel quicker to start at that first set of instructions, pulling from the pieces as you need them, but sometimes it can actually take longer. So there are times when I didn't realize I assembled a part incorrectly until it was too late, and I had to go back and unassemble just to reassemble again. So reading all the directions, organizing all the pieces can feel laborious, but sometimes we need to go slow to go fast. So as you get started with aligning your curriculum, I encourage you to start slow. Some of you may have already been integrating the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, and you might have some of that done. Others of you might just be starting. You might not have even started to look at the standards framework, and that's okay too. So if you are just starting, you may want to just focus on matching the units across the curriculum to a Key Language Use, and just pause there. Sometimes that is enough work for one year. And then in the coming years, assuming that you have that same curriculum, you can follow up by developing the depth and the breadth. So that's one option. For those of you who have already aligned each content unit to a Key Language Use, maybe you've even already aligned it to different functions and features, it may make more sense for you to engage in this guide with a focus on analyzing the depth and analyzing the breadth of the alignment, and consider next steps for working towards more grade-wide and cross-curricular development. No matter how you address aligning your curriculum, it is helpful to set goals for what you would like to see from the curriculum at the end. It might be something as simple as a clear genre focus for each unit, or maybe you are ready to start making language goals for each unit. Or like Maria, one of our goals was to shorten the units more strategically, which this process supported us to do. So once you have some of those goals set, prioritize progress over perfection always. It won't be perfect. It might be messy. Remember that the curriculum works differently with different students, of course, so no matter how much planning we do, challenges will always arise. And honestly, if we look at it in a glass-half-full kind of way, challenges can work as catalysts for innovation. So take them as an opportunity to continue to amplify your curriculum.

We are at the Q&A. I have my email here again, just in case, because I will get to the questions that I can, and I have some here. So I'm going to start at the top here. So I see some of you are trying to find connections between the English language arts curriculum and the English language development curriculum. How do we connect the two? So it depends. If you have an English language development curriculum that is already set, it's a bit harder to find those natural connections. When I was building my own curriculum around a class that I was supporting, in this case, it was an English language arts curriculum, we started at the summative assessment and thought about what do students need to do in order to be successful on this assessment. What do they need to do with language, and what skills do they need to have? What academic skills do they need to have? And I really focused my efforts on the language aspect in those pull-



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out ELD classes. So when finding those connections between your content area classes and maybe those support classes, that Key Language Use can really be that place, that intersection between the two classes, that you can really leverage in order to decide what language you want to explicitly teach in those pull-out classes. Although WIDA does a lot of work with informing curriculum development, we do not require or tell anybody to purchase individual curriculum. So unfortunately, I won't be able to answer the question about what is a good curriculum. I also won't be able to answer questions about Maria's specific curriculum for purposes of . . . just to make sure I'm not saying anything that I shouldn't. Yes, AI can. So I'm wondering if AI programs can help with making these units from our curriculum. I think AI can definitely support. I know we have a colleague that-- oh, I don't have the link to her work, but maybe one of our moderators do. Lynn Willner Schafer also did a WIDA Webinar about how you might want to utilize AI to inform some of the decisions that you make when you're integrating content and language, when you're aligning your curriculum to the standards framework. So I don't know if any of my moderators have that handy. If you want to put it in the chat box, a link to Lynn Schafer Willner's work around AI and the standards framework.

**Moderator:** We can do that, Christina.

**Christina Nelson:** Awesome. Yeah. So I have a question here about using the word genre, and I understand how that could come off a little bit confusing because I was using the word genre when I was talking about the Key Language Uses. I probably shouldn't have done it exactly like that. So we call them genre families in the standards framework, which I don't know is any clearer, but when I say the Key Language Uses are more umbrella genres, and then you have the smaller genres that are underneath that could comprise anything, like we were just talking folk tales. I'm looking at the references of the question. Comics. Yeah. So we could talk about how the genre umbrella can house a lot of smaller genres. The genre umbrellas being the Key Language Uses, or the genre families, if you want to use the terminology from the standards framework Okay. And I see a last question here is, in the instance of unit 2 that did not have a clear content focus, if you are not able to cut the unit, would you recommend looking at Standard 1? So Standard 1, keep in mind, is the language of instruction, the social and instructional language. So Standard 1 really doesn't make sense outside of the other standards. So we want to utilize Standard 1, social and instructional language, while we are using the language of science, while we are using the language of social studies. So that's really talking about how students are collaborating, and how they are bringing in their own perspectives, their own identities, their own ways of thinking, into those collaborative conversations. You definitely still want to build in that foundational language, especially when we were talking about Maria's students, who are all newcomers. We wanted to build that foundational language, so it was definitely



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important. But we can build foundational language within a content. There was another unit I worked on with Maria, and I can also share a link to the Standards in Action webpage, which was another project that I worked on with Maria. Very excited to work with her to create videos of her working with her newcomers, and it gives an example of her building that foundational language. In this case, it was numbers. So the students were just saying the numbers aloud, and that felt a little bit too light. So we embedded it into mathematical equations, and we started getting them to explain mathematical equations, still using the terminology that was based in her unit. So the terminology was the language of math. What is the divide sign? What's the difference between divide and division? And the language of numbers. But we decided to combine it in a way that felt more instructionally sound for 17-year-olds, 16-year-olds, who are developing their understanding of numbers, but also want to develop their understanding of mathematical concepts that are common for that age level.

Looking at another question here. We are getting a curriculum specifically for ELL students that runs concurrent to their new classroom curriculum. How do I know if it follows the WIDA framework and standards? Well, I don't know-- sorry, I'm getting hot, so I'm taking off my sweater. I don't know if I can tell you how you will know. This process is more so about taking you through it to allow yourself to see where it does and where it does not align. So I don't know if there's a stamp that'll immediately tell you. We used to have something called WIDA Prime. I'm not sure if that's still active. I don't think it's used that often, so there's not a lot of curriculums that are published with a seal of approval of alignment. But this process that I just took you through is one that I would encourage you to go through, not only to get to know the curriculum yourself, but to go ahead and make those decisions yourself. Because curricula out there that is published doesn't really do that work explicitly for us, this process is really built to think about how we might do that as educators.

Okay. I'm going to go ahead and stop there with the Q&A. Again, if you have any questions, feel free to or I will try to get somebody else who can answer that question better for you, if you have something more specific about the standards. I also want to just say thank you all for coming. There's so many of you, and this was super exciting for me. If you want to subscribe to our newsletter, we encourage you to do so to get more information about future WIDA Webinars and other tools and resources and publications. And if you would like to give us some input on our WIDA Webinars, we will go ahead and share a link to that. And you can continue to follow us on social media, and I wish you all a wonderful afternoon, evening, wherever you might be. Morning, wherever you might be. Thank you so much for coming.