

The WIDA Can Do Philosophy



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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. 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.

The efforts of every stakeholder in the school community, from home care providers to superintendents, can enhance the education of language learners. The more we know about their cultural backgrounds, home environments and formative experiences, and the positive contributions these experiences afford our school communities, the more effective standards-based instruction will be. We believe practitioners and educators have the power to recognize and unleash the potential that language learners bring to their learning communities.

Everything WIDA does is supported by the Can Do Philosophy. Our work begins with articulating examples of language learners’ assets, and continues with how we support education systems, how we design our products, and how we conduct our research.

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

The Can Do Philosophy in Action

WIDA's Can Do Philosophy is visible in our products and services, but also extends beyond our organization into the educational systems and organizations interacting with us and our work.

WIDA supports education systems where the Can Do Philosophy empowers...

- **Linguistically diverse students and their peers** to share their experiences, knowledge, cultures, skills, and interests, while supporting one another.
- **Families** to advocate on behalf of their children's beliefs and aspirations about education and success in life, to share their social, cultural and linguistic capital with their learning community, and to nurture growth and learning at home and in the community.
- **Communities** to shape perspectives of educators, practitioners, students, and families through diverse experiences and offer resources and supports to build upon the learning happening in school.
- **Educators** to unleash learners' potential and serve as their advocates in culturally responsive ways, to continue to grow their capacities by learning from their students, to inspire active engagement of students and families, and to collaborate to promote effective strategies and seek solutions together.
- **Administrators** to build systems uniting schools and communities with a vision, time, and space for meaningful collaboration in support of language development and academic achievement of language learners.
- **Researchers and Policymakers** to positively influence the focus and direction of programs, schools, and systems in serving the interests of language learners, highlighting students' unique characteristics and needs to advocate for positive change.

WIDA enacts the Can Do Philosophy through its...

- **Standards** that allow educators to recognize and support their students' academic language development and academic achievement, serving as a foundation for curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- **Assessments** that build awareness of language learners' strengths and provide valuable information to educators, students, and families. WIDA's assessment design includes built-in supports that allow learners to show what they can do and serves as a model for classroom, school, and district language proficiency assessment.
- **Professional Learning** that is sustainable and transformative, focusing on teaching and learning that supports language learners and their families by building on their strengths. Further, it promotes dynamic collaboration among educators and meaningful student engagement.
- **Research** that provides timely, meaningful, and actionable results to educators, advancing awareness of the role of language learning in achievement along with the unique traits attributable to language learners. Our research design concentrates on supporting data-based decision-making and sound policy throughout education systems.



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