

**Transforming the Conversation Through Asset-Based Teaching:
Building on Learners’ Strengths**

*Jon Nordmeyer, International Programs Director, WIDA
jon.nordmeyer@wisc.edu*

An asset-based approach to instruction builds on what learners can do and helps students to take ownership for their learning. Effective instruction for English language learners builds on individual students' creativity, proficiency levels and background knowledge. Using the WIDA English language development framework, participants will explore how to scaffold learning for students at different proficiency levels.

Recognizing Student Assets

➤ ***Video Clip: Media That Matters “Immersion”***

- *Pre: Why is math sometimes considered easy for English language learners?*
- *During: Watch the video and take notes on how language is used in this lesson.*
- *Post: What were some challenges Moises faced?*

The WIDA Can Do Philosophy

“Teaching and learning should revolve around who our language learners are, what they can do and how we can benefit from the tremendous assets they bring to school.”

- Margo Gottlieb, WIDA Lead Developer

➤ ***Consider the student portrait of Moises.***

<i>Type of Assets</i>	<i>What is one strength in this area?</i>	<i>How might we build on this asset?</i>
<i>Linguistic</i>		
<i>Academic</i>		
<i>Personal</i>		

Using Student Assets to Scaffold Instruction & Assessment

Building on student assets: Considering a student portrait and a specific learning task:

- ✓ How can students use strengths in one domain to support their development of another?
- ✓ How might a students' proficiency in home language support this learning task?
- ✓ How might teachers build on students' experiential assets?

WIDA Can Do Descriptors:

- Help to interpret assessments by explaining language proficiency levels
- Provide support planning for differentiation of instruction and for interpreting assessment
- Describe *possible* ways a student might use language in academic contexts
- Should not be used for evaluation or as an exhaustive checklist for language proficiency

Synthesis and Reflection

We don't learn from experience, but from reflection on experience. (Dewey)

- ✓ *What are you doing now to build on student assets that you want to amplify?*
- ✓ *What new possibilities for an asset-based approach to ELLs do you see?*

Learn More:

wida.wisc.edu

- **First steps: WIDA Institute** - Four-day introduction to the WIDA standards and assessment system.
- **Next steps: WIDA Symposium** – Two-day forum for innovation to explore recent research, preview new instructional resources and build school-wide systems.