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Multilingual Learning
Research Center



***MLRC Action
Research Capstone***



Suzhou Singapore International School

Designing Shared WIDA Support Tools to Strengthen Collaboration for Multilingual Learners

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Research Topic: Collaboration

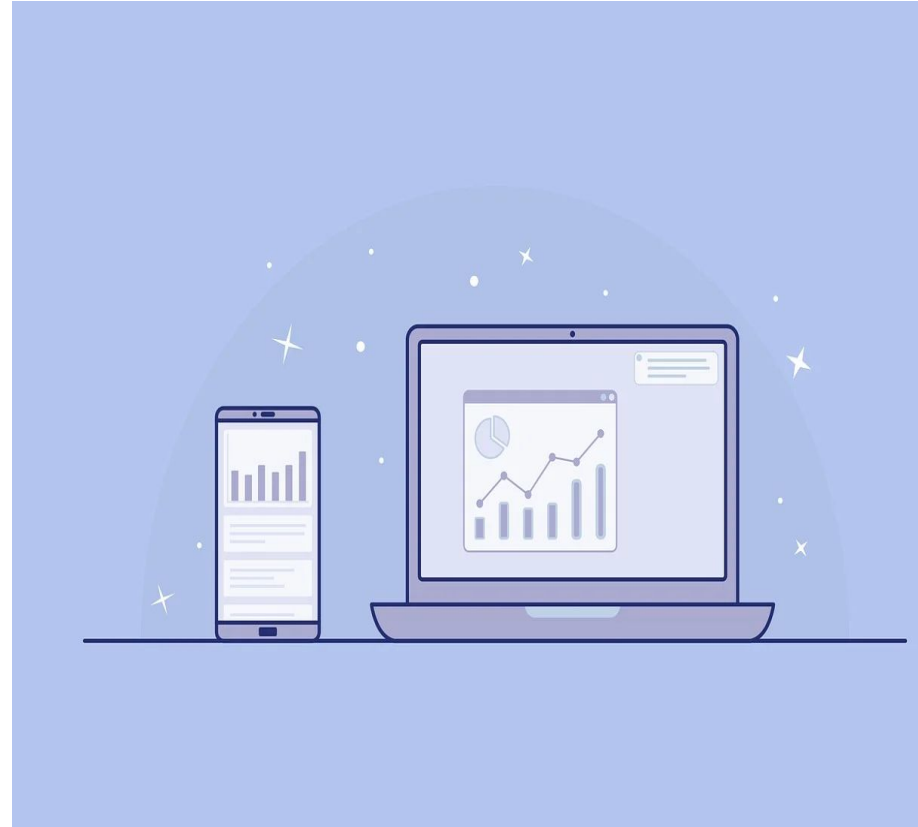
This project explores how teacher-designed WIDA support tools can strengthen shared understanding among:

- EAL teachers
- Classroom teachers
- School leaders
- Families



Research Question

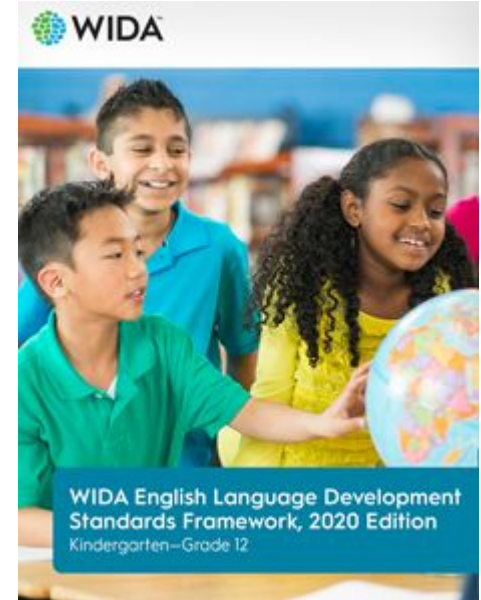
How can teacher-designed WIDA support tools strengthen shared understanding and collaboration among teachers, leaders, and families who support multilingual learners?



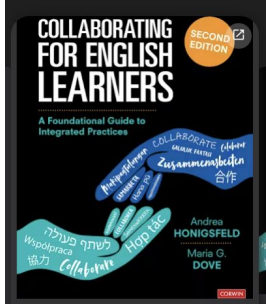
Problem of Practice

WIDA scores provide valuable information about multilingual learners' language development, but the meaning of those scores is not always clear to families, classroom teachers, or school leaders.

When WIDA data is difficult to understand, it becomes harder to build shared understanding and support students consistently across school and home.



Literature Review



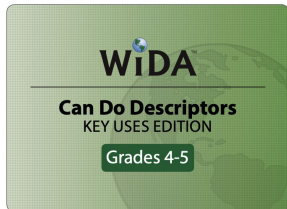
- **Collaboration matters:** Multilingual learners are better supported when EAL specialists, classroom teachers, leaders, and families share responsibility for language development.

(Honigsfeld & Dove, 2019; WIDA, 2020)



- **Families need accessible communication:** Family engagement is stronger when school information is clear, practical, and linguistically accessible.

(WIDA Family & Community Engagement, n.d.)



- **WIDA data becomes more useful when it is actionable:** Proficiency levels and Can Do Descriptors help translate scores into examples of what students can do and how adults can support next steps.

(WIDA Can Do Descriptors, n.d.; WIDA, 2020)

Methodology

I designed and shared a **Multilingual Learner Family Guide App** to make WIDA levels easier to understand.

The app explains what students can do at different WIDA levels and provides home support suggestions. I collected early feedback through a short survey and informal stakeholder responses.



Methodology

The app was designed as a family-friendly tool that explains WIDA levels, language domains, and home support strategies in accessible language.



Methodology

The app was created to move beyond reporting WIDA scores by giving families clear examples of school supports, home strategies, and encouragement connected to language growth.



WHAT HELPS AT SCHOOL

- Graphic organizers for reading and writing tasks
- Pre-reading vocabulary preparation before new topics
- Extended time on tests and written assignments
- Collaborative group work with structured roles
- Simplified versions of grade-level texts when needed



HOW YOU CAN HELP AT HOME

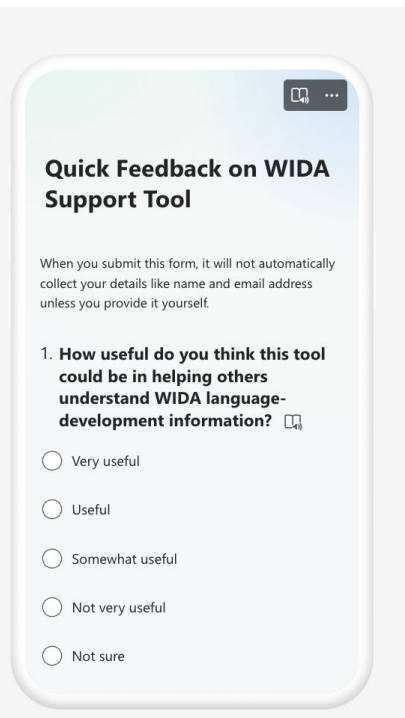
- 1 Ask open-ended questions about school — 'What was interesting today?' rather than yes/no questions
- 2 Read together in English or your home language — both build comprehension
- 3 Play word games together (simple card games, matching games, word searches)
- 4 Encourage your child to explain things to you in English — teaching builds fluency
- 5 Praise effort and risk-taking, not just correctness



A NOTE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Your child is becoming a real communicator. Their confidence is growing, and so is their English.

Stakeholder Feedback: The App Helped Make WIDA More Understandable and Actionable



The screenshot shows a mobile app interface for a feedback form. At the top right, there is a speech bubble icon and a three-dot menu icon. The title 'Quick Feedback on WIDA Support Tool' is centered. Below the title, a disclaimer states: 'When you submit this form, it will not automatically collect your details like name and email address unless you provide it yourself.' The first question is '1. How useful do you think this tool could be in helping others understand WIDA language-development information?' followed by a small icon of a person with a speech bubble. There are five radio button options: 'Very useful', 'Useful', 'Somewhat useful', 'Not very useful', and 'Not sure'.

Quick Feedback on WIDA Support Tool

When you submit this form, it will not automatically collect your details like name and email address unless you provide it yourself.

1. How useful do you think this tool could be in helping others understand WIDA language-development information? 

☐ Very useful

☐ Useful

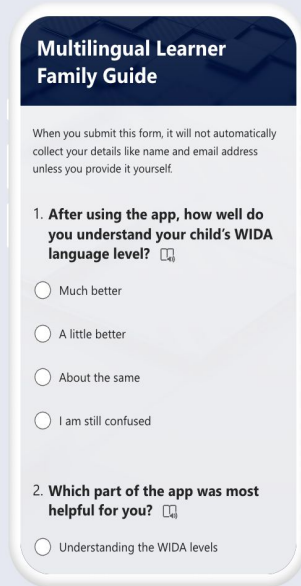
☐ Somewhat useful

☐ Not very useful

☐ Not sure

- 6/6 early respondents rated the app “**Very useful.**”
- Respondents said the app clarified WIDA levels and student progress.
- Feedback suggested the app strengthened the connection between school and home support.
- Respondents saw value for parent meetings, homeroom teacher planning, and shared next steps.
- Suggested improvements included more translation options, a share button, optional teacher notes, and a parent question/resource space.

Family Feedback: Early Family Feedback Shows Increased Understanding



**Multilingual Learner
Family Guide**

When you submit this form, it will not automatically collect your details like name and email address unless you provide it yourself.

1. After using the app, how well do you understand your child's WIDA language level? 

☐ Much better

☐ A little better

☐ About the same

☐ I am still confused

2. Which part of the app was most helpful for you? 

☐ Understanding the WIDA levels

- 2 family responses have been received so far.
- Both families responded in Korean, showing the value of allowing home-language feedback.
- Both parents reported that the app helped them understand WIDA levels **“Much better.”**
- Both parents selected **“Understanding the WIDA levels”** as the most helpful part of the app.
- One parent suggested adding clearer guidance for how students can study at home.

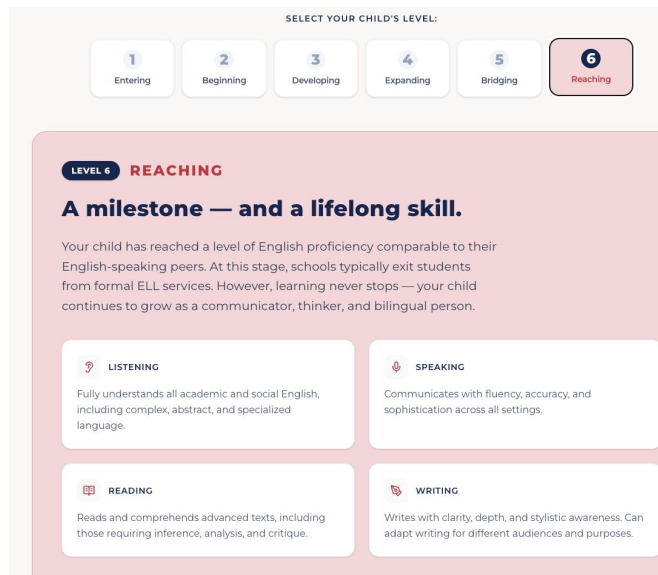
Discussion

The early findings suggest that WIDA support tools can act as bridges between assessment data and practical support.

The app did not replace collaboration. Instead, it created a clearer starting point for conversations among families, teachers, and school leaders.

The app helped bridge:

- **Data → Understanding**
- **EAL expertise → Classroom practice**
- **School language → Family access**



Discussion

Relevance for my school:

The app can support parent meetings, WIDA score communication, homeroom teacher planning, and shared language around student growth.

Relevance for other schools:

Other international schools may face similar challenges when explaining language proficiency data to multilingual families and classroom teachers.

Importance for the field:

Teacher-designed tools can help make language-development knowledge more accessible, practical, and collaborative.



[illegible]

This shifted my project from collecting vocabulary strategies to designing shared WIDA support tools. The focus became more specific: how can tools help different stakeholders understand multilingual learner development and respond more effectively?

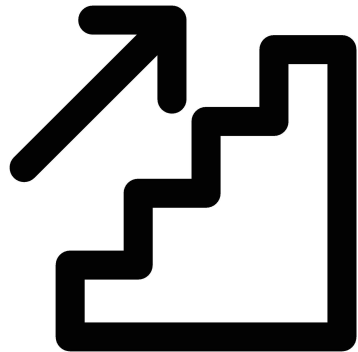
Limitations

- Survey data represents early feedback, not a full evaluation of long-term impact.
- Parent responses are still limited because the survey was sent near the end of the project timeline.
- More feedback is needed after updated WIDA results are shared with families.



Next steps

- Add more translation options
- Add clearer home-study guidance by WIDA level
- Add a parent question/resource space
- Add easier sharing features
- Explore how homeroom teachers might use the tool during planning



Conclusion: From Scores to Shared Understanding

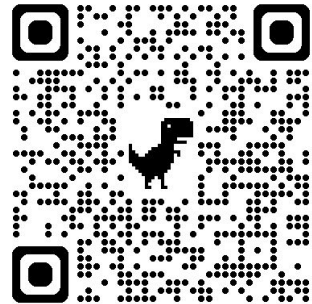
This project helped me see that WIDA data becomes more powerful when it is easier for others to understand and use.

By turning language-development information into a clear, accessible tool, EAL teachers can support stronger collaboration with families, classroom teachers, and school leaders.

[Explore the app by clicking this link or scanning the QR Code!](https://wida-family-guide.replit.app)

<https://wida-family-guide.replit.app>

This educator-created tool references and adapts concepts from the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework. *This tool is not affiliated with, reviewed by, sponsored by, or endorsed by WIDA.*





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Feel free to contact me with any questions, comments or feedback.

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