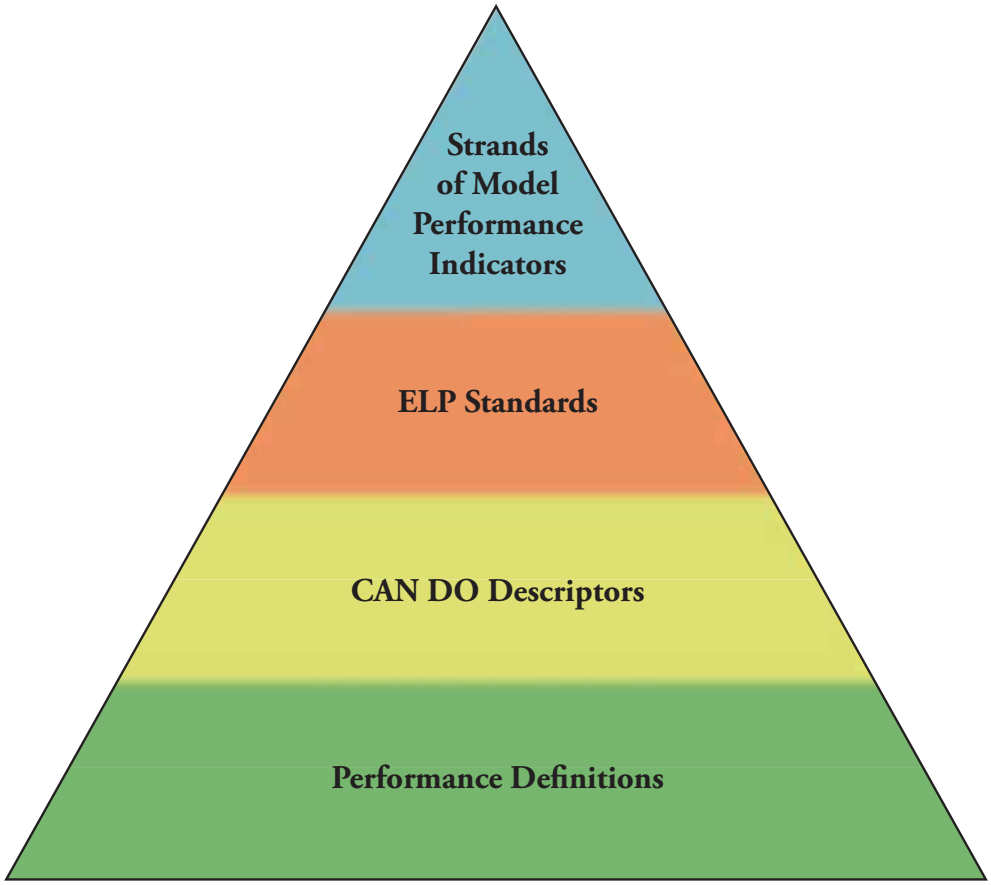
Figure 5A: The Relationship among WIDA's Strands of Model Performance Indicators, ELP Standards, CAN DO Descriptors and Performance Definitions



5.2 Performance Definitions for the Levels of English Language Proficiency

The Performance Definitions, presented in Figure 5B and at the start of the standards' matrices, frame the ELP standards. They provide criteria that shape each of the six levels of English language proficiency. The three bullets within each proficiency level in the Performance Definitions also correspond to the categories or components of the Speaking and Writing Rubrics (see section 5.3); namely,

- **Linguistic Complexity**- the amount and quality of speech or writing for a given situation
- **Vocabulary Usage**- the specificity of words or phrases for a given context
- **Language Control**- the comprehensibility of the communication based on the amount and types of errors

Figure 5B: Performance Definitions

At the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners will process, understand, produce or use:

6- Reaching	• specialized or technical language reflective of the content areas at grade level • a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level • oral or written communication in English comparable to proficient English peers
5- Bridging	• specialized or technical language of the content areas • a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays or reports • oral or written language approaching comparability to that of proficient English peers when presented with grade level material
4- Expanding	• specific and some technical language of the content areas • a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related sentences or paragraphs • oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with sensory, graphic or interactive support
3- Developing	• general and some specific language of the content areas • expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs • oral or written language with phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that may impede the communication, but retain much of its meaning, when presented with oral or written, narrative or expository descriptions with sensory, graphic or interactive support
2- Beginning	• general language related to the content areas • phrases or short sentences • oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support
1- Entering	• pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas • words, phrases or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-, choice or yes/no questions, or statements with with sensory, graphic or interactive support

Linguistic Complexity

Linguistic complexity refers to the amount of discourse (oral or written), the types and variety of grammatical structures, the organization and cohesion of ideas and, at the higher levels of language proficiency, the use of text structures in specific genres. For example, expository essays often include the use of language to foreshadow, argue and summarize (Schleppegrell, 2004). As ELLs gain proficiency in English, their processing abilities and use of complex structures increase accordingly.

Vocabulary Usage

The role of vocabulary, in particular, the use of academic language associated with content-based instruction, has been documented as critical in the literacy development of second language learners. In fact, "mastery of academic language is arguably the single most important determinant of academic success; to be successful academically, students need to develop the specialized language of academic discourse that is distinct from conversational language" (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, & Rivera, 2006, p.7). In the Performance Definitions, as students progress from the Entering to Reaching levels of proficiency, we witness change in vocabulary use from general language to specific language to specialized or technical language that is required in processing or responding to a task.

Figure 5C gives example sets of general, specific and technical terms associated with ELP standards 2-5 for a given grade level cluster. These examples illustrate ELLs' second language acquisition; they are not to be confused with the three tiers of general vocabulary development described by McKeown, Beck, & Kucan (2002) as high frequency words, rich words and low-frequency words. There are many high-frequency words in English, for example, that have multiple meanings used in a variety of contexts which make them difficult for ELLs.

Figure 5C: Examples of General, Specific and Technical Language across the Grade Level Clusters and ELP Standards

Standard	Sample Grade Level Cluster	General Language	Specific Language	Technical Language
The **language** of Mathematics	1-2	in all	total	sum
The **language** of Language Arts	3-5	person	character	protagonist
The **language** of Science	6-8	knee	kneecap	patella
The **language** of Social Studies	9-12	people	population	demographics

Language Control

Language control reflects the extent to which a communication is comprehensible. Comprehensibility is measured by the number and types of errors committed in oral or written discourse that affect the meaning or intent of the message. These errors involve lapses in fluency, grammatical usage, phonology (the sounds used by a particular language), and semantic choice (the selection of words to convey meaning).