

Who are our multilingual students?

- Visa-bearing International students
- Green-card holding Permanent Residents who are new immigrants
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Dreamers and undocumented immigrants
- Naturalized citizens
- Native-born citizens of the U.S and Canada

Language Experience

- Speaks languages other than English at home
- English is a third, fourth or fifth language
- Highly literate or semi-literate in the home language OR
- Non-literate in the home language (comprehends and possibly speaks the language but doesn't write it)
- Has difficulty adopting or adapting to North American discursive skills and strategies
- Still in the process of acquiring syntactic and lexical competence in English
- Has a sophisticated vocabulary and critical approach to ideas but style and sentence structure is unique or non-standard
- Acquired English at an early age and used it alongside the home language
- Demonstrates native-like fluency in spoken English

Status and Identity

- Regardless of their status (visa-bearing, refugee, permanent resident, or citizen), non-native speakers of English often perceive “ESL” as a negative label, one that reflects deficiency rather than description.
- International students who are highly proficient in English may not see themselves as ESL.
- Multilingual students who graduate from American high schools (Generation 1.5) rarely identify themselves as ESL, think of themselves as American, and place into mainstream sections of first-year writing. Often the length of stay in the U.S. determines whether or not students think of themselves as “ESL.”
- The vast range of skills and abilities that multilingual students possess tends to make “ESL” an ineffectual descriptor.
- The terms “L2” (second language learner) and “multilingual” are often used interchangeably with ESL and have a less pejorative connotation.

Guidelines for Instruction

- L2 students are often hesitant to speak up in class. To encourage participation, provide other opportunities for response such as informal writing, small group work, or short (pre-planned) presentations
- Offer additional feedback and individual conferencing to address reading and writing issues.
- Be aware that sensitive topics, such as sexuality, criticism of authority, political beliefs, personal experiences, and religious beliefs, evoke differing levels of comfort among students of different cultural and educational backgrounds.
- Provide students with several options for successfully completing an assignment, such as scaffolded assignment sequences or writing in a variety of genres for completing the assignment.
- Provide clearly written assignments so that expectations are not left tacit.

Guidelines for Writing Assessment

- Create assignments that do not only require U.S. based cultural knowledge so that the assessment acknowledges writing that is developed from a broader knowledge base
- Take into consideration various aspects of writing such as idea development, analysis, and organization, not just grammar, word choice, mechanics, and style
- Look for evidence of a text's rhetorically effective features instead of focusing only on one or two features that stand out as problematic
- Create rubrics or clearly articulate assessment criteria in other written format

Guidelines for Writing Assessment

From the CCCC Position Statement on Writing Assessment:

- “Writing **ability must be assessed by more than one piece of writing**, in more than one genre, written on different occasions, for different audiences, and responded to and evaluated by multiple readers as part of a substantial and sustained writing process.”
- “Best assessment practice[s] **respect language variety and diversity** and [assess] writing on the basis of effectiveness for readers, acknowledging that as purposes vary, criteria will as well.”