

MULTILINGUAL TUTOR PRE-WORKSHOP QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT....

1. Have you studied abroad? What challenges did you encounter—academic, social, cultural, language-related?
2. Have you written extensively in a foreign language? What were your greatest challenges?
3. Have you tutored a multilingual/non-native speaker of English here at CUNY? If so, did this experience differ significantly from tutoring with native speakers? In what ways?
4. Have you been tutored or taught by an international scholar? Describe that experience.
5. What strengths and resources do multilingual (ESL) students tend to bring to CUNY?

WHO ARE MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS? (aka “non-native speakers” or “ESL students”)

	Immigrant/Generation 1.5 (most CUNY) Students	International (few CUNY) Students
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicative English often stronger than academic English • More experience in U.S. • High school in U.S. May have taken ESL courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience with academic rhetoric in native language • Global context • Traditional instruction • Academic English
STRENGTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking and Listening • Cultural knowledge • Support systems (family, friends) • Alternate literacies (code-shifting, code-meshing, etc.) • Responsiveness to instructor/tutor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Grammar knowledge • Specific goals, motivations • Academic skills (in general) • Responsiveness to instructor
CHALLENGES AND NEEDS (<i>linguistic, cultural, academic, personal</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic vocabulary/rhetorical moves • Grammar knowledge • College preparedness (critical thinking, metacognition) • Confidence in academic skills • Fear of asking for help • Cultural identity (sense of “between-ness”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied grammar • Speaking and listening • Adjusting to cultural differences • Confidence in language proficiency • Fear of asking for help • Academic culture in the U.S.

ASSUMPTIONS/GENERALIZATIONS ABOUT ESSAY ORGANIZATION ACROSS CULTURES

One (very general, incomplete) way to think about how languages differ in their conceptions of audience is to consider the range from writer-responsible to reader-responsible within a framework of contrastive or comparative rhetoric (e.g. Hinds, Connor, and Kaplan’s *Writing Across Languages*). Writer-responsible languages presume that it is the writer’s job to “connect the dots” for readers, by ensuring that all main points are clearly explained and exemplified, and relevant background information is offered explicitly. Reader-Responsible languages place more importance on the reader’s ability to infer from or “make sense” of information, and assume that readers may not need as much explicitness from writers. This can have many variations, as can be seen below.

Writer-Responsible

<p>ENGLISH</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five paragraph essay format is more standard • Tend toward deductive reasoning, with a prominent thesis statement, generally in the first paragraph. Subsequent paragraphs develop and support the thesis in a linear way, until the conclusion.
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Reader-Responsible

<p>ASIAN</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach a topic from a variety of viewpoints in order to examine it indirectly, a process that indicates careful, rhetorically-nuanced thinking. • Considered the “polite” way to write. Many view English’s direct approach as rude or abrupt.
<p>SPANISH/ROMANCE/ EASTERN EUROPEAN</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More loosely organized; fewer boundaries that connect the sentence’s development with its topic • Much greater freedom to digress or to introduce extraneous material • More complex sentence structure, longer (in English, run-on) sentences acceptable in academic context, reflecting erudition

ARABIC



- Construct paragraphs based on a complex series of parallel constructions
- Sensitivity towards politeness, represented by indirectness. Rather than getting to their point immediately, native Arabic speakers might open up a topic and talk around the point

Adapted from Robert B. Kaplan, "Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Education." *Language and Learning* 16:15.

STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING MULTILINGUAL (ESL) STUDENTS

<p>INFORM YOURSELF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask the student a bit about his or her past educational experience ● Review the assignment prompt ● Ask the student to describe the readings and/or topic he or she is writing about
<p>VARY TUTORIAL APPROACHES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assume the role of a reader from a U.S. audience, trying to understand what the writer is saying. ● Initially try to focus on the content and ignore the grammar so you can determine what else needs work. ● Ask leading questions like, "Why are they saying this?" or "Why do YOU think...?," thus giving them permission to make inferences. For many students, this sort of interpretation is unfamiliar and even uncomfortable at first. ● Help the students come up with an outline before writing the first draft. It is frustrating for students to spend a lot of time writing a paper just to find out that they need to start over with a narrower thesis, for example. If the paper is already written, help students reorganize, using a reverse outline. ● If only one draft will be seen, put comments about both the grammar and the organization, but don't just correct the grammar. The exceptions are articles, prepositions, and word choice or idiomatic expressions, which need to be corrected because there are few rules or patterns or, as in the case of articles, they are very complex in English.
<p>BE AS VISUAL AND EXPLICIT AS POSSIBLE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make sure the student understands the assignment, and use assignment handouts as basis for discussion. ● If there are some consistent problem areas, then correct or provide a rule for that area and ask the student to correct that mistake throughout the paper (NOTE: You DON'T have to be a grammar expert! Just point out patterns.) ● Give more direct, instructive and extensive comments, for example, "As a U.S. reader, I would expect a transition sentence here..." or "This would be clearer to me if you included more explanation or another example here." ● Try to put more marginal comments instead of just end or front comments, so that the writer knows exactly where ● Make comments or give examples about how to connect personal opinion/viewpoints and other sources. Many students have not had a lot of practice with these connections.

**KNOW YOUR
RESOURCES**

- Consider using templates, analogies, charts, and graphic organizers, etc. (See other handouts and websites.)

GRAMMAR 101/Pick Your Battles: Clarity vs. Correctness & Educating vs. Editing

Most common grammatical issues	Examples	How concerned should you be? What can/should you do?
Verb tense/form (incorrect or shifting)	If housing prices expecting to fall, there ___ many reasons would cause to raise in stock prices. Is he speak Spanish?	Can seriously impede understanding. Ask students to explain what they wish to say orally. It may also help to ask about “who does what” (agent, verb, object).
Word form	It is importance to investment money for the retirement.	Often inhibits understanding. Offer another word form, telling them which part of speech they need (n, v, or adj, in most cases).
Subject/verb agreement	Rich people try to protect their wealth which are deposited in offshore banks	Often impedes. Worth pointing out and asking for clarification.
Plurals (count/non-count nouns)	They have ordered lab equipments . She fed several gooses and sheeps at the zoo.	Sometimes obstructs understanding, but often not; worth pointing out but perhaps not correcting.
Syntax (sentence structure/word order)	I asked my teacher what would be the date due for the written second assignment.	Sometimes impedes. Worth pointing out and asking for clarification.
General “awkwardness” or incorrect idiomatic expressions	“On the third hand...” I wish that we will have more time to work on this essay.	Seriousness depends on severity. You can start by telling the student whether it’s a content issue (i.e. “I don’t understand this part”) or simply a style issue (i.e. “This just seems strange”). If the latter, you might ignore it. Expect some “written accent.”
“Marked” non-SAE (Standard American English) errors	He don’t know... I’m gonna ...	What do you think? (Depends on course, genre, audience, student goals, etc). Code-mesh/code-switch discussion is possible.
Punctuation	[: . ? ‘ “ !]	Rarely if ever hinders understanding. Proceed as you would with your other students.
Incorrect/missing article (a, an, the)	The individuality is [] important aspect of American culture.	Almost never impedes understanding. Many tutors correct directly or ignore.

Our Students: Learning to Listen to Multilingual Student Voices, by Joshua Belknap
Appendix: Tutor-Faculty Workshop Handouts

Wrong preposition (to, from, about, by, etc.)	The essay from Montaigne is for many important issues.	Almost never impedes. Many tutors correct directly or ignore.
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The goal of feedback is to make **better writers, not just better papers!**

It may be helpful to think of writing feedback as a three-step process consisting of:

Contact, Comment, and Follow-up.

Contact – Before you comment

- Let your purpose for the assignment guide your commenting
 - What is important to you? Match your comments to your instructional purpose
 - Is this draft graded or ungraded? Can your students revise? Are there more papers like this in your class?
- Do everything you can to get better first drafts
 - Address common problems in class before the paper is due
 - Provide detailed assignment sheets to clarify your expectations
 - Include grading criteria, rubrics, and checklists when you assign writing
 - When possible, provide model texts and help your students analyze what makes them successful
- Identify possible feedback points
 - Goals of the assignment
 - Grading criteria
 - What has been covered in class
 - Difficulties you have observed in previous writing assignments
- Share your principles and strategies for commenting with your students
 - Explain to your students why and how you comment
 - Model your commenting process on a sample paper
 - Provide students a paper with comments from a previous class and ask them to make suggestions for how the writer could address the comments

Comment – While you respond

- Select 2-4 feedback points based on the assignment and the student's needs
 - Too many comments overwhelm students and you
- Focus on fewer, high-quality comments

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- Be specific
 - Respond as a reader
 - Explain reasons behind your suggestions
 - Give students choices about how to revise
- Address both strengths and weaknesses in the paper
- Avoid jargon-filled and vague comments
- Avoid making changes for the student

Follow-Up – After you comment

- Give students opportunities to ask questions about the comments you have made
- If possible, allow your students to read your comments in class
 - Choose a few of the most common issues from the papers and explain them in class (with good and bad examples)
- Make students responsible for addressing your comments
- Require written revision plans or revision reports in which students explain how they have considered and addressed the comments they received or why they chose not to address them
 - Require that students summarize the feedback they received and explain how they might apply it in the future

Dealing with grammar – If, when, and how

- Decide whether or not to mark grammar
- Can you understand what the student has written even with grammatical problems?
 - Is correct grammar an important part of your instructional goals for the assignment?
- Expect and accept a written accent – non-idiomatic does not necessarily mean incorrect or inappropriate
- Focus on problems that are **frequent**, **serious**, and **treatable**
- **Frequent** – What errors are most common?
 - **Serious** – What errors impede your understanding?
 - **Treatable** – What errors can the student reasonably be expected to improve on?
 - ◆ Common “less-treatable” grammar problems include

- ◆ Idiomatic expressions and word pairings (*on the other hand not in the other hand; take a test not write a test*)
- ◆ Prepositions, especially when used in abstract ways (i.e. difference in meaning between *think about, think of, think over, think on, think through*)
- ◆ Articles (when to use *a, an, the, or nothing* before a noun)

→ When possible, distinguish between **errors** and **mistakes**

- ◆ **Error** – Consistent misuse of particular grammatical structures, usually the result of a lack of understanding of the linguistic feature, a natural and necessary part of language learning.
- ◆ **Mistake** – Typo, or the writer not consistently or consciously applying a grammatical pattern that the he/she does understand

→ **Addressing errors**

- Do not try to address every error, as this will overwhelm you and your students
- Provide short, narrowly focused grammatical explanations and lots of practice noticing and correcting the errors in their own writing

→ **Addressing mistakes**

- Be aware of external factors that make it harder for your students to catch their grammar errors
 - ◆ Time limits on writing
 - ◆ Challenging content
 - ◆ Unfamiliar genre/writing task
- Teach self-editing strategies
 - Time limits on writing
 - ◆ (reading out loud, reading from the end of the paper to the beginning, thoughtful use of spell-checkers, etc.)

- ◆ If you choose to comment on mistakes, do not edit papers for your students - this is work you don't need, and it reduces your students' opportunity to learn
- Provide *implicit* feedback to help students *notice* the mistakes and *gradually reduce* the support you give them – for example:
 - ◆ Round 1: Mark and label mistakes. Student edits.
 - ◆ Round 2: Mark mistakes but do not label. Student edits.
 - ◆ Round 3: Mark lines that contain mistake. Student finds and edits.
 - ◆ Make students responsible for using your editing feedback

→ **Web Resources**

Purdue OWL ESL <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/5/>

Lingolia - <http://english.lingolia.com/en/>