MLL RESOURCES

...providing support for language learners in your classroom...

For more information on classes that MLL students can take in the EWP (and other MLL campus resources) English department opportunities for MLL students (MLLEWP2014.PDF) or take a look at the condensed version in Word with hyperlinks updated: March-2017

The following collection of resources is designed to help you to provide additional support to language learners in your composition class.

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A note on contributing materials: This resource is designed to be dynamic, to be updated and augmented over time. If you have documents or preferred practices that aren't represented here that you'd like to contribute, please send them to Yasmine Romero. Please send MLL related materials to TJ Walker. Thanks in advance for helping us continue to improve this resource!

A note on categories of materials: Materials are labeled as either "assignment prompt," "lesson plan," "handout," "worksheet" or "tip sheet." Searching this page for one of these categories will allow you to find all the materials of that type.

EWP POLICIES

EWP STATEMENT ON ASSESSMENT OF AND FEEDBACK ON GRAMMAR CORRECTNESS

Context

Multilingual Language Learners (MLLs) are a vibrant addition to our composition classrooms, contributing to our campus’ linguistic and cultural diversity and enriching the perspectives students bring to the work of reading and writing in our classes. Like all admitted UW students, MLL students have met and exceeded admissions requirements and are highly qualified. Like many UW students, some of these MLL students will also need additional support as they continue to develop their English language proficiency. While the Expository Writing Program is working to offer sufficient support for our instructors to ensure both they and their students have access to the resources and best practices they need to foster success in the writing classroom (to learn more about these resources and best practices, please consult the EWP website), this statement is meant to clarify instructor responsibilities as well as EWP expectations for assessing and giving feedback on grammar correctness in student writing. Assessing and giving feedback on papers seems to be of particular concern for many instructors, primarily because many of us are unclear about the level of attention we should be paying to grammar errors. When responding to early drafts of MLL student writing, research and experience have taught us to “read through” grammar errors (in other words, to prioritize and selectively mark but “read through” grammar errors) in order to attend to the “higher order” content-based issues such as argument, analysis, use of evidence, and organization. These “higher order” skills, as evidenced by the first three EWP Outcomes, are the most important skills taught in a writing class, and research has shown they are also the skills most likely to improve over the course of a quarter. This does not mean, however, that we should ignore “lower order” concerns such as grammar, particularly repeated errors that interfere with comprehension, and MLL students miss an opportunity to learn when we ignore their
grammar mistakes. Rather, the goal should be to help empower students—MLLs and native speakers alike—to become self-editors of their own work and to research their grammar errors as a means to learn through self-correction.

**Expectations**

While we cannot realistically expect MLL students to achieve native speaker accuracy in a span of eleven weeks, or even four years for that matter, we can and should expect MLL students to self-edit their work, a skill at which students can become more proficient in eleven weeks with the support of feedback from composition instructors, writing centers and peers, and access to effective resources (such as handbooks) related to grammar, usage, and style. Indeed, students’ ability to self-edit their writing is an important part of the EWP’s Outcome Four, which requires that a student's portfolio demonstrate the ability to revise, edit, and proofread his or her writing. In fulfillment of this outcome, we can and should expect students to produce at least one “presentation draft” (a paper that demonstrates students’ ability to edit their writing) in the graded portion of their portfolios.

**Practical Applications**

*Self Editing:* Studies have shown that students are able to self-edit their work when teachers circle or mark a check next to grammar errors. This approach has proven just as effective as when instructors correct or code (using a coding system such as VT for verb tense) the grammar issue for the student. So in most cases cueing students to the presence of an error (without fixing the error or marking what type of error it is) and ensuring that they are aware of the available resources is sufficient for self-editing. In those few cases in which errors prove overwhelming to reading comprehension, an instructor should invite the student to have a conversation with him or her or an MLL consultant as soon as possible as a means to provide greater individualized support.

*Pathways for Cuing and Timing:* When and how we cue our students to error is important, and depends in part on our students’ needs, the number of drafts we have assigned, the degree to which the error interferes with our ability to assess our assignment’s targeted outcomes, and our philosophy as instructors. Timing and context are important. Attempting to deal with every grammar issue in every draft, especially early on, can be overwhelming to students, but it can also prevent them from focusing on higher order concerns, such as complexity, organization, and analysis. Too little attention to grammar errors until the portfolio sequence can leave students feeling overwhelmed trying to make final revisions while also identifying errors and demonstrating the self-editing.

To help instructors decide when and how to respond to error, we have identified two pathways instructors can take for responding to error in student drafts (please see courses designed around these pathways on the EWP website). These pathways are designed as calendar templates that allow students and instructors to balance feedback with the number of assignments expected in each sequence:

- **First Pathway: Revision Throughout: Fewer Assignments, Multiple Drafts of Each**
  
  This pathway allows students the opportunity to work with revision throughout the quarter, producing multiple drafts of each shorter and/or major assignment, with grammar feedback on later drafts. In this approach, instructors focus on higher order concerns in early drafts before prioritizing and selectively marking errors on later drafts, which students then edit during the portfolio sequence. This pathway means assigning fewer short assignments during the first two sequences in order to allow students to first address higher order concerns before receiving error markings on a second draft, which they can edit during the portfolio sequence. This pathway can be a good option for instructors who have a high percentage of students struggling with surface issues, as it provides students with a head start on revising for their portfolios. Because students are spending more time on their drafts, this pathway may help facilitate the connection between higher and lower concerns.

- **Second Pathway: “Higher Order” Feedback-Focused, Defer Grammar Cuing for Portfolio**
  
  This pathway allows for reading through error until the portfolio sequence of the course. In this approach, instructors focus mainly on higher order concerns throughout the first two sequences before attending to grammar concerns during the portfolio sequence. Please keep in mind that for some students this approach can require a lot of grammar and self-editing instruction during the last two weeks of the course, and some students may feel overwhelmed trying to make final portfolio revisions while also identifying errors and demonstrating the ability to self-edit. As such, this option requires that
instructors provide the full two weeks allotted for the portfolio sequence. Note that even if you choose this pathway, you may work on a few shared grammar patterns among your students throughout the quarter, and help individual students target their most pressing issues early on.

Assessing students’ needs early on and providing them opportunities to articulate their goals will help instructors decide which pathway to choose. Ideally, no matter which pathway you choose, rather than marking every error, prioritize the most common and severe errors, identify them in a student's paper, and point the student to grammar resource handbooks and websites, such as Writer’s Help.

**TALKING ABOUT PLAGIARISM**

**Plagiarism** Learning proper citation practices can be challenging for both MLL and mainstream students. However, Western societies place greater value on individualism and original thinking, while international students may be used to imitation of texts as a way to honor great writers. Recognizing and addressing these cultural differences during class time or conferences can help students understand your expectations and their relationship to American academic research more broadly. Plagiarism may also be an act of desperation for MLL students who are overwhelmed by the reading and writing load of your class. Checking in regularly with language learners about their experience with the workload and progress on assignments can help prevent last-minute panic.

- [tip sheet on introducing citations](#) (NF11)

**WRITING ASSIGNMENT PROMPTS**

**Assignments** Understanding assignment prompts can be a real challenge for language learners, especially if prompts expect students to draw on particular cultural knowledge in order to respond. Writing concise prompts that signal the structure of the paper and going over the prompts in class can help language learners to avoid confusion. In addition, instructors should work to develop a practice of stepping back from their prompts to become aware of the cultural assumptions that may be embedded into assignments. Getting feedback from students or other instructors or using a checklist to evaluate your own prompt can be ways to get outside these normalized ways of knowing.

- [tip sheet on writing assignment prompts](#) (NF12)
- [tip sheet on writing assignment prompts 2](#) (NF13)
- [tip sheet on writing assignment prompts 3](#) (NF14)

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- [chinese pronunciation guide](#) (NF15)
- [japanese pronunciation guide](#) (NF16)

**RESEARCH & CITATION**

**Citation** American research and citation practices may prove particularly challenging for language learners, who are just learning to negotiate our databases and numerous disciplinary expectations. Giving them class time to acclimate to the library databases and using well-scaffolded research sequences can help all students to build confidence. Also, keep in mind that citation does not end with the Works Cited page - students will need practice formatting quotations and internal citations as well.

- [handout on plagiarism](#) (NF17)
- [handout on using quotations](#) (AH3)
- [library research worksheet](#) (NF9)

**GRAMMAR**

**Grammar** Teaching grammar can feel overwhelming for those of us who are native speakers and have never had to explain why we write the way we do before. The good news is that research shows that language learners refine their grammar most through regular writing practice. Still, setting aside time at the beginning or end of class to work on a grammar exercise together or having students keep a log of grammar errors over the course of the quarter can help supplement the learning students are already doing in your class.
**READING**

**Reading** It can take language learners 2-3 times as long to read a text as their American peers, so being aware of the reading load in your class and strategies for scaffolding readings is extremely important. Reducing the amount (and complexity) of readings assigned can allow for more effective scaffolding and more attention to the reading and writing skills students need. Almost any reading can work if effectively scaffolded, however, and you do not need to shy away from difficult readings. Instead, give students the time and strategies that they need to engage successfully with those texts. Building in assignments that ask students to begin a reading by investigating context can be a good way to help bridge cultural barriers to readings. After framing a reading, the class can work together to identify central claims and arguments before dividing up into groups and identifying minor claims. Making sure your MLL students are understanding and engaging with the text is time well-spent to prepare them for writing assignments based on readings.

- reading discussion worksheet (NF18)
- lesson plan for code-switching reading activity (XZ9)
- handout on denotation vs. connotation (NF26)

**REVISION**

**Revision** Incoporating revision practice into your course prior to the portfolio sequence will ensure that you do not leave language learners feeling overwhelmed at the very end of the quarter. You can do this in a number of a ways including having students revise a draft as part of your assignment sequence, spending time in class developing revision plans for writing, and of course, giving students opportunities to receive feedback on their writing from peers and then make changes. With language learners, it is especially important for you to be clear about your expectations for polished writing. Let them know if you expect grammatical or content revisions for a particular draft and make sure they have ample time to practice both kinds of revision in preparation for the portfolio.

- lesson plan for using a corpus to self-edit (XZ10)
- lesson plan: self-editing powerpoint (NF19)