

What do we know about Multilingual/ESL writers at Middlebury?

- ❖ We have a mix of international students (“eye learners”) and U.S. immigrants (“ear learners”)
 - ❖ Past educational experience for these students varies widely (e.g., private vs. public high schools; experience in United World Colleges, English or other language as medium of instruction)
 - ❖ Greatest challenges related to writing are:
 - Understanding expectations for assignments
 - Engaging with course readings (and using source material in their writing)
 - Organization/structure of papers
 - Editing/proofreading (and becoming more independent in this area)
 - Confidence and asking for help
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Multilingual/ESL Support

(excerpted from <http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/resources/ctrl/esl>)

The Writing Center and CTRL are committed to supporting students who are non-native speakers of English. [Peer writing tutors](#) are given training and resources for working specifically with ESL students.

Although Middlebury does not have an intensive English acquisition or ESL program, it does offer language support in a number of ways: The Writing Program offers a First-Year Seminar and Writing Workshop courses (WRPR 0100 & WRPR 0101). In addition, the Writing Center, located in CTRL, offers optional workshops in reading, writing, and speaking, as well as individual sessions with peer tutors and writing faculty. CTRL also collaborates with staff and faculty across the campus to support students within their programs of study.

 [Academic Reading Strategies](#) (3 pg handout)

 [Academic Speaking: Class Discussion and Presentations](#)

 [Academic English Vocabulary: Top 60 Words](#)

*Also see [CTRL Learning Resources](#)

For individual Multilingual Student Support, please contact Assistant Professor of Writing, Hector J. Vila, Ph.D. (hvila@middlebury.edu), you may also contact the Writing Program's multilingual specialist Professor of Writing and Linguistics, Shawna Shapiro, Ph.D. (sshapiro@middlebury.edu).

(Appointments with professional writing tutors can be made [online](#) or by contacting CTRL)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about supporting Multilingual/ESL writers (from <http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/resources/ctrl/faculty/teach/eslresources>)

1. How can I best support multilingual/ESL writers in the writing process?

- a. Be very explicit about expectations and resources
- b. Encourage multi-stage writing, giving them feedback along the way
- c. Help students prioritize most important aspects of each assignment
- d. Share your own struggles and strategies
- e. Support long-term growth, rather than simply short-term “fixes”

(More details on each point are available online)

2. I received an assignment that needs significant work on grammar/language use. How can I help? How can CTRL help as well?

- a. Talk with the student: What are the issues? (Often, lack of clarity in writing results from many factors, including reading comprehension, thesis/organization, research/citation practices, rhetorical expectations [which differ in other languages], and time management.)
- b. Develop a plan of action that includes support from CTRL—professional and peer tutors, and possibly revision strategies

3. Is there someone available to proofread student work?

We don't do line editing for entire papers, but do offer feedback and support for improving organization and clarity, as well as noticing error patterns.

What about assessment?

How can I grade fairly, while still recognizing students' individual needs and experiences?

1. Emphasize the purpose/goals for the assignment, and weight those most heavily in a grading rubric
2. Focus on argument/structure/organization before grammar, particularly in earlier drafts.
3. When giving feedback on grammar, try to be specific and selective. Focus on clarity, rather than simply on what is “correct.” (See more on this in other handouts)
4. Consider offering additional (optional) opportunities for revision for those who are struggling.
5. Feel free to consult with Shawna, Hector or other CTRL faculty/staff on assessment practices or other issues

Sample handout: Academic Reading Strategies

1. Preview text (alone or with classmates)

- a. Consider purpose for reading (To prepare for lecture? To write a response? Other?)
- b. Look at overall length, organization, headings, visuals, keywords/main concepts, etc.
- c. Reflect on your own background and prior knowledge and make some connections
 - i. Consider doing a short internet search if needed to build up your knowledge base if content is completely unfamiliar
- d. Predict what the overall argument(s) might be.
- e. Try to consider WHY this reading was assigned. What does it offer, in relation to the class overall?

2. As you read

- a. Notice (or form) sections in the reading.
- b. Consider the best sequence of reading: (Intro/conclusion first?)
- c. Try to identify main arguments, thinking about the “new” perspective this author brings
 - i. In other words, What is s/he saying? and Why does it matter?
- d. Engage physically with the text (margin notes and symbols, underlining,) OR
Make a “double-entry” journal with quotes/main points and reactions
 - i. Try to have at least one note, marking, or comment per page
- e. Test yourself at various points: See if you can summarize the author’s main points and offer some kind of response/reaction.
- f. Take breaks as needed (usually brain efficiency peaks within 15-20 minutes)
- g. DON’T look up every word you don’t know
- h. DON’T try to memorize everything in the reading
- i. DON’T worry if you only understand parts of the reading
 - i. See “Tips for Difficult Reading Passages” (separate handout)
 - ii. Remember: Confusion is the first step toward understanding!!

3. After you read

- a. Try to predict what concepts, points, examples, etc. might be brought up in discussion
 - b. At minimum, try to come out with...
 - i. 3 main points or concepts
 - ii. 2 comments or connections
 - iii. 1 question
 - c. Re-evaluate your strategies over time
 - i. Are you able to meet your goals? (to participate in class discussion, write the response paper, use the reading in another way...?)
 - ii. Consider using different strategies with different kinds of readings
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Prioritizing Grammar Issues with Multilingual/ESL Students

10 most common grammatical issues	Examples	How concerned should you be? What can/should you do?
<i>Verb tense/form (incorrect or shifting)</i>	When interest rates expecting to fall, three reasons would cause to raise in stock prices. Is she speak Japanese?	Can seriously interfere. Ask students to explain what they wish to say orally. It may also help to ask about “who does what” (agent, verb, object).
<i>Word form</i>	It is importance to investment money for the future.	Often interferes. Offer another word form, telling them which part-of-speech they need (n, v, or adj, in most cases)
<i>Subject/verb agreement</i>	Investors search ...to protect their wealth which are deposited in banks	Often interferes. Worth pointing out and asking for clarification.
<i>Plurals (count/non-count)</i>	We have ordered new office equipments . My favorite animals are sheeps .	Sometimes interferes. Worth pointing out but maybe not correcting.
<i>Syntax (sentence structure / word order)</i>	I asked my instructor what would be the due date for the written second assignment.	Sometimes interferes. Worth pointing out and asking for clarification.
<i>General ‘awkwardness’ or incorrect expressions.</i>	<i>[numerous examples abound]</i> (My favorite): “On the third hand...” I wish that we will have more time to work on this paper.	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.”
<i>‘Marked’ errors (non-standard English)</i>	He don’t know ... I’m gonna ...	What do you think? (depends on course, genre, student goals, etc)
<i>Punctuation</i>	[: . ? ’ “ ! - ☺]	Rarely interferes. Do what you would with your other students.
<i>Incorrect/missing article (a, an, the)</i>	The individuality is [] important aspect of American culture.	Almost never interferes. Many instructors correct these directly or ignore them.
<i>Wrong preposition (to, from, about, by, etc)</i>	The essay from Foucault is for many important issues.	Almost never interferes. Many instructors correct these directly or ignore them.

Prof. Shawna Shapiro (sshapiro@middlebury.edu)

This and other resources can be found at <http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/resources/ctrl/esl> or at <http://shawnashapiro.com/>

How can I support multilingual (AND monolingual) students?

GENERAL GUIDELINES	PRESENTATION IDEAS	DISCUSSION & GROUP WORK IDEAS	ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENT IDEAS
<p>Inform yourself about students and elicit regular feedback</p>	<p>Large group quick-response questions</p> <p>3-minute “paper” before/after class</p> <p>Extend targeted invites to meet individually with students</p>	<p>Grade on written and spoken participation (e.g. discussion board, blog, survey tool, Wiki, in-class writing)</p> <p>Regular check-ins: e.g. Small group discussion with a written report or an individual reflection</p> <p>Try group interviews/surveys to get students interacting</p>	<p>Low-stakes quizzes and other assessments (surveys, response papers, projects, games)</p> <p>Mid-term course evaluation (for you and for the students)</p> <p>Offer opportunities for revision , when possible</p>
<p>Vary modes of instruction</p>	<p>Kinesthetic feedback (raise hands, stand)</p> <p>Say it, write it, model it</p> <p>Include examples and application scenarios</p> <p>Highlight relevant supplementary materials and resources for students (e.g. online)</p>	<p>Write down questions or templates for discussion/peer review</p> <p>Encourage students to share from their cultural backgrounds (without singling out specific students if possible)</p> <p>Vary group sizes (2-5)</p> <p>Reference the reading(s) directly, pointing to relevant passages</p>	<p>Use review activities in class—or highlight online resources</p> <p>Comment selectively and specifically on student work (<i>quality over quantity; margin over end notes; clarity over correctness</i>)</p> <p>Consider offering feedback in-person for struggling students.</p>
<p>Be as visual and explicit as possible</p>	<p>Use visual aids: pictures, note-taking grids, charts, graphs, “realia,” examples</p> <p>Highlight new concepts and vocabulary before /after lecture</p>	<p>Use focused questions for discussion (large and small group). Start specific (What/Where/When) and expand with Why/How questions</p> <p>Consider designating roles within group (e.g. note-taker, presenter to class, moderator, etc.)</p>	<p>For assignment handouts, use simple language and offer clear grading criteria. Try to address both <i>what</i> you’re looking for (product) and <i>how</i> they can achieve it (process)</p> <p>Offer models of successful student work, and discuss them in class, if possible</p>