Strategies for Teaching Multilingual Learners Series
PART 2: Promoting Success for Multilingual Learners

In the 2014 reaffirmed "Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers," the Conference on College Composition and Communication [CCCC] emphasizes that the linguistic backgrounds of multilingual students are often quite varied. Because of their highly varied relationships with English, it is important that instructors recognize the individual needs of multilingual students and resist taking a one-size-fits-all approach to the classroom. Instructors can play an important role in supporting multilingual students, both in the classroom and outside. They are often uniquely positioned to spot students who are struggling, and to intervene if possible, or to alert an advisor that the student may need additional support. Here are a few ways that instructors can support multilingual students in the classroom:

Strategies	Teaching Suggestions
Take time to figure out who your students are.	Consider having your students complete a survey or poll at the beginning of the year, and include questions about their language and communication experiences and strengths.
Recognize the unique perspectives, knowledge, experiences, and skills multilingual learners contribute to the classroom.	As discussed above, a survey or poll at the beginning of the year can help you understand your students prior knowledge. Consider the skills and knowledge your students have coming into the classroom, and develop ways to leverage and build on that experience in your lectures and activities without asking students to act as the sole representatives of their entire culture or ethnicity. For example, asking open-ended questions during class discussions can be one way to encourage students to offer their own perspectives.
Provide regular opportunities for students to interact with their peers and with you.	In class, have students work in varying pairs or groups, and provide peer feedback opportunities on major projects. Encourage students to come to office hours, and if possible, build time for one-to-one meetings with students (i.e., on major projects, on their progress in the class, etc.)
Provide timely feedback on writing and other coursework.	Endeavor to provide feedback in a timely manner (within a week if possible), so that students have an opportunity to integrate your comments into their next assignment. For more feedback strategies, see our "Effective Feedback Series."
Be strategic in your feedback, and focus on more than just grammar.	While multilingual learners can benefit from feedback on error patterns or consistent mistakes in their writing, they can also benefit from feedback on the content, support, and structure. Consider prioritizing comments on content and organization when giving feedback. If you do mark papers for grammar, try to distinguish between errors that obscure meaning in the paper and errors that may be distracting but are ultimately unrelated to your course goals.
Build in opportunities for reflection and assessment.	Build in opportunities for students to reflect on their learning, and for you to assess how well the class is understanding your content. For example, you could you have students complete a quick "clicker" quiz or a "minute paper" at the end of class.
Provide numerous opportunities for students to ask questions.	It can be helpful to open several lines of communication, and to encourage your students to ask questions. For example, you could create a specific discussion board on Canvas for questions, and encourage students to message or email you if they don't feel comfortable sharing their question with the class.

Intervene when you notice a student is struggling.	When you notice a student may be struggling in your class, reach out to them through email or on Canvas. Sometime, just showing that you're concerned about them can help a student feel more comfortable asking for support.

Adapted from: Freedman, n.d.; Sato, 2015; & UWCLT, n.d.

Additional Resources
- The International & Academic English Program
- Writing Assistance Services, SASC

As many multilingual learners are also international students, please also refer to our "Strategies for Teaching International Students Series" for more suggestions and strategies specifically regarding international students.

Citation
Center for Educational Effectiveness [CEE]. (2018). Strategies for Teaching Multilingual Learners Series. *Just-in-Time Teaching Resources.* Retrieved from https://cee.ucdavis.edu/JITT

References
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