

APSU Writing Center
Teaching Multilingual Students

The goal of the APSU Writing Center is to assist all students: undergraduates, graduate students, full-time, part-time, and those who are attending classes on main campus as well as Fort Campbell campus.

Who Multilingual Writers Are

- International Students: International visa holders; recent arrivals with varied exposure to English.
- US Residents: Immigrant or non-immigrant students partially educated in US schools.

Key Points

- Don't assume nationality: A student may be American even if English is not their first language.
- Be sensitive to labels: Some students resist "English Language Learner" due to past stigma.

International Students

- Time in US: Recent arrivals, varying prior exposure.
- Cultural Comfort: May experience culture shock; unfamiliar with US norms.
- Language Learning: Often textbook-based; immersion may be challenging.
- Grammar Knowledge: Know formal rules but may struggle with application.
- Listening/Speaking: Limited exposure to natural speech; may need time to express thoughts.
- Writing/Reading: Different organizational patterns; unfamiliar with US essay structures.
- Educational Culture: Academic traditions may differ; may impact participation.

Domestic Students

- Time in US: Partially educated in US school system.
- Cultural Comfort: Varies from fully Americanized to balancing dual cultures.
- Language Learning: Acquired through immersion; may still refine aspects of English.
- Grammar Knowledge: Intuitive; can generate alternative phrasing.
- Listening/Speaking: Generally fluent; occasional difficulties.
- Writing/Reading: Familiar with US essay conventions; occasional grammatical errors.
- Educational Culture: Comfortable with US academic norms.

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Common Challenges

- Limited comprehension of lectures
- Reduced class participation
- Reluctance to use office hours
- Misunderstanding content
- Writing issues (organization, vocabulary, grammar)
- Improper use of sources
- Poor test performance

Writing Tutor Support Strategies

1. Understanding the Student

- Learn about the student's background and English comfort level.
- Be patient and encouraging; build confidence through positive reinforcement.

2. Structuring Sessions

- Set clear goals: focus on 1–2 main issues per session.
- Use a step-by-step approach: break the writing process into manageable parts.

Addressing Common Challenges

1. Grammar & Syntax

- Prioritize major errors that affect understanding.
- Teach grammar in context using student writing examples.

2. Vocabulary

- Build academic and discipline-specific vocabulary.
- Teach strategies: synonyms, context clues, and deducing meanings.

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3. Organization

- Help create essay outlines.
- Teach effective use of transitions to connect ideas.

4. Thesis & Argumentation

- Ensure thesis statements are clear and concise.
- Assist in developing strong, supported arguments.

5. Citations & Sources

- Explain required citation styles.
- Teach how to integrate quotes and paraphrases correctly.

6. Drafting & Revising

- Encourage multiple drafts.
- Provide specific, actionable feedback.
- Model effective writing.

7. Developing Independence

- Teach self-editing and proofreading strategies.
- Recommend grammar guides and writing handbooks.

8. Building Confidence

- Celebrate student progress.
- Create a supportive, non-judgmental environment.

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Faculty Support Strategies for Multilingual Students

1. Supporting Lecture Comprehension

- Record lectures for later review.
- Provide lecture outlines and highlight key points.
- Use visuals and write critical vocabulary on the board.
- Post notes online for students to access after class.

2. Encouraging Class Participation

- Post discussion questions in advance to allow preparation.
- Speak clearly and at a moderate pace.
- Support student responses by offering words, prompts, or rephrasing questions.

3. Facilitating Office Hours

- Schedule specific appointments to ensure accessibility.
- Learn about students' backgrounds and learning styles.
- Check comprehension by asking students to explain concepts in their own words.

4. Enhancing Writing Performance

- Provide clear assignment guidelines and grading rubrics.
- Discuss ideas collaboratively and guide the writing process.
- Require drafts and give thoughtful, actionable feedback.
- Correct major errors carefully and teach proper citation practices.

5. Supporting Test Performance

- Provide study guides and review sessions.
- Allow extra time when needed to ensure fair assessment of knowledge.

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