



# Empowering Multilingual Students through the Composition Classroom

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When you ultimately succeed in writing is when you have your own accent. When I speak, my accent reflects who I am and where I come from. Well, I want my writing to reflect me in that way.

-- Tonka, student from Bulgaria (Zawacki & Habib, 2010)

ESL students can become very fluent writers of English, but they may never become indistinguishable from a native speaker, and it is unclear why they should. A current movement among ESL writing teachers is to argue that, beyond a certain level of proficiency in English writing, it is not the students' texts that need to change; rather it is the native-speaking readers and evaluators (particularly in educational institutions) that need to learn to read more broadly, with a more cosmopolitan, less parochial eye. The infusion of life brought by these ESL students' different perspectives on the world can only benefit a pluralistic society which is courageous enough truly to embrace its definition of itself.

--Ilona Leki. *Understanding ESL Writers: A Guide for Teachers* (pp. 132-133)

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## Is Your Course “ESL Ready”<sup>1</sup>?

### Assignment design:

- Successful completion of assignments does not depend on knowledge of American history, pop culture, or media that was not part of the course content.

On the assignment description, the instructor included clear goals (why the assignment was assigned), clear guidelines for completing the project, a clear description of the rhetorical situation, and clear criteria for how the project will be assessed.

- The assignment description is handed out well before the project is due, giving the student more lead-time. The assignments allow for the student to draw on knowledge learned in the L1.

### In the classroom:

- **Use multiple modalities: say it, write it, show it.**
- Write up all major assignments for students, so that they have a copy to take with them. For ongoing assignments (i.e., reading responses), it is helpful to provide some examples or guiding questions at the beginning of the semester.
- Use visuals in the classroom to help demonstrate ideas or concepts. Handouts, slides, video clips, notes on the board – all of these can be helpful in clarifying ideas for international students.

### Scaffolding writing:

- The writing assignment is presented as a series of discrete steps, which may include prewriting activities, research activities, due dates for early drafts or parts of the draft, and/or peer review sessions.
- Samples of student writing from the same assignment or published writing in the same genre are made available to the students. Gloss the sample papers with comments that point out what specific aspects of the paper make it well written. Discuss these as a class and encourage students to provide their input on what works in these pieces.

### Textual ownership:

- On the syllabus or course website, the instructor provided clear criteria for what counts as academic dishonesty in the course, including a clear description of what counts as plagiarism and consequences for plagiarizing.
- Students are given opportunities to practice writing about and with sources in low-stakes assignments.

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<sup>1</sup> The term “ESL ready” comes from Matsuda, P. K. (2001). Opening statement: Academic Writing forum: Connecting WAC and ESL? *Academic Writing*, 2. Retrieved from <http://wac.colostate.edu/aw/forums/fall2001/>.

**Peer review and group work:**

- Students are guided in giving peer review, so that, in early drafts, feedback focuses on holistic issues (i.e. idea development, focus, organization, incomprehensible sentences) before local issues (i.e. style, usage, grammar, and editing).
- Students are guided in giving editing feedback, so that they only point out errors for other students through minimal marking, rather than explain editing decisions or making corrections for students
- Before oral peer feedback sessions and group work, the instructors explain the importance of each voice in the group being equally heard and respected, and tells the group that it is everyone's responsibility that every group member makes contributions to the discussion.
- Group work is structured so that there are clear roles for each group member.

**Responding to and assessing student writing:**

- Before giving feedback to early drafts of L2 student writing, the instructor reads the entire draft without a pen in hand, to understand the draft on its own terms before responding.
- The instructor gives feedback appropriate to the stage of the draft, focusing on holistic issues (including incomprehensible sentences) in early drafts and local issues in more developed drafts. At this stage, it is useful to look for sentences that are more syntactically tangled than others. These sentences often indicate areas where the writer had difficulty expressing an idea. During teacher-student conferences, try starting the conference by focusing on these sentences, so that the student fully expresses ideas before turning their attention to the organization as a whole.
- Rather than editing for the student, the instructor highlights the areas that require editing. To assess the student's language proficiency, the instructor asks the student to edit all marked areas and to note areas where they don't understand why the text was marked.
- The instructor writes an end comment on the draft, summarizing what the student did well and no more than three areas the instructor would like the student to focus on in the next draft or when writing the next paper.
- The instructor uses a rubric to evaluate papers. The rubric is designed by the instructor and is focused on the paper's learning outcomes, with editing counting for no more than 10% of the grade. When assessing the editing portion of the grade, the instructor only marks down for errors that get in the way of reader comprehension and for errors that had been marked in early drafts by the instructor or peer reviewers as requiring editing (to assess this, the instructor asks all students to turn in marked up early drafts along with the final draft).

**Scaffolding reading:**

- The instructor provides plenty of lead-time for reading assignments (so that students know what readings are due well ahead of time and the readings are made available early on).
- The instructor provides guiding questions, so that students have a sense of what they should be reading for.

- The instructor provides writing-to-learn activities to support the reading process, such as a double-entry journal, annotating the text, or writing in response to a prompt on the reading.

**Drawing on multiple language skills:**

- The instructor provides opportunities for students to process information through multiple modes, such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and visual representation.
- The instructor provides opportunities for students to showcase knowledge through multiple modes, such as incorporating oral presentations and the creation of digital videos.
- The instructor makes it clear in the syllabus that multilingualism is valued in the class, by inviting multilingual students to write in their first language in in-class writing, notes, pre-writing, and early drafts. If the instructor welcomes use of multiple languages in more formal projects, the instructor gives students guidelines and examples they can draw on in order to do so.

**Sample Syllabus Statement:**

**Multilingual Writing:** In this section, it is likely that a range of linguistic backgrounds and levels of English proficiency will be represented. You are invited to use all of your languages as resources in this course. You are welcome to write in a language other than English whenever it is helpful (such as in first drafts and notes), to draw on words and phrases in final drafts of essays that do not have translations in English, to use print- and web-based sources that are written in languages other than English, and to conduct primary research in languages other than English. In this class, I expect “written accent” (missing articles, incorrect prepositions, incorrect verb tenses) to be treated with respect. While all students in this course are expected to challenge themselves to become more effective and accomplished writers in English, we will not spend time worrying too much about the aspects of English that take many years to acquire (i.e. articles, verb tense, prepositions), but instead focus on expression of ideas, communicative competence, and rhetorical savvy.

## Seven Tips for Working with Multilingual Writers and Their Texts

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**1. Learn about the student's cultural and educational background.** Like all students, multilingual writers come into our classrooms with a variety of language use and educational backgrounds. They also have a wide range of responses to being “identified” as “ESL.”

- One idea that we’d suggest is having all students fill out a written survey of the languages they know, the ways in which they use those languages (reading, writing, speaking, home use, digital use, school use), prior English language training, prior English writing experience, feedback preferences, and goals during the first week of class. Then consider, following up with a one-on-one meeting with students to discuss the written survey. (For an example of such a survey, see one created by Angela Dakak. Her survey is included in the appendix of Michelle Cox’s “WAC: Closing Doors or Opening Doors for Second Language Writers?,” *Across the Disciplines*, 8(4), n. p. Available at <http://wac.colostate.edu/atd/ell/cox.cfm>.)
- Another idea is to have all students write a literacy narrative, either as a full essay or a short response piece. For an example of a literacy narrative assignment designed to allow L2 students to connect literacy experiences in their L1 and L2, see Michelle Cox and Kate Tirabassi’s “Snapshots of Our Literacies,” in *The College Writing Toolkit: Tried and Tested Ideas for Teaching College Writing*, edited by Martha Pennington and Pauline Burton (Equinox, 2011) and in this handout.

**2. Identify resources available at your institution that support multilingual writers.**

- Try to identify the second-language/ESL writing specialist on your campus, then meet with this person to talk about the accessibility of your assignments, expectations, and questions that arise during the semester. Find out if faculty or graduate students in either linguistics or composition programs specialize in ESL writing.
- Visit the writing center. Many writing centers hire an ESL specialist that can work both with teachers and students. If no one at the writing center has been designated as an ESL specialist, talk to senior staff to find out if any consultants have developed expertise in this area.

**3. Work with students to gear the course and your feedback to their needs.** Many strategies that are focused on creating a student-centered composition class can help multilingual writers, as well as native English writers. For example:

- At the beginning of each essay assignment, ask students to identify personal goals that they would like to focus on in their writing. Once the essay is finished, ask students to refer back to these goals in a reflective cover letter.
- Have class discussions on what counts as “error.” Differentiate between errors that make the meaning of sentence unclear, and errors that are merely surface-level.

**4. In the classroom, use multiple modalities: say it, write it, show it.**

- Write up all major assignments for students, so that they have a copy to take with them. For ongoing assignments (i.e., reading responses), it is helpful to provide some examples or guiding questions at the beginning of the semester.
- Provide models of well-organized papers for the class. Gloss the sample papers with comments that point out what specific aspects of the paper make it well written. Discuss these as a class and encourage students to provide their input on what works in these pieces.

**5. Develop response systems/practices that help students develop a metacognitive awareness of their own writing practices and development.** “Response systems” might include: get-acquainted mechanisms, discussions on how assignments are designed, executed, and graded, structured peer review sessions, teacher feedback (in-person and in writing) at various stages of the process, regular reflections and analysis of assignments by the student. Most of these suggestions for responding to multilingual student writing are good practice for any and all students. For example, balancing praise, critique, and suggestion is likely something most people try to remember as they comment. However, some recommendations are more important with L2 or multilingual writers:

- Skim the paper in its entirety before making any written comments on the draft. Provide comments on the strength of a paper, in order to indicate areas in which the student is meeting expectations. Try to have students clarify unclear points orally, if possible.
- We recommend that instructors aim to make their commentary specific, including reasons why students should make changes. When using margin comments or summative comments at the end of the paper, make those comments explicit and clear. If you conference with students, have them clarify ambiguous points orally and write down comments (or allow them to record) during conferences so that students have something tangible to take with them.
- Encourage multiple solutions to help students steer away from “the teacher-says-I-fix” model.
- Be aware that it can be quite easy for multilingual writers to feel overwhelmed by excessive correction. Try to identify 3 major concerns to work on with each paper. Also, assure the student that some issues are common to many students: in other words, it’s not just that student. Consider adding a second conference to the students’ schedule in order to discuss these areas.
- Prioritize issues and help students to focus on the global issues in their writing first (i.e., finding a strong topic, developing the language to talk about the topic, ideas, organization, and so on). Sentence-level concerns and grammar can be an issue for some students, but unless it interferes with meaning in substantive ways, it is one that is often better to help students to arrive at a solid draft of their ideas and then work with sentence-level concerns at a later stage in the paper’s development.

**6. Practice peer review and writing workshops as a part of the writing curriculum.** Whether for small group activities or discussions, peer groups are a good place for multilingual students to build connections to other students. It is a lower-stakes environment with a high level of personal interaction. For this reason, it helps to:

- Match students with similar interests, and aim to keep groups long-term (at least 4 weeks) to build relationships.
- Help students to train to be stronger peer responders; provide structured support.
- Identify students’ strengths and give them roles where they can assert these strengths and rhetorical competencies. For multilingual learners, it is particularly helpful to encourage them to participate where they have strengths (part of knowing your students).

- Talk explicitly in class about the fact that all students in the group are expected to have a voice during peer review and that all members of the group can make valuable contributions. The goal is to help group members see L2 writers as supportive group members. You may even consider adding a statement to your syllabus about multilingual writing.

**7. Don't assume that everyone understands the need to cite sources. Citation and plagiarism are cultural constructs in many ways.** In the US, for example, we place a strong cultural value on ownership, including the ownership of ideas and words. For some students, the idea of "ownership of text" may be a new concept. Further, some cultures value the passing down of knowledge more than the creation of new knowledge, particularly at the secondary level. Students from these may not have had much experience working on research papers. Rather than simply point students to the citation section of a handbook, explicitly teach citation.

- Discuss not only the formatting elements (the grammar of citation), but the rhetorical reasons for citation. What instance, why do writers cite? How does citation affect a writer's credibility? What is common knowledge? How does common knowledge change depending on rhetorical context?
- One idea is to ask students to compare the rhetorical implications of MLA format and APA format. What is valued in each format? How do these styles affect the voice of a piece? Why do certain disciplines favor one over the other?

## Sample Assignment: Scavenger Hunt Presentation

Many of our classes will open with a Scavenger Hunt Presentation, which will focus on resources available for students at BSU through different offices and programs.

Choose one of the following programs and offices, and answer the following questions:

1. What is the mission of this program or office?
2. What kinds of resources does this program offer students?
3. Which of these resources are available to first- and second-year students?
4. How can students make use of these resources?
5. Where can students go to find more information?
6. Who is the go-to person for this program or organization? Who should students contact to learn more?

Programs and Offices:

- Career Services
- Center for Multicultural Affairs
- Center for Sustainability
- Community Service Center
- Counseling Center
- Disability Resource Office
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Ally Pride Center
- Honors Program
- Office of Study Abroad
- Office of Undergraduate Research
- Second Language Services
- Writing Studio

Instead of focusing on a particular office or program, you can focus on answering one of these questions:

- What scholarships or awards are available through BSU? Which of these are available to first-year students? What is the application process? Where can students go to find more information?
- What internships are available to BSU students? How can students get academic credit for doing an internship? What is the application process? Where can students go to find more information?
- What is the process for starting a student organization? Which offices help students start student organizations? Where can students go to find more information?
- What minors are available to BSU students? How many courses are required for completing a minor? What is the process for declaring a minor?

Your 7 to 10 minute presentation should include the following:

- Visual aids – can be in the form of PowerPoint slides, a handout, a tour through a website, or brochures/handouts from the program or organization
- Information that can't be found on a website (so you'll need to talk to a person affiliated with the program or organization).
- Photo of a person associated with this office or program, taken by you.



## Sample Assignment: Film Project Assignment Description

This project brings together what you've learned about argument, rhetoric, and research, but asks you to compose in another medium: film. I'd like you to think of this film as an argumentative essay – one that includes claims, evidence, summary, paraphrasing, and direct quotes, but uses sound and visuals along with words.

For this project, I'd like you to target a Dartmouth audience, such as Dartmouth faculty, peers from the US, next year's international students, specific groups of international students, RWIT tutors, etc. You may choose to focus your argument on any topic related to multilingualism and/or internationalism.

You will be completing this project as part of a group – your film team. As with other projects in this course, you will complete this project through a series of steps:

- **The Pitch (due Jan 22):** This initial step is both a brainstorming tool and a chance for feedback. In the pitch, you will begin to give shape to your ideas, proposing a tentative film title, target audience, film objective and goals, and a description of why this film is important to make.
- **Film Tutorial in Jones Media Center (Jan 30, x-hour):** During this tutorial, Susan Simon will lead us through activities that will introduce us to iMovie, the program you'll use to edit your films, as well as available resources.
- **The Treatment Plan (due Feb 3):** The Treatment Plan is a more detailed version of the Pitch, and will thus assist you in further planning your film as well as getting additional feedback on your ideas.
- **Storyboard and Script (due Feb 10):** The storyboard will help you plan the visual elements of the film and the script will help you plan the audio elements. Together, they work as the blueprint of your film.
- **Shooting, information gathering, and editing (Feb 10-Feb 24):** During this stage of the project, gather visual elements of your film, which may include footage of interviews and scenes, photos, images from the web (credited), music (credited), as well as information related to your topic from the literature. Keep in mind that editing footage takes four times as long as acquiring it. Be sure to leave plenty of time for this step in the process. In class, we will discuss procedures for obtaining consent, should you decide to conduct a survey or interviews.
- **Rough Cut (due Feb 24):** The rough cut is essentially a rough draft – your chance to step back and see how the film is coming together as a whole and to get feedback on your work-in-progress.
- **Final Cut (due March 7):** This is where all of your hard work pays off. On the last day of class, each group will share and discuss their films.

### Film Specifications:

- Medium: iMovie
- Running Time: (including credits): 7 minutes maximum, 4 minutes minimum (NO EXCEPTIONS).

- **Audio:** Any kind (voiceover, song, music, sound effects). Remember the 7-minutes limit when you choose audio.
- **Credits:** cite in the credits secondary sources and images or audio recording of others that you use or consult.
- **Final Submission:** post as YouTube video. If you haven't collected signed consent forms from all people who are surveyed, interviewed for, or are featured in your film, set the privacy settings so that your video is only accessible to those who have the link. If you do have signed consent forms and if everyone in your group is comfortable with making the film public, then you may post the film without the privacy settings. If you do this, include a statement that provides some context for the film and state that the film may only be used for educational purposes.

**Along with the final version of the film, each group should turn in a folder containing:**

- The Pitch
- The Treatment Plan
- The Storyboard and Script

**Each individual should also hand in a reflective letter that answers the following questions:**

- How has this film project contributed to your learning about rhetoric and argumentation? What from this experience will you keep in mind for the next time you compose an argument?
- How does making an argument through film compare to making an argument through a written essay? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each medium?
- What insights did you gain during this project as related to the film making process and the topic you focused on? What challenges did your team face while gathering materials for the film, shooting the film, and editing the film and how were they resolved? What from this experience will you keep in mind should you participate in another film project?
- What insights did you gain during this project as related to collaboration? How did your film team divide responsibilities during this project? What parts of the process were handled collaboratively (with input from every member) and what parts were handled individually? What was your role in the team? What were the challenges of this collaboration and how were they resolved? What from this experience will you keep in mind should you participate in another collaborative project?

## Sample Assignment: Onto the Editorial Page - The Op/Ed Essay

*To argue well is an act of imagination, not a picking of sides. In presenting their arguments, then, the best argument essays make a clear claim, but they do it by bowing respectfully to the complexity of the subject, examining it from a variety of perspectives, not just two opposing poles. (Bruce Ballenger, *The Curious Writer*, 288).*

This project will require you to build an argument, persuading your audience through the use of evidence and persuasive appeals (*logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*), writing in a genre often used to persuade the public: an op-ed (an opinion-editorial). The topic is open. In class, we will brainstorm our communities, and then brainstorm issues that currently affect these communities, as well as newspapers and magazines that reach these communities. You will then be asked to select a topic, target audience, and newspaper or magazine that reaches your target audience. We will also read and analyze some editorials, to get a feel for the conventions of this genre, and what makes for an effective editorial. The final draft of your op-ed should be between 700-1000 words long, be organized around one central claim, provide specific and appropriate evidence in support of your claim, and address one or more counterarguments offered by readers who take a position on the argument differing from your own.

If you choose to actually send your op-ed to a newspaper or magazine, you will get 5 points extra credit added to your final course grade. Most newspapers and magazines prefer electronic submissions. To provide evidence that you've sent your op-ed, either CC me when you email your submission, or send me a copy of the acknowledgement of receipt.

### What to Hand In

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At the end of this project, use a folder with two pockets to hand in:

- early drafts of the essay
- peer feedback from the Paperswap workshop
- any feedback I've given you during this project
- final edited draft (700-1000 words, has a title, uses MLA format for the heading and header, as well as for any researched material, uses Times New Roman 12-point font, and uses 1 inch margins)
- a cover letter about your writing process that answers the following questions:
  - Why did you choose to write about this topic?
  - Who is your target audience? Which newspaper or magazine would you send this op-ed to, if you were to send it? At this point, do you plan to submit this op-ed for publication?
  - How did revision help you to explore and further develop your writing? What changed between drafts? What feedback did you receive from readers (i.e. classmates, teacher, or writing studio consultant) and how did you use this feedback during the writing and revision of this op-ed?
  - If you had more time, how would you further develop this op-ed?

## Sample Assignment: Snapshots of Our Literacies<sup>2</sup>

*You need to get some writing down on paper and to keep it there long enough so that you can give yourself the treat of rewriting. What you need is a ballpoint pen so that you can't erase and some cheap paper so you can deliberately use a lot of it . . . Where are your notes to yourself? Where are your lists? . . . Where are your quoted passages? Where is your chaos? Nothing comes of nothing!*

--Ann Berthoff, "Recognition, Representation and Revision"

During this project, we will write "snapshots"—brief descriptive essays—that portray our multiple literacies and literacy experiences.

Below, I have listed writing prompts about writing, reading, languages and discourse communities, and literacies. Remember—these are prompts, not essay questions. In most of the prompts, I list a number of questions, but you don't need to worry about answering every question. In fact, it would be better if you didn't. Read the prompts until you come across a question that sparks a particular memory, something worth exploring through writing, and then write. In each piece, I would like you to use personal writing (writing from our experiences, using the word "I"), and a narrative (story-telling) voice.

If you use multiple languages, feel free to write about literacy experiences you had when writing or reading in a language other than English. Literacies across languages build upon each other, so it's valuable to reflect on all of your literacy experiences across languages, educational systems, and cultures. You may also choose to focus on experiences you have had while reading and writing in English. It's up to you.

Generating short writings will give you multiple chances to experiment with stylistic choices, narrative strategies, and revision techniques. Sometimes, when we write a longer essay, we feel "locked into" that first draft, perhaps since it represents such an investment of time and effort. Long first drafts can feel as if they've been etched in concrete—unmovable, intractable, set. But short pieces of writing can be endlessly played with, transformed, explored. During this project, you will work with your writing group to identify prompts from the handout, "Playing with Revision," that would be helpful in revising and further developing your snapshots. I didn't discover the "treat of rewriting" until my second semester of graduate school. Hopefully, you will discover this much earlier than I did. Revision is the time when you are free to play with language, experiment with form and voice, and explore your ideas and memories more deeply.

During the last week of the project, you will select some of "snapshots" to create a "snapshot essay," a form used in creative nonfiction to present windows into your experiences (we will also read snapshot essays by my former students so you can see what this kind of essay looks like). We will workshop the essay as a whole, again using prompts from "Playing with Revision" to continue crafting the snapshots. We will then place the essay, along with drafts, notes, and feedback ("your chaos") into a portfolio and step back to think about what we learned about our literacies and the writing process during this project (these requirements are listed toward the end of this assignment description under the heading "Final Notes"). Taking the time to appreciate what we have written is perhaps the best "treat" of the writing process.

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<sup>2</sup> A version of this assignment was shared and discussed in Cox, M. & Tirabassi, K. E. (2011). *The College Writing Toolkit: Tried and Tested Ideas for Teaching College Writing*. Ed. M. Pennington & P. Burton. London, UK: Equinox.

## Definitions

**Discourse community:** A group of people who are connected by a common discourse. Composition scholar Lynn Z. Bloom defines discourse community in this way: “When several (or more) readers share a background, common values, and a common language, they may be considered a discourse community. . . . all the words, all the languages we understand (including the nonverbal communication of body language and social conventions), invariably influence how we write” (*The Essay Connection*, 5). Discourse communities tend to use a specialized discourse and prefer certain genres for communicating with each other. Some examples of discourse communities: fans of the Boston Red Sox, knitters, biochemists.

**Literacy:** You may be familiar with the definition of literacy as the ability to read and write. We are using a more current definition of literacy here. Composition scholars talk about people as having multiple literacies at multiple levels. If you can read and write within a particular discourse community, then you are *literate* in that discourse community. For example, I am literate in the world of knitting, becoming literate as a Boston Red Sox fan, but not at all literate in the world of biochemistry.

**Literacy sponsor:** A literacy sponsor is an agent that brings someone into a particular literacy. For example, I am a sponsor to my sister’s developing knitting literacy, because I often help her learn how to interpret knitting instructions and give her knitting books that I’ve found helpful. Those knitting books were my literacy sponsors because they helped me become literate in the world of knitting.

## Writing Prompts

### *Writing about Writing*

1. **Favorite Writing Experience:** Think about a piece you wrote that is important to you. What makes this piece special to you? What did you write about? How did you go about writing this piece? Did you write it inside or outside of school? How has this writing experience continued to influence you? If you shared what you wrote, what kind of feedback did you receive? Rather than think about a piece, you could also think about writing in a certain genre, such as poetry, letters, arguments, or writing in a journal. Develop a brief narrative that highlights an aspect of your favorite writing experience.
2. **Worst Writing Experience:** Think about a writing experience that had a negative effect on you. Did this experience take place in school or outside of school? How was the experience negative? Was it stressful? Did you feel embarrassed? Were you unfamiliar with the discourse or genre you were expected to write in? If you shared what you wrote, what kind of feedback did you receive? How has this experience continued to influence you as a writer? Develop a brief narrative that highlights an aspect of your worst writing experience.
3. **Picturing a Writer:** What do you envision when you picture a writer? What does this writer write? Where does this writer write? What does this writer look like? What kinds of tools does this writer use to write with? Compare yourself to this writer that you envision. How do you compare? Where do your ideas about writers come from? Write a brief narrative that explores what you envision when you picture a writer in comparison with who you are as a writer.
4. **Feelings about Writing:** What are your first thoughts when you think about writing? What are your first feelings when you are given a writing assignment in school? Where do these thoughts and feelings come from? Do you remember the first time you felt this way about writing? Do you remember a time when you felt differently about writing? If so, what changed your feelings? You

- may also choose to compare your feelings about writing when writing in different languages. How do you feel about writing when writing in a first language versus writing in a second (third, fourth, etc.) language? Write a brief narrative that depicts your feelings about writing.
5. **Writing Inventory:** As a form of prewriting, make a list of the kinds of writing you have done. What genres have you written in (i.e. journal entry, email, lab report, proposal, essay, research paper)? What places have you written for (i.e. a workplace, school, an organization)? What audiences have you written for? What purposes have you used writing for? After making this list, write a snapshot on what you discovered about who you are as a writer.
  6. **Your Writing Process:** How would you describe your writing process? Do you use a dictionary or a thesaurus? Do you have people read your writing and give you feedback as you write? What are the steps you take when you write? Do you brainstorm, make an outline, write multiple drafts? How do you feel when you write? Does your writing process differ if you are writing for school versus writing outside of school, or in one language versus another language? How do you find topics to write about? Do you have different writing processes for different genres of writing (i.e. email, journal entry, lab report)? Write a brief narrative that depicts your writing process.
  7. **Learning How to Write:** When have you experienced turning points as a writer? When did you come to insights about writing? How did the way you were taught to write affect your feelings about writing or your experiences with writing? Did you learn to write differently when taught to write in different languages? Write a snapshot that explores one experience related to how you learned to write.

### *Writing about Reading*

8. **Favorite Reading Experience:** Think about a book, poem, or story that has been important to you. Did you read this piece inside or outside of school? What makes this piece special to you? What were the characters like? Did you connect strongly with one of the characters? If yes, how? What details can you remember from this piece? When do you find yourself remembering this piece? Rather than think about a particular piece, you could also think about a certain author or genre (short story, poetry, science fiction, speeches, etc). How has this reading experience continued to influence you? Develop a brief narrative that highlights an aspect of your favorite reading experience.
9. **Worst Reading Experience:** Think about a reading experience that had a negative effect on you. Did this experience take place in school or outside of school? How was the experience negative? Was it stressful? Did you feel embarrassed? Was the discourse inaccessible? How has this experience continued to influence you as a reader? Develop a brief narrative that highlights an aspect of your worst reading experience.
10. **Reading Inventory:** As a form of prewriting, list books that you've read. How many on your list are fiction? How many are non-fiction? How many are written by women, and how many by men? What are the ethnicities, nationalities, and/or races of the authors? What year was each book written in? What trends do you notice when you think about these books (i.e. are most of them science fiction? satire? about relationships?)? How did you come to read each book (i.e. did a friend suggest it? did you happen across it on amazon.com? did a teacher assign it?)? After making this list, write a brief narrative on what you discovered about who you are as a reader.
11. **Rereadings:** I often think about reading as being a drafting process. In a first reading, I am usually so engaged in the story, or so interested in the argument, that I rush through the reading. During a second reading, I notice the writer's style, catch some of the larger claims the writer is making, or notice contradictions in the writer's argument. Write a brief narrative about a time when you had a similar experience with reading.

12. **Picturing a Reader:** What do you envision when you picture a reader? What does this reader read? Where does this reader read? What does this reader look like? Compare yourself to this reader that you envision. How do you compare? Where do your ideas about readers come from? Write a brief narrative that explores what you envision when you picture a reader in comparison with who you are as a reader.
13. **Feelings about Reading:** What are your first thoughts when you think about reading? What are your first feelings when you are given a reading assignment in school? Where do these thoughts and feelings come from? Do you remember the first time you felt this way about reading? Do you remember a time when you felt differently about reading? If so, what changed your feelings? Write a brief narrative that depicts your feelings about reading.
14. **Your Reading Process:** How would you describe your reading process? As you read, do you take notes in the margins, underline sentences, or make other marks on the page? Do you use a dictionary to look up unfamiliar words? Does your reading process differ if you are reading for school versus reading outside of school? How does your reading process differ when you read in your first language in comparison to when you read in a second language? Is there a certain time of day when you like to read, or a certain place you like to sit? Do you need absolute silence or do you read in front of the TV? How do you feel when you read? How do you find new books to read? From friends? From library shelves? From amazon.com? From teachers? Write a brief narrative that depicts your reading process.

## Writing about Languages and Discourse Communities

15. **Exploring Languages:** What languages do you use? How do you choose when to use which language? How important is language to culture? To identity? Do you feel like someone different in each language? When do you feel silent, without language? Have you lost or gained a language or pieces of a language? How, where, why? Tell us a story about an experience you have had with language.
16. **In Response to Course Readings:** During this project, we are reading about language acquisition, approaches to teaching English, and literacy narratives by multilingual scholars. Look through your double entry journals: did any of these readings connect to your own experiences with language? If so, choose one of these experiences and write a brief narrative about it.
17. **Exploring a Discourse Community:** Think about a discourse community that you are very familiar with (i.e. a workplace, a social circle, an academic discipline). What words are specific to this community? Why are there words that are specific to this community? What are the speaking and/or writing practices of members of this community? Who generally gets to speak/write? How can people enter this discourse community? What would gain a person entry? What would keep a person out? Develop a brief narrative that highlights some of the language practices specific to this discourse community.
18. **Entering a Discourse Community:** Think about a time when you were aware of entering a discourse community. How did you feel before you were fluent in this discourse community? How did you enter the community? Did anyone act as a sponsor? How did you learn the discourse practices of this community? How do you now stand as a member of this community? Develop a brief narrative that illustrates a key experience you had when you entered an unfamiliar discourse community.
19. **Moving between Discourse Communities:** Think about a time when you were aware that you were moving between discourse communities. How would you describe each of these communities? What was the relation between these communities? Did they clash against each other or blend together? How did your discourse practices change as you moved between these

- communities? Do you feel like a different person in each of these communities? Develop a brief narrative that illustrates a key experience you had when moving between discourse communities.
20. **In Conversation:** Think about the conventions of conversation in one of your discourse communities. Who gets to talk? How are turns taken? How do speakers signify that they want a response? How do listeners know when to jump in and speak? How do listeners signify that they are listening, following the conversation? How is silence interpreted? How does body language figure into the conversation? Describe a scene where members of this community interact so that someone from outside of this community has a look in.

### *Writing about Literacy*

21. **Literacy Spaces and Artifacts:** Explore a room that is important to you (i.e. a bedroom, a lab, an office). What literacy artifacts do you see? What literacies are represented in this room? If you moved to come to school, what kinds of written pieces did you bring with you? Develop a brief narrative, exploring how artifacts in a particular space represent your literacies. Or, examine one artifact and write about it in detail, seeing where this takes you.
22. **Literacies of Someone You Know:** Think about the literacies of a family member or close friend. How do you know about this person's literacies? When you enter this person's space (i.e. house, room, office), what literacy artifacts do you see? How does this person's literacies affect your relationship with this person? How have this person's literacies affected your own? Develop a brief narrative that highlights the relevance of this person's literacies.
23. **Oral Literacy:** Think about the role of oral literacy in your family or one of your discourse communities. What stories are told? Who tells the stories? When are they told? Why are they told? How do these stories change over time, or change when different people tell them? Do these stories coincide with or contradict written histories? Are they written down anywhere? Develop a brief narrative that focuses on one of these aspects of oral literacy.
24. **Acts of Sponsorship:** Think about a time when you sponsored someone into a literacy, or when someone acted as a sponsor to you. What prompted this act of sponsorship? How did this sponsorship take place? How did this sponsorship play into your relationship with the other person? Have you or the other person retained this new literacy? Develop a brief narrative about an act of sponsorship.

## Final Notes

When the project is due, hand in a folder containing the following pieces:

- Snapshot Essay: must contain 5-7 snapshots; use 12-point font, Times New Roman, with 1" margins; each snapshot should be well-crafted and edited, and contribute to the essay as a whole.
- Paper Trail: drafts, revisions, worksheet from Paperswap workshop
- Cover Letter: Tell me the story of your writing of the essay, answering the following questions.
  - What have you learned about your literacies, languages, and the writing process during this project?
  - How did revision help you to explore and further develop your writing? How did you use feedback from readers (i.e. classmates, teacher, or the TA) during the writing of different snapshots? Choose a snapshot that you feel taught you the most about writing and revision, and tell me the story of you writing it.
  - If you had more time, how would you further develop this essay? Choose one snapshot, and tell me how you would revise it further.



## Useful Resources on Second Language Writing

Bruce, Shanti and Ben Rafoth, Eds. *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2009.

Though written for writing center tutors, this is the book I most often recommend to faculty. The chapters are clear and concise, and focus on different aspects of reading and responding to second language writing.

Conference on College Composition and Communication. *CCCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers.* 2010. <http://www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/secondlangwriting>

Written by the CCCC Committee on Second Language Writing and Writers and endorsed by Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), this useful statement provides an overview of second language writing and guidelines for writing programs and instructors.

Cox, Michelle, Ed. "WAC and Second Language Writers." *WAC Clearinghouse.*  
<http://wac.colostate.edu/slhw/>

On this WAC Clearinghouse page, I provide information about working with second language writers and a bibliography of useful resources.

Cox, Michelle. "WAC-WID and Second Language Writing." WPA-CompPile Research Bibliographies, No. 8. *WPA-CompPile Research Bibliographies.* 2010.  
<http://comppile.org/wpa/bibliographies/Bib8/Cox.pdf>

In this annotated bibliography, I provide abstracts for scholarship focused on second language writers in contexts outside of first-year composition.

Currie, Pat. "Staying Out of Trouble: Apparent Plagiarism and Academic Survival." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 7.1 (1998): 1-18.

This article reports on a study of a second language writer who resorted to plagiarism when pressured to write in Standard Written English, and was rewarded for doing so, as the instructor didn't catch on. This is a useful article for considering the reasons L2 students may plagiarize.

Ferris, Dana, John Hedgcock, and John S. Hedgcock. *Teaching ESL Composition: Purpose, Process, and Practice.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005.

This useful book pulls together scholarship on second language writing development and pedagogy to guide instructors in planning curricula, designing assignments, understanding the features of second language writing, and responding to and assessing the writing of second language students.

George Mason University. *Valuing Written Accents.* <http://writtenaccents.gmu.edu/>

This website provides data from an ongoing investigation into the experiences of second language students and their instructors at George Mason University.

Harklau, Linda, Kay M. Losey, and Meryl Siegal. "Linguistically Diverse Students and College Writing: What is Equitable and Appropriate?" *Generation 1.5 Meets College Composition.* Ed. Linda Harklau, Kay M. Losey, and Meryl Siegal. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1999. 1-14.

This landmark article introduces the term “generation 1.5” to writing studies, and discusses the unique characteristics of this group of second language students.

Land, Robert E. and Catherine Whitley. “Evaluating Second-Language Essays in Regular Composition Courses: Toward a Pluralistic U.S. Rhetoric.” *Second-Language Writing in the Composition Classroom: A Critical Sourcebook*. Ed. Paul Kei Matsuda, Michelle Cox, Jay Jordan, and Christina Ortmeier-Hooper. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2006. 324-32.

This provocative article challenges instructors to rethink how we evaluate writing by second language students.

Leki, Ilona. *Understanding ESL Writers: A Guide for Teachers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann-Boynton/Cook, 1992.

Though dated, this concise book provides useful guidance for instructors working with international second language students.

Matsuda, Paul Kei, Michelle Cox, Jay Jordan, and Christina Ortmeier-Hooper, Eds. *Second-Language Writing in the Composition Classroom: A Critical Sourcebook*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2006, 2010.

This collection of previously published articles pulls together scholarship on second language writing useful to instructors of first-year composition. This book is free – simply contact your Bedford / St. Martin’s representative.

Ortmeier-Hooper, Christina. *The ELL Writer: Moving Beyond Basics in Secondary Schools*. Teachers College Press, 2013.

A provocative book that examines the experiences of U.S. resident multilingual student writers in U.S. high schools and provides insights for teachers into the constraints and opportunities that exist for immigrant, linguistic minority and refugee students in today’s schools.

Robertson, Wayne, dir. *Writing Across Borders*. Oregon State University, 2005.

This valuable film features the voices of second language writing scholars, instructors, and second-language students from across the curriculum, and provides a useful overview of several issues relevant to second language writing, such as cultural notions of textual ownership, contrastive rhetoric, and responding to and assessing the writing of second language students. The short film can be ordered for a nominal fee from Oregon State University, or viewed through YouTube.

Saenkhum, Tanita and Paul Kei Matsuda. “Second Language Writing and Writing Program Administration.” WPA-CompPile Research Bibliographies, No. 4, *WPA-CompPile Research Bibliographies*. 2010. [http://comppile.org/wpa/bibliographies/Bib4/Saenkhum\\_Matsuda.pdf](http://comppile.org/wpa/bibliographies/Bib4/Saenkhum_Matsuda.pdf)

This annotated bibliography provides abstracts for scholarship focused on second language writers in first-year composition.

Severino, Carol. “The Sociopolitical Implications of Response to Second Language and Second Dialect Writing.” *Second-Language Writing in the Composition Classroom: A Critical Sourcebook*. Ed. Paul Kei Matsuda, Michelle Cox, Jay Jordan, and Christina Ortmeier-Hooper. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2006. 330-50.