TEACHING EVERY STUDENT

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How can we foster learning environments in which diversity becomes one of the resources that stimulates learning?
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REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Questions to ask yourself

Wake Forest University
How do your own experiences, values, beliefs and stereotypes influence your knowledge and understanding of groups that are different from your own?

- Do I expect that NNES students will do better or worse than other students?
- Do I assume that all NNES students are alike?
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

• How do your own experiences, values, beliefs and stereotypes inform the way you interact with students whose racial background is different from your own?
  o Am I afraid of calling on students whose English may be less proficient?
  o Do I rationalize or tolerate lack of participation from NNES students more than I would from other students?
REFLECTION QUESTIONS

• How do your own experiences, values, beliefs and stereotypes influence the way you behave in the classroom?
  o How open am I to multiple modes of discourse?
  o Am I impatient with NNES students if they don’t know what I expect them to know or do?

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• Problematic assumptions?
  - All ESL students have the same problems/needs
  - Grammar must always be corrected
  - If they are in college, their English is fine
  - They will ask if they have a question or need help
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

International Students ("Eye" Learners)
• Global context, high socioeconomic background,
• Strong(er) reading, grammar, motivation, academic skills
• Challenges: grammar application, speaking/listening, appropriate vocabulary, cultural adjustment, asking for help

Immigrant Students ("Ear" Learners)
• More experience in US, more cultural knowledge
• Communicative, oral English sounds strong
• Challenges with academic literacy, vocabulary, college preparedness, cultural identity, asking for help

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TEACHING NNES STUDENTS

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WHAT CAN FACULTY DO?

Two major ways that faculty can enable learning for NNES students:

1. Think about the language used in the classroom
   - Cultural references, humor, idioms, colloquial language and slang
   - Rate of speech, clutter, lack of visual support

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2. Develop student skills most critical for academic success:
   - Explain use of syllabus
   - active listening, reading, note-taking, writing, in-class participation
   - ‘Western’ academic tasks: personal opinion, summary, paraphrase, analysis, evaluating arguments and positions
   - Test taking skills
General Advice:

• Enunciate, pause between phrases and thoughts
• Use slower but natural speech rate, especially with PowerPoint
• Exaggerate intonation on key words, phrases
• Add redundancy with examples, expansions, paraphrases
• Use visuals, gestures and props
• Limit idioms and slang
General Advice:

• Clear step-by-step instructions and model new tasks
• Use distinct transitions: “Let’s get started”, instead of “OK”
• If you reference pop culture (TV shows, ads, slogans slang) to explain something, paraphrase explanation without cultural reference
• Write key terms on board
• Speak loudly enough for everyone to hear you
• Even NNES with good levels of English proficiency will have a far smaller English vocabulary than NES students so reading assignments will take them longer:
  o Point out organization of textbook readings (main ideas, subheadings, etc.)
  o Highlight features such glossaries, chapter overviews, headings, etc.)
  o Offer guidelines or questions to direct the reading
SKILLS: LISTENING

• Strategies to promote Active Listening
  o Establish connections with recent lessons at beginning of a lecture/ask students to summarize main points from previous lecture
  o Clarify topic and key objectives
  o Use clear macromarkers: “What I plan to discuss today” not “All right, so…”
  o Check writing for legibility
SKILLS: LISTENING

• Strategies to promote Active Listening
  o Allow use of recording devices
  o Before and during lecture identify key terms, write them on board or one slide
  o Avoid digressions and reduce “linguistic clutter”
  o Highlight transitions, major points with non-verbals (gesture, facial expressions, intonation) and verbal markers (“Furthermore, in summary”)
• If note-taking is important in your class:
  o Share examples of well-taken notes: have students stop and compare notes to answer questions
  o Structure the note taking with partially completed “skeletal” outline of main ideas, headings and sub-headings
  o Provide abbreviations and symbols common in your discipline
SKILLS: PARTICIPATION

• Be explicit about what counts as participation.
  o Use prepared participation: quick writes, question formulation from reading, review of notes
  o Ask for several hands to be raised, don’t call on first student, increase wait time
  o Focus on meaning or content of NNES responses, not pronunciation or grammatical accuracy
  o Use pair and share before open class discussion
• Not all language problems are grammar problems
  o Academic **genres** and **registers** present linguistic challenges (for all students)
  o Writing in **specific disciplines** present linguistic challenges (for all students)
  o There are culturally-based rhetorical styles
  o Actual grammar errors result from a complex variety of causes
SKILLS: WRITING

- Possible traits of a Generation 1.5 / Language Minority student writer
  - speak like native speakers of American English
  - written text sounds like informal spoken English (only one register)
  - vocabulary not very rich
  - rarely write syntactically incoherent sentences
  - some faulty grammar structures
Possible traits of EFL Student Writers

- Speak and write as nonnative English speakers
- Grammar problems may be due to mislearning, transfer from L1, inability to understand the assignment or texts
- Organization of information problematic
- Influence of culturally-based rhetorical style
- May have little basis for understanding “essay”
Responding to Student Writing

• **Pretextual Stage**
  - Collect Biodata from all students
  - Collect a Writing Sample from all students
  - Configure a Grading Rubric
  - Conduct Pre-paper Conferencing
  - Help Students to Read Models
Responding to Student Writing

- *Textual and Early Composing Stages*
  - Emphasize Writing as a Process through Drafting and Revision
  - Establish the Difference between Global and Local Errors
  - Recognize the Relative Permanence of Global Errors
Responding to Student Writing

• *Post-textual and Revision Stages:*
  o Establish a “Scale of Concerns”
  o Identify Transfer and Interference
  o Decide between Formative and Summative Assessment
Some general things to do:

- Acknowledge the complexities involved in learning to write academic prose.
- Equip students to work with genre models.
- Make instructions and expectations for writing assignments more explicit.
- Identify patterns and priorities of errors in students’ writing.
When marking errors:

- Identify patterns and priorities of errors
- Avoid the temptation to “correct” right away.
- Do not correct everything: choose in a principled manner.
- Decide on the type of feedback (corrective vs. indirect).
• When making up an exam:
  o Use simpler sentence structure in place of complex
  o Be careful with telegraphic writing, e.g., *Items on right used only once = what did the items on the right use only once?*
  o Watch typos or misspellings: NNES may assume it’s a real word and may waste time trying to figure it out
• When giving an exam:
  o NNES will likely read more slowly due to cognitive load of processing second language
  • If possible, allow extra time
  • Allow them to ask you the meaning of words that are not being tested
  • If spelling and vocabulary not object of test, allow the use of dictionaries
Bibliography
