

WAC and Second Language Writing: Cross-field Research, Theory, and Program Development  
**Teaching and Learning with Multilingual Faculty**<sup>[1]</sup>

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**Abstract:** This article draws on a survey of 64 self-identified multilingual faculty from across the disciplines who currently teach with writing in English at the undergraduate and graduate level. The survey asked faculty about their linguistic experiences from childhood through the present and thus offers insights about the complexity of multilingual faculty members' language lives. The author contextualizes her findings in the literature critiquing WAC/WID as a standardizing force in the academy and the literature identifying the English monolingual biases of composition studies. The article concludes with recommendations for working against the common assumption that faculty who teach with writing in English are linguistically homogenous and suggests that changes in faculty development could nurture WAC/WID programs that work against language standardization.

*Almost everything that I do in my (personal, professional) life is informed by my experiences as a multilingual person/writer.*

— multilingual faculty survey respondent

*I teach in the US, so all classes, research, interactions with colleagues, etc. are in English, of course.*

— multilingual faculty survey respondent

*Formal education in the US, from bottom to top, identifies multilingual speakers like me as 'ESL' based on an outdated understanding of multilinguals on monolingual basis, which is like studying dogs by using chicken science, which at the very least fails to account for four legs, teeth, and tail! That convenience of labeling all 'others' also fails to show us the staggering variety of language identities, or rather, language performances.*

— multilingual faculty survey respondent

I am a monolingual English writing teacher and program administrator. And I am not alone. As Christiane Donohue (2009) notes: "U.S. composition theorists and teachers are often monolingual, unlike much of the rest of the world. Our classrooms may well be multilingual, but our writing faculty and scholars are quite often not" (p. 227). I speak and write an upper-middle-class, institutionalized, standardized,<sup>[2]</sup> American White School English. I write and teach in that same English, long dominant in U.S. classrooms. But many of my faculty colleagues move through their professional and personal lives with more than one language, including different varieties of English.

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***Across the Disciplines***

*A Journal of Language, Learning and Academic Writing*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37514/ATD-J.2011.8.4.06>

wac.colostate.edu/atd

ISSN 1554-8244

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As the director of a writing center, and now as the director of a Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program, I've sat with monolingual English faculty as they discuss the writing of multilingual<sup>[3]</sup> student writers, referring to those writers as "they" and "them" and "those students" (as well as with any number of other whispered, othering characterizations). In those same rooms our multilingual colleagues have sat beside us. I've also been in attendance at presentations at conferences like the International Writing Across the Curriculum conference when those speaking have made the same move, implicitly and somewhat unconsciously—or explicitly and quite consciously—constructing "faculty," especially the faculty who teach writing intensive courses across the disciplines, as monolingual English or English dominant speakers and writers who are all struggling to understand multilingual student writers. These presenters seem to have little or no awareness that audience members may themselves be multilingual faculty who have moved through the curriculum as multilingual students. These stances reveal deeply ingrained beliefs and assumptions about language at work in institutions with English as the primary language of instruction and presentation.

In the fall of 2009 I hosted a well-attended WAC lunch at St. John's University that I titled "Teaching and Learning with Multilingual Writers." St. John's is a campus with a significant number of multilingual students, and I wanted to avoid a conversation in which monolingual faculty would refer to the multilingual students in their classes as "them." My goal was to create a situation in which the "them" was actually "us"—faculty colleagues.<sup>[4]</sup>

By describing experiences ranging from those they had as multilingual elementary school students to those they had as multilingual undergraduate and graduate students in American universities<sup>[5]</sup> to those they have as multilingual scholars, the presenters were able to complicate the language assumptions and practices of all faculty present. There was talk of writing process: one faculty person described how slowly he writes in English while another spoke of how easily she writes and how much she loves to write—in any language. There was talk of teaching: a faculty person talked about speaking with Korean students in Korean when she feels she can't appropriately say what she wants to say to them—or they feel they can't appropriately say to her what they want to say to her—in English. A senior faculty person asked the multilingual faculty present to help him think about the multilingual doctoral students in his social sciences department, in particular how he might help his faculty think about what they see as those writers' struggles. In response to his question, monolingual and multilingual faculty talked their way to many of principles of the [CCCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers](#). The CCCC's Statement also speaks to the value of "sustaining" faculty conversations like this one and notes that when faculty are introduced to one another in structured discussions around language they may be more likely to find ways to pick up and continue these cross-departmental, cross-campus conversations on their own.

After this lunch, even I had a much greater understanding of the range of faculty members' linguistic experiences. With so many in writing studies calling for us to embrace the languages, and thus the complex identities, histories and experiences of all students, I began to think more and more about what we know (or don't know) about how to embrace the linguistic experiences of all faculty. I wondered how we might re-orient our WAC work not just for the linguistically heterogeneous students we teach and from whom we learn, but also for our linguistically heterogeneous faculty colleagues, from whom we also learn. In this article I report on research study I developed to think about the experiences of multilingual faculty across the disciplines who currently teach with writing in English.

The preliminary research reported here may be the first research of its kind: an account(ing) of multilingual faculty members' experiences as learners and teachers across the disciplines. Certainly within rhetoric and composition we find many versions of the first person literacy autobiography

(Gilyard, 1997; Pandey, 2006; Richardson, 2009; Salako, 2010; Villanueva, 1993; Young, 2004). We have long had a body of research about multilingual students' experiences across the curriculum (Casanave, 2002; Ferris, 2009; Leki, 2007; Zamel, 1995; Zawacki and Habib, 2007), and this body of literature is extended with the work in this special issue and with collections like *Language Diversity in the Classroom: From Intention to Practice* and *Reinventing Identities in Second Language Writing*.

Researchers have studied the publishing experiences of multilingual faculty (Belcher, 2007; Canagarajah, 2006; Flowerdew, 1999; Lillis and Curry, 2006; Matsuda and Tardy, 2007; Pederson, 2011) and have explored how multilingual faculty navigate writing the teaching, research and service genres of the university (Hyon and Chen, 2004). A great deal of research has been devoted since the early 1990s to the experiences of multilingual, native and non-native English speaking teachers in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms (see Moussu and Llorca, 2008, for a recent review of this research). And there is new literature calling for an appreciation of non-American, non-Western approaches to teaching with writing in English (Donahue, 2009). But there has been little attention to multilingual faculty who teach in English and support students' writing in English across the curriculum.

In "WAC/WID in the Next America: Redefining Professional Identity in the Age of the Multilingual Majority," Jonathan Hall describes our students as "multilingual learners"— "traditional international students with an education in their original language and country, ... long-time immigrants and children of immigrants, sometimes called 'Generation 1.5' (Roberge, Harklau) or 'emergent English-dominant learners, 'children of immigrants who have oral competency in English and the cultural references of native English speakers' (Johns 141)" (Hall, 2009, p. 35). This could also be a description of our faculty colleagues. Hall notes that the "assumption that the mainstream college student is monolingual is so pervasive and so seemingly obvious that we don't even think of it as an assumption, most of the time" (p. 37). And I would argue that the assumption that the mainstream faculty person is monolingual is just as "pervasive" and "seemingly obvious," especially in the US. We need to become more attentive to how often we assume faculty are monolingual and why we so quickly make that assumption.

Perhaps we are unaware of the deeply ingrained institutionalized beliefs that have to do with how and why we construct our faculty colleagues as *not* multilingual. These institutional beliefs can also inform our WAC programs if we are not vigilant in questioning them. As a movement, WAC, in the United States in particular, has been critiqued for its tendency to standardize, accommodate and lose critical reflexivity (Kells, 2007; LeCourt, 1996; Mahala, 1991; Schroeder, Fox, Bizzell, 2002; Villanueva, 2001). And the dominant discourse of WAC may remain, even in today's globalized, transcultural and inter-connected world, strikingly similar to the "dominant discourse of U.S. college composition," which Paul Kei Matsuda (2006) argues "not only has accepted English Only as an ideal but it already assumes the state of English-only, in which students are native English speakers by default" (p. 637).

Because the faculty we work with speak in English, teach in English and write in English, it may be that we are also able to assume, however unconsciously, "the state of English-only, in which [faculty] are native English speakers by default." But, by implicitly characterizing all faculty as monolingual English teachers who are trying to figure out their multilingual students, as most published scholarship does, we miss the complex linguistic experience of faculty across the disciplines, we keep our monolingual faculty from learning from their multilingual colleagues, and we maintain a subtle bias against any language but a standardized English in the academy, especially in the American academy.

This preliminary research offers some insight into the experiences of multilingual faculty teaching with writing in English, though in many ways, the most interesting finding of this study is how much more we need to know about multilingual faculty members' experiences as learners, writers and teachers. In what follows, I describe my survey research and use the most striking frequencies in the survey data, as well as open-ended responses from the survey, to identify several themes that show up in the experiences of the multilingual faculty who responded to this survey. In final sections I offer ideas for additional research and provide recommendations for how we might reorient faculty development in our writing, literacy and communication across the curriculum programs if we want to strive to work *with* the linguistic diversity of faculty. This reorientation can echo outward, I believe, and significantly affect the attitudes about multilingualism of all faculty, students and staff, especially in the American academy where monolingualism is still, more often than not, thought of as the norm and multilingualism as the exception.

## The Survey and the Survey's 64 Respondents

Because I wanted to collect a larger number of responses than would be possible were I to conduct interviews, and because I wanted to be certain to reach faculty not living in North America but teaching with writing in English, I chose survey research for this project. With the hope of collecting more narrative data, I designed the survey to have a number of open-ended "please add additional comments" spaces. These comments have helped enormously as I've tried to understand the variety of reasons the faculty who responded may have identified themselves as multilingual.

In addition to reading relevant literature as a part of my research process, I sought out and utilized the input of multilingual and English-monolingual friends and colleagues as I developed a web based survey to query multilingual faculty about their linguistic experiences and their experiences teaching with writing in English ([PDF version of the survey](#)). The survey responses were submitted to the St. John's Office of Institutional Research, and the staff at the Office of Institutional Research provided me with the survey data. Responses are anonymous and respondents did not name themselves or their institutions. This research was approved by the Institutional Review Board at St. John's University, and faculty who completed the survey gave informed consent.

Many questions on the survey are informed by literature we often use to talk with faculty across the disciplines about supporting multilingual student writers (see, for example, Michelle Cox's helpful CompPile bibliography — "WAC-WID and Second Language Writers") at the undergraduate and graduate level. The survey had three sections: 1) Demographics; 2) Multilingualism and Experiences Writing; 3) Teaching. In developing this survey, I tried to be attentive to creating questions that were not too Western or US-centric. (I was not always successful. One respondent explicitly critiqued the survey in open-ended responses.<sup>[6]</sup>) I also tried to insure that the survey's questions focused most of all on linguistic identity rather than identity as defined by something like citizenship status. But I did decide to ask survey respondents two geographic questions (What is your birth country? What country do you currently live in?). In the end, the survey became quite long, but its many interconnected parts contribute to the complexity of responses received.

I distributed an invitation to participate via a variety of listservs I am a member of with a research plan to use purposive sampling. From these lists I know the invitation was forwarded to additional listservs, and individuals who saw the posting forwarded it to multilingual friends and colleagues, sometimes cc'ing me on those forwarding emails. In one case in which I was cc'd, a faculty person forwarded the email to a long list of people at institutions across the country, but I do not know any of those faculty and would have no way of knowing if they completed the survey because the survey responses are anonymous.

Sixty-four faculty who identify themselves as multilingual faculty teaching writing in English responded to the survey. Every question that tallied single answers has at least 60 responses. But not every respondent answered every question on the survey, so totals offered throughout this article do not always add up to 64.

To give a sense of the respondents, here is some brief demographic data. Respondents hold a range of degrees, but 56% hold doctoral degrees and 29% hold masters degrees as their most advanced degrees. More respondents teach at public institutions (62%) than private institutions (24%) and a little more than half of the respondents are at doctoral granting institutions (54%). Baccalaureate colleges (22%) and master's college/universities (38%) are also represented. Two respondents are at associate degree granting institutions and two are at special focus institutions.

Slightly more than half of the survey respondents are at institutions with more than 20,000 students (52%), while ten are at institutions with under 5,000 students (16%). The other respondents are practically evenly split among institutions with 5,000 to 20,000 students (11% at over 5,000 and under 9,999, 10% at 10,000 to 14,999, and 11% at 15,000 to 19,999).

The respondents teach in a variety of disciplines sufficient to provide a wider view of the experiences of multilingual faculty teaching in English as the primary language of instruction across the disciplines (for example: 9% biological sciences, 10% business, 16% engineering, 6% health, 7% physical science, 21% social sciences). Of the respondents, 55% report they teach in the humanities and 22% report they teach in education, and in the open-ended questions many of these faculty reveal some present or past academic connection to literatures, writing, composition studies, literacy or linguistics. This disproportionate response clearly had to do, in part, with how and where the survey was advertised. An interesting twist of this demographic, however, is that this statistic can challenge our conception of faculty teaching in English and education, and the subfields of those disciplines, as monolingual.

One hundred percent of the faculty responding have published articles or essays. Twenty-seven percent have published a single or co-authored book and 13% have published more than one book. While I do not know the languages of these publications because the survey did not ask for this information, I would guess that the majority are in English for reasons I explain in a later section, "The Idea of a Dominant or Primary Language." I purposely did not define "multilingual faculty" in my invitation, stating quite clearly that respondents could choose to consider themselves multilingual. The results of this methodological decision offer the first insights of the study. For, as I'll explain in the next two sections, the lived experiences of the faculty who responded to this survey hardly ever fit neatly into the most familiar categories we use for multilingual learners and writers, for example, "ESL" or "L2" or "Generation 1.5." Had I, as the researcher, sought out respondents using categories like these, I might have neater conclusions to offer in this article, but I would not have as much data about the lived language experiences of a wide range of multilingual faculty.

## The Difficulty of Defining Linguistic Experience

There are senior faculty I work with at St. John's who have been teaching at the university level in English for many, many years who I have heard describe themselves as "ESL." I know for some this is because they feel (and/or have been made to feel) as if their spoken and written English is not standardized enough for their colleagues in the American academy to think of their linguistic ability in English as anything other than still deficient. As Christina Ortmeier-Hooper (2008) explains: "The term 'ESL' is not only a descriptor, it is also an institutional marker, pointing to a need for additional services and also to the status of someone still marked as a novice in the English language, an English Language Learner (ELL)" (p. 390). Other faculty I know claim "ESL" because they understand

themselves to be individuals who lived years of their lives in various languages other than English and then, literally, added English to their linguistic repertoires. For these faculty, "ESL" feels accurate and names their experience.

In comparison, the academic friend who helped me with the early design of this study, and who was raised in and has lived among many languages and in many countries over much of her life, would definitely not consider herself to be "ESL." She is, in fact, an example, of someone who learned a World English and native languages in a colonized country along with a standardized British English from primary school. Thinking about this variety of experiences among the faculty I know, and considering whether and how I wanted to limit which faculty would complete the survey, led me to choose "multilingual" and teaching "writing in English in college and university courses across the disciplines" as the key terms by which research respondents would identify themselves.

As the editors of *Reinventing Identities in Second Language Writing* tell us in their introduction: "Second language writers have historically been identified by labels and categories, including ESL [English as a Second Language], LEP [Limited English Proficiency], EFL [English as a Foreign Language], ESOL [English for Speakers of Other Languages], bilingual, nonnative English Speaker (NNES), L2 [Language 2 English], and Generation 1.5" (2010, p. xv). The *Reinvented* editors, Michelle Cox, Jay Jordan, Christina Ortmeier-Hooper and Gwen Gray Schwartz, go on to point out that these "labels that instructors and administrators apply – and are compelled to apply" tend to "simplify the rich multiplicity of identities that L2 writers inhabit, invent and revise as they compose" (p. xvi).

Gail Shuck (2010) echoes these points in her chapter in the *Reinventing Identities in Second Language Writing* collection, "Language Identity, Agency, and Context: The Shifting Meanings of Multilingual." Thinking about the differences between the research paradigm shift that "has taken place in second-language acquisition studies" and "institutional practices," she writes that while newer research shows "our understanding of the complexity of second (and additional) language acquisition in general (not just in second language composition) must account for individual learner identities and the contexts in which their language learning activities occur," "common binaries" are still too often used to "structure our practices in research, administrative, and pedagogical arenas" (p. 118). Examples of these binaries are "'native' vs. 'nonnative'" or "'L1' (first-language) vs. 'L2' (second language)" (Shuck, 2010, p.118). With labels like these, Shuck argues, "learners of English are primarily seen in terms of their inabilities in English, rather than their abilities to be multilingual and navigate multiple language communities" (p. 133).

One survey respondent, an English/Spanish speaker and writer, born in Costa Rica and living in Oman, did offer a label-like description of self—"parallel bilingual." The terms "ESL" and "English as a Second Language" do show up in other faculty responses throughout the data—for example, a respondent born in Kenya and teaching in the English for 25 years names her dominant spoken language "English as a Second Language" and a respondent born in Mexico and educated from elementary school in the US explains that in college she "wanted to prove that an ESL student could become successful in not only majoring in English but also teaching English." It is important to me that respondents themselves *chose* these terms to explain their experience and were not asked to fit themselves into pre-determined categories of linguistic experience.

## The Complexity of the Linguistic Experiences of Faculty

Of the 64 faculty who responded to the survey, 46 report they currently live in the United States. Eighteen respondents list 13 other countries as their current country of residence. To show the reach of the survey, some of those faculty currently reside in China, Israel, Oman, Qatar, Sweden, Taiwan, The United Arab Emirates, and Turkey. Nineteen of the survey respondents were born in the United

States, and four of those 19 currently teach outside the US, in Israel, Sweden, Taiwan and Turkey. Thirty-one faculty born outside the US currently reside in and teach in the US. As these data reveal, migration across national borders was sometimes significant in respondents' linguistic experiences; for example, one respondent wrote: "After my M.A. in Social Work in India and two years of work in India, I began my Ed.D. in Curriculum and Teaching in the U.S.—had to adjust to different academic culture and U.S. writing, spelling, etc." But respondents also noted local border crossings within one country that had significant impacts on their linguistic experiences (into an English dominant school, for example: "I actually received classroom instruction combining speaking, writing and reading English from 5th to 11th grade in Germany") and three specifically noted that marriage changed their language experiences ("As I am married to an Irish, the predominant language with my husband and children is English").

The survey asked respondents to list all their languages and dialects and report how many years they had been speaking and writing each. Of the 64 respondents, only three respondents who selected English for 25 years or more had a second and/or third language of less than 10 years. It would seem as if these might be faculty who had lived most of their lives with English and had only recently learned an additional language. For example, of these three respondents, one was a man born in the US and living in the US, with parents who spoke and wrote in English, who reported Thai as a language he has spoken and written for over seven years. This respondent did not offer any clarification in open-ended comments, so I can not explain the details of his explicit self-identification as "multilingual." But technically he is multilingual.

However, the open-ended "please add additional comments" portions of the survey add important clues about the lives of the other two faculty who might not otherwise be considered multilingual according to their multiple choice survey responses alone. For example, one of these three respondents reported she was born in Turkey and lives in Turkey. She wrote in "English/standard" as a language she has spoken for 25 years or more and written for more than 19 years, and French as a language she has spoken and written for one to three years. She also offered that her parents spoke limited English and did not write in English. But in the open-ended additional comments she wrote:

I was born in iron-curtain "between-coups" Turkey to parents who themselves spoke very little English. There were very few people who spoke a foreign language in the country and no exposure at all to other languages than Turkish in the media. Against this backdrop, my parents did an amazing thing and sent me to a private school where English was the language of instruction. Schools like this existed but were few and far between. I studied many of my school subjects in English between the ages of 6 and 17. Thereafter, I studied American Studies (BA) and English Language Education (MA), both of which were taught solely in English.

Another survey respondent, a woman born in the US and living in the US, gave English as the language she has spoken for 25 years and German as the language she has spoken for less than three years. Her open-ended response explained: "I grew up with grandparents speaking German; high school in Germany - non-English speaking community where we lived; world traveler - visited India, Middle East, South American, West Indies." I am not quite certain how we would characterize this small group of faculty who chose to designate themselves multilingual but who have lived what we might consider only partially multilingual lives with much of their linguistic experience in English. Clearly, they don't see themselves as monolingual English or they wouldn't have taken the time to respond to this survey, so it seems important to acknowledge that there are probably faculty on our campuses whom we might not identify as multilingual but who identify themselves as multilingual from a variety of past and present lived sociocultural experiences.<sup>[7]</sup>

Forty-eight faculty (75% of the respondents) reported *speaking* in both English and one other language for 25 years or more. Slightly fewer, 44 faculty (69%), reported *writing* in both English and at least one other language for 25 years or more. All other respondents who listed they had been speaking and/or writing in English for 25 years or more, also reported speaking and/or writing in at least one other language (and often more than one other) for more than 10 years.

In considering how to best define who this more obviously "multilingual" group of respondents are as learners, writers and teachers, I recalled Terry Zawacki and Anna Sophia Habib's (2010) description of the 26 student informants who took part in their research described in "Will Our Stories Help Teachers Understand?: Multilingual Students Talk About Identity, Voice and Expectations across Academic Communities." Zawacki and Habib (2010) write that what "binds" these students at George Mason University together "despite their varying personal histories is the fact that they have all experienced years of schooling outside of the American academy. Many of those educated in postcolonial contexts, in particular, were travelling between multiple first languages and spoke and wrote a hybrid of English and their native languages" (p. 58).

The faculty in my study are probably older than most of Zawacki and Habib's student informants, so their linguistic identities span longer periods of time and likely include a variety of World Englishes, that is, "English localized in the diverse communities to which it has traveled" (Canagarajah and Jersky, 2009, p. 474). It may be that English was a second language learned for many of these faculty, but that learning started early in life, for 73% of these faculty report that they first became exposed to English in their home or early childhood in a variety of ways from "an old man in the neighborhood taught me English-like alphabet and some English words before I went to school" to "I was tutored." Fourteen percent said that early exposure to English came through media (tv, radio).

Even if English was not the "primary language of instruction" in the undergraduate institutions attended by these faculty<sup>[8]</sup>, 84% wrote in English as undergraduates and almost all of these faculty, 98%, wrote in English as graduate students. A number of faculty respondents to this survey had years of schooling *within* the American academy (for example, a man born in Portugal noted receiving a second college degree in English in the US through an athletic scholarship) or in other English dominant school settings around the world. Only approximately one quarter of the survey respondents said they first became exposed to English in undergraduate or graduate education.

The survey respondents, then, share a number of linguistic experiences. Almost all (98%) wrote in English in graduate school. Most (84%) wrote in English in their undergraduate education. Many (75% of the respondents) reported *speaking* in both English and one other language for 25 years or more, and more than half, but not quite three-quarters of the respondents (69%), reported *writing* in both English and at least one other language for 25 years or more. With every additional variable added on in analysis, however, such as the specific languages other than English spoken and written, parents' proficiency with English, discipline, years teaching in English, the groupings of respondents' similar experiences became very small.

The complexity and individuality of respondents' linguistic experiences were most fully revealed in the open-ended responses of those who reported many years of simultaneously living in multiple languages. The former student athlete from Portugal reported learning English in his home through television, which wasn't "dubbed," so he got the "sound stream in original language with Portuguese subtitles." A woman born in France and teaching in the US for less than six years who reported speaking and writing French and English for 25 years or more wrote:

I was born in France to two American parents. When I was 6, we moved to England but continued in the French educational system. So I spoke English at home and socially and



French (90%) and English (10%) academically, with some Spanish classes too. It's complicated!

A woman born in Kenya reported speaking and writing three languages—English, Kiswahili, and Gikuyu—for as long as she had been teaching in the US, more than 25 years. In explanation, she wrote:

Gikuyu is my mother tongue, Kiswahili is the National language of my country. During lower school (primary and secondary) I spoke English only at school and Gikuyu at home. I never formally learned Kiswahili, I just picked up from others.

This preliminary study suggests questions we might ask as we move forward with research on the language learning experiences of multilingual faculty, and I offer ideas about further research in the recommendations section at the end of this article.

## The Idea of a Primary or Dominant Language

I constructed the survey so faculty could reject or accept the idea of a primary or dominant language. It is interesting to note that 31 respondents offered English as their dominant spoken language and 44 offered English as their dominant written language (including one English/Spanish and one English/French). Sixteen faculty chose "no," explicitly noting they did not have a dominant or primary spoken language while 11 said they did not have a dominant or primary written language.

For a sense of how this question of dominant or primary language may have felt to faculty completing the survey, consider what a few survey responses offered: The Kenyan woman described in the previous section who responded that she has spoken and written English, Gikuyu and Kiswahili for 25 years or more wrote "English as a Second Language" as her dominant spoken language and reported "English" as her dominant written language, clearly delineating what she saw as differences between the two. A woman born in Mexico and living in the US, who has taught at the college level for less than three years, wrote, "I learned English as a second language mostly in fifth grade; when my parents and I moved to the US, I was eight years old and as a third and fourth grader, I was mainly exposed to Spanish in a U.S. elementary school with some exposure to English." She also wrote:

I indicated the primary spoken and written language as both English and Spanish; however, I believe the language written in each category is the language that might be a bit more dominant than the other. In relation to Spanglish/Tex-Mex, I believe I became exposed to these dialects/languages after my parents and I moved to South Texas and I speak and write in these dialects when I communicate with friends and family members as the situation allows and at times in personal and academic writing.

Finally, consider the ways another respondent, born in Nepal and living in the US, completed the survey. This respondent has taught at the university level in English for 10 or more years and he offered Nepalese, Hindi, Manipuri, Zou, Paite as languages he has spoken for more than 10 years, although he clarified noting: "I haven't spoken the last three (and a few other) minor languages (all from South Asia) for more than a decade so my proficiency with them has fallen from high fluency to quite low. I do write in four scripts, and I would regain the fluency if I was exposed to the languages for a week or two."

But in response to the questions about primary or dominant spoken and written language, that same respondent wrote in further explanation:

Do you have a primary or dominant spoken language?:

What is primary depends on the situation, my knowledge of the content, and how my audience perceives my so-called language identity. For me, there is no such thing as a forever stable hierarchy.

Do you have a primary or dominant written language?:

That would be English, because my academic and professional works require me to write in English, which has been perhaps 99% of my writing since I first went to an English medium school, in 1980.

A similar response was offered by the respondent who labeled herself a "parallel bilingual." Born in Costa Rica but currently living in Oman (where British influence lingers), she has taught in English for 25 years or more and has taught at the university level for four to six years. She wrote: "I am a parallel bilingual, but English is my dominant language due to having done almost all my formal learning in English."

These responses were instructive and led me to look more closely at the survey question that asked respondents what language they most often used in their academic scholarship. If the respondents' formal learning was often in English, what language did they report most often using for their current, formal writing? Sixty of 64 respondents (94%) reported English as the language most often used in their academic scholarship.<sup>[9]</sup> Also, 61 of 64 respondents reported English as the language they most often use in their classrooms.

That 94% of the faculty respondents reported that they most often use English in their academic scholarship, and that 95% of these faculty most often teach in English, helps me understand how the myth of faculty linguistic homogeneity has been sustained in institutions that prioritize a standardized English. Almost half of the respondents, 28, reported that peer reviewers of their scholarship had *never* commented on their use of written English. And yet 50% of the respondents designate a language other than English as the language they most often use when they speak with their family members. And 36% use a language other than English when they write to family members. Clearly, the multilingual faculty of this study live their professional lives in English. Because many of our multilingual colleagues likely do the same, it is all too easy to use an institutionalized designation – like primary language or dominant language English – to categorize faculty, masking their rich linguistic lives and experiences.

What is required of our colleagues – in the classroom, in committee meetings and memos, and in their published scholarly work—is not the whole of their linguistic lives. Life outside the academy's requirements allows for much more fluidity of language. For example, in one of my favorite open-ended responses on the survey, a faculty person wrote, "I always speak English or write to friends and family in English, unless English is a second language for the other person, in which case we communicate in Spanish." I love imagining a scenario where this breaking of the monolingual English norm could happen within institutional boundaries, in a department meeting, for example, in economics or biology or English.

And that could be possible were we to push for a reorientation of our teaching, learning and professional work using the lens suggested by Michelle Hall Kells and Juan Guerra—"writing across communities" (Kells, 2007, p. 87). A writing across communities approach focuses as equally on "learning incomes" — what faculty and students bring linguistically into our institutions—as on "learning outcomes"—what faculty and students carry linguistically out of our institutions (Guerra,

2008, p. 296). "Writing Across Communities as a cultural ecology approach seeks to cultivate critical awareness of the ways that literacy practices are shaped by ever-shifting sets of economic, political, social, cultural, and linguistic factors" (Kells, 2007, p. 93) and forces us to notice the "ethnocentric biases that permeate every field and discourse community, including Composition Studies, itself" (Kells, 2007, p. 92). A writing across communities approach also values "transcultural citizens," the students and faculty who "can and should make use of the prior knowledge and experienced they have accumulated and the rhetorical agility they have developed in the course of negotiating their way across the various communities of practice to which they currently belong, have belonged in the past, and will belong in the future" (Guerra, 2008, p. 299). Providing evidence of what could come from such an approach, one faculty respondent wrote:

I genuinely believe that if [teachers and professors] would have valued my bilingual/multilingual student [sic], I would have felt more comfortable in learning and continuing to grow as a student and teacher. I believe the current education system tends not to value languages other than English, and yes, learning English is important but not at the cost of losing other languages/dialects.

## Learning and Writing in the Disciplines in English

An experience many of these faculty respondents shared was having the support of a faculty advisor or mentor. Fifty-nine percent of respondents said their professors were important or very important support while they were writing in English as undergraduates. Compare this to the 47% who noted English composition courses or 17% who noted ESL courses. In fact, what these faculty relied upon more than those two curricular supports while undergraduates were writing guidebooks—which 51% noted as important or very important. As graduate students, interaction with faculty was even more significant. Eighty-five percent of respondents noted professors as very important or important support as they wrote in English in graduate school and 68% cited a graduate advisor as very important/ important. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents said their graduate mentors or advisors remain an important or very important support system for their current research and scholarly writing in English.

The faculty respondents to this survey had varied experiences as multilingual students writing in English. No scaled survey question asked directly about the negative or positive qualities of their experiences, but faculty wrote in negative and positive examples, from "British teachers who make us feel like our languages were primitive by punishing us if we used them" to a respondent who reported writing in English was uncomfortable for her first two years of college. But later, when she became an undergraduate writing center consultant, she sensed that the director and assistant director of her institution's writing center "believed in" her academic and writing potential. It was then, as she "learned from other tutors" and as she "tutored other students," that she saw her "writing become more effective."

Respondents described how they enjoyed writing in English as undergraduate and graduate students, and they described concerns they had. For example: "As an undergraduate, I felt that English wasn't rich enough or complex enough to express certain abstract or literary ideas." Though many respondents described becoming more comfortable writing in English in graduate school and noted they found supportive faculty at that level of education, respondents also noted their graduate professors' struggles with their writing. For example: "one insisted I should take an English class to improve my English there are no classes on the level I communicate" and "I felt and noticed that faculty who spoke only English were not always comfortable with the use of 'non-traditional' English structures"). These comments reveal moments when the multilingual faculty of this study felt

institutional bias against their Englishes and gained awareness of their professors' desire to see students' standardized English. Suresh Canagarajah (2006) tells us if we work from "a multilingual pedagogy of writing," "we will treat the first language and culture as a resource, not a problem. We will try to accommodate diverse literacy traditions—not keep them divided and separate" (p. 603). Yet, this is not what all the faculty respondents to this survey have experienced, even as faculty scholars. While 28 faculty reported peer reviewers never commented on their use of written English, 11 faculty reported peer reviewers had very often commented on their written English. Ten faculty reported peer reviewers had often commented on their written English. These 21 faculty continued to feel institutionalized bias against their Englishes even after becoming active members of their disciplinary communities.

## Teaching in the Disciplines in English

As faculty, 67% of those who responded to this survey reported they teach courses their institutions recognize as fulfilling a writing requirement or designate writing intensive. And, whether they were or weren't teaching courses designated as writing intensive, these faculty report they were engaged with their students' writing. On this survey, multilingual faculty teaching writing intensive or required writing classes said they "very often/often" responded to/wrote comments to their students' writing 78% of the time and multilingual faculty teaching courses that do not fulfill a writing requirement said they "very often/often" did 74% of the time. A difference was that 12% of faculty teaching courses that do not fulfill a writing requirement said they never wrote on drafts and *none* of the faculty teaching courses fulfilling institutionalized writing requirements reported that they never wrote on drafts whether they were or weren't teaching writing intensive courses. It is worth looking into why commenting and responding to student work is so prevalent in all course settings for multilingual faculty and how this challenges our conception of the comfort of multilingual faculty teaching with writing in English.

While it is my experience that monolingual English faculty across the disciplines struggle with the notion of adjusting teaching for multilingual and monolingual English students, the faculty respondents to this survey were not shy about reporting they *do* work differently with multilingual and monolingual students. Seventy one percent of respondents reported working differently with multilingual and monolingual writers.

In comments related to working with multilingual student writers, multilingual faculty described the degree to which they understand how their multilingual students experience the writing process. They also explained the pedagogical choices they make as a result of this understanding:

"I spend more time building confidence in multilingual student writers."

"With multilingual students, I try to make them aware of how their ability to speak more than one language is an asset rather than a setback; how literate they are in each language and how the literacy skills transfer across languages."

"I let them know that I value all kinds of language and that I empathize with the experience of second language learners."

"Explain more so I am sure I am understood well."

"I put less emphasis on sentence-level errors but make it clear that they need to have a plan for how to address them."

"I pay more attention to sentence level errors in multilingual students' writing."

The faculty also described creating opportunities for linguistic fluidity, like the respondent who wrote: "You must allow him his individuality while keeping a control on his structure." Or the respondent who wrote:

I think multilingual writers of English, ultimately, can create a style for themselves that exceeds the quality/richness of monolingual writing... at the level of mystery, of course. By the same token, in a world of monolingual writers, multilingual writers risk being misinterpreted and 'disciplined' for their polyphony (linked to a polycultural/transcultural vision) out of reader ignorance.

However, there was at least one respondent, a faculty member in engineering, who prioritized standardized English in a long open-ended response (excerpted here):

I think the whole multiculturalism thing (think "Asian Student Society" or "Mexican Student Society" type things) really hurts the students by allowing them a vent to not feel completely frustrated by being unable to communicate in english and therefore giving them a driving force to learn english properly. I know this goes against the current ultra permissive, low standards approach to education, but remember that, just like me, these students \*chose to study in the USA\*! Therefore, a particularly important set of experiences for these people would be to live in the host culture, not force the host culture to adapt to the 'special' culture of these students. In essence, with the globalization movement going on, we have caused the US (and much of the developed world) to behave as if it was a 'borderland' (where multiple cultures coexist in some kind of competitive tension) rather than a core society with immigrant groups (where the dominant culture is clear, and into which immigrants are absorbed). This causes the English as a second language students to be able to very simply find their native culture group and blithely ignore the need to live and work within the core cultural group.

As this respondent notes, he chose to study in the US. Since he is the respondent previously noted in this article who did a second undergraduate degree in the US on an athletic scholarship and who then completed a Ph.D. in a U.S. institution, I wonder to what degree his attitudes about language and multilingual may have been affected by his years in the American academy as a student? Interestingly, in a different open-ended question, the same respondent wrote, "I do think primarily English speaking students should become sufficiently fluent in a second language in their studies—German preferentially, since this is the main technical non-English language." This respondent's responses show the complex web of language experience, language beliefs and every day professional language use many faculty live within, as well as a kind of "I did it this way so you should too" attitude. WAC programs can provide opportunities to discuss and reflect on the complicated and conflicted language beliefs faculty carry into their teaching.

## Recommendations for Further Research

These preliminary research findings reveal the complexity of studying the experiences of multilingual faculty teaching in writing in English across the disciplines, but they also reveal some possible routes for important and further research. Interview studies focusing on smaller groups of faculty with similar experiences would teach us much we don't know about the relationship, for example, among multilingual faculty members' experiences and identities and their institutional

contexts or their disciplinary constraints. For example, what would we learn from the experiences of multilingual faculty teaching with writing in English who completed undergraduate degrees in the US? Or, following Christiane Donahue's (2009) suggestion that we think more about the contributions of non-U.S. approaches to teaching with writing in English, what would we learn from multilingual faculty from across the disciplines who were not educated at the undergraduate or graduate level in the US but who are now teaching with writing in English in the US or elsewhere?

Institution type and WAC/WID/CAC program type might provide an interesting lens for determining recruitment of research participants: What would we learn about the experiences of multilingual faculty members teaching with writing across the disciplines at small colleges, regional teaching universities and research intensive universities? What would we learn by considering the experiences of multilingual faculty teaching with writing in English at institutions with strong WAC/WID/CAC programs in comparison to the experiences of those at institutions with little or no formalized support for faculty teaching with writing?

Also, because the international student population in the US has ebbed and flowed over the past ten years and has at times included students from many different countries (see the [Institute of International Education's annual census](#)), it would be interesting to consider the experiences of multilingual faculty across the disciplines who matriculated as undergraduates in U.S. institutions as international students and who are now faculty members who teach with writing across the disciplines in the US. As students, many current faculty would have experienced the development of WAC programs and the creation of WI graduation requirements. What were their meaningful writing experiences and how do those experiences affect their teaching with writing? It would be especially interesting to consider how multilingual faculty members experienced their in-school and out-of-school language lives as students in the US and learn more about how they experience those various language lives now, as professors. Or it would be interesting to use case study approaches to investigate the experiences of graduates of particularly multilingual doctoral programs – following graduates from particular programs out to the various institutions where they hold faculty positions and bridging multilingual faculty members' experiences with the literature about multilingual graduate students' experiences.

I do hope researchers will take on questions like these to push against the institutionalized and standardized English monolingual norms I've discussed in this article. I realize, however, there is much working against such research. Researchers who might take on these projects have little exposure in graduate coursework to these issues unless they take seminars in ESL or TESOL, are seldom exposed to the non U.S. research on writing and composing (Donohue, 2009), and within fields like rhetoric and composition, writing studies and English, this research may unfortunately still be seen as peripheral. That is, of course, yet another sign of the myth of linguistic homogeneity in English dominant institutions and disciplines.

## Recommendations for Reorienting our WAC Work for a Linguistically Heterogeneous Faculty

Considering 67% of the faculty respondents teach courses institutionally designated as writing intensive or fulfilling a writing requirement, I was surprised by the low number of faculty who identified "Writing Support at my institution (writing center, support programs for faculty who teach writing)" as "Very Important"—7%—or "Important"—27%. And yet these very same faculty respondents are getting support from their cross-disciplinary colleagues outside their own departments/discipline, for 16% said that support was "Very Important" and 41% said it was "Important." Respondents seek support from their graduate mentors/former professors (Very

Important/Important – 38%/21%), from their peers and friends (Very Important/Important – 47%/38%) and from colleagues in their departments (Very Important/Important – 28%/42%). And yet at least one respondent (who I want to be careful to keep anonymous) but who has spoken and written English and two other languages for at least 25 years, did say: "I feel as if my colleagues are biased, so I would rather ask help from outside my institution from people who can be objective in their assessment of my work." When I think of how to reorient our WAC work for a linguistically heterogeneous faculty, I wonder how we might also help monolingual faculty be better supporters of their multilingual colleagues' writing.

At St. John's, I see some monolingual English faculty learning about both their multilingual colleagues and their multilingual students experiences through cross-disciplinary programming designed collaboratively by WAC and the Center for Teaching and Learning to support faculty members' writing lives. The Faculty Writing Initiative (FWI) offers writing retreats and workshops on issues relevant to faculty research and writing. At those events, I have heard issues of multilingualism come up in a variety of ways. At one event meant for participants to air anything they wanted about writing and publishing, a faculty person talked about what she believed were the biases of journal editors who saw her name and read her as a deficient multilingual writer before even seriously reading her work. When that same faculty person attended a lunch with more senior colleagues who are journal editors, she asked questions but she did not raise this same issue. Offering different audiences and purposes for such events clearly changes what it is possible to discuss and it is important as program leaders to remember this.

At another Writing Initiative workshop on "Developing Edited Collections," a monolingual English junior faculty person in the humanities described the challenges of editing a collection of essays from an international conference. Foremost on this faculty person's mind was the issue of standardizing the English of the contributors, many of whom are multilingual and were writing in English for this conference proceedings volume. St. John's has a linguistically diverse student body, and so it did not take much time for the group of faculty present to extrapolate the conversation from questions around the ethics of editing colleagues' English to questions around the ethics of editing students' English. When writing programs find ways to bring together faculty members' roles as writers and teachers, there is more opportunity for conversation about language, learning and writing – and not just the language, learning and writing of our students.

Finally, from this research, I have been thinking about the responsibility WAC program directors have for developing curricula and opportunities for faculty development that can encourage faculty to learn about and reflect deeply on language experiences and language biases. Elaine Richardson (2003) has pointed out the need for such language education, reporting in findings from a study of almost 1000 members of the National Council of Teachers of English and the Conference on College Composition and Communication that: "Overwhelmingly, educators of Color supported the maintenance of diverse dialects and languages in the classroom more than White language educators" (p. 62). In this same study, White respondents identified themselves as "standardized English speakers most of the time in their past and present" in comparison to "educators of Color, who identified their language use as multilingual or multidialectical" (Richardson, 2003, p. 62). For Richardson (2003) this points to why "more White instructors did not support the usage of nonstandardized dialects and languages other than English in the classroom," and even though "most of the language educators surveyed want to foster language diversity, some don't feel they have the training to provide it" (p. 62). Paul Kei Matsuda (2000) reiterates this point in relation to writing instruction for L2 students, noting "L2 writing instruction frequently takes place in... writing across the curriculum programs.... Yet, writing instruction in non-L2 writing courses and programs remains, for the most part, uninformed by the field of L2 writing" (p. 16).

But those of us who are program leaders can offer this education to faculty. This year, the WAC program at St. John's bought *Language Diversity in the Classroom: From Intention to Practice*<sup>[10]</sup> for all faculty participants in a combined writing retreat and WAC workshop called the Summer Faculty Writing Institute (SFWI). The 20 cross-disciplinary faculty who will attend the SFWI are a mix of monolingual English and multilingual faculty, and they will be talking about themselves as writers and teachers for seven days at St. John's University's Paris campus. The value of doing this work around writing, language and language diversity in a place where almost no one in the group will be a fluent speaker or writer of the local language seems obvious. But even though we have had some conversations about language use in the previous SFWI's at our Rome, Italy campus, this summer's decision to buy the Smitherman and Villanueva collection and explicitly introduce faculty across the disciplines to scholarship on language issues is a new one. WAC/WID/CAC programs need not take on an institutional role as a standardizing language force and can instead become "agents of change" (Shuck, 2006) for how our campus communities think about language. I know Terry Zawacki has accomplished similar goals through local assessment conversations and Michelle Cox has intentionally used WAC programming to turn faculty to effective, culturally and linguistically inclusive teaching practices. We have entry into institutional spaces where we can work to promote "writing across communities" (Guerra; Kells) and we must take advantage of that access.

## Conclusion

Not long ago, I was in a meeting with faculty from across the disciplines who work together and with me through a year-long program and who collaborate with undergraduate writing fellows in their classes in the spring semester. One faculty person wanted to enroll her writing fellow in her class's online learning space, and as others tried to teach her to do it, there was the usual griping about whether faculty problems with their computers or courseware get a quick enough response from IT at our institution. There was also the usual cataloguing of which staff in that office are particularly responsive. And then one faculty person in the group said aloud: "Yes, but that staff member is so difficult to understand with that thick accent."

In the moment, I did not speak to that comment. In fact, by the time I registered what had been said aloud, conversation had turned to new topics. But since that moment I have been thinking of what Gail Okawa (2003) tells us:

If we claim language as our business, whatever our linguistic and cultural complexions may be, our pedagogy must reflect an awareness of the conditions around us – the multiplicity of language varieties in our communities, the rights of their speakers to maintain them in a democratic society, the forces endangering those rights. Becoming a part of a global society makes our individual worlds more, not less, complex, more, not less, rich, but we must be made privy to the knowledge that would liberate us from our own provincialism and seclusion. (p. 128).

This summer, at the Summer Faculty Writing Institute, I want to be the WAC director who, in an urban institution like mine where students, in particular, but also staff and faculty live and learn, speak and write in many languages and dialects, "claim[s] language as [my] business" and speaks productively into a moment like this one. I want to use an offhanded comment like this one to open a conversation about language diversity and valuing written accents (Zawacki et al, 2007) as well as spoken ones. I want the faculty who are in Paris to learn with and from one another, and I want our talk informed by scholarly work from writing studies that explains linguistic diversity with clarity and passion.



When faculty say aloud that students are writing worse than they ever have before, or that students don't know how to write a lab report, or that students never edit well enough, I know what to say to open an informed inquiry. I should also I know how to open an informed inquiry about multilingualism in the standardizing English academy, and I should know why I must open such an inquiry among faculty. We should all find ways to open these conversations, especially if we are monolingual, because these conversations will lead to richer educational experiences for all and will allow us greater opportunity to learn and teach across many languages.

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## Notes

[1] Thanks to: Kiran Asher, Natalie Byfield, Michelle Cox, Harry Denny, Connie DeSimone, Gino DiIorio, David Elwell, Michele Eodice, Ikuko Fujiwara, Clover Hall, Pia Nawarat, Terry Zawacki. Portions of this research were presented at the 2011 Northeast Writing Centers Association (NEWCA) Conference on a panel with John Chen (SJC '11) and Mohammad Saad Quasim (SJC '11) entitled "Creating Fertile Environments for Transplanted Writers." I wrote and revised this article at many St. John's University Faculty Writing Initiative retreats during 2010 and 2011, and I am grateful for the support provided by my colleagues at those writing retreats.

[2] I am using "standardized" here with Gail Okawa's understanding of "standardized English" versus "standard English." From her endnotes in "'Resurfacing Roots': Developing a Pedagogy of Language Awareness from Two Views": "15. Rather than the term 'standard English,' which conveys a universally accepted standard, I prefer to use 'standardized English,' which implies political and social agency and is more historically accurate" (Okawa, p. 129-130).

[3] I use "multilingual" here because as Paul Kei Matsuda, Christina Ortmeier-Hooper and Aya Matsuda (2009) suggest, "the traditional distinction between first and second languages as well as second and foreign languages has become problematic, and for that reason, it is also becoming increasingly common to refer to second language writers as *multilingual writers*" (p. 458).

[4] I invited four of these five faculty to be lunch speakers because I had previously talked with them about multilingualism. The fifth faculty person, the only tenured speaker, is known to be an advocate for language matters both on campus and off campus.

[5] One faculty person who spoke at this lunch, Flora Keshishian, had published a piece in which she considers her experiences as an international student from Iran through the lenses of intercultural communication and the influence of mass media (Keshishian, 2000).

[6] This respondent echoes Christiane Donohue's (2009) concerns about the limited (and limiting) perspectives of U.S. writing researchers, and I include the lengthy critique in this endnote because it can inform future exploration of the experiences of multilingual faculty and students, especially the experiences of those who have been educated in a wide variety of international contexts:

I wondered if these questions are based on the assumption that the respondent must have studied in the US if he/she said that their undergraduate education was in English medium, or if the statements are simply assuming that writing is done in the same way in other countries as it is in U.S. colleges. I understand the difficulty of trying to capture the writing experiences of

respondents that could potentially be from every single country in the world, but I think that these questions should be better designed than they currently are. For example, please imagine my particular situation (common on South Asia) where college writing means writing exams at the end of the academic year, in which case most of the above questions don't make sense. Or imagine situations where writing is done in content courses but is never a part of assessment (which is equally common in other parts of the world), then see questions like 6.9 or 6.10. Or consider 6.5, 6.6, or 6.7 in educational systems where writing is not an assignment/project. I would be able to tell you much better about my (English) writing and literacy experiences (if English is the only point about writing or vice versa) if I was asked more open questions about those experiences. I am afraid that the researcher's convenience might put respondents from vastly different educational backgrounds in neat boxes that won't tell you much – just reinforce the assumptions on which the questions are based.

It was possible for this respondent to offer critique because the survey had open-ended questions. Many respondents used the open-ended questions to explain the complexity of their linguistic experiences.

[7] Those of us who work with faculty in WAC/WID/CAC programs may want to attend more closely to how research on the experiences of multilingual students, such as Chiang and Schmida's "Language Identity and Language Ownership: Linguist Conflicts of First Year University Students," could inform and expand our understanding of multilingual faculty members' experiences. Many multilingual faculty are living the same "sociocultural politics of English literacy in a multicultural and multilingual world" (Chiang and Schmida, 2006, p. 101) as the University of California Berkeley students Chiang and Schmida interviewed. Thus it makes sense, programmatically, to adopt Chiang and Schmida's recommendation to "think beyond the narrow confines of a monolithic English ideology" (p. 101).

[8] On this survey, faculty whose undergraduate institutions did not utilize English as the primary language of instruction reported German (5), Spanish, Afrikaans, Korean, Russian (2), Mandarin, Portuguese, Swedish (3), Hebrew, Turkish, French (2), and Chinese as primary languages of instruction.

[9] Two respondents did not answer the question, one born in Nicaragua and living in the US reported English and Spanish, one born in the US and living in the US reported Danish as the language most often used in academic scholarship and one born in Sweden and living in Sweden reported Swedish as the language most often used in academic scholarship.

[10] I selected *Language Diversity in the Classroom: From Intention to Practice* as one of the books for cross-disciplinary faculty to read for the 2011 St. John's Summer Faculty Writing Institute in Paris, France because so many of the text's chapters explicitly remind us that we have a responsibility as educators to study and reflect on language diversity so we do not teach using an "ideology of English monolingualism and monodialectism" (Richardson, 2003, p. 63).

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## Complete APA Citation

Geller, Anne Ellen. (2011, December 21). Teaching and learning with multilingual faculty. *Across the Disciplines*, 8(4). Retrieved from <https://wac.colostate.edu/docs/atd/ell/geller.pdf>