Responding to Multilingual Student Writers

Reading Texts by Multilingual Writers

- Read through the whole paper before responding, and then respond to the central intellectual work
- Don’t be distracted by difference: read generously, for meaning
- Focus first on global issues (ones that affect the paper as a whole), such as approach, content, evidence, organization, use of sources, etc.
- For sentence-level issues, focus on what interferes with understanding
- Consider what will help the writer develop her/his skills.

Priorities for Responding to “Error”

Identify where a student should focus attention, considering, in descending order of importance,

- whether the issue interferes with communication
- where “writing with an accent” may be acceptable
- the seriousness of the issue in the context
- the frequency of the issue (identifying patterns)
- the complexity for that writer of learning the relevant rules

Support for Multilingual Writers through the Writing Center

- Tutors are trained to work with multilingual writers
- Tutors follow the approaches above
- Students can schedule appointments as needed or arrange for weekly appointments with a writing partner at http://www.uvm.edu/writingcenter

For more information or to discuss how you can support multilingual writers, contact Susanmarie Harrington at smharrin@uvm.edu.

www.uvm.edu/wid   www.uvm.edu/writingcenter