Hamilton

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES FOR MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS DURING QUIZZES/TESTS/EXAMS

Inclusive Practices Prior to Administering Quizzes/Tests/Exams

1. **Offer to meet with students before the test.** This may mean setting aside specific times to meet with students solely about the test and/or emphasizing that you are available during office hours to discuss any questions they may have.
2. **Organize a review session**. Sessions where faculty provide an overview of the exam content, as well as how students can best prepare (study) for the exam can be especially helpful for major exams.
3. **Review the format of the quiz/test/exam, explain how the questions will be phrased.** Letting students know whether questions will be multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay format, as well as preparing them for whether or not they will need to interpret visuals, charts, figures, etc. can be helpful.
4. **Provide study guides and vocabulary lists for tests.**[1] In addition to providing these resources prior to the test, be sure to provide explicit instruction in "academic language and vocabulary" (the disciplinary language) in class, which improves test scores for multilingual students (Nerlinger 2021).

Inclusive Practices While Designing Quizzes/Tests/Exams

5. **Use simple, clear, and accessible language in writing the test questions, and also the answers in the case of multiple choice questions**. Oftentimes, multiple choice questions have subtle differences in language that can be more challenging for a multilingual student to discern; keeping the language simple, clear, and accessible helps mitigate some of the challenges that can emerge due to linguistic differences.
6. **Avoid the use of idioms and phrasal verbs.** While these may seem like common knowledge, they're culturally and linguistically situated, and also do not literally translate across languages, making them sometimes difficult to comprehend.

Inclusive Practices During Quizzes/Tests/Exams

7. **Allow students to translanguage or use words or phrases from their preferred language when possible, particularly for short answer responses**[2].
8. **Make explicit to students your willingness to provide support during exams.** Offer to rephrase questions or clarify vocabulary within a question (when comprehension of that term is not what's being assessed).
9. **Offer for students who may have specific questions during the test to sit near you** (the professor) so that when a question arises, students can more discreetly receive assistance.

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[1] Suggestions 1, 2, and 4 are from Teemant, p. 96, 2010.
[2] Translanguaging does not mean that an entire answer is written in a single language, but instead creates space to recognize how multilingual students are regularly moving between and within languages to communicate. There may also be exceptions to this; for example, if a student is being assessed on their proficiency in a particular language, then allowing students to write translingual responses may counter the assessment goals. If you are unsure of how to translate a word or phrase, contact the Coordinator of Multilingual Student Support.

10. **Provide additional time**. If possible, additional time can, "promote an inclusive classroom" and acknowledge how "it takes exponentially longer to process ideas and generate prose in a second language than a first language" (Cox 2020). However, if providing additional or unlimited time is not possible, applying the inclusive practices above can be effective methods for ensuring your quizzes/tests/exams are equitable and fair for *all* students.

One Final Note: Unlimited Time for Quizzes/Tests/Exams

Providing unlimited time on timed quizzes/tests/exams when possible is a Universal Design practice because of how it improves the accessibility of these assessments for *all* students, including students with disabilities. Providing unlimited time to *all* students when possible removes barriers for students who may struggle with timed assessments for a range of reasons including but not limited to slower processing speeds, high test anxiety, attention deficits, reading disabilities, as well as linguistic differences, a personal/familial/health or other emergency, and or illness at the time of the test. Unlimited time also has multiple benefits including but not limited to--increased time for processing information, decreased anxiety, and additional time to reflect on content knowledge.

While there may be instances where the content being assessed must be done in a specific amount of time (for example, due to certain professional or industry standards or because an outcome of the course requires demonstrating knowledge in a set amount of time), when this is not the case, faculty may consider extending the amount of time allotted on an exam to ensure students have the opportunity to demonstrate their full content knowledge without the added pressure of a time constraint.

Sources

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