

Working with WIDA Global Educators: Teaching Multilingual Learners Online

Since many schools are moving to online instruction, WIDA reached out to educators in the WIDA International School Consortium to identify some of the unique opportunities and challenges for multilingual learners in online environments. Some international educators have been teaching online for more than a month, and we have framed these insights around the *2019 WIDA Guiding Principles of Language Development*.

- Many thanks to Esther Bettney and Tan Huynh for their contributions.
- Join the conversation to share your insights and [continue the discussion online HERE!](#)

WIDA Guiding Principle #1. Multilingual learners' languages and cultures are valuable resources to be leveraged for schooling and classroom life; leveraging these assets and challenging biases help develop multilingual learners' independence and encourage their agency in learning

- ✓ ***What teachers can do:*** Provide choices and multiple pathways for students that use multilingualism as a key to open doors to and grade-level content, rather than a barrier.
- ✓ ***What multilingual learners can do:*** Leverage their full linguistic repertoires both to develop conceptual understanding and engage in learning experiences.
- ✓ ***Examples and resources:***
 - [Google Translate](#): Besides translating a text, Google Translate's Snap feature instantly translates an image using a camera. The Talk feature enables users to have live bilingual conversations. The Google Translate Chrome extension translates an entire webpage.
 - [Microsoft Immersive Reader](#): Students can hear the text read aloud, use a picture dictionary, to look up words, and translate part of or the entire text into multiple languages in Word, OneNote, PowerPoint, and on several creation apps such as [Buncee](#) and [Flipgrid](#).

WIDA Guiding Principle #2. Multilingual learners' development of multiple languages enhances their knowledge and cultural bases, their intellectual capacities, and their flexibility in language use

- ✓ ***What teachers can do:*** Identify opportunities for students to use their entire linguistic repertoire in new and creative ways in the virtual classroom.
- ✓ ***What multilingual learners can do:*** Create multilingual graphics, posters, collages, websites, and animated videos to express how language can be flexible enough to bend around a context and fluid enough to adapt to different content.
- ✓ ***Examples and resources:***
 - Infographics: [Google Drawing](#), [Piktochart](#), [Canva](#)
 - Animated videos: [Adobe Spark](#)

- Presentations: [Buncee](#)
- Websites: [Google Sites](#)
- Publishing Books: [Book Creator](#)

WIDA Guiding Principle #3. *Multilingual learners' language development and learning occur over time through meaningful engagement in activities that are valued in their homes, schools and communities*

- ✓ **What teachers can do:** Design opportunities which connect online learning with students' immediate home and community situations.
- ✓ **What multilingual learners can do:** View online videos in their home language to connect virtually with experts and leaders, domestically and internationally, then share what they learned with their classmates.
- ✓ **Examples and resources:**
 - [Google Expeditions](#): Tours that include text to support exploration.
 - [Tour Creator](#): Create your own tour for students to virtually explore an area.
 - [Within](#): Virtual reality tours without the need for special glasses.

WIDA Guiding Principle #4. *Multilingual learners' language, social-emotional, and cognitive development are inter-related processes that contribute to their success in school and beyond*

- ✓ **What teachers can do:** Host daily and weekly individual, small-group, or whole-class meetings to maintain, sustain, and expand a sense of community while reducing isolation.
- ✓ **What multilingual learners can do:** Share their experiences in making the transition to online learning, celebrate milestones and encourage their classmates.
- ✓ **Examples and resources:**
 - [Weekly Structures](#): Planning a week at a time and sharing the plan with students (and parents) for the entire week's learning will help to create a predictable rhythm and regular routines.
 - [Google Meet](#): Students can use chat functions and screen sharing features to enhance their learning experience and build community.
 - [Flipgrid](#): Students can record questions and respond to questions on Flipgrid. The videos come with closed captioning and translations.
 - [Talking Points](#): For educators in the U.S. and Canada, Talking Points can sustain your partnerships with families by sending free SMS messages that can be translated into 130+ languages. Families can send messages to teachers in their home language and will be translated back into English.

WIDA Guiding Principle #5. *Multilingual learners use and develop language when opportunities for learning take into account their individual experiences, characteristics, abilities, and levels of language proficiency*

- ✓ **What teachers can do:** Consider how the language demands of online tasks differ from classroom activities, as well as the potential advantages of technology to personalize learning experiences.
- ✓ **What multilingual learners can do:** Become protagonists of their own learning by making choices about content/format/modality/language while utilizing embedded scaffolding and built-in accessibility features.
- ✓ **Examples and resources:**
 - [ReadWorks](#): Assign students to different leveled text with question sets and at times, audio recordings.
 - [Commonlit](#): Leveled text with different question sets to foster close reading of the text which can be translated in several languages. Create classes and assign students different passages according to their reading proficiency.
 - [Edpuzzle](#): Teachers can embed comprehension questions on Youtube videos and create different assign different questions for the same video to particular students.
 - [Book Creator](#): Teachers can create books about content-specific topics and use the audio recording function to embed a read aloud of each page of text. The books can be assigned to specific students.

WIDA Guiding Principle #6. *Multilingual learners use and develop language through activities which intentionally integrate multiple modalities, including oral, written, visual, and kinesthetic modes of communication*

- ✓ **What teachers can do:** Weave language domains together to connect content and language development, for example reading an online text and then recording a video response; consider the increased level of language complexity in multistep directions across multiple applications.
- ✓ **What multilingual learners can do:** Make the most of built-in online features for using language flexibly to engage with their virtual assignments and make choices to build on their strengths.
- ✓ **Examples and resources:**
 - One approach is called [App Smashing](#): the process of using various apps to create a product or to learn content.
 - Students can read about ecosystems on [ReadWorks](#), watch a video about habitats on Youtube, take notes on [OneNote](#), use the voice-to-text feature in [Google Doc](#) to write a script, and record the script for their animated video about ecosystems on [Adobe Spark](#).

WIDA Guiding Principle #7. *Multilingual learners use and develop language to interpret and access information, ideas, and concepts from a variety of sources, including real-life objects, models, representations, and multimodal texts*

- ✓ **What teachers can do:** Identify opportunities to connect curriculum and concepts to students' lived experiences and immediate environment, recognizing that families may have

access to a variety of home language resources beyond what is available in the regular classroom.

- ✓ **What multilingual learners can do:** Interview family and community members, engage with and respond to new types of texts, such as newspapers or cookbooks, in a variety of languages; use objects, pets, memorabilia from their immediate physical spaces to better understand key content and concepts.
- ✓ **Examples and resources:**
 - Teachers can use the [Blooms 21](#) model of teaching to foster critical thinking by flipping Bloom's taxonomy on its head. Instead of learning about a topic as a linear progression where students first understand the content and remember it in order to reach the higher levels of Bloom, teachers can design learning experiences that have students creating as the first task of learning. As they create, they work through all the other levels of understanding. Teachers can have students use technology throughout this process such as during the research phase or to create a product.

WIDA Guiding Principle #8. Multilingual learners draw on their metacognitive, metalinguistic, and metacultural awareness to develop effectiveness in language use

- ✓ **What teachers can do:** Leverage assessment as learning through opportunities for reflection and feedback; check in with students to ask them what are the most challenging aspects of online learning and what is helping them.
- ✓ **What multilingual learners can do:** Reflect on their learning, post their questions and respond to classmates using multimodal (e.g. emojis) or multilingual tools; compare across languages or evaluate how different online translation tools interpret words differently.
- ✓ **Examples and resources:**
 - [Padlet](#): Teachers can have students post responses to prompts that require students to reflect on the content and the process they are learning. Students can also respond to each other's comments to promote critical thinking and create a sense of community. It is also available in 29 languages.
 - [Seesaw](#): Teachers can use Seesaw as a digital portfolio to showcase their engagement during virtual learning. Students can write their reflections, annotate a photo, attach documents, and record video responses. These all serve as ways to stimulate metacognitive thinking about language, cultures, the content, and the process of learning. Seesaw can be shared with families so they can also participate in their child's learning.

WIDA Guiding Principle #9. Multilingual learners use their full linguistic repertoire, including translanguaging practices, to enrich their language development and learning

- ✓ **What teachers can do:** Encourage students to submit assignments in multiple languages, use translation tools to provide feedback, and pair students intentionally to create oral and written texts together.
- ✓ **What multilingual learners can do:** Build on their own creativity to create multilingual texts, process content in multiple languages, and blend languages intentionally to communicate their ideas.
- ✓ **Examples and resources:**
 - [Screencastify](#): Students can create a series of slides to present their work using Google Slides. Students can use any language they feel appropriate to narrate their slides with Screencastify. Teachers can also use this program to narrate their lessons or provide feedback.

WIDA Guiding Principle #10. Multilingual learners use and develop language to interpret and present different perspectives, build awareness of relationships, and affirm their identities

- ✓ **What teachers can do:** Design virtual learning experiences that allow students to connect the content to their unique lived experiences and complex cultural identities.
- ✓ **What multilingual learners can do:** Represent themselves with icons, avatars, flags or other symbols; share family images, videos or stories to help peers understand their unique linguistic and cultural perspective.
- ✓ **Examples and resources:**
 - [Podcast](#): Students can use recording programs on their smart devices to record interviews of individuals in their communities who can share about a particular topic. These recordings can be edited and turned into a podcast which can be shared with the virtual school community.