

Enacting Linguistic Justice: How Writing Centers Can Better Support Multilingual Students

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With support from Lana Oweidat, Director of the Writing Center, and the Center's tutors

Phase 1: Spring 2020

Surveyed Goucher College Writing Center tutors

Phase 2: Spring 2021

Interviewed Goucher College Writing Center tutors with over one year of experience

How do Writing Center tutors at Goucher College transfer the knowledge they receive in training about tutoring multilingual students to their sessions? What areas do they need more support in and why?

Results

Challenges: language barrier, not being very familiar with grammatical terms and rules, multitasking

Successes: leading with empathy, being patient and accommodating

Recommendations: more shadowing opportunities, offering to take notes for tutees, and experimenting with different tutoring strategies

Takeaways: (1) Multilingual tutees come to the Center for help with grammar, understanding course content/assignment prompts, and for reassurance with their writing abilities. (2) Adjusting the session to the needs of the tutee and being patient and empathetic create an environment for multilingual tutees that allow them to comfortably work through their ideas without judgment. (3) Tutors should be accommodating and encouraging. (4) Tutor training can provide extra shadowing opportunities for tutors-in-training to gain more experience and encourage tutors to experiment with different tutoring strategies. Tutors can also offer to take notes for tutees so that they can focus on unraveling their ideas.