

# **PERSPECTIVES ON MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

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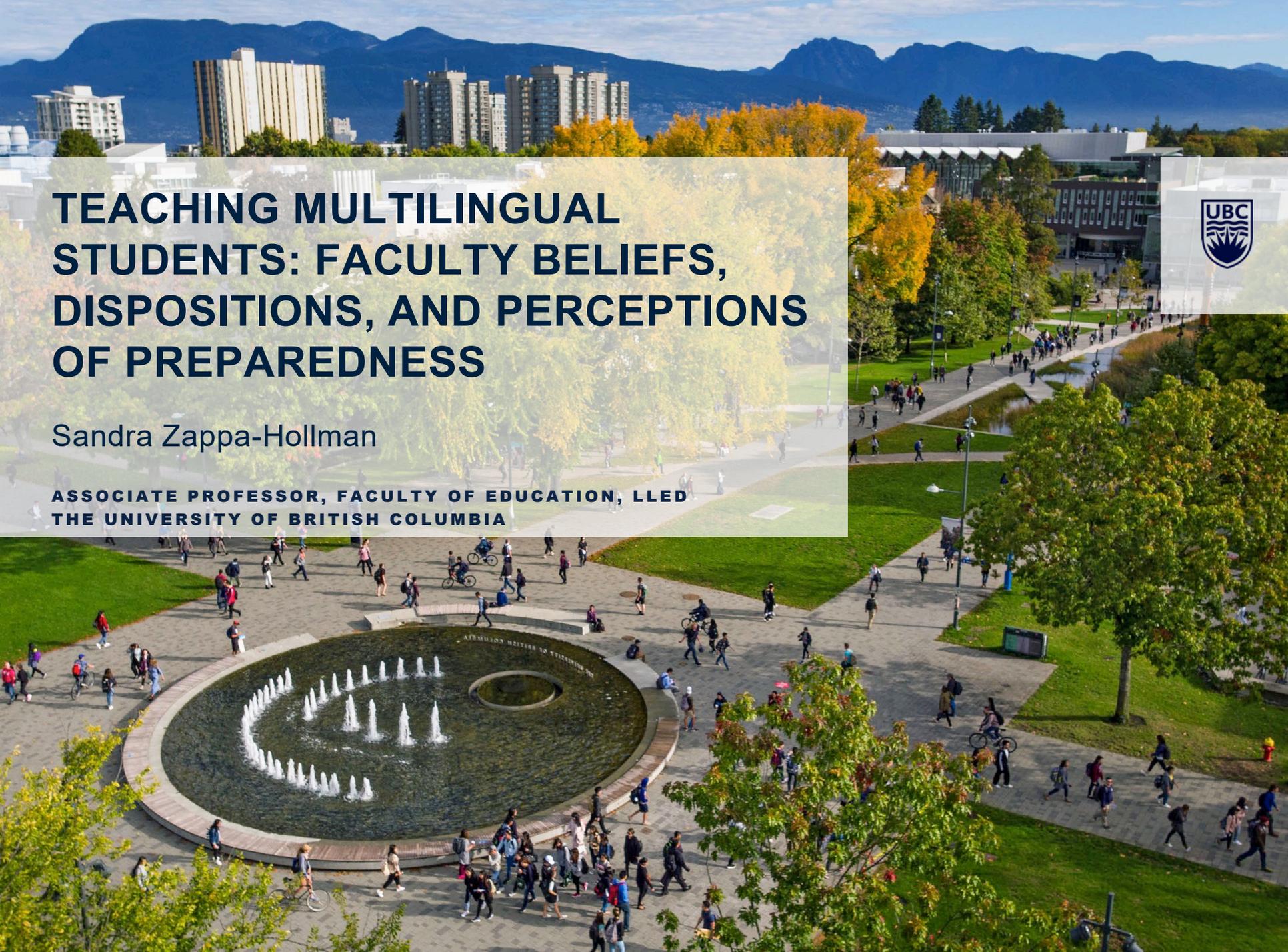
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We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the unceded territory of the Syilx (Okanagan) Peoples. We are grateful and thanks to our Syilx hosts. Presenters today also work in the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the sə́lilw̓ətə́l (Tsleil-Waututh), kʷikʷə́ləm (Kwíkwetlem), Sk̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) and xʷməθkʷə́yəm (Musqueam) Nations.





# TEACHING MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS: FACULTY BELIEFS, DISPOSITIONS, AND PERCEPTIONS OF PREPAREDNESS

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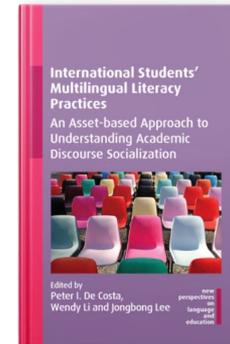
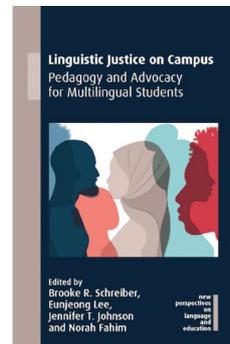
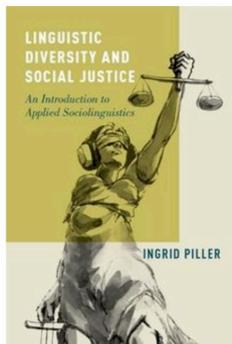
# MULTILINGUALISM AS THE NORM

“Multilingualism conveys the ability of societies, institutions, groups, and individuals to have regular use of more than one language in their everyday lives over space and time.” (Franceschini, 2011)



*Multilingualism* connected with ongoing change in perspective in society, resulting from

- increased waves of migration evidence of the variety of language phenomena
- increased sensibility toward diversity → a departure from assumptions of homogeneity
- reaction against the “monolingual bias” and “native speakerism” linked to deficit ideologies



# MULTILINGUALISM IN EDUCATION



Recent interest has emerged in examining how and why multilingualism, particularly students' agentive, skillful strategic use of their linguistic repertoire, should be incorporated into teaching and learning to create inclusive learning spaces.

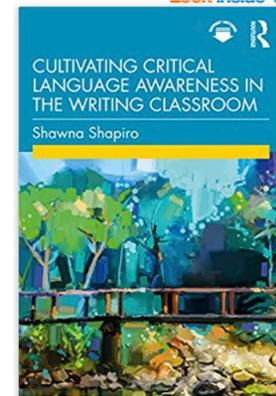
*(van Viegen & Zappa-Hollman, 2020, p. 174)*

# IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

How might we leverage linguistic diversity as a resource, rather than a problem?

How can we cultivate equity and justice in our work with multilingual and multidialectal writers?

What structures, strategies and resources might increase our effectiveness in this work?





## A CONTINUUM OF BELIEFS

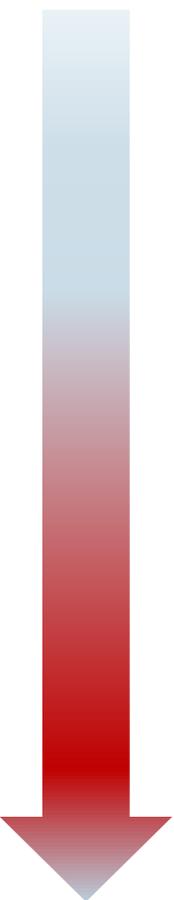


"I think definitely English should be the language at the classroom, since we are in Canada and English is one of the official languages. It could also be French if all students are able to communicate in French, however, no other language should be used in the classroom as a sign of respect to the monolingual students."

"Our focus on English/French language ability is deeply rooted in a colonial and racist history. I am not here to rubber stamp the English language ability of the students I teach seeing as many of them will end up working outside Canada and throughout the world."

# FACULTY CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ML STUDENTS



- 
- low level of English in papers
  - discrepancy between very high level written work and very low speaking ability
  - large portion of class missing lecture material due to low listening/reading comprehension level
  - ...

- How to evaluate these students in written assignments – are we grading for language, or content?
- What if the language skills hamper the students' ability to communicate?
- Please provide more support for language learning for such students, as we ourselves don't have time to teach language on top of disciplinary content.

# FACULTY CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ML STUDENTS



How to affirm these students' multilingualism, value these resources in front of peers who identify as monolingual, and draw on multilingualism more in class assignments.

Sadly, only, how to improve their English. This survey is making me think more about how we should also try to acknowledge multi-lingualism and see it as a strength/asset in learning/classroom dynamics



How to talk respectfully about native languages

How to ensure fair assessment (e.g., of skills like phonetic transcription when not all students have the same level of familiarity with the same accents and dialects)

## ML-ORIENTED PRACTICES AS OBSTACLES

I tried the experiment of multilingual discussion during an in class group project. My experience was that it split the class in an odd way and was disruptive to learning.

I have had many many experiences with multilingual students and friends. We all agree that speaking and THINKING in English is the only way to improve your English. Speaking and thinking in another language is detrimental to learning the lingo here.



# ML-ORIENTED PRACTICES AS OPPORTUNITIES



“Building assignments into the courses using the spectrum of languages students bring (like comparative translation exercises) has been rewarding for me and I believe the students too.”

“Multilingual students may enhance learning by other students because there might be a greater requirement for explanations in alternate terms or concepts.”

“In my fourth-year research course I frequently field the question, “Am I allowed to cite sources not in English?” This leads me to believe that in the prior three years of study students multilingual abilities are not being engaged with or encouraged within courses.”

“Very complicated questions. The basic rule is that if there is discussion inside the classroom in language other than English that the participants translate their remarks for the broader class. This often opens up very interesting discussions, translation being a difficult and essential enterprise.”

## SUMMING UP AND "INQUIRING" FORWARD

- Prevailing beliefs drawing on deficit ideologies, but majority of respondents drawing on asset-oriented ideologies
- Valiant, creative, discipline-specific efforts to engage in teaching for including all learners; some evidence “incipient pluri/multilingual” pedagogical orientations (van Viegen & Zappa-Hollman, 2020)
  - Frustration and demand for institutional supports that address systematic issues
- Conversation about multilingualism seldom present in higher education. Why is this the case? (Marguerite Lukes, 2022)

What kinds of changes are required to address the concerns and needs of faculty? How can we form alliances with colleagues across different parts of the institution and across disciplines to do this work? What are some barriers? (Shawna Shapiro, 2022)

# ACADEMIC TRANSITION AND NAVIGATION OF MULTILINGUAL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS



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## Study Goals and Objectives:

- To measure the efficacy of English 109: Studies in Composition, Enhanced (a 2 semester course designed with immersive and scaffolded writing practice)
- In relation to the course's interdisciplinary approach to writing instruction, to assess students' adaptive knowledge transfer (DePalma & Ringer, 2011)
- To promote greater institutional accountability for multilingual learning, shifting the discourse toward an “asset-oriented mindset” (Van Viegen et al., 2016, p.498)
- To align with recent calls for linguistic justice (CCCC, 2020) and culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum design (Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Van Viegen, Stille & Zappa-Holman, 2019).



# METHODS AND DATA

**Initial approach: Mixed methods, longitudinal case study (3 YR) including anonymous student pre- and post-course surveys, instructor interviews, and student reflective writing.**

## Data Analysis

- Instructor interviews (N=12) and student reflective writing (N=11) analyzed via NVivo deductively (based on course design) and inductively (emerging nodes) using constant comparative inquiry

## Limitations

- Results may not be generalizable to all contexts, but this pilot study hopes to add to the literature on Canadian multilingual student writing experiences.
- Remaining student reflective writing from 2021-22.



# **THEMES AND FINDINGS:**

## **1) Writing course design and socially responsible curriculum in relation to academic navigation and agency**

- the two-semester small class design, scaffolding, and reflective and recursive writing immersion resulted in increased student agency and acculturation across the curriculum.

## **2) Student and instructor perceptions of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy**

- educational accountability and criticality were embedded in the course design through multimodal, multicultural, and multilingual teaching practices.
- administrative change needed and ongoing.

## **3) Adaptive transfer of skills**

- interdisciplinary course design encouraged skill transfer across genres and disciplines.



## ADAPTIVE TRANSFER

Snapshot from Student R speaking about their analytic abilities at the end of the course: "I now find myself asking more questions in my **computer science** lectures as I am eager to gain a complete understanding. **Whenever I encounter incomplete logic, I make sure to contact my professors** about the issue and ask for more details. I have also developed my skills in the research process, editing, academic forms and styles, reading strategies and communication, and **these will stay with me for a lifetime.**"



As we finish this case study and in relation to the Elon Statement on Writing Transfer (2017), we wonder how this class remains with students at the end of their undergraduate degrees.

Can we find out more a) about how first year course concepts have been “reused and reshaped” (DePalma & Ringer) near the end of students’ degrees?

And b) should we consider other, post-qualitative research methods, looking at the **identities, practices, and interventions** relevant to students, instructors, the institution?



# USING ASSET-ORIENTED PEDAGOGY

Liston & Rahimi's (2017) book connects SoTL with transformative education and highlights that asset-based pedagogies such as, culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000), and culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alilm, 2017)

- enhance “awareness of who is being taught in order to be more sensitive and responsive to the culture of the learners.” (p.xx)
- underline that “learners and teachers are peers on the journey toward greater social justice.” (p.xx)



# CULTURALLY SUSTAINING PEDAGOGY (CSP)

“CSP seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of schooling for positive social transformation. ...the outcome of learning as additive rather than subtractive, as remaining whole rather than framed as broken, as critically enriching strengths rather than replacing deficits.” (Paris & Alim, 2017)

- We argue that not addressing "linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism" contributes to "dysfunctional illusions of rigor" as contended by SoTL researchers Nelson (2010) and Cook-Sather, Abbot & Felten (2019).



# CULTURALLY SUSTAINING AND LINGUISTICALLY RESPONSIVE CURRICULAR DESIGN: INSTRUCTOR INTERVIEWS

- Focusing on “identifying strengths of the students... to speed up their ability to write effectively and communicate effectively”
- Initiating conversation on standardized notions of writing communication
- Addressing interdisciplinary interests and connect learning transfer between courses to understand disciplinary expectations, multimodal practices and develop learner interest
- Approaching learning as incremental development of skills



# CULTURALLY SUSTAINING AND LINGUISTICALLY RESPONSIVE CURRICULAR DESIGN: INSTRUCTOR INTERVIEWS

- Recognizing that students have written before or have experience of creating texts
- Developing skills and voice in text development
- Understanding integrity cultures, expectations around citation practices that incorporate own voice and opinion
- Valuing self-reflection
- Thinking of pedagogical space as an ‘assemblage’ so that the process of teaching and learning is addressed:
- “Who should decide how this learning should progress?”
- It is not about “who” sits in the classroom rather “how” writing is taught



# CULTURALLY SUSTAINING AND LINGUISTICALLY RESPONSIVE CURRICULAR DESIGN: STUDENT INTERVIEWS

- Being able to help others was a ‘satisfying’ learning experience
- Understanding the genre of academic writing was valuable
- Recognizing that learning cultures and expectations are different
- Focusing on the writing process (drafting process) was effective
- Understanding applications beyond the writing classroom was useful
- Discussing assignment expectations and assessment practices (particularly during the pandemic) was important



## QUESTIONS FOR THE AUDIENCE:

What kinds of changes are required to address the concerns and needs of faculty? How can we form alliances with colleagues across different parts of the institution and across disciplines to do this work? What are some barriers? (Shawna Shapiro, 2022)

In relation to support services, does policy need to catch up with practice?

What does this mean for writing instructors? For "content" instructors? For universities as a whole?

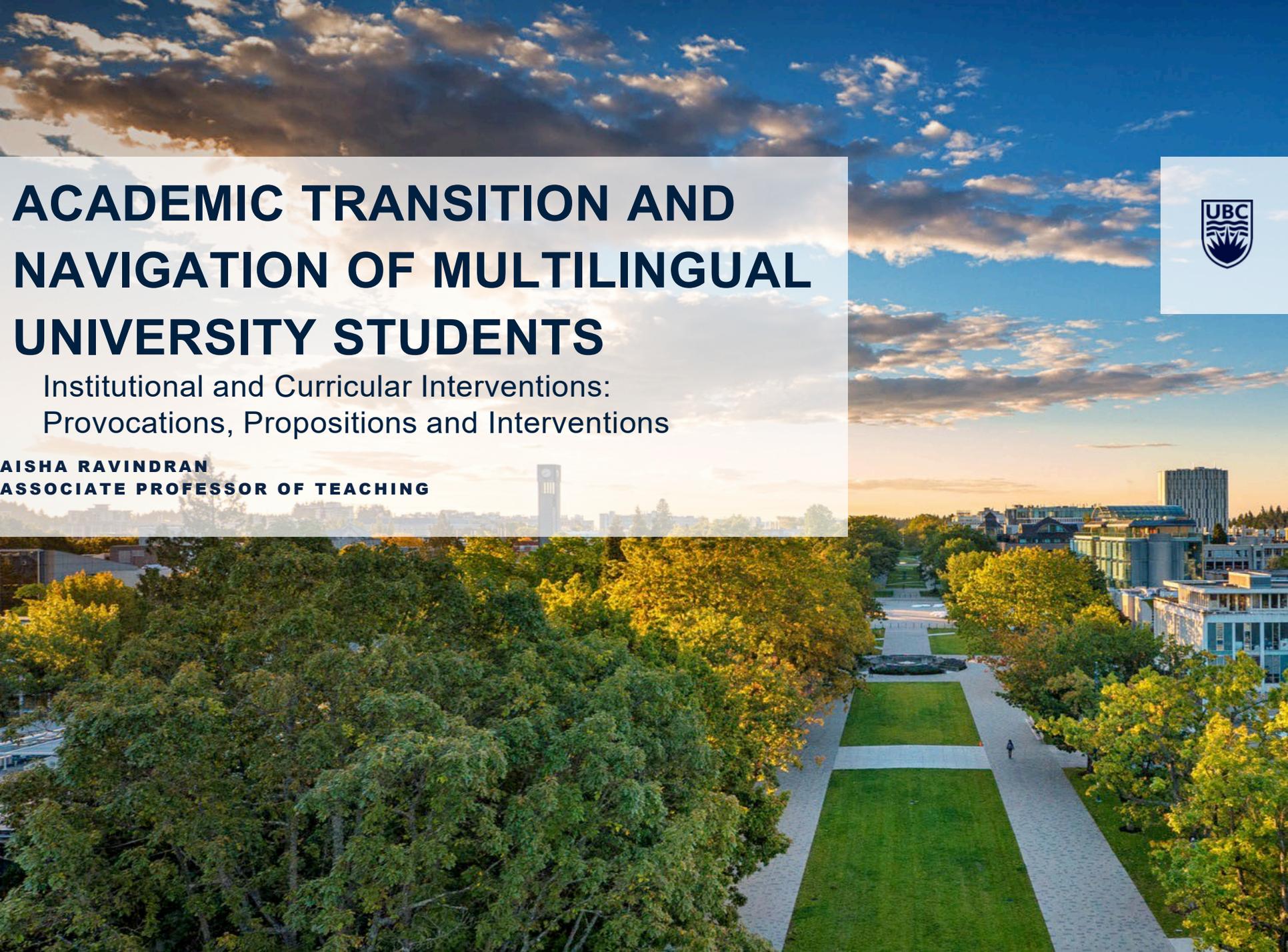
Do you have courses similar to English 109 at your institutions? What curriculum designs are used?



# ACADEMIC TRANSITION AND NAVIGATION OF MULTILINGUAL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Institutional and Curricular Interventions:  
Provocations, Propositions and Interventions

**AISHA RAVINDRAN**  
**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF TEACHING**



## SOME PROVOCATIONS TO THOUGHT....

- How has your research contributed to changes at the micro, meso, and macro levels?
- Does it exist only in the vast repository of extant research, or has it altered perspectives and practices beyond your department and faculty, in other disciplines, programs, and departments?



# THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ILLUMINATIONS/ TRANSFORMATIONS OF STUDY:

## Post-qualitative methodologies

- Reconceptualization of research methods that offers alternatives to researcher-centred methodologies, representation of reality, and illuminated by posthumanist ontology (Lather, 2013; St. Pierre, 2020)

## Ecological perspectives

- “Attuning to the environment” and affecting and being affected in “a double becoming” (Massumi, 2015).

## Seeking data that “glows”

- The wonder of data that “glows” (MacLure, 2013) resonates as “both material and virtual – a matter of potentialities and thresholds” (MacLure, 2010)

## Interviews as researcher- decentered assemblages

- Disrupting the conventional structure of the interview (Barlott et al. 2020; Shannon & Flint, 2019) and thinking about method as “becoming entangled in relations” (Springgay and Truman, 2018)



## FOLLOWING MANNING (2016): SOME PROPOSITIONS

### Proposition 1: Seize the moment!

“ We were doing some writing on topics of Indigenous peoples ... in the midst of covering this situation this global pandemic. So one very relevant topic for students is vaccine hesitancy so last year, we were talking about vaccine hesitancy and some students ... decided to dig deeper into vaccine hesitancy among Indigenous peoples in Canada, and I thought, oh this is really great topic for for students and an opportunity for students to know more about the history and and colonial history in Canada [this was not part of the lesson plan or included in the syllabus] .... they just shared a lot of research findings in terms of the legacy and colonial history.

**I learned a lot from my students and they learned from each other.**

They really appreciate such opportunities to to be open with, you know, different topics that are socially significant and culturally relevant for them” (Instructor 1, Interview January, 2022).



## FOLLOWING MANNING (2016): SOME PROPOSITIONS

### Proposition 2: Embrace difference!

“ In today's globalized and multilingual educational context, maybe one important step for us to do is to have this awareness [diverse student demographics] and also help students to develop their awareness, and when it comes down to the actual classroom practices, what we can do ... [is use] different pedagogical strategies so we can take to be responsive, more responsive to our students needs. **It's not one singular set of needs from our students right? They are diverse.** That is the way we can do to help facilitate the most optimized learning experience for students today.”

(Instructor 1, Interview January, 2022).



## FOLLOWING MANNING (2016): SOME PROPOSITIONS

### **Proposition 3: Dismantle deficit-models and discourses!**

“ I think we understand that this term **international student**, you know in a way of a standardized terminology that it's an umbrella term that brings all of these students, ... it has a very ... dehumanizing perspective or, you know, becoming as having deficiencies rather than ... we're not acknowledging ... prior learning or the cultural backgrounds or what they can bring in through their previous experiences.” (Instructor 2, Interview January, 2022).



# AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC ANECDOTES

"Students come to N. America to learn English."

Banning the use of "Chinese" dictionaries in an English classroom.

"What do you mean by *setting* exams?"

"That is the beauty of Global Englishes."

"I did not think it was an error, but a different way of pronouncing the word *algae*."



## EXIT TO THE NEXT THRESHOLD: INTERVENTIONS

- 1. The Micro Level:** What interventions have you initiated at the **course level**?
- 2. The Meso Level:** What interventions have you initiated within **disciplinary communities** at your institutions?
- 3. The Macro Level:** How has your research contributed to **policy changes and representations at the institutional level**?



## DISCUSSION

Thank you!

We invite your insights and experiences.

