

## Chapter 7

# Information Literacy Instruction for International Students: Collaborating for Success

Alessia Zanin-Yost  
Penn State University Libraries, USA

### ABSTRACT

*International students bring cultural and diversity awareness to an institution, but they also bring a variety of assumptions about how research is conducted in the United States. In developing an outreach plan to international students, the academic library should create services that cater specifically to this student population. By developing collaborations with other campus units, the library can foster academic success and at the same time build a sense of community for the undergraduate international student population. The chapter illustrates how through collaboration the library can become an active participant in supporting the academic mission of the institution, foster a sense of belonging among the students, and strengthen campus relationships among various entities, in particular, international students.*

### INTRODUCTION

The role of the library is to support students to succeed academically. Historically, libraries have done this by providing a variety of resources and services and more recently by targeting specific student populations. Programs and services for freshmen have increased because “75 percent of non-returning students will withdraw during or right after the first semester” (Soria, Fransen, & Nackerud, 2013, p. 150). Despite this move toward tailoring services for specific student populations, many academic libraries have not focused closely on one growing group: international students. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight how the academic library can foster and build collaborations with other campus entities to better serve the international student population and in doing so increase the international students’ sense of belonging to the institution.

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This chapter highlights a variety of successful outreach projects with international students implemented over the past 10 years at Penn State Altoona and Western Carolina University. These projects evolved organically to meet the changing needs of the various institutions and the educational needs of the international students.

The background section in the first part of the chapter describes assumptions and issues related to international students as well as the importance of supporting the objective of student success for all types of students. The second section focuses on the importance of developing partnerships with other campus entities. The third section highlights the collaborative efforts, development, implementation, and results of a pilot initiative in teaching international students about plagiarism. The last section offers some recommendations to consider when developing or expanding a library program for international students

## **BACKGROUND**

According to World Education Services (2007), “international student” means something different from country to country. For example, New Zealand excludes students who are permanent residents, while Germany includes long-term and permanent residents. This chapter uses the definition adopted by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, Eurostat and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD): “international students [are] those who are not-residents in their own country of study or those who received their prior education in another country” (OECD, 2011, p. 98).

International students are important to an institution for many reasons. Students from different countries offer a cross-cultural perspective and increase cultural sensitivity. The whole institution is enriched culturally and intellectually, domestic students have an opportunity to improve their foreign languages skills, and there is the opportunity for future international collaborations (Grayson, 2008; Mamiseishuili, 2012). International students also bring important revenue to their host institutions. During the academic year 2012-2013, international students contributed \$24 billion to the economy (NAFSA, 2013).

International students consider several factors when selecting an institution. While studies abound in this area, information focusing specifically on the role of the academic library in the lives of international students is limited. The most common reasons for selecting an institution abroad include availability of scholarships, awards and internships; course transfer agreements; and, most of all, positive campus experience feedback from others who attended that institution (Zhang, Sun, & Hagedorn, 2013; Althbach & Knight, 2007).

The literature regarding the impact of the library on international students focuses on multilingual translations of library handouts or online guides as well as the production of self-directed tours to lessen language and terminology barriers (Howze & Moore, 2004); effective marketing and outreach plans (Mundava & Gray, 2008; Ye, 2009); use of resources and services (Yi, 2007; Sackers, Secomb, & Hulett, 2008); adaptations to cultural, social, and linguistic differences (Jackson, Ray, & Bybell, 2013; Lin & Scherz, 2014); and issues related to plagiarism (Zimmerman, 2012; Abasi & Graves, 2008). What is missing in the literature is how to adapt and integrate information literacy skills for international students and the benefits for the academic library of extending collaborations with other campus units.

Every institution has a variety of units that support the international students. Student engagement has been reported as the most effective factor in student success, and, according to the literature, engagement includes persistent student-faculty interaction and an environment that is perceived as inclusive

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