

# Integrating Academic Writing and Intercultural Competency Curricula for First-Year International Students

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UNIVERSITY

- **Needs Assessment**
- **Course Overview**
- **Course Outcomes**
- **Successes**
- **Challenges**
- **Future Goals**



- **Institutional Needs**

- 135 first-year international students (10% of class)
- International student academic writing enhancement
- Greater campus connection and engagement for first-year international students

- **Student Needs**

- Academic writing support, especially citations and plagiarism
- Campus belonging and social support
- Cultural knowledge of US universities
- Using intercultural skills in university contexts



- **2013: Introduction to US Culture and US University Life for first year international students (1 credit, fall)**
  - **2015: 33 enrolled**
    - Focus: using intercultural skills in US university contexts
    - Positive intercultural skills gains (Brunsting, Smith, Zachry, under review)
  - **2016: 19 enrolled**
    - Integrated academic writing into curriculum
    - Condensed intercultural competence curriculum
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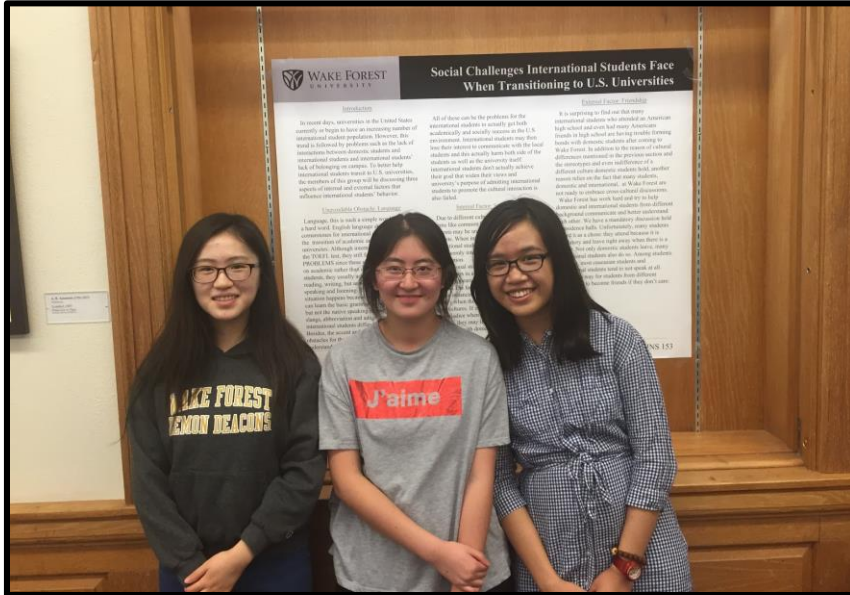
## **Student Learning Outcomes:**

- Increase their understanding of American culture
- Develop three intercultural skills critical for succeeding in different cultures
  - Suspending judgment
  - Perspective taking
  - Tolerating ambiguity
- Implement intercultural skills in different university academic and social contexts, specifically in academic writing

## **Written Tasks:**

- Reflection on acculturation goals
  - Event papers (x2)
  - Research paper & poster presentation
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#	Content	#	Content
1	Priming intercultural knowledge	8	Communicating with faculty Faculty panel in class
2	Intercultural theory Suspending judgment	9	Common writing errors and how to fix them
3	Supporting arguments with sources Paraphrasing	10	Using intercultural skills to solve roommate issues
4	Perspective taking Tolerating ambiguity	11	Self-editing your writing Collocations and Synonymy
5	US academic norms: Discussion and groupwork	12	Research check-in WFU campus social life
6	Academic research tools Research assignment overview	13	Reviewing your research paper Reporting verbs
7	Decoding writing assignments Structuring academic writing	14	Presentation of research



Two students joined the Intercultural Transition Research Team and are currently working on an study investigating the international student transition

## Survey: Most useful skills

- Suspending judgment (7)
- Communicate with students (3)
- Communicate with profs (3)
- Understand transition (3)
- Academic writing (2)
- Understanding culture shock (2)
- Groupwork (1)
- Solving roommate issues (1)

## Significant pre-post increases

- Self-Advocacy
- Solving Roommate Issues
- Perspective Shifting
- Suspending Judgment

- Student research papers
    - Students researched culture shock or international student adjustment to US universities
    - We provided topic choices and 2-3 “starter” research articles
  - Student presentations
    - Students presented research posters to campus audience in the library
  - Students sought advice about campus adjustment issues
  - Course designed to meet Fantini’s (2000) model on intercultural competence development
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- Frequently changing syllabus
    - Too much to teach; had to readjust syllabus
  - Perception of a “remedial” course
    - Confirmed via focus group
    - Students believe they do not need writing support OR
    - Students do not want to lose face taking “remedial” course
  - Balancing student levels of English
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- Create year-long course sequence
  - Reframe course sequence goal to integrate international students into campus organizations
    - Academic writing and oral communication skills support their integration into organizations
    - Provide multi-skill language support
    - Engage previous students as mentors
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## Summer

One-week course prior to pre-orientation for new international students that provides an introduction to life at Wake Forest University as well as connections to current faculty, staff, and students who lead intercultural and globally focused initiatives and classrooms.



## Fall

Semester course focused on continuous development of students' written and oral communication skills, combined with multiple opportunities to engage with student leaders and explore student organizations as well as campus life and academic support units.



## Spring

Semester course designed to enhance students' communication and self-awareness skills through direct collaboration with campus offices and student organizations on events and initiatives designed to enhance their campus community.

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