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### Optimizing Library Services – International Students and Academic Libraries: Identifying Themes in the Literature from 2001 to the Present

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# Optimizing Library Services — International Students and Academic Libraries: Identifying Themes in the Literature from 2001 to the Present

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**Column Editors' Note:** *This study International Students and Academic Libraries: Identifying Themes in the Literature From 2001 to the Present, is featured in the recently released IGI Global book publication, Promoting Ethnic Diversity and Multiculturalism in Higher Education, edited by Dr. Barbara Blummer (Center for Computing Sciences, USA), Dr. Jeffrey M. Kenton (Towson University, USA), and Dr. Michael Wiatrowski (Independent Researcher, USA) (Copyright Year: 2018; ISBN: 9781522540977; Pages: 309). — CC & LW*

## Introduction

According to the **Institute of International Education's Open Doors Report on International Education Exchange**, the number of international students studying in the United States (U.S.) is increasing as well as the number of U.S. students enrolled in academic institutions abroad. In addition, the numbers of Hispanic, Asian, and nonresident alien students attending U.S. academic institutions increased from 2010 to 2014 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016). Other countries are reporting a rise in foreign students enrolled in their universities, as well. Still, studies suggest that international students experience difficulties in adapting to academia, in part, due to cultural differences. Librarians' understanding of international students' library use patterns can foster the development of appropriate informational literacy instruction and outreach to these individuals and facilitate their use of library resources and services.

## Background

A recent *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)* report illustrated the number of students studying in higher education institutions abroad is increasing (United Nations, 2016). The report identified the most popular countries for these students as the U.S., the United Kingdom, Australia, France, Germany, and Russia respectively. On the other hand, the report pointed to China, India, Germany, Korea, France, Saudi Arabia, and the U.S. as claiming the most mobile students. Yi (2007) suggested the U.S. remained especially attractive to foreign students due to the extent of technological and scientific development in the country. In addition to an increasing rate of international students in the U.S. and abroad, studies sug-

gest a rise in immigration trends will impact the demographic composition of academic institutions, especially in the U.S.

## International Students' Adjustment to Academia

Research has identified a variety of factors that impact international students' adjustment to academic life including: language difficulties, technological barriers, different instructional methods, financial problems, discrimination as well as loneliness (Banjong & Olson, 2016; Faleel, Tam, Lee, Har, & Foo; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008). Moreover, **Koenigstein** (2012), **Peters** (2010) and **Sarkodie-Mensah** (2000) believed international students in the U.S. experienced cultural shock that produced anxiety and stress. Recent studies support these findings highlighting the linguistic, cultural, and instructional challenges facing international students (Han & Hall, 2012; Lin & Scherz, 2014).

Foremost, differences between the libraries and librarians in students' native countries and their host institutions affect international students' utilization of library services and resources (Nataowitz, 1995; Peters, 2010). Studies suggested international students visited the library for studying, but not research and these individuals were less apt to contact a librarian for assistance (Duan, 2016; Haley & Clough, 2017). Additional barriers to international students' use of library resources include difficulty with language, especially English, as well as a lack of understanding of library facilities, resources, and services (Duan, 2016; Varga-Atkins & Ashcroft, 2004). Moreover, research found international students were often confused about plagiarism and library jargon (Han & Hall, 2012; Mundava & Gray, 2008; Ramachandran, 2014/2015). Surveys and focus groups with international students pointed to the role of language as a barrier to these individuals' information literacy development as well as the importance of outreach, specialized instruction, and campus collaborations to improve their research skills (Ishimura, Howard, & Moukdad, 2007; Jackson, 2005; Mehra & Bilal, 2007; Safahieh & Singh, 2007; Wang, 2008).

Authors noted international students experienced anxiety when using the library (Lu & Adkins, 2012). **Battle** (2004) found information literacy instruction reduced library anxiety for international students in English as a second

language (ESL) programs when completing a library assignment. To this end, **DiMartino** and **Zoe** (2000) urged librarians to understand the learning styles, cognitive habits, and cultural background of international students to support their use of the library.

Ethnic diversity, and especially the appearance of international students on college campuses, exposes students to new perspectives, research opportunities, and pedagogy practices. Still, language and cultural barriers can hinder the academic endeavors of minorities. It remains especially important that administrators, faculty, and librarians devise strategies to support international students' research and learning activities. Librarians' and faculty's support to international students can be aided by understanding how cultural differences impact their information seeking.

## Literature Review Method

The methodology centered on a literature review of international students and academic libraries from 2001 to the present. To identify relevant articles on this topic, the authors searched the library literature with various combinations of the following keywords: international, students, library, academic, university, college, and higher education. The authors truncated terms and limited the results to material published after 2000, to reflect the availability of commercial technologies in libraries. The reference lists of relevant papers were also reviewed.

## Research Analysis & Findings

The authors reviewed 99 papers that reported on international students and academic libraries. These papers consisted of studies that examined data from surveys, interviews, focus groups, and reference interactions with international students as well as their search diaries and artifacts. The majority of the papers did not differentiate among individuals' ethnic status, but 14 out of 99, or 14 percent focused on Asian international students. There was also research that centered on international students from Saudi Arabia and developing countries use of the library at **Robert Morris University** and the **University of Delaware** respectively (Ibraheem & Devine, 2016; Iheanacho, 2008). Likewise, more than half of the studies considered undergraduate and graduate international students, 59 out of 99. However, some research focused on graduate

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or undergraduate international students. In addition, three studies consisted of surveys and focus groups with librarians that served international students. Collectively the literature presents best practices for librarians and faculty for supporting international students in their academic research endeavors.

The authors identified four themes within the material including: international students in the library, library initiatives for international students, skills required for librarians' support to international students, and marketing and outreach to international students (see Table 1.0). The authors assigned one theme to each paper based on the primary focus of the material. Together, these materials highlight opportunities for librarians in supporting international students' use of resources and services in academic libraries.

**Table 1.0 Distribution of Themes and Papers in the Literature**

Theme	Number of Papers
International students in the library	39
Library initiatives for international students	33
Skills required for librarians' support to international students	14
Marketing and outreach to international students	13
Total number of papers	99

**Conclusion**

This study focused on librarians' efforts to support international students in academic institutions as reflected in the literature. The literature illustrated international students utilized the library, but experienced difficulties in locating items, consulting a reference librarian, and capitalizing on various library services. Still, international students recognized the value of the library and sought additional information on how to utilize collections and services. Foremost, articles noted the need for librarians' outreach and instruction to these individuals due to their limited use of the library and language difficulties. The literature also discussed the importance of librarians' communication skills as well as their creation of library initiatives and marketing efforts to support international students' use of the library.

In addition to the themes identified above, the review underscored the role of collaboration, user studies, technology, and communication in facilitating library support to international students. An examination of these topics illustrates the interrelationship among the themes and highlights the need for a multifaceted approach to providing library support to international students.

Collaboration was paramount in the provision of library support to international stu-

dents. Librarians collaborated with a variety of entities inside and outside the institution to develop initiatives for international students. Librarians employed user studies to help inform the development and assessment of library initiatives to international students. Technologies were also used to facilitate library support to international students especially websites that offered students access to resources and services as well as other technologies such as library tutorials and online tours.

International diversity in higher education offers numerous benefits to the institution. Still, administrators, faculty, and librarians must ensure international individuals remain satisfied with their academic experience. Librarians' support to international students can enhance their learning and research opportunities. In addition to the provision of library resources, instruction in information literacy skills fosters individuals' success in academia and beyond.

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# Let's Get Technical — The Care and Feeding of Local Data in a ILS Migration



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## The Situation

In a previous article “A Herculean Task: Cleanup in Preparation for Migrating to a New ILS” (*ATG* v.28#6, Dec.16-Jan.17) we outlined some recommendations for areas to cleanup in preparation for migrating to a new ILS. As we edge closer to implementation and cutover to **Ex Libris’s** Alma and decisions have been made as to how to migrate records and move to a single record environment, other areas of bibliographic data have come to the forefront as areas for examination and potential preparation and cleanup. This is particularly true in areas of local enhancements and local notes in bibliographic records.

After the decision to migrate from **Ex Libris’s** Voyager to Alma, it was decided by our consortia leadership that the bibliographic records from the nine **WRLC** libraries would be merged into a single record environment. Historically within the **WRLC** consortia, each institution has maintained their own bibliographic records. This means, for example, that if five of the nine schools held the same bibliographic record with the same **OCLC** number for a work, there would be five similar records in our shared catalog with the same identifier. While there have been some benefits to this, it has also been relatively inefficient and cumbersome from a discoverability and record and authority maintenance perspective.

The **WRLC** Metadata Committee, comprised of mostly heads of cataloging from each of the schools in the consortia, needed a plan for merging duplicate records while preserving local data. Thus, while also performing cleanup on areas recommended by **Ex Libris** and already identified by the committee, the group began working on making provisions to retain a wide range of local enhancements and customizations from each institution’s individual records prior to the merge. This ranges from retaining local provenance notes to locally added Varying Form of Title (MARC 246) fields, as well as vendor-provided tables of contents fields, and Demand Driven Acquisitions information. **Ex Libris** provides a range of 9xx fields for migrating local data that libraries want to preserve and keep in their institution zones, and the group has worked on defining fields for mapping local data to ensure it is preserved.

With the mapping and migrating plans in place, it is incumbent on each institution to ensure the mapping of the appropriate fields and tag with a \$9 LOCAL to identify and

retain the local fields. As we have discovered in the catalog at **American University**, this can be a challenge because of changing local practices and national standards over time, missing historical institutional knowledge, and even no knowledge of some local notes or collections, especially in Special Collections and Archives. As a result, it can be difficult to locate all the local notes and other fields that we have wanted to keep.

## The Process

In the Voyager environment, with the permissions and knowledge we have currently, we have used a couple of methods to perform the identification of records and individual fields that need tagging, as well as the tagging itself. For the identification, one method we have used has been to run reports in Microsoft Access on records to locate local fields that we want to keep. The challenge with this is if the field is not indexed in your system, as is the case with many 5xx notes, running reports can be difficult and time-consuming. It does help if you know the specific field or phrasing you are looking for. Another method is to extract the records and use MarcEdit’s delimited text translator tool or OpenRefine to parse out individual MARC fields into spreadsheets for identification.

Once records with local fields we want to keep are identified, there are a couple of options for tagging fields we want to retain. Moving fields and tagging with the \$9 LOCAL can be performed on the record set within MarcEdit and the records can be reimported and overlaid onto the existing record in the catalog. Alternatively, many ILS’s have a batch change tool that can be used to make these modifications within the records themselves. Voyager has a module called Global Data Change (GDC) that will move, add, or modify fields in both the bibliographic and holdings records, if it has the bibliographic or holdings ID number. This is an exceptionally useful tool in that one can also review changes in a preview mode before they are made in the records, and can set conditions for making changes, so that errors are minimized. GDC also has a function to search for and create sets of records that meet certain parameters, which could probably be used to make changes, though we have not experimented with this feature. At American University, we have used a combination of making batch changes in GDC and MarcEdit and overlaying records to make these modi-

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