It is widely recognized that all students struggle to understand expectations, specifically during their first year of study, within the academic and non-academic systems inherent in higher education, ranging from course selection, group work, online course interaction, standards for effective communication, and academic research (Brinkworth, McCann, Mathews, & Nordström, 2009; Gabriel, 2008; Pancer, Hunsberger, Pratt, & Aisat, 2000). Moreover, international students are at an increased disadvantage and are most often ill-prepared for the academic, linguistic, and cultural expectations in western institutions of higher education, specifically those which demand high research and writing output; additionally, many academic staff/faculty remain frustrated that international students do not arrive to their classes already acculturated with the skills necessary to compete with their domestic peers (Andrade, 2006; Kingston & Forland, 2008; Smith & Khwaja, 2011). The overall assumptions made by many educators and the legacy systems that they have inherited have not adjusted to accommodate the reality of the academic, linguistic, and cultural challenges that international students, specifically, encounter at western institutions of higher education, particularly with regard to delivering hybrid and/or online courses.

This presentation will address the current academic climate for international students in higher education with a specific emphasis on student-centered practices that address strategies for increased academic success through preparation and, ultimately, gradual autonomy for the student. The author's personal experiences in teaching information literacy/research skills development within a collaborative environment (both F2F and online) will be shared as additional evidence for the issue. There will also be a discussion on faculty/staff individual experiences, observations, and proposed solutions for preparing international students to translate the F2F classroom into the online environment.


