

**Bonjour, Ni hao, Hola, Konichiwa: Communicating with
And Empowering International Students with a Library Skills Core**

**Amigos Fellowship Final Report
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Submitted by

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and
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A. Title

Bonjour, Ni hao, Hola, Konichiwa: Communicating with and Empowering International Students with a Library Skills Core

B. Abstract

Meeting the research needs of students who are speakers of other languages is often a challenge to traditional reference and instructional services. Overcoming language barriers, introducing the library milieu and adjusting to diverse cultural modes of communication is essential for effective communication and empowerment of students with an urgent need for a core of library skills. Our research will analyze services to international students in Amigos academic member libraries. We will develop a core set of library skills and strategies for effective reference and instructional services to international students.

C. Objectives of the proposal

- Identify skills to improve services to, and communication, with foreign-language speaking students.

Relationship to personal development: On a daily basis, we work with international students. We believe this study will help improve marketing and services to international students. Explore technical products and resource-sharing for serving international students.

Relationship to AMIGOS' mission: Impacts the development of distance education programs and resource-sharing projects of Amigos member institutions.

- Synthesize effective inter-cultural communication tools for reference and instructional services.

Relationship to personal development: We intend to develop tools for librarians to use in communicating with international students. We both provide reference and instructional services to undergraduates and graduate international students.

Relationship to AMIGOS' mission: Impacts the provision of innovative information services.

- Determine practical teaching tools and strategies for acclimating and empowering international students to the library research environment.

Relationship to personal development: We firmly believe that any reference encounter is an instructional encounter. We strive to train and empower all students, especially international students, during every reference and instructional interaction.

Relationship to AMIGOS' mission: Impacts the provision of innovative information services and supporting libraries as leaders in education and information services.

- Develop guidelines for creating print and online resources to meet international student's information needs.

Relationship to personal development: We both recognize the need for providing information in a variety of formats, including print and online. We hope to maximize the effectiveness of these tools and develop ideas for new print and online services.

Relationship to AMIGOS' mission: Impacts the provision of innovative information services.

- Outline strategies for partnering with other campus organizations to: orient students to the available resources; reduce information anxiety; and enhance learning potential.

Relationship to personal development: In addition to marketing library services through collaboration with other campus entities, we aim to promote information literacy to all students, with a special emphasis on international students.

Relationship to AMIGOS' mission: Impacts the promotion of regional cooperation and resource-sharing partnerships.

D. Strategy

We plan to accomplish the majority of our project objectives via mailed surveys and conference calls to the targeted population of AMIGOS institutions. Follow-up visits with a few selected institutions will provide us with additional anecdotal information. Please refer to *E* below for a timeline of when project activities will be accomplished.

E. Schedule and report

- Surveys sent to Academic libraries in the AMIGOS Consortium. (Summer 1999)
- Surveys sent to International Student Services and/or Dean of Students offices and/or International Admissions in AMIGOS-member schools. (Summer 1999) *see attached*
- Follow-up interviews with selected institutions via e-mail or conference calls. (Summer-Fall 1999)
- Follow-up on-site visits with selected institutions. (Fall 1999)
- Data compiled and tested in SPSS. (Fall 1999)
- Analysis of cultural diversity, multiculturalism and communication in library and educational settings. (Spring 1999-Spring 2000)
- Collaborate with local inter-cultural communication, diversity and language experts. (Spring 1999-Spring 2000)
- Write paper with findings. (Summer-Fall 2000)
- Final Report submitted to AMIGOS (Fall 2000)

F. Significance

Significance to Career:

- Applying research skills to a practical study leading to a publication opportunity.
- Incorporating expertise from our other disciplines (second Masters) into our current field.
- Expanding our instruction philosophy and skills.
- Hands-on experience with a scientific study; including survey development, content analysis and knowledge synthesis.

Significance to the Library profession:

- Developing a practical core of library skills targeted to international students which will recognize the potential rise of international students in North American academic settings.
- Guidelines for developing online [Library] tutorials for international students which will be essential as Distance Education increases its role in North American academic settings.

- Exploring and developing additional resources via which librarians can continue to improve services to international students in the evolving technological milieu.

G. Qualifications

Sara Baron has an MA in Speech Communication and an MS in Library Science. She has studied intercultural communication and works extensively with international students at TCU through campus orientations and instructional encounters. She is an advocate of target marketing library services to users with special needs.

Alexia Strout-Dapaz has an MA in Spanish Literature and an MS in Information Science. She works extensively with international students, specifically graduate students in the MBA program. Her culturally diverse background and language skills will be invaluable in this project.

Both authors have had research classes and research training. They have also researched reference services to special populations. They have an article soon to be published in *Reference Librarian* concerning instruction and reference for returning students.

H. Participants

Sara Baron, Instruction Librarian, TCU

Alexia Strout-Dapaz, Business & Reference Librarian, TCU

AMIGOS Member Libraries (International Student Services, Dean of Students offices and International Admissions)

I. Evaluation

We will incorporate our recommendations at the TCU Library. We will do a pre and post evaluation of reference and instructional services preceding and following the incorporation.

We will disseminate our information in the following ways:

- RUSA speaker proposal at ALA Convention 1999
- AMIGOS proposal to report research activities and progress at Fall conference
- Submission to a scholarly journal
- Possible contributed paper session at TLA 2000