

Re-Defining Academic Literacy: An Information Literacy Approach to Helping Chinese International Students Succeed in American Colleges

Authors : Yi Ding

Abstract : With the upsurge of Chinese international students in American higher education, serious academic problems Chinese international students are suffering from are also striking. While most practices and research in higher education focus on the role of professors, writing centers, and tutoring centers to help international students succeed in college, this research study focuses on a more fundamental skill that is neglected in most conversations: information literacy, which is usually addressed by academic librarians. Transitioning from an East-Asian, developing educational system that values authority, set knowledge more than independent thinking, scholarly conversation, Chinese international students need support from academic librarians to acquire information literacy, which is crucial to understand expectations of a Western academic setting and thus to succeed in college. This research study illustrates how academic librarians can play an integral role in helping Chinese international students acclimate to the expectations of American higher education by teaching information literacy as academic literacy unique to the Western academic setting. Six keys of information literacy put forward by Association of College and Research Libraries, which are 'Authority Is Constructed and Contextual', 'Information Creation as a Process', 'Information Has Value', 'Research as Inquiry', 'Scholarship as Conversation', and 'Searching as Strategic Exploration', are analyzed through the lens of Chinese educational system and students' backgrounds. Based on the analysis as well as results from surveys and interviews among academic librarians, professors, and international students, this research further examines current practices from a wide range of academic libraries and finally, provides evidence-based recommendations for academic librarians to use information literacy instruction to help Chinese international students succeed in American higher education.

Keywords : academic librarians, Chinese international students, information literacy, student success

Conference Title : ICETHE 2018 : International Conference on Emerging Trends in Higher Education

Conference Location : Vancouver, Canada

Conference Dates : August 09-10, 2018