

# Growing Pains and Course Correction: Internationalizing a Writing Program

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**Abstract:** Higher education institutions in the United States are experiencing tremendous growth of international students. This essay serves as a case study of how an institution is addressing its growth from a handful of international students to nearly 10% of its total student population in a decade. The authors describe writing instruction and the lack of writing instruction related services for international students on campus before and during the increase in international student numbers. They then describe the process of developing separate workshops for students and faculty based on survey results and the creation of a Bridge Program to help prepare international students for institutional writing expectations. Throughout this article, the process of internationalization through recruitment of international students is critically examined. The authors focus on the changing policies and pedagogies associated with this growth, faculty reactions to and support for addressing the needs of this new population, and students' own reflections on their linguistic preparedness in light of the rigors of university expectations. The article concludes with an analysis of the roles played by the students, faculty, and institutional policies in internationalization efforts as they are related to the creation of "insiders" and "outsiders" on college campuses.

## Introduction

*Working with international students is not a one-way interaction, but requires compassion and sensitivity from both staff and faculty as well. From my own experience, I believe that it would be valuable to collect data that speaks to our ability to provide an experience for these students that respects who they are both culturally and linguistically from an interpersonal perspective.*

*There need to be higher English ability admissions requirements. The English program at UM-Flint cannot fully prepare students who already have very low English ability.*

—Anonymous respondents to a faculty/staff survey about international students at UM-Flint

The University of Michigan-Flint (UM-Flint), like many universities in the United States, has strived toward and struggled with internationalization for the past decade. The process of internationalizing can occur at several levels: the movement of students abroad or bringing international students in, the support of foreign language programs, and the development of globalized content in curricula and general education requirements. Of particular focus in this article is the recruitment of international students to higher education institutions, which has been

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occurring around the US for reasons both altruistic and less-than-altruistic. Those driving reasons have created growing pains, particularly in writing-intensive courses that were not developed with a consideration for international L2 (IL2)<sup>1</sup> students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, or L2 students' preferences regarding instruction (Leki & Carson, 1994). Not only must curricular adjustments be made to support these students, but also a respect for differences in Englishes and other language backgrounds must be fostered (Cox & Zawaki, 2014). Failure to do so leads to discourses of IL2 students' deficits (Zawacki & Habib, 2014a), and responsibility for adapting to communicative norms becomes unidirectional. As the anonymous respondent quoted above observes, "working with international students is not a one-way interaction." In other words, the responsibility for communicative effectiveness should not rest solely on international students' shoulders, but should be shared by all participants in a communicative event. The second quote is representative of the frustration faculty feel at having to adjust to internationalization and L2 students' needs, but does so citing "low English ability," perhaps expecting native-like language skills. This is an expectation that few students will realize (Hafernik & Wiant, 2012). Furthermore, international L2 students should not be singularly responsible for adjusting to the norms of native speakers and local practices. Rather, as the first respondent states, faculty and staff should be sensitive to students' backgrounds and share some of the communicative, social, and pedagogical burden (Shapiro et al., 2014). As will become clear throughout this article, the anonymous respondents quoted above are only two of many diverse views of IL2 students at UM-Flint.

Our analysis of institutional internationalization not only includes these multiple perspectives, but also traces the development of internationalization efforts at the university policy level. As such, this article is a case study in the policies and politics around internationalization and L2 English teaching and learning. Following the CCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers, which calls on writing teachers and writing program administrators to "develop instructional and administrative practices that are sensitive to [L2 users'] linguistic and cultural needs" and to "offer teacher preparation in second language writing theory, research, and instruction" (2009), this article focuses explicitly on L2 English acquisition, especially in writing. At our particular institution, nearly all of our students who would be considered L2 users of English are international students recruited in the past 5 years; we have never had a large L2 resident student population. Ferris (2009) describes aspects of international students' backgrounds that faculty should take into account, such as their various degrees of culture shock, background knowledge about the educational system and culture-specific practices, and preference for certain learning modalities ("eye" learners as opposed to "ear" learners). We discuss the process of identifying the instructional and administrative practices directed toward international L2 students and the perspectives of faculty, staff, and international students at our institution.

Much of the work to support L2 users and the faculty and staff who work with them has been in reaction to, rather than in preparation for, internationalization at UM-Flint. The first section of this article outlines the historical context leading up to the burst of internationalization through international student recruitment. It details how the number of bodies was foregrounded over providing support for students or faculty. Such considerations were moderated by existing pockets of writing instruction, especially the First Year Writing Program. It was through these pockets that the university's undergraduate writing curriculum was expanded to provide IL2 students support, resulting in a bridge program. Many researchers in L2 writing recognize that the acquisition of academic English is different for L2 and L1 users, and recommend specialized services (e.g. Silva, 1993; Ferris, 2009; Hinkel, 2015). Hinkel (2015) summarizes research on undergraduate L2 writers by saying that "restricted access to advanced language features results in simple texts that rely on the most common language features that occur predominantly in conversational discourse" (pp. 80-81). Teachers of writing-intensive courses may not have the skills or language to respond to

IL2 writers' needs - even when they recognize the challenge of writing in an L2 - without some form of faculty development (Zawacki & Habib, 2014a). In the case of UM-Flint, neither L2 writing courses, nor targeted faculty development were in place as international student enrollment escalated. If teaching English as an L2 is political (Pennycook, 2013), then here the lack of L2 English instruction was also a political choice.

Studying UM-Flint's history of internationalization and its steps to address its growing pains points us to what Jonathan Hall believes is the future of WAC, and arguably the future of higher education. He claims, "The future of WAC, I will argue, is indissolubly tied to the ways in which higher education will have to, willingly or unwillingly, evolve in the wake of globalization and in response to the increasing linguistic diversity of our student population." (Hall, 2009, p.34). In response to Hall, we have identified two main themes to address in this essay that we believe are essential to the evolution of WAC in what Hall calls the "Age of the Multilingual Majority": 1) How do institutions view IL2 students, and how do those views influence policy and pedagogy? What is the role of the institution to support students in reaching their potential, and how does it limit practices that might prevent them? Also, how are IL2 student assets promoted and incorporated into the institution and its curriculum? 2) Why internationalize? What is the impact of internationalization without institutional planning? What support services will IL2 students need and what professional development will faculty and staff need? What is the faculty and staff responsibility to IL2 students on campus and in the curriculum, and to what extent are the IL2 students responsible for integrating into the institution?

Our situation is unique compared to those who have long histories of internationalization or L2 writing programs. Nevertheless, we hope our experiences resonate across local situations, particularly regarding the development of supportive programs for IL2 students and the faculty/staff who work with them. The following article is organized chronologically, and has been a collaborative effort between the writing center director (Blumner) and an applied linguist (Feuerherm) at UM-Flint. As Silva & Leki (2004) outline, the field of second language writing has historical ties to composition studies and applied linguistics. Collaborations between these fields can support the process of internationalization by drawing on each discipline's strengths (Siczek & Shapiro, 2014) and raise new questions about the processes by which students acquire academic writing competence (Zawacki & Habib, 2014b). Our approach to this article is colored by our professional histories and positionality within the field and institution. Blumner came to UM-Flint in 1998, and so he experienced pre-internationalization at UM-Flint and has been involved in the institution's lurching forward to address the needs of students, faculty, and staff. Feuerherm was hired at UM-Flint in 2014 to teach linguistics and build a bridge program for international students. We draw on our personal experiences and timelines as we outline the internationalization of our institution.

## **Institutionalizing Internationalization: History and Development at UM-Flint**

In 2004, the University of Michigan-Flint enrolled 58 international students, and the role of international education in the university was undeveloped. In fact, in the 2005-2010 strategic plan for the university, the only mention of international students is in a bulleted list about student recruitment and a footnote with three examples of signed articulation agreements, two of which are in Ontario, Canada. But some administrators and faculty saw the value of broadening the educational experience of regional students and saw the value the US university experience could bring to international students. The University established an International Center in 2005 to support international students on campus, and in 2007 it established the English Language

Program (ELP), a non-baccalaureate intensive English program designed to prepare students to enter baccalaureate and graduate programs. Primarily through the work of the International Center, the number of international students had tripled to 171 by 2008. Between 2008 and 2015, the number had grown to 692, nearly a 300% increase. This growth is exceptional, and it follows a national trend of international students growth since 2005. According to the Institute of International Education, the number of international students in the United States grew from 564,766 in 2005 to 886,052 in 2013, and the largest growth coming from China, India, and Saudi Arabia (Institute, 2015). Those same countries represent the majority of international students at UM-Flint.

In 2011, UM-Flint created a new strategic plan that placed more emphasis on internationalization than it had in 2005, including increasing the number of international students to 600. The provost at that time wanted to see that number at 1000, or 10% of the target number of 10,000 students for the University in 2016. The 2011-2016 strategic plan also mentioned the International Center under the priority of promoting diverse social identities and perspectives. Yet, like the 2005 strategic plan, there was no mention of supporting international students' curricular needs. And so though the goal was to significantly increase the international student population, and by extension the L2 population, little institutional drive or planning was given to the impact the growing number of international L2s would have on the curriculum, what strengths they bring to the educational environment, or the needs the IL2s would have.

We suspect because of the lack of university strategic vision or sense of urgency regarding international students, few departments and programs were prepared for the dramatic increase in international student numbers and their needs, particularly those needs of L2s. The International Center, underfunded, understaffed, and with a relatively narrow mandate at its creation, did what it could, including developing a robust English Language Program that grew from 15 students to now between 60-80 each academic year (International). It now works with admissions; conducts international student orientations; recruits and supports international students; supports international cultural events; manages study-abroad programs; advises students, faculty, and staff; and assists international students when they have academic or personal crises. With all the International Center does, it is not positioned within UM-Flint to lead curricular change, such as addressing international student needs in writing, and it is also poorly positioned to push critical conversations about why our institution should internationalize.

UM-Flint's English Language Program (ELP) is available to any international or immigrant student who wants to increase their (academic) English fluency. It also supports those international students who have been provisionally admitted. However, nearly all students enrolled in the ELP are not in baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate programs (recently some graduate programs have required students to take ELP courses as part of their course of study). The ELP requires an intensive twenty hours per week in class. Students can still continue in the ELP while concurrently in degree-granting programs, but the time commitment and additional costs are prohibitive and taking ELP coursework would slow student progress toward graduation. Nearly all international students have strict timelines they must follow to graduate, and they do not want their progress hindered (D. Adams, personal communication, October 28, 2015). Recently the ELP has hired writing tutors to aide in L2 writing success. Yet, like the International Center, in which the ELP is housed, the ELP is not well-positioned to lead curricular change for credit-bearing courses at the university. The program is in many ways seen as extra-curricular. The faculty are technically staff members and are not represented on campus-wide faculty committees and do not have a significant voice in campus affairs. Shapiro (2011) discusses a similar situation where curricular change required the stakeholders to find common ground and develop a new programmatic identity. We will add, though, that the ELP faculty are very active in their own professional development and

participating in campus events and activities. The ELP is also physically housed in a building not often considered part of campus by many of the UM-Flint community. There are few classrooms there, and it is relatively remote. This contributes to the ELP and non-matriculated IL2s having the quality of being separate, and potentially viewed as “other,” further limiting the ELP’s ability to influence curricular change on campus.

One well-positioned place to address curricular and pedagogical change for WAC and international student education is our Thompson Center for Learning and Teaching (TCLT). The TCLT regularly hosts workshops, seminars, and brown-bag lunches to provide pedagogical professional development for faculty. One of the gems of the TCLT has been its pre-convocation workshops, which it has hosted since 2000, and the workshops are relatively well attended. During the past fifteen years, none of the workshops have focused specifically on or had components addressing international students. In 2007, when the influx of international students showed its first major growth spurt going from 69 to 133 students, the TCLT hosted an internationalization summit for the campus. Much of that day focused on initiatives to increase internationalization on campus, including expanding the study abroad program and funding sources, internal and external, to support internationalization. There were no specific sessions to address the pedagogy of working with international students or assisting them to integrate into the campus and greater Flint communities.

The campus also has had an International and Global Studies program, which is designed to “enable students to gain a global perspective of human events and behavior; to appreciate the cultural diversity of the World; to discern global patterns and processes and to understand their impact on particular regions” (IGS). The IGS program, which is relatively small though very active on campus, has partnered with the International Center and the TCLT for events and activities that promote internationalization on campus, such as International Education Week. Their focus has not been on faculty pedagogical professional development, and arguably it does not fall within their mission. Much of their program, too, has been focused on providing international perspectives for US students. And so IGS has been an important partner on campus for internationalization, and could potentially be a strong voice in critical conversations about it, but it has not focused on the writing needs of L2s.

Another well-positioned place to address international student needs in writing would be a WAC program. Unfortunately UM-Flint no longer has a WAC program. It had a relatively short-lived one from approximately 1994-2002, operating on a budget of \$900, and was directed by a pre-tenured faculty member with no reassigned-time for much of the WAC program’s existence. When that faculty member left, the budget eventually disappeared and the last WAC workshop held on campus was in 2005, just before the dramatic increase of international students. When operating, the WAC program focused exclusively on US English speaking students, and most of the challenges faculty discussed were typical complaints ranging from critical thinking to citation style to plagiarism. Anecdotally, a significant subset of the struggles faculty sought help with was for students who spoke African American Vernacular English. By 2010, the focus of faculty complaint had begun to change when the international L2 population numbers reached 225, a still small percentage of the overall student population.

When the WAC program faded, the writing center became what Muriel Harris (1999) called the De Facto WAC center. Since there was no formal program or support for writing instruction across campus, faculty naturally turned to the writing center director, and occasionally the writing program director. But the De Facto WAC center was what Blumner et al. (2001) called a “reactive program” rather than a strategic one, in which faculty largely seek assistance based on individual challenges they face rather than the institution thinking strategically and preparing faculty to work with student writing.

What has developed is what Blumner et al. (2001) call “pockets” of writing instruction within the institution (p. 22). Those pockets can be departments, programs, writing intensive courses or even one or two faculty members. At UM-Flint, few departments or programs take a systematic approach to writing instruction or expectations, despite most departments having some kind of writing expectation in their program assessment of graduates. Still fewer departments have tried to address L2 needs in their programs and departments.

One pocket is the Biology Department, which has long had a strong tradition on teaching writing. In addition to writing being assigned in many courses, the department has designated two courses as writing-intensive, which is laudable because there is no writing-intensive requirement at the University. Students write in many of their courses, and the faculty are focused on student writing – steeped in it – but when asked directly about working with L2s, a colleague replied, “Foreign language issues? I have no idea what we can do” (D. Viele personal communication, November 23, 20015).

A second pocket of writing instruction, arguably the largest, is the First-Year Writing Program, housed within the English Department, and it was the first place seeing the greatest impact of L2s. The writing program, with a two-course requirement and a developmental writing course for those who do poorly on a timed placement test, became the proverbial canary in the coal mine. Faculty teaching the First-Year Writing sequence were also experiencing the changes brought by a growing L2 population without larger programmatic or institutional considerations on how the changes should best be addressed. Writing program faculty addressed their concerns in writing meetings and brought in instructors from the ELP to discuss how best to work with international students in 2013. The internal work the writing program did helped the faculty work with the IL2 students, and the writing program is slightly better positioned than the aforementioned programs and centers to engage the campus in pedagogical conversation about writing and L2 students. Still, nearly all faculty in the writing program are lecturers, not tenured or tenure track, and the preponderance of them are not considered permanent lecturers. Because of this, they are not best positioned to have their voices heard in the way other program faculty or academic administrative offices might.

### **First Year Writing Program**

This section explores in greater detail the existing writing courses into which IL2 students were placed because of the lack of L2 writing courses in existence. The writing placement exam was placing large numbers of international L2 students into the developmental writing course, ENG 109: College Writing Workshop, in dramatically increasing numbers, beginning with one or two L2s in the mid 2000s until nearly 65% of the course was composed of L2s in 2013. ENG 109, designed for US English speakers and US students was ill-equipped to address the influx of students with vastly different needs, learning styles, and experiences. Faculty teaching the course began to adjust as best they could to the changing demographic, but ENG 109 was effectively becoming two different courses within the same classroom.

The course goal for ENG 109 focuses on helping students become more fluent, comfortable, and confident with writing; helps them consider audience and writing coherent, well-organized essays; and it prepares them for the rest of the First-Year Writing sequence. These goals, at an abstracted level, are equally valuable for L2s, but when it comes to putting pen to paper or pixels to screen, how those strategies are enacted depend on underlying cultural and linguistic contexts that often differ significantly for US students and IL2s.

Another English course similarly affected is ENG 100: College Reading and Learning Strategies, a reading and study skills course in which students are placed based on ACT scores. Despite the

course's focus on reading and study skills, it is strategically housed within the First-Year Writing Program's suite of courses. Students who do not have an ACT score (including most of our international students) or are placed into English 100 based on an ACT score, have the option of taking the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) exam for placement. Because international students have fared poorly on the exam or opted not to take it, they have been placed into ENG 100 in large numbers. In the 2012-2013 academic year, 51% of the students in ENG 100 were international despite them making up less than 10% of the student population.

A final course in English was affected, but in a different way. It was resurrected from the ashes of disuse. The English Department and the writing center revived a course that paralleled ENG 109, providing L2s an additional track beyond the basic writing courses for English language study. The course, ENG 110: College Writing Workshop II, was created in 1986 to assist a handful of students coming from Eastern Europe and Latin America. The course was mothballed in 2002 because of a lack of enrollment, but the course was revived in 2011 because of the growing L2 population, a perceived lack of writing services for them, and the limitations of the basic writing program to help them. ENG 110 is fully housed in the writing center and students spend one 2-hour block per week, per credit hour working in small groups, just like ENG 109.

As the site of basic writing courses and tutoring, many faculty contacted the writing center director for help with working with L2s, making the writing center a De Facto WAC center. As a result of the increased traffic of students and faculty, the writing center began offering professional development opportunities for its all-student staff. The writing center incorporated scholarship, such as Harris and Silva's work (1993) and Williams and Severino's (2004), into its tutor-training seminar and its professional development meetings. Many tutors became intensely interested in learning about and working with international students, and an English Language Program instructor came and ran a workshop for the writing center staff in 2013. The writing center continues to try and address L2 and faculty needs.

## Developing a Plan for Institutional Support

The International Center and the Office of Institutional Analysis had been closely monitoring international student success and had been hearing the growing cries of faculty disgruntlement over L2 issues in their courses. In the late spring of 2013, the International Center formed a task force to review the English language proficiency requirements for international students, to reexamine student placement success, and to see if data supported the faculty complaints. It did not. Unsurprisingly to those familiar with international student education, the majority of international students were surpassing their US counterparts in GPA, retention, and time to graduation. International student success is likely because of the strict requirements placed on international students by the US and often their home countries (i.e. Saudi Arabia). What did become apparent from the study was that a small subset of students, those who scored lower on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) with an overall score of 5, struggled the most. And UM-Flint was one of very few comparable institutions accepting an overall score of 5 on the IELTS.

Of the recommendations made by the task force, two are noteworthy here. First, the task force recommended the IELTS minimum score be raised, requiring the average score to be a 5.5, but no sub-score of the test can be below a 5. It is too early to determine if those changes have had a significant impact on enrollments and student success, but anecdotally we believe this factor, combined with some others discussed later, have led to a drop off in international students. The second significant recommendation was the creation of a bridge or pathway program in which L2s



can take language courses for baccalaureate credit. As part of this recommendation, it was also recommended the university hire an applied linguist to build and direct a Bridge Program.

### **Narrative of Starting the Bridge Program**

The creation of the Bridge Program began in earnest in the Fall of 2014, with the hiring of Dr. Emily Feuerherm, a faculty member who had a background in teaching English learners, developing a community-based English language program, and a degree in applied linguistics. The steps in developing the Bridge Program may be helpful for other faculty and administrators who are charged with establishing or revising bridge, pathway, or other ESL programs. The groundwork for this institutional support had already been laid before Feuerherm arrived, and her position was supported by all the stakeholders. As Hafernik & Wiant (2012, pp. 9-24), Ferris & Hedgcock (2014, pp. 29-49) and Shapiro et al. (2014) all discuss, curricula and pedagogies should take L2s' backgrounds into account, because the instructional needs of international students compared to domestic students (both L2s and non-L2s) will be different. Not only will the linguistic control of grammatical rules or lexical items differ, but also rhetorical conventions and the social functions of texts may be understood by L2s differently because of their prior literacy socialization (Ferris 2009; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014, pp. 19-22). While all those in support of the Bridge Program may not have been familiar with the L2 writing literature and research, they were in agreement that the current policies were doing a disservice to the growing international L2 student population, and knew it needed to be addressed.

The first draft of the Bridge Program plan included Feuerherm's experiences teaching L2s, discussions with university program directors, and research into other Bridge Programs. Feuerherm reviewed existing writing placement tests and collected a modest corpus of student writing from some obliging instructors in the writing program. A proposal was drafted based on an analysis of student writing and an understanding of the context and existing curricula. The proposal included a modified placement test for international students, two levels of writing courses, one reading course, one speaking/listening course, and a summer course focused on cultural orientation. There was also a plan to expand these courses in following years to include writing courses attached to disciplines with high international student enrollments and developed collaboratively between English and other departments (WID/WAC style courses).

In November, 2014, the draft received largely positive feedback from the Associate Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Dean of Graduate Programs, the program directors, and a few faculty members who were vocal advocates of international students. There were concerns from the International Center that it would be difficult (it turns out, impossible) to get students to come in the summer, as Ramadan overlapped with the summer session classes and many of UM-Flint's international students are Muslim. Additionally, a particularly vocal member of the group insisted that graduate students should also be receiving language support services, and this proposal was limited only to undergraduates. Despite these concerns, the administrators and faculty present gave the green-light to the proposed plan.

Next, the courses needed to be presented to the English Department because the Bridge Program would be housed there. Although the English faculty were supportive of the plan, there were some details that needed to be hammered out so that the policies and procedures guiding students from the Bridge Program into the First-Year Writing Program would be clear and efficient. Placement tests for the First-Year Writing Program are conducted online, through Blackboard, and are managed in the English Department. However, a separate reading test, the DRP discussed earlier, is also administered for first-year students through the Student Success Center; the results of which may place students into ENG 100. However, this test is not intended for L2s, and could not be used

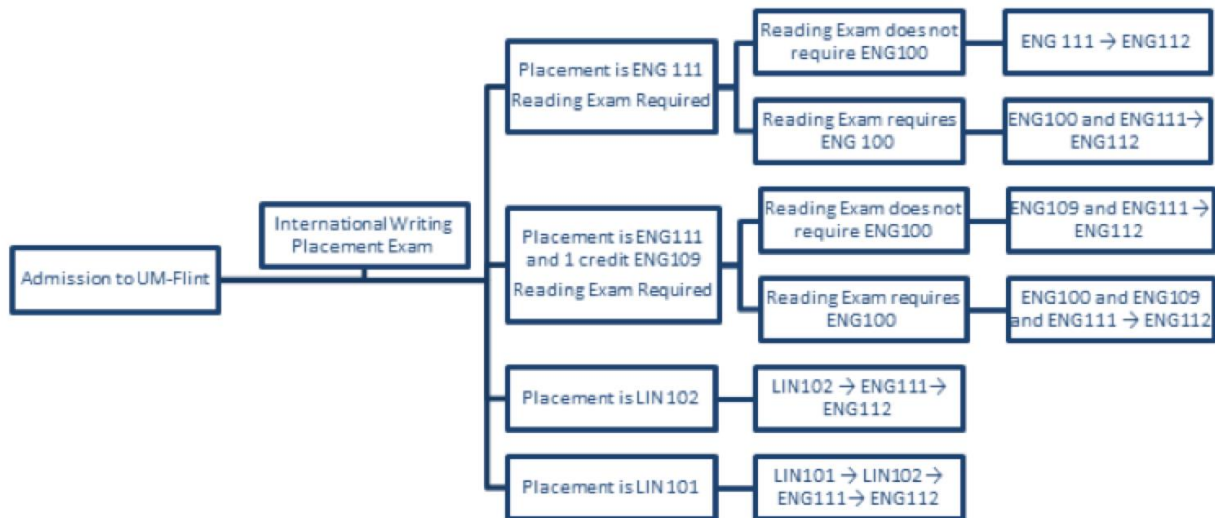


or adjusted for placement into a separate reading course within the Bridge Program. In order to streamline the new and existing curricula, the separate Bridge Program reading course was combined into the writing courses. Hinkel (2015) states that neither reading nor writing are possible “without a substantial range of academic vocabulary and grammar, and both of these require extensive and intensive instruction” (p. 73). The programmatic result of this was that students placed into the Bridge Program would simultaneously receive instruction in reading and writing, and would not be required to take the reading test through the Student Success Center. This resulted in a fresh proposal with the following courses (Table 1) and testing procedure (Figure 1), which was the basis for the first iteration of the program in Fall 2015.

**Table 1: Bridge Program Course Descriptions**

Course	Description
Lin 101: Academic Skills for Non-Native English Writers	Focus on writing organized, coherent and grammatically correct paragraphs and short essays in the style expected of university level writing.
LIN 102: Advanced Academic Skills for Non-Native English writers	Intensive work in writing organized, coherent and grammatically correct essays in the style expected of university-level writing, with integrated support for developing reading, critical thinking, listening and speaking skills.
LIN 104: Speaking and Listening for Non-native English Speakers	Support and practice in speaking in formal and informal settings, pronunciation, presentation skills, conversation skills, listening comprehension, note-taking, and cultural integration.

**Figure 1**



As shown in the flowchart above (Figure 1), results of the International Writing Placement Exam either place students into one of the Bridge Program writing courses (LIN 101/102) or directly into the First Year Writing Program (ENG 111/109). If students are placed into the Bridge Program, they will move through the courses into the First-Year Writing Program. If students are placed into the First-Year Writing Program, they are required to take the reading exam and may have to take

the developmental reading course, ENG 100. This may be appropriate for some international students based on their English language skills, particularly if they have (near) native fluency but need support for academic English and study skills. The speaking and listening course, LIN 104, is not included in Figure 1 because it is currently an elective course and there are no testing procedures to place students in that course. Because the summer course from the original proposal was never run, it was not included in either the table or figure.

## Reflecting on Institutional Culture: Survey Results

Throughout the process described in the previous section, support for international students and the recognition of the need for the Bridge Program was presumed and supported by all who participated. However, this was not reflective of all faculty perceptions, nor could it be assumed to be reflective of students' perceptions of their own need. For this reason, in January, 2015, two online surveys were distributed to UM-Flint's campus using Qualtrics: one to faculty and staff, and the other to international students. The purpose of these questionnaires was to determine what the perceived needs of the international student population were and what types of services might best meet these needs. Both surveys were divided into two parts, and internal structures to the surveys were in place so that participants would be responding to questions regarding the appropriate international student population (graduate students or undergraduate students). A total of 242 faculty and staff responded to the survey, as well as 39 undergraduate students and 60 graduate students. Because the Bridge Program was already conceptualized and new courses had been submitted to the registrar when the survey was distributed, the intention was not to use the results to formulate the program, but rather to begin a critically needed campus-wide discussion about international students that could be used productively to generate additional, targeted services for students, faculty, and staff. Nevertheless, the results of the surveys were aligned with what was already planned at the undergraduate level, as students, faculty, and staff identified the socio-cultural orientation to university life and the productive skills (speaking and writing) as the two most often cited needs. Particularly the expectations for advanced academic writing skills were identified as needing additional support by faculty and staff. This aligned with the writing-focused courses of the Bridge Program (these courses also include cultural orientation and study-skills), and the elective speaking/listening course. Additionally, these surveys showed that graduate students were interested in extra support services in the form of classes or workshops focused on writing, speaking (especially in front of an audience), and culture. The following sections will outline the survey findings in more detail.

### Faculty and Staff Results

The findings below have been filtered to represent only those who have worked with more than ten international undergraduate students, so that those who have worked with few international students do not skew the findings. Table 2 shows that very few respondents felt that international undergraduate students are well prepared for the academic work at UM-Flint (answers were not required, so some respondents skipped questions, resulting in different totals across questions).

**Table 2: International undergraduate students are well prepared for the academic work at UM-Flint**

	Response	Percent
Strongly Agree	2	1.83%

<b>Agree</b>	22	20.18%
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	37	33.94%
<b>Disagree</b>	34	31.19%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	14	12.84%
<b>Total</b>	109	100%

Faculty and staff identified that students have more difficulties adjusting to college in their first year than in subsequent years; which is not surprising and supports program development for entering freshmen.

When asked for more detail about what aspects international undergraduate students had difficulty with, faculty and staff responded that they felt students had the most difficulty (in order of most to least: (1) writing academic papers in English, (2) participating in classroom discussions, (3) speaking in front of an audience, (4) understanding reading assignments, (5) completing assignments or exams, (6) engaging in research projects, and (7) understanding spoken English. These responses were chosen out of a list, but respondents could mark “other” and fill in additional answers, as listed in Table 3. These answers have been grouped based on themes of skills or cultural adjustment.

**Table 3: Other Difficulties Listed by Faculty and Staff**

<b>Speaking</b>	“Asking for assistance”
	“Afraid to speak in class”
	“Understanding their English”
<b>Reading</b>	“Understanding syllabus”
	“Interpreting written directions correctly and completely”
<b>Listening</b>	“Understanding spoken instructions”
<b>Writing</b>	“Composing essays”
<b>Academic honesty</b>	“Understanding academic honesty”
	“Understanding or following plagiarism policies”
	“Plagiarism”
	“Ability to learn without cheating”
<b>Culture</b>	“Addressing course concerns”
	“Understanding expectations”
	“Understanding university policies and procedures”

	"Complying with treatment recommendations"
<b>Attendance</b>	"Attendance"
	"Class attendance"
	"Being on time"
<b>Participation</b>	"Classroom participation/performance elements"
	"Participating in small group activities"
<b>Other</b>	"Maintain GPA"

What was not asked in this survey, was whether faculty and staff felt that international students were any more or less prepared than their domestic counterparts. At the end of the survey, where there was space for additional comments, one respondent said "International undergraduate students have no more problems in class than non-international students. They tend to write better than native students and show more pride and put more effort into their work than native students." This respondent's experiences show that there were several international students who were perceived as not needing additional support, though there were several other respondents that felt differently. Another person recognized the variation in preparedness that international students come with:

I usually work with international students early on (FYE, 100 level courses). My experience has varied widely...some do very well, or may struggle at first, but develop/grow over the course of the semester. Some are clearly not prepared in terms of language issues indicated above (writing/reading/understanding), which makes success very difficult. More problematically, some lack professionalism (attending class, completing assignments, plagiarism), which makes improving language skills and passing the course impossible.

And some respondents were particularly negative regarding the English skills of international students: "There have been a few with no language deficits, some that had significant accents but were relatively able, and some with basically no ability to communicate in English at all." This last quote represents a very extreme deficit view of language ability. First, deficit is used explicitly in the first part of the response, showing that while the TESOL, L2 writing, and composition fields have intentionally been moving away from deficit discourses of language learning, it is still common outside of the discipline. Second there is a conflation between accents and ability, which seems to indicate that those who have accents may have impaired ability, though it is unclear whether ability here is referring to communication in English, or some other type of ability (e.g. critical thinking or academic ability). Finally, this respondent claims that some students have "basically no ability to communicate in English at all" and yet all students must have taken and passed English proficiency tests in order to be admitted, to say nothing of the linguistic demands throughout the admission process. Clearly, all of these students speak English at an advanced level. Another repeated concern for many respondents regards plagiarism and cheating. One respondent even commented that students had difficulty with the "ability to learn without cheating" (Table 3). While it is unclear exactly what is meant by this comment (does this person truly believe that all international students cheat? and what type of "cheating" results in "learning?"); what is clear is that there is once again a deficit discourse evident in these concerns.

The faculty and staff surveys demonstrated that international L2 students were perceived as doing extremely well in some instances, but that many were thought to be struggling with some linguistic and cultural expectations. The Bridge Program would start to address several of these concerns—particularly in the first year—but more would be needed in order to establish a university-wide culture of support. Hafernik & Wiant (2012, pp. 26-31) list four fundamental principles for understanding L2s' linguistic development in higher education, but one is particularly important for re-shaping instructors' understanding of their L2s, and the context of the Bridge Program. "Multilingual students do not become 'native' English speakers. [And] a few courses will not perfect students' English" (p. 30). This point, well known to those in applied linguistics, second language acquisition, and L2 writing, needed to be understood by the university as a whole: a culture shift. Shapiro et al. (2014) recommend engaging in university-wide discussions and trainings in order to foster better support in the disciplines.

### Meetings and trainings

Following the distribution and analysis of the surveys, an open forum was held to discuss the survey findings and foster a productive discussion about graduate students' language support. The open forum was open to all faculty, staff, and students and 45 people attended. A panel with representatives from the International Center, Student Success Center, the English Language Program, an international student, a First-Year Writing Program instructor, and faculty members from the Biology and Computer Science Departments gathered to help answer faculty questions about the Bridge Program and the needs and experiences of international students. Feuerherm was leading the discussion, with the intention of presenting the Bridge Program to the university, discussing a series of workshops for faculty, staff, and students, and establishing what types of services might best support graduate L2s. Until that point, everyone involved in the process recognized the need for the Bridge Program and was supportive of each stage of the program development. Still, a vocal minority at the forum focused on whether the Bridge Program courses were overly burdensome to international students (ignoring the fact that they were populating developmental courses not addressing their needs), and the reliability of the surveys based on low response rates from international undergraduates. Additionally, some faculty members vocalized their continued concern about international L2 students' language "deficits." Nevertheless, the information had been shared, the university-wide conversation about institutional support for international L2 students had begun. Additional plans were in place to host one workshop each for faculty and students, in order to begin the culture-shift.

The workshop for students was focused on intercultural communication, based on the international student survey results that identified American culture as the primary interest topic (58.28%). The student workshop was open to all students, though it was advertised most thoroughly to international students. Two student representatives, one domestic and one international, were present to discuss their experiences with language learning and intercultural communication. Theoretical background moved from Hall's cultural iceberg model to cultural humility, which is a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation, critique, and redressing the power imbalances in intercultural communication (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998, p.123). This first workshop was attended by 14 students and one staff member, but similar workshops have been presented to international student orientation leaders (most of whom are domestic students) and advisors from the Student Success Center.

The workshop for faculty was based on Shapiro et al.'s (2014) book and was attended by only 6 faculty; two of whom were sponsoring the workshop (the English Department chair, and the director of the TCLT). This low attendance was surprising considering how many faculty felt that IL2 students were struggling in their classes, and may reflect faculty's focus on international

students' English skills as the problem while dismissing their own communicative responsibility. Considering how comparatively well attended the workshop for students was, students themselves may be internalizing this expectation and responding to it by seeking out resources. The director of the TCLT suggested that a different format, perhaps online, would increase its accessibility, particularly if faculty failed to come because of time constraints. With all that faculty are expected to do – heavy teaching loads for lecturers and teaching/research/service for those on the tenure-track – it is very possible that faculty did not come because they were feeling overwhelmed by other obligations. The TCLT's pre-convocation workshops, mentioned earlier, would be another excellent opportunity to expand support for faculty working with IL2 students. Additionally, having regular or well-attended faculty workshops would symbolize better institutional planning throughout the internationalization process. Following this faculty workshop Feuerherm presented targeted information about working with international L2s to writing faculty and staff in the Writing Program and in the Writing Center. These efforts are only a small first step in providing training and faculty development opportunities, and stronger institutional support is still needed.

In addition to developing workshops for students and faculty, a series of 6 workshops were offered during the Fall, 2015 semester for graduate students. Like the intercultural communication workshop for students, these workshops were also open to all students, but thoroughly advertised to international graduate students. Nevertheless, several domestic L1 students heard about the series and attended. Each workshop focused on some aspect of academic culture/English and included a brief guest presentation from programs around the university. Topics included setting goals, making friends, citing sources, writing proposals and abstracts, and presenting research in classes or conferences. These workshops and their topics were generated because of the faculty/staff survey and the international graduate student survey that indicated a gap in services. Over 30% of faculty and staff felt that 60-100% of the international L2 graduate students they had worked with had language difficulties in their first year, especially related to writing academic papers and speaking in class or in front of an audience. These figures are further evidence of faculty blaming students for being underprepared. However, international graduate students also identified the writing expectations at the University to be what they most struggled with (56% of those surveyed responded that this was the most challenging aspect). Of those surveyed, the ones who would be willing to take credit-bearing courses to support their linguistic and cultural adjustment identified that writing was the number one course they would benefit from. When asked if they would attend a workshop, 70.9% said they would attend a workshop on public speaking or presentations, 63.6% would attend a workshop for writing an abstract, and 52.7% said they would attend a workshop for writing a conference paper or proposal. The workshop series received a strong initial impact, with 35 students registering for the series, though less than 10 attended the last 4 workshops. The problem may have been that the benefits of these workshops were not attached to course credits or other quantifiable remunerations.

These series of workshops, trainings, and information sessions are a small first step to increasing a campus culture that values and scaffolds L2s. They were developed in response to data on the perceptions of international L2 students' needs. What this section does not cover are the other programs, services, and outreach that the International Center developed. During this time, staff at the International Center and the ESL librarian developed a workshop that focused on academic honesty, library research, and the avoidance of plagiarism. This workshop was held several times throughout the winter semester, and continues to be popular, though the popularity is largely the result of faculty requiring their students to attend or inviting the workshop speakers into their classes. There have also been several cultural events hosted by either the International Center, the Intercultural Center, or some combination of both. However, all of these workshops and programs



are student focused, and are not designed to support faculty in their pedagogical or socio-cultural interactions with international L2 students.

## Bridge Program: Testing and Inception

In facing the next stage of the Bridge Program development, it was clear that the campus culture was conflicted about the role of international L2s on campus, their academic performance, and the need for particular types of support. During the initial proposal stages, everyone was supportive of the Bridge Program and recognized the need for the various courses in order to provide specialized support to the particular needs of international L2s. The campus-wide survey results largely supported this as well, particularly in recognizing that productive skills (writing and speaking) and cultural support were key components to academic success. There were few who denied that these classes would be helpful (and those who did may have interpreted the Bridge Program classes as being punitive, rather than an adjustment away from existing classes that were not tailored to L2's needs). However, the faculty were overwhelmingly focused on L2 students' deficits, and did not avail themselves of a workshop meant to counter the deficit orientation.

As planned, the first iteration of the Bridge Program began in Fall 2015. At this early stage, only the two writing courses were offered. This was a result of the lack of general education designation for the listening/speaking course (LIN 104), which academic advisors said would not fill unless there was a general education designation. The summer classes also were not expected to fill, and so were similarly abandoned. Further scaling down of the number of courses occurred as the numbers of international undergraduate students dwindled compared to previous years, resulting in only one section of each Bridge Program writing course being offered. This was particularly unfortunate for the lecturer about to be hired to teach all of the (now unneeded) courses. According to the International Center, two contributing factors had influenced the drop in enrollments: (1) as previously mentioned, the task force for international student admissions had raised the IELTS score. While the raising of scores set UM-Flint on par with comparable universities, it also reduced the number of students eligible to enter the university. (2) The largest international student population had been coming from Saudi Arabia through the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) to the U.S., but fewer students were sent here because we were "saturated," a designation the Saudi Arabian government SACM places on institutions with a high number of Saudi students.

In order to place students into the Bridge Program, the International Student Writing Placement Exam was developed to identify the appropriate starting place for students in the writing curriculum: Bridge Program writing courses (LIN 101/102) or previously existing Writing Program courses (ENG 109/111). The test consisted of a 250-300 word article with academic, but non-specialized language and a writing prompt that included a summary of the text and a question. The articles for each test were adapted from Smithsonian Magazine on common interest topics such as friendship and aging, and vocabulary was controlled using the website [www.lex tutor.ca](http://www.lex tutor.ca). This website identifies the most common words, as well as the academic and specialized vocabulary in a text, which were then used to replace specialized vocabulary with common or academic vocabulary.

The International Student Writing Placement Exam occurred in-person at several times during orientation and through the first week of classes. Students had 2 hours, and were allowed to use English-only paper dictionaries. Students' tests were read by Feuerherm and the two lecturers teaching in the Bridge Program. Students were placed based on content, organization, and language – though language and fluency could sway the placement determination. Each test was read by at least two people, and a third read the test if there was a split. Three International Student Writing Placement Exams were held in Fall 2015. A total of 34 international undergraduate students were given the placement test. Of these 34, 17 students were placed into Bridge Program courses: 4 into

LIN 101, and 13 into LIN 102. There were additional students who were placed into Bridge Program courses using the online, domestic student Writing Placement Exam, before a coding error had been resolved. In total, 7 students were enrolled in LIN101, and 15 in LIN102.

In keeping with the established tradition in the First Year Writing Program, a list of learning outcomes for these courses was provided to the instructors, and they designed their own methods and a for arriving at these goals. The learning outcomes were based on the existing outcomes in the First Year Writing Program with adaptations for the academic English needs of L2s such as grammar and vocabulary. Additionally, the learning outcomes from the ELP level 6 (advanced English) curriculum informed the development of the grammar and vocabulary goals in these new courses, as well as Lane and Lange's (2012) global and local errors. Before the semester began, the teachers shared their syllabi and discussed how they were aligned with the outcomes and how they would feed into the rest of the First Year Writing Program courses.

Based on the current results from this first semester, it appears that the placement test worked well in placing students in the appropriate courses. Only one student seemed to have been placed in a course that was too advanced; however, this student was one of those who had taken the wrong test based on the coding error. Additionally, students taking the International Student Writing Placement Test were asked into which class they would self-place, and their responses were not aligned with or predictable based on their actual placement. Crusan (2011) and Gere et al. (2010) extol the many virtues of directed self-placement (DSP), though Gere et al. are more critical of the validity of DSP at their specific institution. Far more research would be needed for DSP to be considered at UM-Flint. Other future research into the efficiency of the placement test will be ongoing, particularly in regards to proficiency tests and whether they can be used to reduce the placement test load. Early findings suggest that the IELTS test score of at least 7 total or 6.5 on writing will place students directly into ENG 111.

Future research will not only include the process and efficacy of the testing procedures, but will also analyze the effect of the Bridge Program on student performance and GPA and students' experiences in the program. Nearly all of the international students who were tested in Fall 2015 consented to being contacted in the future regarding their experiences in (or not in) the Bridge Program. These statistics and reflections will be used to further tailor the courses to students' needs within their larger academic goals and academic English learning. Students' voices have been somewhat secondary in the development of the Bridge Program until this point, and this will be an essential consideration to future iterations of the program.

## Discussion

The recent history of internationalization at UM-Flint is an affair that is situated in a unique geographical location with particular local policies. Other institutions seeking internationalization through international student recruitment may not find themselves in the same quagmire of procedures as has been described throughout this article. However, with the special issue of ATD and the metaphor of "bringing the outside in," we see the ideologies that spurn increased internationalization as global issues with serious repercussions for those on "the outside" and those on "the inside." In fact, local policies can create "insiders" and "outsiders." In the case of our local institutional policies, which lack support for the curricular implications of internationalization, we create institutional "outsiders," or "dis-citizens" (Ramanathan 2013) out of our international students. These policies, or lack of policies demonstrate a particular institutional value for international students as well as guiding curricular policies and pedagogies that reinforce that value. It allows faculty and staff to abdicate their responsibility for providing an educational environment conducive to all students fully participating in the academic life of the institution.

Deficiency orientations to students' English proficiency erases their histories and the Funds of Knowledge (Moll, 1992) upon which they draw. In the most extreme cases, this can result in students' intellectual acuity and academic ability being questioned by the faculty who teach them. Without informed institutional planning, regular faculty support, and active advocacy on behalf of international L2 students, internationalization becomes a process of marginalization. As institutional policies and attitudes place the onus of communicative and cultural competence only on international students' shoulders, students may internalize this burden. Creating "outsiders" burdened by the deficit view of their knowledge and experience also marginalizes the assets IL2 students bring to the curriculum, institution, and greater community.

One might disparage the situation UM-Flint finds itself in, but we believe we are not alone in wading through the difficult morass of institutional change (e.g. Shapiro, 2011). We believe the establishment of the Bridge Program, particularly as a credit-bearing program, housed within an academic department, with institutional support is an important early step toward better moving our IL2 students toward becoming "insiders," and thus strengthening the entire university as it strives for its laudable goal of internationalization. The Bridge Program is well-positioned to influence institutional change, but it will need the support of key programs, centers, and administrators.

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## Notes

1. We have chosen to use the term L2 to align with the field of second language writing, though our use of L2 is not meant to erase additional languages in students' repertoires, nor minimize the linguistic resources they possess. We have chosen it over the term *multilingual*, also common in language acquisition studies, as *multilingual* reinforces ideologies of English monolingualism (Matsuda & Duran, 2013).

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