# **Implementation Guide**

## Transculturation in Introductory Composition

Developing Intercultural Competence in First-Year Writing Courses

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## About this implementation guide

This brief document is designed to help writing program administrators adapt the **Transculturation in Introductory Composition** approach to integrating intercultural competence into first-year writing instruction.

Readers not familiar with intercultural competence and/or our curriculum should refer to our comprehensive <u>Transculturation Instructor Manual</u>. Suggestions for further reading on intercultural competence can be found in this Manual. We have also prepared a <u>brief guide intended</u> for online delivery of the curriculum, though there are many advantages to traditional face-to-face pedagogy.

**Thank you for reading!** We welcome your questions and feedback: <u>info@writeic.org</u>. We are particularly interested in hearing from anyone who implements this curriculum in contexts we have not addressed below.

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Table of contents	
About this implementation guide	2
Table of contents	3
Project overview	3
The four key curricular components	4
Local context evaluation and implementation	6
Key considerations for implementation:	6
Goals, means, and outcomes	6
Curriculum	7
Placement	8
Diversity	8
Integrating intercultural interaction	9
Instructor training and professional development	9
Logistics	10
Summary of implementation questions	10
Examples of implementation for common contexts of FYW	11
Institution without L2-specific sections	12
Community colleges	12
Online Delivery	12
Two-Semester or "Stretch" FYW Sequences	13
Assessment	13

## **Project overview**

Transculturation in Introductory Composition is a first-year writing (FYW) curricular project designed by a team of writing instructors from Purdue University. This curriculum provides an opportunity for domestic and international students in FYW classes to effectively engage in cross-cultural learning. The pedagogical interventions we employ help students to develop intercultural competence and use such competence in their writing, research, and general communication, within and beyond the FYW classroom.

Inspired by the presence of a diverse student body on our campus, we began development of an intercultural learning curriculum in 2016. We piloted the curriculum in two paired first-year writing sections in Spring 2017. We implemented it in a further six sections during the 2017–2018 school year. Throughout the semester of implementation, we collected data on students' writing and intercultural development to evaluate the effectiveness of our curriculum. We published the results of this research on our web site in April 2020.

For more on the history of our project, including links to research in progress, please visit our web site (writeic.org).

We've written a detailed <u>Instructor Manual</u> for this curriculum, and we recommend that those who are implementing this course in their contexts draw on the extensive material we've provided there as well.

## The four key curricular components

We see the increasing diversity in US higher education institutions as a unique opportunity for writing programs to create efficient and effective curricula to support all students' intercultural growth, but especially to support the expanding population of international and domestic minority students. University contexts are often one of the first times students encounter significant cultural diversity. Thus, it is critical that students develop the ability to communicate and collaborate across cultures. First-year writing (FYW) programs are ideal for designing research-based curricular and pedagogical interventions for the development of cross-cultural skills in undergraduate students, because large numbers of students take FYW courses early in their education. Small class sizes allow for careful implementation and evaluation of such interventions.

Embedding structured intercultural interaction into existing university settings provides the most sustainable way to ensure that intercultural competence reaches the widest possible audience in the university. New programs created specifically for intercultural purposes are valuable and innovative; however, it takes time to build the audience for these programs. Courses and activities already required of large portions of the student body circumvent this challenge and automatically reach a wide audience. Actual intercultural contact, supported by opportunities for discussion, reflection, and questioning, provides the best environment for growing intercultural competence.

Our curriculum is centered on the development of intercultural competence, which is the development of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that lead to effective interactions with people from other cultures. For a detailed guide to the Transculturation curriculum, please see the

Instructor Manual we prepared for Introductory Composition at Purdue we have made available through HubICL.

Component	Descriptions	Learning Outcomes
Linked sections of FYW courses	Paired class meetings in which mainstream and L2-specific writing classes meet together. The two instructors co-teach and design activities that engage students in intercultural learning.	<ul> <li>(A) Strengthen the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for intercultural effectiveness.</li> <li>(D) Display effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations.</li> </ul>
Multicultural reader	A custom anthology that invites students to explore controversial themes and concepts across different cultural contexts: gender, identity, language, globalization, power dynamics, individualism vs collectivism, relationships, technology, and education.	(C) Critically analyze culture through reading, writing, discussion, and reflection.
Research-based writing assignment sequence	<ul> <li>Three scaffolded writing projects that build on each other in one semester arc:</li> <li>1. Case Study Report</li> <li>2. Cultural Inquiry Project</li> <li>3. Digital Remediation Project</li> </ul>	<ul><li>(C) Critically analyze culture through reading, writing, discussion, and reflection.</li><li>(B) Demonstrate cultural awareness of diverse audiences, situations, and contexts.</li></ul>
Reflective writing	A series of five short reflective papers: four general reflections and one end-of-course reflection.	All four Transculturation learning outcomes (noted above and in our Instructor manual).

There are four central pedagogical components for our curriculum:

Further detail, including assignment sheets and sample activities, can be found in the Instructor Manual.

As we will discuss later in the guide, pairing sections of FYW (mainstream and L2-specific) may not be possible — or the most effective way to increase intercultural interaction — at every institution. Determining whether and what types of pairing should be enacted is a critical component for local implementation of this curriculum.

## Local context evaluation and implementation

The Transculturation curriculum places intercultural communication and collaboration at the heart of writing instruction. In addition to writing-related learning outcomes, we focus on having all students actually engage in cross-cultural learning and exhibit the desired cultural outcomes—the specific cultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes—that the curriculum seeks to develop.

These learning outcomes are:

- A. Strengthen the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for intercultural effectiveness.
- B. Demonstrate cultural awareness of diverse audiences, situations, and contexts.
- C. Critically analyze culture through reading, writing, discussion, and reflection.
- D. Display effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations.

Writing programs interested in implementing this curriculum in their FYW classes first need to examine the extent to which their structures and practices align with the main goals of the Transculturation curriculum. The next step is to determine whether adjustments are required. Pertinent considerations include student demographics, current FYW curriculum, program outcomes, placement practices, teaching staff and resources. These considerations are explained below.

#### Key considerations for implementation:

- A. To what extent do the current **goals and outcomes** of first year writing align with intercultural communication?
- B. How will the Transculturation **curriculum** fit within the target first-year writing program's general curricular framework?
- C. How does your institution approach **placement**?
- D. What types of **diversity** are present in the writing program student and staff pool, and how can these types of diversity be incorporated into the implementation?
- E. How will you **integrate intercultural interaction** in your local context, particularly if your student population is less diverse?
- F. How will **instructors** be recruited and trained? What ongoing professional development beyond the program's standard initial instructor preparation will be offered?
- G. What **logistical work** is required to implement the curriculum?

Below, we address each of these in turn. We conclude this section with questions that WPAs can use to imagine adapting the Transculturation curriculum to their particular context. Note that we discuss assessment in depth in the last section of this report.

#### A. Goals, means, and outcomes

We suggest two key principles:

#### First, model outcomes related to intercultural competence on existing FYW outcomes if

**possible.** This will make takeup easier because instructors will have familiarity with the language you use, and existing assessment apparatus will be more compatible as well.

For example, our second and third outcomes are revisions that highlight culture in the same way program outcomes speak of rhetoric and writing:

- Demonstrate **cultural** rhetorical awareness of diverse audiences, situations, and contexts.
- Critically analyze culture think about writing and rhetoric through reading, writing, discussion, analysis, and reflection.

Second, identify how your program's goals, means, and outcomes highlight not only culture and diversity, but attention to audiences, diverse genres, and multiple media. Intercultural competence offers strong means for engaging all of these. IC encourages students to analyze and engage cultural differences. This engagement provides depth for considering how different audiences will engage their writing, or how a particular genre may or may not be effective for a given exigence. Here, we describe how we make those moves for our program:

The six outcomes for our writing program do not mention culture, but the first outcome, "Demonstrate rhetorical awareness of diverse audiences, situations, and contexts," includes the detailed learning objective "Understand how cultural factors affect both production and reception of ideas." Additionally, the extended course description included in all syllabi includes this sentence (our emphasis):

English 106 is grounded in the idea that writing provides an outlet for sharing and developing ideas; facilitates understanding **across different conventions**, genres, groups, societies, and cultures; and allows for expression in multiple academic, civic, and non-academic situations.

For our project, this content provided the justification we needed to teach writing using intercultural competence.

Reflection—a key part of the Transculturation curriculum—is mentioned explicitly only in our third program outcome, "Critically think about writing and rhetoric through reading, analysis, and reflection." However, reflection is implied in other ways: many detailed learning objectives speak of the "understanding," "evaluation," or "application," all of which are coincident with reflection.

Finally, we note that because first-year writing curricula often involve substantial interpersonal interaction, writing-focused outcomes frequently anticipate the structured intercultural interactions the Transculturation curriculum facilitates. For example, our fourth program outcome, "Provide constructive feedback to others and incorporate feedback into their writing," suggests ways to integrate the Transculturation approach's intercultural interaction into the peer interaction commonplace in first-year writing.

#### B. Curriculum

Writing program administrative teams will need to consider the current alignment between the Transculturation curriculum and the local curriculum, in terms of goals, content, and logistics. This consideration will aid writing programs to determine what issues to focus on during local implementation.

For example, consider whether digital remediation is already a part of the local curriculum. If not, it will be important to develop instructor training/support materials for this final project, in addition to training instructors in the culture-focused aspects of the curriculum.

Further, determine the extent (if any) to which the local curriculum implements a *sequenced writing* approach wherein each assignment explicitly builds on the previous, or whether the local curriculum assignments have a more stand-alone approach. Again, determining the level of alignment between the local curriculum and target curriculum will help WPAs determine the ease of implementation and where instructors may need the most support before and during implementation.

See the Instructor Manual for full curricular resources.

#### C. Placement

Introductory Composition at Purdue uses a directed self-placement model intended to direct students to one of three FYW settings: our mainstream course, English 106; the L2-focused course described here, English 106-INTL; or English 108, a three-credit "accelerated" course that eliminates the student-instructor conferencing of English 106. This is possible because Purdue's writing requirements are minimal — one "written communication" course, with AP exemption possible. With this in mind, placement is not a major factor in implementing the Transculturation curriculum at Purdue.

Directed self-placement materials can identify the Transculturation sections in the same way that learning communities and similar specialized approaches to teaching composition are taught. Indeed, this can help the curriculum from being viewed as "remedial" and contribute to efforts to ensure multilingual learners are valued. However, care should be taken to present the Transculturation sections in a manner that does not make them seem more difficult than other approaches.

Institutions with a greater diversity of writing courses should consider if implementation in the second course in a series might reduce potential issues with placement by reducing the amount of decisions to be made regarding first semester or first year courses. The Transculturation approach is just as useful for students in their second semester or second year.

Working directly with writing program staff who coordinate placement can help smooth the addition of Transculturation sections to self-placement processes. As we suggest elsewhere, developing practices that parallel first-year writing variants such as learning communities or service learning sections of the course is best.

#### D. Diversity

The Transculturation curriculum requires that students and instructors engage both ideas of diversity *and* lived, interpersonal diversity. While we designed the curriculum in a context with diversity of nationality, mother tongue, and ethnicity, the curriculum can be adapted for contexts with different diversity profiles.

Institutional and personal definitions of "diversity" vary. Further, the *types* of diversity present at an institution of higher education may be more or less visible. Writing programs should consider the kinds of obvious and less obvious diversity present, and develop ways to highlight and affirm all types of diversity. Purdue's ethnic and national origin diversity is highly evident, but we have also learned to make more visible socioeconomic diversity and religious diversity, for instance. Our

students and curriculum benefit when discussions of diversity include and move beyond ethnic and national origin. Finally, for universities that, for example, do not have large international populations or significant ethnic diversity, highlighting less visible types of diversity will be key to achieving the curricular outcomes.

Universities where the student population appears homogeneous may find that this curriculum illuminates less evident dimensions of diversity. Many types of diversity, such as social class, disability, and religion are present to at least some extent in every institution. However, with many kinds of diversity, it's important not to single students out or make students feel as though they have to disclose aspects of identity that they want to keep private. Instructors should be particularly attentive to privacy concerns and legal protections for disabled students. As always, setting the terms for respectful engagement in the classroom can create an environment that allows students to choose what aspects of their identities they wish to discuss and make known.

Discussions of less-visible aspects of diversity might include considering the extent to which university and surrounding community environments are designed to be accessible. Instructors could also facilitate discussions about how university calendars value the schedules of certain religious traditions and do not accommodate others.

#### E. Integrating intercultural interaction

While some types of intercultural interaction are integrated into the curriculum, it is also imperative that WPAs consider what opportunities for intercultural interaction are present in the local community, and determine the extent to which students are likely to naturally encounter intercultural interaction. This consideration is important because these encounters can be increased by the class (if students do not already participate). Such encounters may then be connected to the class discussion. Concurrent experiences can have a powerful impact on students' intercultural development when they are able to reflect on these experiences and connect them to the course materials. Types of diversity present in the campus community also impact the types of intercultural interactions available.

#### F. Instructor training and professional development

Training should be designed to strengthen instructors' qualifications (or knowledge, skills, and attitudes) in:

- understanding cultural diversity
- effectively supporting L2 writing development (where applicable for university population)
- implementing team-teaching
- engaging in collaborative research.

Training formats include workshops; meetings; observations; mentoring; technology-supported (online) training and support; and the use of structured instructional materials (provide links to the Instructor's Guide and Online Delivery Guide) supported by periodic visits, workshops, and meetings.

We anticipate that support for developing instructors' own intercultural competence, understanding of the IC construct, and ability to navigate cultural discussions in the classroom will

require substantial and ongoing support. In some cases, this support may come from faculty who do not hold an administrative or teaching role in the writing program but who could be affiliated with the program in a less formal manner, serving as a consultant or a regular workshop presenter. At Purdue, much of our support for intercultural and curriculum development came from the <u>Center</u> <u>for Intercultural Learning, Mentorship, Assessment, and Research</u> (CILMAR). We suggest seeking out similar organizations on your own campus for robust collaboration.

We recommend that instructor training and ongoing professional development incorporate frequent opportunities for reflection on teaching the curriculum, as well as instructors' own intercultural development. Ongoing support will also help instructors thrive as they teach a demanding but rewarding curriculum.

#### G. Logistics

The logistics required to implement the linked course sections at the heart of the Transculturation curriculum are minimal:

- Instructors who will be co-teaching paired sections need to be assigned the same time slots, and schedule changes need to protect those paired sections (in the same way as learning communities or other linked courses).
- Classroom spaces large enough for students in both sections need to be scheduled.
- Because the linked sections are effectively independent, the Transculturation linked-course model presents few if any issues regarding assignment of grades.
- Because the curriculum follows programmatic outcomes, there's no strong need to identify the Transculturation sections as different from other sections of the same course. However, a schedule note or course description would help students interested in the content self-select that particular section.

Key consideration	Implementation questions	
A. Goals, means & outcomes	<ol> <li>Do goals, means, and outcomes specifically address multiple cultures or diverse audiences?</li> </ol>	
B. Curriculum	<ol> <li>How does the Transculturation curriculum structure compare with the target program's current curricular structure?</li> <li>How much adjustment to assignments and evaluative practices will be required for instructors transitioning from the program's typical curriculum to the Transculturation curriculum?</li> <li>Will the Transculturation curriculum need to be modified in any way to align with the programs standard curriculum, and if so, how will the program ensure these modifications do not disrupt the core pillars of the Transculturation approach?</li> </ol>	

#### Summary of implementation questions

Key consideration	Implementation questions
C. Placement	<ol> <li>Does the Transculturation curriculum need to be acknowledged in depth in placement, or can it be treated the same way as other variations of courses such as learning communities?</li> <li>If directed self-placement is used, should students be made aware of Transculturation sections in surveys or other materials?</li> <li>How can staff responsible for placement be consulted to help ensure the development of a smooth process?</li> </ol>
D. Diversity	<ol> <li>How does the institution define diversity?</li> <li>What are the demographics of the first-year writing student population?</li> <li>What forms of diversity in your program are visible? What forms are invisible?</li> <li>To what extent do you and your instructors take an intersectional approach to diversity?</li> </ol>
E. Intercultural Interactions	<ol> <li>What types, if any, of intercultural interaction do FWY students already have? How are these distributed across the student population?</li> <li>What kinds of intercultural experiences are available on campus and in the wider community?</li> <li>How can you leverage the types of diversity present in your FYW population to increase students' intercultural interaction?</li> </ol>
F. Instructor Recruitment and Development	<ol> <li>How will you recruit/select individuals to teach the Transculturation curriculum?</li> <li>To what extent do you program's current instructor preparation and development practices support the intercultural development of instructors?</li> <li>What further extensions to the current instructor professional learning will you need to develop to implement and support Transculturation?</li> </ol>
G. Logistics	<ol> <li>What staff can help make arrangements for the linked courses at the program, department, college, and institution level?</li> <li>Are special permissions needed to ensure appropriate scheduling of instructional staff and access to rooms large enough for two sections' worth of students?</li> <li>How much lead time is needed to make scheduling arrangements?</li> <li>How can the linked courses and instructional staff assignments be protected from changes?</li> </ol>

## Examples of implementation for common contexts of FYW

This section provides some guidance for implementation of this curriculum in several common FYW contexts that are different from the original context of development at Purdue.

If you implement our curriculum in a context not listed here, please tell us! info@writeic.org.

#### A. Institution without L2-specific sections

A linked-course model is foundational to our work at Purdue, since we wanted to integrate domestic and international populations that often remain isolated from one another. Further, our L2 population at Purdue is nearly all international (rather than consisting of heritage speakers or Generation 1.5 students). Thus, pairing mainstream and L2-specific sections enabled us to ensure intercultural contact.

In institutions without L2-specific sections, WPAs should consider the demographics of their typical FYW sections as well as the enrollment practices. Based on these demographics and enrollment practices, are there ways to ensure diverse enrollments in Transculturation sections based on the types of diversity present in the institution?

In sections with few people of color and/or international students, the burden of being "diverse" can fall on a small number of students. Instructors in such sections should remind students of the many types of diversity present in every culture, calling on readings that underscore cultural, social, religious, and regional diversity, and unpack the complexities inherent in seemingly homogenous populations. WPAs should pay special attention to these sections and provide mentoring for instructors, helping them identify ways for all students to examine their cultural diversity beyond race and nationality. The burden of "diversity" should not fall on the shoulders of students who are othered in their university context.

#### B. Community colleges

We believe that our curriculum can also benefit community college students—particularly since many community colleges serve very diverse populations. The sequenced-writing, scaffolded approach of our curriculum also fits well with FYW pedagogical practices common to community college settings.

Considerations for implementation in community college settings include:

- Whether the institution implements a prerequisite or corequisite support model for FYW. A corequisite support model means that there are opportunities to embed concurrent support for the Transculturation curriculum in the companion course.
- What technology/digital remediation writing assignments are commonly included (if any) in FYW and whether implementation of the Transculturation curriculum would introduce this for the first time, or whether such assignments are already understood by instructors.
- What kinds of intercultural teaching support for instructors can be provided, but without significantly increasing the workload of instructors, who are often teaching a 4/4 or 5/5 load.

Considerations discussed earlier—such as student population, standard local curriculum, types of instructor support—also apply in community colleges.

#### C. Online Delivery

It is possible to deliver the Transculturation curriculum in both online and hybrid settings. Please see our online delivery guide for further guidance. This document presents a modular format for curriculum delivery, describing the objectives, readings, activities, online tools and resources, and

assessment for each of eight modules. We also identify best practices for teaching intercultural competence online.

#### D. Two-Semester or "Stretch" FYW Sequences

For two-semester first-year writing sequenced courses, consider whether one implementing this curriculum in one of the two semesters is appropriate. One-semester implementation is simpler. Fewer adjustments will be required for implementation of the Transculturation curriculum during one semester of a two-semester sequence. We recommend this approach and note that it will make the paired course aspect of the curriculum easier. If the two semesters have different focuses (e.g. semester one covers rhetorical analysis and semester two covers research-based writing), then implementation should be in the semester that addresses research-based writing.

For composition courses where the model stretches the composition content usually covered in one semester over two semesters, it may be the better choice to stretch this curriculum across both semesters. Benefits of stretching this quite full curriculum over two semesters include more chances for reflection in intercultural interaction, more time to discuss the rich cultural readings, and possibilities for increasing the number of reflective journals. Another benefit to this approach would be the opportunity to assess intercultural competence development across a longer time.

### Assessment

Because the Transculturation curriculum neither displaces attention to writing nor alters the outcomes at the heart of writing programs, integrating Transculturation sections into assessment efforts should not be challenging. Indeed, we observed that many students devoted considerable attention to their writing skills and knowledge in the reflective assignments that support our approach. In other words, overall program assessment procedures should be impacted very little, if at all, by the presence of Transculturation sections.