Cross-cultural adaptation
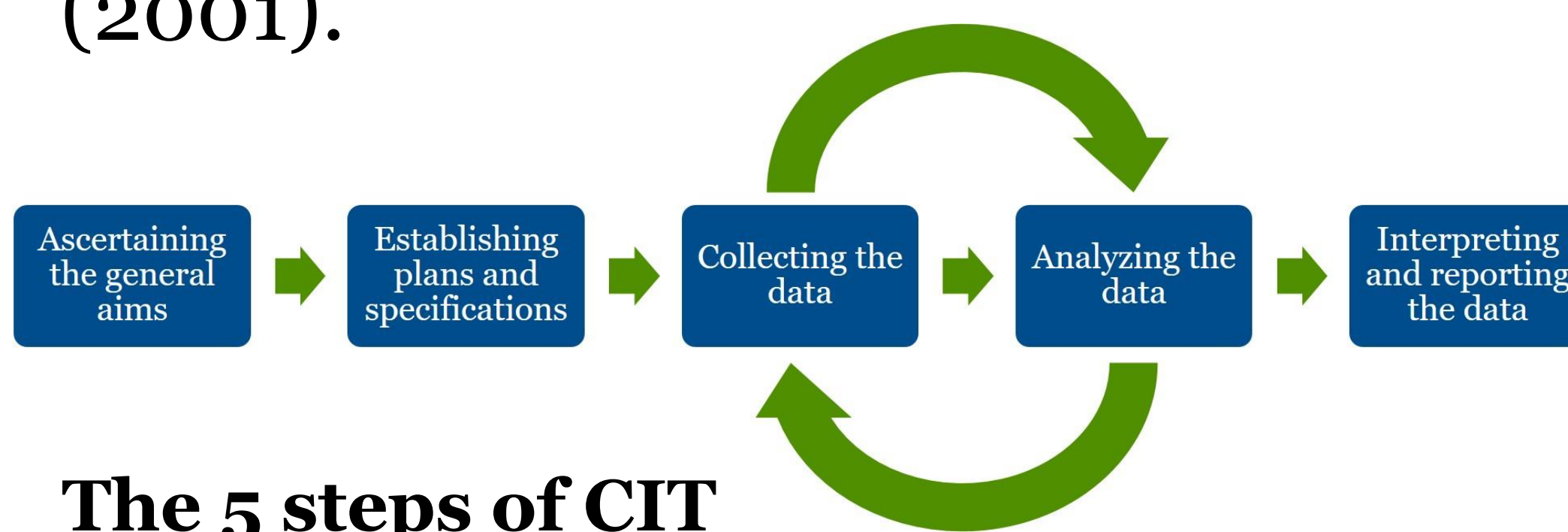## International students, research & academic integrity

Amanda B. Click, PhD
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill | American University

Introduction

The number of international students studying in the U.S. during the 2015-2016 academic year broke one million for the first time (IIE, 2016). These students have experienced a variety of teaching and learning styles, and may benefit from specialized support from the library. This study explores how international graduate students at three universities conduct their scholarly research and writing, and negotiate issues of academic integrity in the process.

Methods

This qualitative study used semi-structured interviews and critical incident technique (CIT) for data collection. Data analysis was guided by Kim's cross-cultural adaptation theory (2001).

Ascertaining the general aims → Establishing plans and specifications → Collecting the data → Analyzing the data → Interpreting and reporting the data

The 5 steps of CIT

Findings

❝ First I have an outline, like how I want to structure all the paragraphs, from the beginning to the end. ❞

❝ Then for each part I will search of course, search online and then try to get the most related content and materials. ❞

❝ To me the first hardest thing is finding an idea. You don't have an idea from nothing. Sometimes your idea...other people already did that. ❞

❝ There was a lot of irrelevant information so you have to filter it out and take the relevant information. ❞

❝ It is respectful to the one who write and come up with the great ideas, you can borrow them and you can absorb them, you can benefit from them, but you need to respect them. ❞

❝ I try to paraphrase a lot...change the whole sentence structure and try to substitute a lot of words, because I feel like plagiarism is really emphasized here. ❞

1. Many participants describe similar research processes: (1) create an outline document, (2) search for resources, (3) add notes, quotes, or links to the document.

2. Participants struggle with big-picture research issues (e.g., finding a gap in the literature), as well as specific skills (e.g., finding "good" sources).

3. Participants believe that academic integrity is important, but find the American guidelines to be confusing.

4. Participants understand what plagiarism is and believe that they are paraphrasing, but their practices could be considered plagiarism.

Practical Implications

Orientations: Avoid information overload by showing students where to find the answers they need instead of providing all the answers.

Outreach: Create opportunities for interaction between domestic and international students.

Instruction: Do not assume familiarity with general academic concepts or disciplinary terminology.

Discuss the research process as a whole. Introduce big issues (e.g., What is a literature review?) as well as specific skills (e.g., How do you find scholarly articles?).

Design information literacy instruction based on evidence, and incorporate different cultural perspectives in the classroom.

Provide context and reasoning for academic integrity guidelines.

References

Institute of International Education [IIE]. (2016). *Open doors report 2016 fast facts*. Available at http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/Fast-Facts#.WMbs1vnytQI
Kim, Y. Y. (2001). *Becoming intercultural: An integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
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Further Information

This poster highlights findings from the author's dissertation: "Adapting to higher education in a new culture: international students' perspectives on research, writing, and academic integrity."