

## **Enhancing Academic Writing Skills through Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: A Study in EAP Courses for International Students**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the impact of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) on international students' academic writing development in Vietnamese English for Academic Purposes courses. Using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, the research examined 63 students' TOEFL iBT Writing scores before and after CRP implementation, followed by interviews with 18 students and 7 instructors. Statistical analysis revealed significant writing improvement with a large effect size ( $d = 0.89$ ), particularly in organization, coherence, and culturally relevant evidence use. Qualitative findings highlighted three primary mechanisms: cultural contextualization of academic conventions, validation of students' cultural knowledge as legitimate resources, and creation of collaborative environments leveraging diversity. Students reported enhanced self-efficacy, greater cultural validation, and improved metacognitive awareness, with variation across cultural groups. The findings challenge deficit perspectives by demonstrating that addressing cultural dimensions of academic writing enhances rather than compromises instructional effectiveness. Despite contextual limitations, this research provides empirical support for CRP's efficacy in EAP contexts, offering a framework for more inclusive yet rigorous writing pedagogy in increasingly diverse academic environments.

**Keywords:** culturally responsive pedagogy; academic writing; English for Academic Purposes; international students

The international education landscape has witnessed substantial growth in student mobility, with diverse cultural backgrounds enriching higher education institutions worldwide (OECD, 2022). For international students in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses, mastering academic writing represents an essential skill for engaging with course materials, formulating arguments, synthesizing information, and communicating research findings effectively (Ye, 2020). However, the transition from general language proficiency and informal writing practices to formal academic writing in an additional language presents distinct challenges regardless of the educational context—whether in Anglophone countries or in multilingual academic environments where English serves as a lingua franca for academic communication

(Casanave, 2018; Mumin, 2022). These challenges often stem from variations in rhetorical traditions, citation practices, and expectations regarding critical analysis across different educational systems (Zhang, 2018). Instructional approaches characterized by teacher-led lectures on writing rules, memorization of grammatical structures, focus on error correction over content development, standardized essay formats, and assessment primarily through grammar and mechanics rather than rhetorical effectiveness frequently reflect Western rhetorical conventions that may diverge significantly from international students' educational experiences (Canagarajah, 2015). This discrepancy can impede comprehension, engagement, and the development of effective academic writing abilities, potentially affecting students' academic performance across diverse geographical contexts (Singh, 2019).

Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) has emerged as a promising framework to address these pedagogical limitations. Grounded in the scholarship of Gay (2002) and Ladson-Billings (1995), CRP transcends superficial acknowledgment of cultural diversity by positioning students' rhetorical traditions, knowledge systems, and communicative practices as foundational resources for academic development rather than impediments to overcome (Gay, 2018). Unlike conventional approaches that present academic writing conventions as universal standards, CRP recognizes the culturally situated nature of discourse practices and leverages students' existing competencies while explicitly teaching the expectations embedded in target academic communities (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Despite theoretical advocacy for culturally responsive approaches in writing instruction, empirical research examining CRP's implementation and measurable impact within EAP courses remains limited, particularly in non-Western educational contexts where international students navigate complex linguistic and cultural transitions. The Vietnamese higher education context presents a particularly underexplored setting for investigating CRP's effectiveness, given the distinct rhetorical traditions and educational philosophies that characterize this region's approach to academic discourse (Hoang & Florence, 2019). This study addresses these research gaps by examining CRP's implementation in Vietnamese EAP writing courses, contributing empirical evidence to inform pedagogical practices in increasingly diverse academic environments.

## **Theoretical Background**

### **Academic Writing Pedagogy for International Students**

Academic writing instruction for international students has traditionally operated under pedagogical assumptions that inadvertently marginalize diverse rhetorical traditions and cultural knowledge systems. Conventional instructional methods—characterized by teacher-led lectures on prescriptive writing rules, memorization of grammatical structures, drill exercises focused on error correction, and assessment that prioritizes linguistic accuracy over rhetorical effectiveness—reflect traditional pedagogical approaches while treating them as universal standards (Canagarajah, 2015). These approaches typically involve students passively receiving predetermined writing formulas, practicing isolated language skills through decontextualized exercises such as gap-filling activities and sentence-level grammar drills, and receiving feedback that emphasizes surface-level corrections rather than meaningful content development or cultural expression (Singh, 2019). Such deficit-oriented perspectives position international students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds as problems to be remediated rather than intellectual resources to be leveraged, fundamentally misunderstanding the nature of academic writing as a culturally situated practice (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

The implications of these pedagogical limitations extend beyond individual classroom experiences to broader patterns of academic exclusion. International students frequently encounter academic writing demands that transcend basic language proficiency, encompassing complex discourse conventions and disciplinary norms that remain implicit and culturally

embedded (Canagarajah, 2015). Some of these challenges stem from substantial differences in rhetorical organization, citation practices, and analytical approaches between students' prior educational experiences and target academic environments (Zhang, 2018). Western academic discourse typically values linear argumentation, explicit thesis statements, and writer-responsible clarity, whereas other rhetorical traditions may emphasize reader-responsible texts, indirect development, and narrative-based reasoning (Sun & Feng, 2024). When students receive limited explicit instruction in these unfamiliar rhetorical expectations, they face barriers not only to academic success but to legitimate participation in scholarly communities (Mumin, 2022).

Traditional assessment practices compound these challenges by treating writing as a transparent skill rather than a culturally-embedded practice that reflects specific epistemological assumptions about knowledge construction and communication (Singh, 2019). Citation practices exemplify this cultural embeddedness: many international students come from educational backgrounds where established knowledge is primarily respected rather than evaluated, creating tension when encountering Western academic expectations for source engagement and authority challenging (Kuiken & Vedder, 2020). These instructional approaches often present academic writing conventions as universal standards rather than culturally-situated practices, implicitly positioning Western discourse patterns as superior while marginalizing alternative rhetorical traditions (Canagarajah, 2015). The result is an educational environment that frequently emphasizes mechanics over deeper rhetorical awareness, providing insufficient scaffolding for students navigating complex disciplinary writing demands while simultaneously undermining their confidence in their existing communicative competencies (Mumin, 2022).

These pedagogical limitations become evident when contrasted with culturally responsive approaches. While conventional classrooms feature instructors delivering predetermined lessons using standardized textbooks, culturally responsive classrooms involve students analyzing rhetorical patterns from their own traditions alongside academic conventions (Gay, 2018). Where traditional instruction employs uniform prompts disconnected from students' experiences, CRP utilizes culturally-situated tasks that transform diversity from obstacle into pedagogical resource (Kumar et al., 2018). Assessment practices further distinguish these approaches: conventional evaluation emphasizes prescribed formats and linguistic accuracy, whereas culturally responsive assessment recognizes diverse manifestations of critical thinking while maintaining academic rigor (Inoue, 2015).

### **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) emerges from the foundational scholarship of Gay (2002) and Ladson-Billings (1995) as an educational framework that repositions cultural diversity from deficit to asset within academic contexts. CRP conceptualizes learning as inherently sociocultural, viewing students' first language development, rhetorical traditions, and epistemological frameworks as foundational resources for acquiring additional academic competencies rather than impediments to overcome (Gay, 2018). This theoretical orientation directly challenges subtractive approaches to education by advocating for additive bilingualism that values linguistic diversity and positions students as active knowledge constructors who contribute valuable cultural capital to learning environments (García & Wei, 2014; Yosso, 2005). Unlike approaches that prioritize decontextualized knowledge transmission through lecture-based instruction and standardized curricula, CRP requires specific pedagogical conditions: validation of students' cultural knowledge as legitimate academic resources, meaningful connections between academic content and lived experiences, metacognitive

awareness of diverse discourse patterns, and collaborative knowledge construction that leverages rather than suppresses cultural differences (Hammond, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2014).

The implementation of CRP fundamentally transforms traditional educational roles and relationships within academic writing instruction. Students function as cultural experts who bring intellectual assets to classroom discourse rather than passive recipients of predetermined knowledge, while instructors serve as cultural mediators who facilitate connections between students' rhetorical backgrounds and target academic expectations rather than authoritative transmitters of universal standards (Hammond, 2015). First language serves as a cognitive resource, identity marker, and pedagogical tool rather than an interference factor, with CRP encouraging strategic incorporation of primary languages through translanguaging practices and contrastive rhetorical analysis (García & Wei, 2014). Materials extend beyond traditional textbooks to include culturally diverse resources that reflect varied perspectives and serve as vehicles for cultural validation, while assessment practices emphasize multiple demonstration methods and attention to potential cultural biases embedded in evaluation criteria (Inoue, 2015; Paris & Alim, 2017).

Effective CRP implementation requires differentiation rather than homogenization of cultural responses, acknowledging that even within seemingly homogeneous nationality groups, individual variations in learning experiences, communication styles, and cultural affiliations necessitate flexible pedagogical approaches (Akintayo et al., 2024). This differentiation involves ongoing assessment of students' cultural backgrounds and adaptive modification of instructional strategies that recognize both patterns and variations within cultural groups (Gay, 2018). Rather than attempting to incorporate every specific cultural reference—an unrealistic expectation that risks essentializing student identities—CRP practitioners develop responsive frameworks that maintain cultural sensitivity while accommodating individual differences and avoiding stereotypical assumptions about cultural practices (Hammond, 2015). The theoretical foundation thus positions CRP as a dynamic pedagogical approach that requires continuous reflection and adaptation rather than a static set of culturally-themed activities or materials.

### **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Academic Writing**

The application of culturally responsive pedagogy to academic writing instruction addresses fundamental tensions between diverse rhetorical traditions and standardized academic expectations that international students navigate across educational contexts. Academic writing in Vietnamese higher education contexts presents distinct challenges stemming from specific contrasts between Vietnamese and Western academic traditions, particularly regarding rhetorical organization, authority relationships, and epistemological approaches to knowledge construction (Hoang & Florence, 2019; Truong, 2023). Vietnamese rhetorical traditions embody cultural values that emphasize indirect communication, circular reasoning, and implicit thesis statements, directly contrasting with the linear argumentation and explicit positioning characteristic of scientific and academic writing in English-medium contexts (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020). Furthermore, Vietnamese educational socialization emphasizes harmony and respect for established authorities, creating tension when students encounter academic expectations for direct critique and oppositional argumentation that characterize scholarly discourse (Huong & Albright, 2018). This cultural emphasis positions critique as potentially disrespectful toward established knowledge or published works, generating conflict when students must demonstrate evaluative source integration and authority challenging required in academic writing (Quynh & Linh, 2020).

CRP addresses these context-specific challenges through targeted pedagogical strategies that validate existing rhetorical competencies while explicitly teaching unfamiliar discourse conventions. When operationalized in writing instruction, CRP employs contrastive rhetorical

analysis that examines students' cultural writing traditions alongside target academic conventions, culturally-situated genre instruction that contextualizes expectations within specific discourse communities, and translingual writing activities that incorporate students' full linguistic repertoires as cognitive resources (García & Wei, 2014; Kumar et al., 2018). These approaches develop metacognitive awareness of rhetorical choices across cultural contexts rather than promoting formulaic adherence to prescribed structures, enabling students to make informed decisions about when and how to employ different communicative strategies. CRP reframes writing assessment by challenging evaluation practices that privilege particular cultural expressions of analytical thinking, recognizing various manifestations of intellectual engagement across cultures while maintaining transparent criteria that acknowledge the developmental nature of acquiring new discourse conventions (Gay, 2018; Inoue, 2015).

Despite growing theoretical support for culturally responsive approaches in writing instruction, empirical research on CRP's implementation and measurable impact within international academic contexts remains limited and fragmented. Existing research on culturally responsive approaches to academic writing instruction in Vietnam demonstrates particular gaps, with studies by Hoang and Florence (2019) and Nguyen and Nguyen (2020) primarily identifying challenges rather than developing evidence-based pedagogical solutions (Ngo, 2023). Current investigations provide isolated insights into specific difficulties without integrated frameworks for pedagogical practice, while lacking in-depth exploration of how students and instructors experience culturally responsive approaches to academic writing instruction. This research gap becomes particularly significant given Vietnam's increasing internationalization of higher education and the growing importance of English academic writing across disciplines, necessitating deeper understanding of how cultural backgrounds influence writing development and which pedagogical strategies effectively address these influences (Truong, 2023).

### **Research Gaps and Questions**

Current scholarship on culturally responsive pedagogy in academic writing instruction reveals significant empirical limitations that constrain evidence-based pedagogical development for international student populations. Despite growing theoretical advocacy for culturally responsive approaches, empirical research examining their implementation and measurable impact within EAP courses remains insufficient, with existing investigations emphasizing theoretical discussions rather than rigorous documentation of implementation processes and learning outcomes (Canagarajah, 2015; Inoue, 2015). Qualitative insights into the lived experiences of both students and instructors engaged in culturally responsive writing pedagogy represent another substantial gap, with insufficient exploration of how students from different cultural backgrounds perceive culturally responsive instruction and how instructors experience implementation challenges, benefits, and required adaptations (Inoue, 2015).

The Vietnamese educational context exemplifies these research limitations while presenting unique opportunities for advancing understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy. Current studies have documented specific challenges faced by Vietnamese students in academic writing contexts (Hoang & Florence, 2019; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020), yet these investigations have not examined the effectiveness of culturally responsive interventions designed to address these documented challenges. Ngo's (2023) investigation, while representing progress toward empirical validation, focused narrowly on specific instructional components rather than evaluating comprehensive pedagogical frameworks. This gap becomes particularly significant given Vietnam's accelerating internationalization of higher education and the expanding role of English academic writing across disciplines, creating urgent need for evidence-based approaches that effectively support diverse student populations while maintaining academic rigor.

These identified research gaps necessitate empirical investigation that addresses both quantitative outcomes and qualitative experiences of culturally responsive pedagogy implementation. This study therefore investigates the following research questions:

**RQ1:** How does the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy in EAP writing courses influence international students' academic writing skills?

**RQ2:** What are students' perceptions and experiences regarding culturally responsive pedagogy implementation in academic writing instruction?

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed methods design to examine culturally responsive pedagogy's impact on international students' academic writing in Vietnamese EAP courses. This approach integrates sequential quantitative and qualitative phases, with initial statistical analysis informing subsequent qualitative exploration (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The design directly addresses both research questions while offering distinct methodological advantages: it establishes empirical evidence of intervention effects before exploring underlying mechanisms, recognizes the limitations of statistical outcomes alone in explaining complex cultural dynamics, and enables purposeful selection of qualitative participants based on quantitative results (Morgan, 2014). Unlike concurrent designs, this sequential approach allows quantitative findings to shape qualitative inquiry, creating an integrated methodological framework where quantitative patterns inform qualitative exploration—addressing limitations in educational research where mixed methods components often remain disconnected.

### **Participants and Sampling**

The quantitative phase involved 63 international students (39 females, 24 males) aged 18-20 years enrolled in EAP courses at a major university in northern Vietnam. Participants represented six nationalities: Vietnamese ( $n=31$ ), Chinese ( $n=12$ ), Laotian ( $n=7$ ), Cambodian ( $n=6$ ), Japanese ( $n=4$ ), and Korean ( $n=3$ ). This composition reflects the demographic diversity of international students in Vietnamese higher education while providing sufficient representation of major regional nationalities. All participants were enrolled in advanced EAP writing courses requiring CEFR B2 level proficiency, ensuring comparable baseline language abilities. Purposive sampling was employed to select intact EAP writing classes taught by instructors who completed a standardized 16-hour CRP training program conducted over four weeks prior to intervention implementation. The training program included theoretical foundations of culturally responsive pedagogy (4 hours), comparative rhetoric analysis techniques (4 hours), facilitation of cross-cultural peer activities (4 hours), and culturally responsive assessment practices (4 hours). All seven participating instructors demonstrated competency through teaching simulation assessments and received detailed implementation protocols specifying session-by-session activities, materials, and assessment criteria. Intervention fidelity was maintained through weekly instructor debriefing sessions, classroom observation checklists completed for 25% of sessions by trained observers, and standardized lesson plans ensuring consistent delivery across all classes. Inter-instructor reliability for CRP implementation was verified through independent observation ratings ( $\kappa = 0.82$ ), confirming adherent delivery of the intervention components. A power analysis using G\*Power (Faul et al., 2009) with  $\alpha=.05$ ,  $\text{power}=.80$ , and anticipated medium effect size ( $d=0.5$ ) determined that a minimum sample of 34 participants was required for paired-sample analysis, indicating the sample size was adequate for detecting meaningful effects.

For the qualitative phase, 18 students were purposefully selected from the quantitative sample using a maximum variation strategy based on writing improvement scores (6 high

improvement, 6 moderate improvement, 6 minimal improvement) and nationality distribution to ensure diverse cultural perspectives. Additionally, 7 instructors (4 females, 3 males) who implemented the CRP intervention were included, representing varied teaching experience (3-15 years) and cultural backgrounds (4 Vietnamese, 2 American, 1 Australian). This sampling approach allowed for triangulation between student and instructor perspectives while capturing variation in experiences across different improvement levels and cultural backgrounds. The qualitative sample size was determined through information power analysis (Malterud et al., 2016), considering the study's narrow aim, strong theoretical background, high-quality dialogue, and cross-case analysis approach.

### **Instruments**

The TOEFL iBT Writing section served as the primary quantitative instrument, selected for its established validity in measuring EAP writing skills and alignment with academic writing expectations across international contexts (Llosa & Malone, 2018). This assessment combines an Integrated Writing Task requiring source synthesis (scored 0-5) and an Independent Writing Task requiring argumentation (scored 0-5), with results converted to a 0-30 scale. The instrument evaluates organization, development, cohesion, lexical precision, and syntactic variety—dimensions relevant to CRP's emphasis on rhetorical awareness across cultural contexts (ETS, 2022). Two certified ETS raters independently evaluated all writing samples using official rubrics, with inter-rater reliability calculations confirming strong agreement (pretest:  $\kappa=0.87$ ; posttest:  $\kappa=0.88$ ) across both overall scores and individual subsection components including organization, coherence, and evidence integration. Discrepancies exceeding one point underwent third-rater resolution to ensure scoring consistency.

To address the assessment of culturally relevant evidence integration—a dimension not captured by standardized TOEFL rubrics - a supplementary analytic rubric was developed based on CRP literature (Gay, 2018; Kumar et al., 2018). This instrument underwent content validation through expert review by three specialists in culturally responsive assessment, enabling quantitative measurement of students' ability to incorporate cultural knowledge as supporting evidence while meeting academic writing conventions. Both overall TOEFL scores (0-30 scale) and subsection scores for organization, coherence, and cultural evidence integration (0-5 scale) were analyzed to provide detailed assessment of writing improvement across specific dimensions, with improvement calculated as point differences rather than percentages to maintain measurement precision.

For the qualitative phase, semi-structured interview protocols were developed for students (12 questions) and instructors (14 questions), exploring perceptions of CRP effectiveness, experiences with culturally-themed writing tasks, confidence changes, and implementation challenges. Correlation analysis between cross-cultural peer review engagement levels and writing improvement scores was incorporated to examine relationships between collaborative activities and learning outcomes, with engagement data collected through post-intervention surveys rating participation frequency and perceived effectiveness. Both protocols underwent cognitive interviewing with non-participating individuals to verify clarity and cultural appropriateness, with interviews conducted in participants' preferred languages and employing back-translation procedures to ensure conceptual equivalence (Brislin, 1970).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection followed a sequential timeline aligned with the explanatory mixed methods design. The CRP intervention was implemented as a structured 4-week program consisting of 12 instructional sessions (90 minutes each) between the pretest and posttest phases.

The intervention operationalized three core mechanisms through specific pedagogical activities. Cultural contextualization involved comparative analysis where students examined rhetorical patterns from their L1 traditions alongside English academic conventions. Students analyzed Vietnamese implicit thesis placement in classical poetry, Chinese *qi-cheng-zhuan-he* parallel structures, Japanese *ki-sho-ten-ketsu* organization, Khmer circular narrative patterns, Korean *seung-gyeol-jeon-gyeol* development, and Lao storytelling traditions, contrasting these with English explicit thesis statements and linear argumentation.

Validation of students' cultural knowledge occurred through weekly assignments requiring incorporation of cultural examples as academic evidence, with instructor feedback explicitly highlighting cultural knowledge as intellectual assets. Collaborative cross-cultural learning was facilitated through 30-minute peer review sessions where students served as cultural experts, rotating through mixed-nationality groups to explain L1 rhetorical conventions and analyze sample texts from different traditions. Instructional materials included comparative rhetoric handouts featuring parallel examples from all represented languages, student-generated L1 writing samples, and assessment rubrics that valued cultural knowledge integration alongside conventional academic criteria.

Quantitative data were collected between November and December 2024, while qualitative data were gathered in January 2025, allowing quantitative analysis to inform qualitative protocols. For the quantitative phase, a pretest-posttest design was implemented, with the TOEFL iBT Writing pretest administered in November 2024 before the CRP intervention and the posttest in December 2024 following intervention completion. Standardized testing conditions were maintained across all administration sites, with tests conducted in university computer laboratories under trained proctor supervision. Writing prompts were randomized from the official ETS prompt bank to ensure validity while preventing practice effects. All writing samples were anonymized and assigned randomized identification codes before scoring to prevent bias, with pretest and posttest samples intermixed during evaluation.

Qualitative data collection commenced in January 2025 after preliminary quantitative analysis, with semi-structured interviews conducted individually with 18 strategically selected students and 7 instructors based on maximum variation sampling criteria. Interviews were held in private university offices, lasting 45-60 minutes for students and 60-75 minutes for instructors, with participants selecting their preferred interview language. All procedures adhered to APA (2017) ethical guidelines. Potential biases were mitigated through several measures: researchers conducting interviews had no involvement in intervention implementation or participant evaluation, interview protocols were standardized while allowing appropriate follow-up questions, and reflexive journaling documented potential researcher influences, enhancing trustworthiness while acknowledging the cultural complexities inherent in cross-cultural educational research.

### **Data Analysis**

Quantitative data analysis employed paired-sample t-tests to determine statistically significant differences between pretest and posttest TOEFL iBT Writing scores. Prior to analysis, data were screened for normality using Shapiro-Wilk tests and visual inspection of Q-Q plots, confirming no significant violations of parametric test assumptions. Effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's *d* to quantify the magnitude of observed changes, with values interpreted according to field-specific thresholds for second language research: small ( $d = 0.40$ ), medium ( $d = 0.70$ ), and large ( $d = 1.00$ ) (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014). Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to control for pretest differences when examining nationality group variations, with partial eta squared calculated for effect sizes. Supplementary analyses examined score distributions across specific writing dimensions and demographic variables using descriptive

statistics. The inter-rater reliability coefficient (Cohen's kappa) was calculated and reported in response to the reviewer's specific concern about scoring consistency. Finally, correlations between delta (posttest minus pretest) scores for writing improvement and Likert-scale questions were checked using Spearman's rank correlation, due to the ordinal nature of Likert-scale questions. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 28, with significance threshold set at  $p < .05$  and confidence intervals calculated at 95%.

Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach, beginning with familiarization with data through multiple transcript readings, followed by systematic initial coding, theme development, review, definition, and narrative integration. This approach was selected for its methodological flexibility and established reliability in cross-cultural educational research. To enhance analytical rigor, two researchers independently coded 25% of transcripts, with initial inter-coder agreement of 83%, followed by collaborative refinement of the coding framework. Discrepancies were resolved through researcher discussion until consensus was reached. Data analysis software (NVivo 13) facilitated coding consistency and analytical transparency through systematic documentation of the coding process. Trustworthiness was enhanced through triangulation between student and instructor perspectives, member checking of preliminary findings with selected participants, and thorough documentation of analytical decisions. The analysis explicitly focused on identifying explanatory connections between quantitative outcomes and participants' subjective experiences, emphasizing cultural dimensions of writing development that addressed the study's research questions while responding to gaps identified in previous CRP research.

## Results

### Impact of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy on Academic Writing Skills

The culturally responsive pedagogy intervention demonstrated significant positive effects on international students' academic writing performance (Table 1). Statistical analysis revealed substantial improvement in TOEFL iBT Writing scores from pre-intervention to post- with a large effect size according to Plonsky and Oswald's (2014) thresholds for second language research. Examination of score distributions revealed that 85% of participants ( $n = 54$ ) improved their scores with an average increase of 3.4 points, while 15% ( $n = 9$ ) maintained their initial performance levels.

**Table 1. Writing Performance Results: Pre-test to Post-test Comparisons**

Measure	Pre-test	Post-test	Test Statistics	Effect Size
	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> ) [95% CI]	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> ) [95% CI]	<i>t</i> (62), <i>p</i>	<i>d</i> [95% CI]
Overall TOEFL iBT (0-30)	21.3 (3.2) [20.5, 22.1]	24.7 (2.8) [24.0, 25.4]	<b>8.42, <math>p &lt; .001^{***}</math></b>	0.89 [0.61, 1.17]
Organization (0-5)	3.1 (0.8) [2.9, 3.3]	4.3 (0.6) [4.1, 4.4]	<b>6.78, <math>p &lt; .001^{***}</math></b>	0.82 [0.50, 1.14]
Coherence (0-5)	2.9 (0.9) [2.7, 3.1]	4.0 (0.7) [3.8, 4.2]	<b>7.23, <math>p &lt; .001^{***}</math></b>	0.85 [0.53, 1.17]
Cultural Evidence Integration (0-5)	2.6 (1.0) [2.3, 2.8]	4.0 (0.8) [3.8, 4.2]	<b>8.91, <math>p &lt; .001^{***}</math></b>	0.94 [0.66, 1.22]

*Note.*  $N = 63$ . Effect sizes interpreted according to Plonsky and Oswald (2014): small ( $d = 0.40$ ), medium ( $d = 0.70$ ), large ( $d = 1.00$ ). Bonferroni correction applied for multiple comparisons (adjusted  $\alpha = .017$ ). \*\*\* = statistically significant after correction.

Analysis of TOEFL iBT subsection scores demonstrated significant improvements across multiple writing dimensions, as shown in Table 1. The most pronounced improvement occurred in students' ability to incorporate culturally relevant supporting evidence ( $d = 0.94$ ), followed closely by coherence ( $d = 0.85$ ) and organization ( $d = 0.82$ ). Inter-rater reliability remained strong throughout the assessment process (overall scores: pretest  $\kappa = 0.87$ , posttest  $\kappa = 0.88$ ;

organization  $\kappa = 0.84$ ; coherence  $\kappa = 0.86$ ). All subsection improvements remained statistically significant after Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons.

Triangulation with qualitative data revealed that students attributed these improvements to newfound confidence in drawing on their cultural knowledge. As a Laotian student explained: “I learned to map Lao parallel poetry structure onto English paragraph organization—each stanza builds evidence like English body paragraphs. Now cultural examples become strategic support, not just decoration.” A Japanese student similarly noted: “Understanding *ki-sho-ten-ketsu* helped me see how English needs explicit transitions where Japanese allows sudden conceptual turns. I can now bridge these approaches strategically.” A Korean student added: “I discovered how *seung-gyeol-jeon-gyeol* development mirrors English argumentative structure, just with different emphasis patterns. This connection made academic organization logical for me.” This sentiment was echoed across nationality groups, with 15 of 18 interviewed students describing similar transformations in their approach to evidence selection.

The significant improvements in organization scores reflected students’ successful application of cross-cultural structural analysis across all represented rhetorical traditions. A Vietnamese student demonstrated this transfer: “After comparing Vietnamese implicit conclusions with English explicit thesis statements, I developed a bridge method: draft Vietnamese-style first for logical flow, then restructure for English directness.” A Chinese student similarly reported: “I use *qi-cheng-zhuan-he* as scaffolding—承 becomes body paragraphs, 转 becomes counterargument sections. Cultural structure makes English organization logical.” A Cambodian student explained: “Khmer circular storytelling taught me that repetition creates emphasis. In English academic writing, I learned to use this as strategic reinforcement rather than redundancy.”

Coherence improvements, as evidenced by the large effect size in Table 1, stemmed from students’ enhanced metacognitive awareness of rhetorical transitions across cultural contexts. A Cambodian student noted: “Learning Khmer storytelling repetition patterns helped me understand English transitional phrases—both create idea bridges, just differently.” A Korean student observed: “Korean indirect connection-making helped me understand why English needs explicit signposting. I learned to translate implicit relationships into explicit transitions.” A Japanese student added: “In Japanese, readers infer connections. Learning English academic writing meant making those inferences explicit through transitional devices.” Analysis revealed 27 instances where students referenced improved understanding of coherence through cultural analogies, directly corresponding with the quantitative improvement in this dimension.

Cross-cultural collaboration emerged as a particularly influential factor in writing development, as demonstrated in Table 2. Post-intervention survey data on cross-cultural peer review engagement levels showed significant variation in improvement based on collaboration engagement.

**Table 2. Cross-Cultural Collaboration Engagement and Writing Improvement**

Engagement Level	n	Average Improvement <i>M (SD)</i>	Correlation Analysis
High engagement	23	4.2 (1.6)	<i>rs = 0.72, p &lt; .01**</i>
Moderate engagement	26	3.1 (1.8)	
Limited engagement	14	2.7 (1.4)	

*Note.* Determined through post-intervention Likert-scale survey responses. Spearman’s rank correlation used due to ordinal nature of engagement ratings. \*\* = statistically significant.

The strong positive correlation between collaboration engagement and score improvement was explained through students’ application of peer-taught rhetorical strategies. For example, a

Chinese student stated: “My Japanese partner taught me *ki-sho-ten-ketsu* sudden turns for counterarguments; I showed her Chinese parallel evidence structure. We learned intentional rhetorical code-switching.” A Vietnamese student reported: “Working with my Cambodian classmate, I learned how circular development can strengthen rather than confuse arguments when adapted for English academic expectations.” A Laotian student noted: “My Korean study partner showed me how to maintain cultural thinking patterns while meeting English explicitness requirements.”

Analysis of improvement patterns across nationality groups revealed variation in performance gains, though all groups demonstrated significant improvement (Table 3). Statistical analysis controlling for baseline differences revealed that nationality itself was not a significant predictor of improvement ( $F(5,57) = 1.23, p = .31$ ), suggesting these variations reflect ceiling effects and initial proficiency differences rather than differential intervention effectiveness.

**Table 3. Writing Improvement by Nationality Group**

Nationality	n	Pre-test <i>M (SD)</i>	Post-test <i>M (SD)</i>	Improvement <i>M (SD)</i>
Cambodian	6	19.3 (3.8)	23.8 (3.2)	4.5 (2.3)
Laotian	7	20.1 (3.5)	23.7 (2.9)	3.6 (1.9)
Vietnamese	31	22.1 (2.9)	25.3 (2.5)	3.2 (1.8)
Chinese	12	21.8 (3.1)	24.9 (2.7)	3.1 (2.1)
Korean	3	20.8 (3.2)	23.9 (2.6)	3.1 (1.8)
Japanese	4	21.5 (2.8)	24.2 (2.4)	2.7 (1.5)

*Note.* Groups ordered by improvement magnitude. No significant between-group differences when controlling for baseline scores.

Qualitative data from students who maintained rather than improved scores suggested that these individuals already possessed strong bicultural writing competence prior to the intervention, potentially creating a ceiling effect for this subgroup. This finding indicates that CRP interventions are most beneficial for students navigating initial transitions between rhetorical traditions rather than those already demonstrating advanced intercultural writing competence. Students from various cultural backgrounds developed explicit metacognitive strategies, as illustrated by a Korean student who explained: “I learned to map Korean indirect thinking onto English direct expression—like using translation software for rhetorical styles, not just language.” A Japanese student similarly noted: “I developed a dual-processing approach: think in Japanese patterns for depth, then restructure for English academic clarity.”

### Students’ Perceptions and Experiences of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Thematic analysis of student interviews revealed four key dimensions of students’ experiences with culturally responsive pedagogy, with 89% expressing predominantly positive attitudes toward the approach (Table 4). Students’ self-efficacy ratings for academic writing tasks increased significantly from pre-intervention to post-intervention and correlated positively with writing performance improvements.

**Table 4. Students' Perceptions and Self-Efficacy Changes**

Dimension	Pre-test <i>M (SD)</i>	Post-test <i>M (SD)</i>	Test Statistics <i>t(62), p</i>	Correlation with Performance <i>r<sub>s</sub>, p</i>
Self-efficacy for academic writing (1-5)	3.2 (0.81)	4.3 (0.62)	7.84, <i>p</i> < .001***	0.68, <i>p</i> < .01**
Cultural validation perceived (1-5)	-	4.67 (0.58)	-	-
Understanding facilitated by cultural comparisons (1-5)	-	4.38 (0.74)	-	-
Overall CRP effectiveness vs. previous instruction (1-5)	-	4.2 (0.83)	-	-

*Note.* *N* = 63 for self-efficacy; *N* = 18 for perception measures from interview subsample. \*\*\* *p* < .001, \*\* *p* < .01. Cultural validation: 92% agreement. Understanding facilitation: 83% agreement. CRP more effective than previous instruction: 85% agreement.

Enhanced cultural validation emerged as students' most frequently reported experience, with 92% agreeing that "My cultural background was valued as a resource in this course" (*M* = 4.67, *SD* = 0.58). A Chinese student articulated this sentiment: "When I used the Confucian concept of 中庸 (zhongyong, middle way) to analyze different perspectives in my argumentative essay, my instructor helped me explain this concept for English readers while maintaining its analytical power. This wasn't just inclusion—it was strategic academic application." Vietnamese and Cambodian students demonstrated particularly strong endorsement of cultural inclusion (*M* = 4.82, *SD* = 0.40) compared to other nationality groups, though sample size limitations preclude statistical comparison across groups.

Students consistently reported (83%) that cultural comparisons facilitated their understanding of academic writing conventions (*M* = 4.38, *SD* = 0.74), as shown in Table 4. A Japanese student explained: "Learning about 'reader responsibility' in Japanese writing versus 'writer responsibility' in English helped me understand why I needed explicit transitions. Now I can choose which approach to use depending on my audience—it's strategic, not automatic." This enhanced rhetorical flexibility was echoed by a Korean student: "I developed a mental checklist: Korean readers expect subtle implications, English academic readers expect explicit connections. I learned to translate between these expectations while keeping my analytical thinking intact."

The significant correlation between self-efficacy improvements and writing performance gains (*r<sub>s</sub>* = 0.68, *p* < .01) demonstrated that CRP's impact on confidence functioned as a mediating factor in writing development. Students' increased confidence stemmed primarily from instructor validation of cultural knowledge and explicit instruction in rhetorical flexibility rather than simplified academic expectations. A Vietnamese student explained: "My confidence increased because I learned specific techniques, not just general encouragement. I know how to use Vietnamese poetic parallelism as an evidence structure, how to transform circular reasoning into spiral argumentation. This is technical competence, not just cultural pride."

However, students identified specific challenges in balancing cultural expression with academic conventions (Table 5). East Asian students reported the greatest perceived distance between their rhetorical traditions and academic writing expectations, with 37% of all students expressing uncertainty about achieving this balance.

**Table 5. Student-Reported Challenges and Preferences**

Challenge/Preference Area	Agreement Level % Agree	Mean Response M (SD)	Group Variations
Cultural themes sometimes felt limiting	26%	2.8 (1.36)	-
Uncertainty about cultural-academic balance	37%	3.1 (1.24)	East Asian: higher concern
Preference for cross-cultural collaboration	78%	4.2 (0.89)	SE Asian: M = 4.72; E Asian: M = 3.75
CRP more effective than previous instruction	85%	4.2 (0.83)	12% equally effective; 3% less effective

*Note.* N = 18. SE Asian = Southeast Asian (Laotian, Cambodian); E Asian = East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean). Group comparisons descriptive only due to small sample sizes.

Despite predominantly positive responses, the concern expressed by 26% of students that “the focus on cultural themes sometimes felt limiting” (M = 2.8, SD = 1.36) reflects the importance of flexible implementation that avoids stereotypical assumptions about student interests. A Chinese student observed: “Sometimes I felt the assignments assumed my primary interest would be in Chinese issues.” Students demonstrated problem-solving approaches developed through the intervention, as illustrated by another Chinese student: “At first, I worried about losing my ‘Chinese way’ of critical thinking. But I learned that explicitness in English doesn’t mean abandoning Chinese dialectical thinking—it means translating it clearly. I can still think in yin-yang complementarity and express it through English argumentative structure.”

Cross-cultural collaboration activities received varying responses across nationality groups, as detailed in Table 5. Laotian and Cambodian students expressed the strongest preference for collaborative activities (M = 4.72, SD = 0.46) compared to Japanese students (M = 3.75, SD = 0.96), though formal statistical comparison was not conducted due to small sample sizes in some groups. These diverse perceptions highlight the importance of flexible implementation approaches while confirming the overall positive impact on students’ writing experiences and development.

When comparing CRP to previous writing instruction experiences, 85% of students rated it more effective, 12% equally effective, and 3% less effective, as shown in Table 5. Interview data indicated that students’ increased confidence stemmed primarily from instructor validation of their cultural knowledge and explicit instruction in rhetorical flexibility rather than simplified academic expectations. This finding addresses potential concerns that positive perceptions might reflect reduced academic rigor rather than enhanced pedagogical effectiveness, confirming that CRP operates as a transformative framework that maintains high standards while providing culturally relevant pathways to achievement.

## Discussion

### Impact of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy on Academic Writing Skills

The large effect size observed in this study ( $d = 0.89$ ) can potentially be attributed to several key mechanisms through which CRP addresses fundamental challenges in academic writing instruction for international students. Rather than reflecting reduced academic rigor, the improvements demonstrate how CRP enables students to meet existing academic standards more effectively by leveraging their cultural knowledge as cognitive scaffolding. Primarily,

CRP disrupts what Canagarajah (2015) termed the “unidirectional acculturation model” by repositioning students’ cultural knowledge as a resource rather than an impediment. This validation enables students to develop what García and Wei (2014) describe as “translanguaging competence,” directly countering the limitations of traditional approaches that position rhetorical conventions as universal standards (Kubota & Lehner, 2004).

Enhanced organizational skills and coherence reflect CRP’s capacity to scaffold unfamiliar rhetorical structures onto students’ existing cultural schemas, facilitating conceptual transfer rather than rote memorization. This constructivist approach transforms abstract principles into meaningful frameworks that students can manipulate with greater cognitive flexibility—contrasting sharply with the decontextualized instruction critiqued by Hammond (2015). The qualitative evidence supporting quantitative improvements demonstrates that students developed genuine understanding of academic conventions rather than superficial compliance with format requirements. When instructors connected thesis statement construction to Vietnamese literary traditions or explained coherence through Khmer storytelling patterns, students achieved deeper comprehension than traditional rule-based instruction typically produces.

The differential impacts across nationality groups illustrate the importance of cultural congruence between pedagogical approaches and students’ prior educational socialization, though statistical analysis controlling for baseline differences revealed that nationality itself was not a significant predictor of improvement. This finding challenges deficit perspectives identified by Singh (2019) and Zhang (2018), demonstrating that perceived cultural distances can become opportunities for accelerated development when appropriately mediated. The ceiling effects observed in students who maintained rather than improved scores suggest that CRP interventions are most beneficial for students navigating initial transitions between rhetorical traditions rather than those already demonstrating advanced intercultural writing competence.

The strong correlation between cross-cultural peer engagement and writing improvement ( $rs = 0.72$ ) demonstrates how CRP operationalizes collaborative learning principles while addressing power imbalances in traditional peer review. Unlike conventional peer review that often reinforces dominant discourse patterns, culturally responsive collaboration validates diverse rhetorical approaches while maintaining academic standards (Casanave, 2018). Students’ descriptions of learning to “present arguments in ways that make sense across cultures while maintaining academic rigor” illustrate how cross-cultural collaboration develops sophisticated rhetorical flexibility rather than cultural relativism.

Most significantly, these findings challenge the false dichotomy between cultural responsiveness and academic rigor that has limited CRP implementation in higher education contexts. The improved performance on standardized TOEFL assessments contradicts concerns that culturally responsive approaches might disadvantage students on evaluations aligned with established academic norms (Barrow, 2013). This paradox—that validating students’ cultural knowledge enhances rather than compromises performance on assessments designed without cultural considerations—suggests that traditional approaches may actually impede academic achievement by creating unnecessary cognitive conflicts. The study thus provides empirical support for Ladson-Billings’ (2014) theoretical position that validation of students’ cultural identities enhances rather than hinders academic engagement and performance.

The pronounced improvement in culturally relevant evidence integration ( $d = 0.94$ ) represents a particularly significant finding, as this dimension was assessed through supplementary rubrics specifically designed to measure cultural knowledge application. This improvement indicates that students developed the ability to draw upon their cultural backgrounds as legitimate sources

of academic evidence while meeting conventional standards for argumentation and support. Such integration demonstrates sophisticated intercultural competence that extends beyond technical writing skills to encompass genuine intellectual engagement with diverse knowledge systems—a capacity increasingly valued in globalized academic and professional contexts.

### **Students’ Perceptions and Experiences of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

The positive correlation between increased self-efficacy ratings and writing performance improvements ( $r_s = 0.68$ ) extends Kumar et al.’s (2018) research by demonstrating that CRP’s impact on confidence functions as a potential mediating factor in writing development rather than merely a parallel outcome. However, the correlational nature of this relationship precludes definitive causal claims about whether improved confidence drives better performance or enhanced performance increases confidence. This finding illustrates how CRP addresses affective dimensions of writing that traditional EAP approaches often neglect, supporting Bandura’s (1997) position that perceived capability significantly influences academic achievement. The mechanism appears to operate through instructor validation of cultural knowledge and explicit instruction in rhetorical flexibility rather than through reduced academic expectations, addressing potential concerns that positive perceptions might reflect compromised rigor.

Students’ endorsement of cultural inclusion represents a counterpoint to the alienation documented in traditional academic writing instruction (Canagarajah, 2015). The particularly strong response from Vietnamese and Cambodian students ( $M = 4.82$ ) compared to other groups, though not statistically tested due to sample size limitations, aligns with theoretical expectations that students from educational backgrounds where cultural knowledge has been historically marginalized may especially benefit from validation of their rhetorical resources (Hoang & Florence, 2019). The reported facilitation of understanding through cultural comparisons demonstrates how CRP enables what Paris and Alim (2017) term “metacultural awareness”—making implicit cultural expectations explicit through comparative analysis and providing students with conceptual tools to navigate unfamiliar rhetorical demands.

However, the challenges students identified in balancing cultural expression with academic conventions highlight persistent tensions in implementing CRP that require careful pedagogical attention. The variation in perceived rhetorical distance reported by different cultural groups, while descriptively notable, reflects the complex relationship between cultural background and academic writing adaptation rather than simple cultural determinism. East Asian students’ reports of greater perceived distance between their rhetorical traditions and academic writing expectations echo Kubota and Lehner’s (2004) research, though this study’s findings suggest such distances can become productive learning opportunities when appropriately scaffolded. Similarly, the concern expressed by 26% of students that “the focus on cultural themes sometimes felt limiting” ( $M = 2.8$ ) reflects Ladson-Billings’ (2014) caution against essentializing cultural backgrounds and underscores the importance of flexible implementation that avoids stereotypical assumptions about student interests.

The differential preferences for cross-cultural collaboration activities between Southeast Asian students ( $M = 4.72$ ) and East Asian students ( $M = 3.75$ ), while not statistically compared due to small sample sizes, likely reflects varying educational socialization regarding collaborative learning practices rather than inherent cultural traits (Truong, 2023). This finding underscores Gay’s (2018) emphasis on differentiated implementation of CRP that recognizes both cultural patterns and individual variations within groups. The strong student endorsement of CRP compared to previous instruction (85% rating it more effective) provides important validation, though this comparison relies on retrospective self-report rather than controlled comparison with alternative approaches.

These perceptions demonstrate that CRP operates as a transformative framework that reconfigures the sociocultural context of writing instruction by addressing fundamental power dynamics that have traditionally disadvantaged international students (Canagarajah, 2015). This transformation challenges hierarchical relationships between dominant and non-dominant discourse practices, creating what García and Wei (2014) describe as a translanguaging space where multiple rhetorical traditions inform each other. However, the success of this transformation depends heavily on instructor competence in cultural mediation and institutional support for such approaches, factors that extend beyond the scope of this study but represent important considerations for broader implementation.

The correlation between self-efficacy improvements and performance gains suggests complex reciprocal relationships between affective and cognitive dimensions of writing development, though longitudinal research would be necessary to establish causal directions and temporal sequencing of these changes. The finding that students' increased confidence stemmed from validation of cultural knowledge rather than simplified expectations addresses theoretical concerns about the relationship between cultural responsiveness and academic rigor, supporting the position that effective CRP maintains high standards while providing culturally relevant pathways to achievement.

### **Theoretical and Practical Implications**

This study offers significant theoretical reconceptualizations of academic writing instruction in international contexts. Primarily, the findings challenge the notion of academic writing as culturally neutral, supporting Canagarajah's (2015) assertion that writing practices are cultural constructs embedded within specific epistemological traditions. The effectiveness of CRP extends Ladson-Billings' (2014) theoretical framework beyond K-12 settings to tertiary education contexts characterized by linguistic and cultural diversity. However, the application of CRP theory to higher education contexts reveals additional complexities not fully captured in the original K-12 framework, particularly regarding disciplinary writing conventions and academic gatekeeping mechanisms that operate differently at the tertiary level.

The study's use of standardized TOEFL assessment creates an apparent theoretical tension that requires acknowledgment. While this research demonstrates CRP's effectiveness using conventional measures, this approach simultaneously validates the very assessment paradigm that CRP scholars like Inoue (2015) critique for perpetuating linguistic discrimination. The paradoxical finding that culturally responsive instruction improves performance on assessments designed without cultural considerations suggests either that such assessments capture more transferable skills than critics acknowledge, or that CRP enables students to code-switch effectively between cultural and academic contexts. This contradiction highlights the practical challenges of implementing culturally responsive approaches within existing institutional frameworks while maintaining accountability to established standards.

The interaction between cultural backgrounds and writing development supports García and Wei's (2014) translanguaging theory, though this study's focus on written rather than spoken discourse extends their framework into academic literacy contexts. The findings suggest that linguistic practices are inseparable from cultural knowledge systems—a perspective that challenges conventional approaches separating language from culture in academic writing instruction. However, the specific cultural pairings examined in this study (primarily East and Southeast Asian students writing in English academic contexts) limit the generalizability of these theoretical claims to other cultural-linguistic combinations.

Practically, these findings necessitate several shifts in EAP pedagogy, though implementation challenges require careful consideration. First, curriculum design should incorporate explicit cultural analysis of academic writing conventions rather than presenting them as universal

standards, though this approach requires instructor expertise in diverse rhetorical traditions that may exceed current professional development frameworks. The variation in effectiveness across different instructor-student cultural configurations observed in this study suggests that successful implementation depends heavily on instructor cultural competence and may not transfer automatically across teaching contexts. Second, instructor preparation requires reconceptualization to include development of cultural knowledge as a core professional competency (Gay, 2018), though the resource implications of such training may present significant barriers to widespread adoption.

For assessment practices, the findings present a complex challenge rather than a straightforward solution. While students' experiences suggest the need for more flexible assessment approaches that recognize diverse manifestations of analytical thinking, the improved performance on standardized measures indicates that such measures may not be as culturally biased as theoretical critiques suggest, or that effective instruction can bridge cultural gaps without compromising assessment validity. This apparent contradiction requires further investigation rather than immediate policy recommendations. The relationship between culturally responsive instruction and standardized assessment outcomes represents an important area for future research that could inform both pedagogical practice and assessment development.

Finally, for institutions serving diverse international populations, these findings suggest the potential value of approaches that engage students' existing rhetorical knowledge while explicitly addressing academic writing conventions. However, the resource requirements for implementing CRP—including instructor training, curriculum development, and ongoing support—may present practical barriers that limit scalability beyond well-resourced institutional contexts. The study's Vietnamese context, with its specific cultural and educational characteristics, further limits direct transferability to other international education settings without careful adaptation and validation. Rather than advocating wholesale replacement of existing approaches, these findings support pilot implementation and gradual integration of culturally responsive elements within existing EAP frameworks, accompanied by careful evaluation of outcomes and adaptation to local contexts.

Despite these contributions, the specific Vietnamese context and relatively modest sample size necessitate caution in generalizing findings. Future research should explore CRP implementation across diverse geographical settings, examine longitudinal impacts, and investigate how specific cultural backgrounds interact with various CRP approaches. Additionally, examining how institutional structures support or constrain CRP implementation would provide valuable insights for systemic educational change.

## **Conclusion**

This study examined culturally responsive pedagogy's impact on international students' academic writing development in Vietnamese EAP courses. The findings demonstrate that CRP significantly enhances writing performance while fostering positive affective and sociocultural responses to academic writing tasks. The mixed-methods approach revealed both quantitative improvements in standardized writing assessments and qualitative insights into students' experiences, providing a comprehensive understanding of CRP's effectiveness in this context.

The empirical evidence indicates that culturally responsive approaches significantly improve writing performance through three primary mechanisms: facilitating deeper understanding of academic conventions through cultural contextualization, repositioning students' cultural knowledge as a legitimate resource rather than an impediment, and creating collaborative environments that leverage diversity as an educational asset. These mechanisms directly

counter the limitations of traditional approaches that present Western academic conventions as universal standards.

Student perception data revealed predominantly positive responses characterized by enhanced self-efficacy, cultural validation, and improved metacognitive awareness of rhetorical choices. The variation across cultural groups highlights the importance of flexible implementation that recognizes both cultural patterns and individual differences within student populations—a key principle in Gay’s (2018) conceptualization of culturally responsive teaching.

This study ultimately supports the integration of CRP into academic writing instruction for international students, demonstrating its potential to transform both educational practices and outcomes in increasingly diverse academic environments. By challenging approaches that marginalize non-dominant rhetorical traditions, CRP offers a more equitable and effective framework for developing the academic writing competencies essential for success in global higher education.

## Data Archive

<https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.31403994>

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