

Literature vs. Practice: Challenges for International Students in the U.S.

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If you talk with international students about their experiences in U.S. universities, many of them will tell you that they feel there is a disconnect between what the literature suggests is “good practice” in accommodating international students and the reality of what is actually happening on U.S. campuses. Research suggests the importance of establishing relationships with international students so that other “good practices” may occur. After conducting an extensive review of the literature and current good practices, the authors concluded that United States (U.S.) institutions of higher education are not “practicing what they preach” when it comes to meeting the needs of international students. They are not using the research to drive practice in accommodating international students. This article reflects on the literature that describes what is considered good practice in U.S. international educational programs, and makes recommendations for improving those practices based on this review of the literature.

International students come to the United States for several reasons: to pursue academic goals (Hull, 1978); to get education and training that is unavailable in their home countries (Woolston, 1995); to acquire prestige through a degree from an institution of higher learning in the United States (Huntley, 1993); and to escape unstable home-country economic and political conditions (Woolston, 1995). Internationalizing U.S. colleges and university campuses have always been an interest and a concern to scholars and higher education administrators. We define Internationalization for this study as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of postsecondary education” (Knight, 2003, p. 2) and “an ongoing, future-oriented, multidimensional, interdisciplinary, leadership-driven vision that involves many stakeholders working to change the internal dynamics of an institution to respond and adapt appropriately to an increasingly diverse, globally focused, ever-changing external environment” (Ellingboe, 1996, p. 199).

According to Rice, et al. (2009), the United States has hosted more than half a million students since 1999. Recent data also suggests that the number of international students show an increasing trend (Institute of International Education, 2008). As the number of international students entering U.S. colleges and universities increase (Chronicle of Higher Education, 1999; Sarkodie-Mensah, 1998; Zikopoulos, 1991), the need to understand and to address their cultural and psychological adaptations to this country grows (Lin & Yi, 1997). “As American universities continue to attract international students as well as expand into global markets, this growing community deserves attention” (Halic, Greenberg, and Paulus, 2009, p. 73-4). The number of international students enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States

increased by 7% to a total of 623,805 in the 2007/08 academic year according to the 2009 report conducted by Open Doors - the number of enrollments for first-time international students in U.S. colleges or universities increased by 10 % since the same period last year. This increase is also a result of Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs issuing 10.2% more student and exchange visas for the same period.

Contribution of International Students

While developing programs to provide U.S. students an international perspective and help them to gain cross-cultural skills for future leadership positions, U.S. universities also gain economically from international students studying in the U.S. Knight (2004) supported these concepts in a report written for the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). She wrote that there are two economic concerns that need to be considered in the recruitment of international students to U.S. institutions of higher education. First, the U.S. economy has declined over the past two years causing significant budget shortfalls in most states. Second, there has been a decrease in international students caused by 9/11 restrictions. This effect hurts the economic health of universities.

According to Altbach (2002) more than 1.6 million students studied outside their home countries in 2002. Of these students, 547,000 studied in the U.S. The most recent Open Doors Report (2008) explained that international students contribute approximately \$15.5 billion dollars to the U.S. economy, through their expenditure on tuition and living expenses. According to the same report, 62% of all international students receive the majority of their funds from personal and family sources. Quazi (1999) argued that the tuition

paid by international students allows institutions to hire more instructors and provide more facilities, which in-state students might not have had otherwise. Bassinger (1999) argued that the international alumni are also important sources of capital gifts. When they complete their studies and return to their home countries, they will not only contribute to their alma maters but to the entire goodwill toward the U.S. The political and economic connections with their home countries are extremely important to the U.S.

Peterson, et al. (1999) explained that international students contribute substantially to the U.S. by supplying competent teaching assistants at the college level. They explained that if it were not for the international teaching assistants, many courses required by U.S. students would not be offered because U.S. students will not work for the small amount of money that universities pay for teaching assistantships. U.S. students will rather find other jobs and pay for their education also supplementing it with student loans. Jessica Vaughan, a senior policy analyst with the Center for Immigration Studies, in a congressional testimony on June 29, 2007, House Foreign Affairs Committee, explained that the international students are also an important part of the campus workforce. For example, a huge influx of international student workers would lower the wages (which is approximately 50 billion dollars a year), and even if it is only five per cent, it would mean a payroll savings of 2 billion dollars each year.

With all the benefits of having international students on U.S. campuses, it would be beneficial for organizations that work with international students to pay closer attention to their concerns and needs. It is not necessarily the lack of research on the challenges experienced by international students on U.S. campuses, but it is rather the lack or absence of educated attempts to solve the issues.

Review of the Literature

International students on U.S. college campuses are a diverse population with unique concerns and needs. These concerns and needs are mainly academic and social and are influenced by language ability, cultural differences and pre-conceived expectations of student life on U.S. campuses (Mori, 2000). Even though there is extensive research on international students' adaptation while studying in a foreign environment (Leong & Chou, 1996; Pedersen, 1991), the authors contend that educational professionals do not have a clear understanding of cross-cultural differences. This creates a communication gap between the institution and the international student (Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986).

The following is a comprehensive analysis of the current literature on accommodating international

students on U.S. campuses. The literature is clear that institutions must rethink their delivery systems in order to better meet the concerns and needs of international students.

Related Findings

During interviews with six East Asian students, Dillon and Swann (1997) found that one of the major areas of their insecurity was the lack of confidence in their English language skills. Takahashi (1989) reported that contrary to a common American assumption that everybody readily understands English, acquiring foreign language proficiency, especially academic English in adult years, requires relatively long periods of hard studying, strong linguistic ability, and an extensive knowledge of the adopted culture. Tompson and Tompson (1996), as reported in Senyshyn, et al. (2001), wrote that international students enrolled in business programs also identify the lack of confidence in language skills to be one of the most daunting barriers to a positive adjustment experience. One of the most widely used tools to measure the language proficiency level of the students is the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). However, because of the complexity of proficiency in a second language, there are significant numbers of studies suggesting that there is a lack of a relationship between the TOEFL and academic success (Özturgut, 2001; Stover, 1982). That is to say, achieving a minimum TOEFL score for college admission by no means guarantees sufficient English competency of international students in succeeding in U.S. colleges and universities (Pederson, 1991).

To investigate the factors associated with the academic stress of international students at U.S. universities and to show how this has a strong negative impact on their academic skills, Wan, Chapman, and Biggs (1992) conducted a survey of 689 international graduate students enrolled in three major upstate New York universities. Wan and associates found that the students who considered themselves as having better English language skills were less likely to view academic situations as stressful and believed that they were able to cope with the stresses they experienced. On the other hand, students who considered themselves as having weak English language skills were more stressed and believed that they were unable to cope with the stresses they experienced.

To investigate international students' perceptions of their own adaptation to academic and social life and to analyze their interaction in the host culture, Heikinheimo and Shute (1986) conducted a study by interviewing and observing participants at a Canadian university. Results covered four aspects: language skills, academic concerns, family support and

expectations, and cultural differences. In terms of language skills, to adapt successfully to North American culture, the students had to master both formal and informal English for both everyday and academic life. As for academic concerns, students experienced heavy academic pressure.

Bunz (1997) argued that the lack of interaction between American and international students has roots in American tendency toward ethnocentrism, the habitual disposition to judge people from other cultures by standards and practices of one's own cultural or ethnic group. In the light of research, one can conclude that the issues international students face have different interpretations and explanations. And, the challenge of overcoming the challenges still lies in the hands of researchers and the professionals who are communicating with these international students.

Various factors influence the adjustment process of international students as indicated in the literature. Stafford, Marion, and Salter (1978) found that homesickness, finances, and housing represented the three most difficult areas of adjustment for two-thirds of the 747 students they surveyed. Lin and Yi (1997) argued that the psychological stressors such as academic demands, changes in their support system, and lack of familiarity with U.S. customs and culture, can lead to social isolation among international students.

In terms of academic adjustment, Boyer and Sedlacek (1986) concluded that the international students considered education to be very important and they were concerned about grades, study skills, ability to think independently and critically, and the issue of time management. Mori (2000) explored the reasons causing anxiety for international students and explained that student-teacher relationships, academic credits, grading scales, class attendance, class discussions, and types and frequency of quizzes, examinations, presentations, and assignments may well present problems. Surdam and Collins (1984) argued that the cultural background of the international students can represent a significant factor in the adjustment experience. They added that adaptation was related to spending leisure time with Americans, adequate knowledge of English, better educated families, and religious participation.

Another significant cause of the students' academic problems was their unfamiliarity with the American educational system (Thomas & Althen, 1989). For example, Asian, Middle Eastern, and African students have been trained to sit quietly in lecture-type classes and take detailed notes to be memorized in preparation for exams that are usually given only once or twice a year (Aubrey, 1991). Many Chinese students are still trained in the Confucian tradition of teacher-centeredness (Yen, 1987). In view

of this, the American education system requires of international students a more complex and challenging adaptation.

In addition to academic challenges, most international students face social problems related to social integration, daily life tasks, homesickness, and role conflicts. They often feel overwhelmed by cultural differences (Constantinides, 1992). They also express their concerns about competitiveness, individualism, and assertiveness of American culture (Parr, Bradley & Bingi, 1992). Some even feel that American culture is somewhat offensive (Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986). When the international students come to the U.S. the first time, they feel the absence of their own traditional sources of social support (Pederson, 1991). Therefore, social support is important not only for self-esteem and self-confidence but also for helping reduce stress that plays an important part in academic achievement (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992). According to the results of several surveys, international students try to get social support from their American peers, but the relationship between international students and their American peers rarely go beyond the most superficial contact, and many international students quickly abandon the hope of establishing deep cross-cultural friendships (Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986). Studies have also found strong positive correlations between the amount of contact with host nationals and international students' adaptation (Ward & Kennedy, 1992; Ward & Searle, 1991). As mentioned before, adaptation in this context is defined as "the international transformation of an individual challenged by a new cultural environment in the direction of increasing fitness and compatibility in that environment" (Kim, 1988, p. 9). The amount of stress experienced by international students is in direct correlation to the distance between the student's culture and that of the host country (Babiker, Cox, & Miller, 1980).

As more students from abroad select to attend U.S. institutions for their education, pressure is being applied on these institutions to make dramatic changes in the way they conduct business (Wan, 2001). Wan (2001) identified several problems that impact the success of Chinese students. In the study, although Chinese students were highly conscious of the political and cultural differences existing between the two countries and extremely motivated, they were frustrated by language problems, discrimination and disillusionment because things were not as they had expected. For example, most Chinese students expected that U.S. citizens would be more open to their culture, but in reality, they felt isolated and left to navigate the system on their own.

In addition, Wan's (2001) study shows that it is rather difficult to be a cross-cultural learner. It requires courage, determination and persistence. Wan (2001)

also indicated that educators can assist international students by trying to understand their home cultures, different learning styles, frustrations in adjusting to academic life and in overcoming “culture shock.” In addition, institutions of learning can help international students by providing a safe and low-anxiety environment, and effective English language classes. Individual professors can help international students by building relationships between them, and promoting friendships among colleagues and other students. If relationships are developed, other solutions will easily follow.

Tseng and Newton (2002) focused on identifying some strategies for well-being among international students. They did not define well-being but asked the students to define it. They did this in order to find out what strategies the international students use to build and enhance individual well-being. The researchers found that well-being in international student life included two general categories. One category included personal satisfaction and the other pursuing a meaningful and successful academic life. They suggested that these findings would be especially significant for student affairs professionals to understand international students’ needs and concerns in order to help them more effectively. This study explored a limited population. Therefore, generalization of the findings to other international students is questionable.

Tomich, McWhirter, and Darcy (2003) examined the differences existing between the levels of adaptation reported by Asian and European students. Adaptation, in this context, is defined as “the international transformation of an individual challenged by a new cultural environment in the direction of increasing fitness and compatibility in that environment” (Kim, 1988, p. 9). Tomich, McWhirter, and Darcy (2003) explored the question of whether a difference actually existed and whether certain personality traits correlated with Asian and European students’ adaptation. They chose to survey 21 Asian students and 15 European students participating in English as a Second Language program. The results of this study illustrated the significant role and potential value of utilizing personality variables to identify students who may be at greater risk of experiencing adaptation difficulties when studying abroad. That is, results indicated that Asian and European students’ adaptation to life in the United States must be viewed differently. This finding can help the educators to understand the international students better and design more effective orientation materials and programs that will assist students to develop styles that are resilient and more open. Tomich, McWhirter, and Darcy (2003) also reported that there were significant differences in mean adaptation scores obtained between European and Asian participants.

Specifically, Asian participants had a harder time adapting to life in America than the Europeans because they were more likely to feel uncomfortable with the English language and experienced more adaptation difficulties than the European participants. The researcher concluded that the cultural similarity/distance is a powerful determinant in the adaptation and adjustment of international students and that professors need to understand and learn to communicate more effectively with their international students. Even though most higher education faculty have limited or no training in communicating with international students, they engage in longer and more intense communication with them than other staff members such as counselors. The effectiveness of the university’s counseling services is another significant area that contributes to the success of international students.

Yi, Lin and Kishimoto (2003) conducted a study in a major university in Texas on the utilization of counseling services by international students. They wanted to understand who seeks counseling, how they go about doing so, and why they sought it. After analyzing six years worth of data they explained that international students were concerned with academics, depression, and anxiety. This finding was consistent with other research found in the literature. Nearly 70 % of international students in the study reported that they were extremely worried about their future lives. They also found that more than half of the students were self-referred to the counseling center. Overall, this research did not offer solutions to the counseling needs of international students. It simply reports on their findings without any suggestions other than expressing the need for more research. After reviewing the literature, it would seem that the most important challenge in working with international students lies in the area of communication.

Heggins and Jackson (2003) focused on applying student development and transition theories to understand the collegiate experience for Asian international students. After interviewing 28 Asian international students they found that the Asian international students that participated in this study sought help from familial and social sources of support when coping with problems and challenges. The researchers suggested that faculty and staff, resource centers, and student services offer mentoring opportunities for Asian international students to help them better use existing social support networks.

In a study investigating intercultural communication competency, Hinchcliff-Pelias and Greer (2004) explained that interactions between culturally different individuals involve complex understandings, dispositions, and abilities that must be learned if the intercultural communication is to be

successful. Data were collected through extensive interviews, focus groups, one-to-one interviews and by reviewing 64 international students' written personal narratives from 20 nations. Although they were aware of the fact that these selected students were not to be considered representatives of their national cultures, they considered them to be representatives of a contemporary "international student" culture (p. 9). They found that every one of the 64 students interviewed articulated one or more negative experiences related to their past and present intercultural interactions. A recurring theme across students' responses was the need to reflect on difficult intercultural interactions and then to make the commitment to learn from them. Hinchcliff-Pelias and Greer concluded that educators of international students are in a position to guide the learning of their international students. Because of this, they should take responsibility for helping their students develop better skills that would allow them to communicate more effectively.

Galloway and Jenkins (2005) surveyed the adjustment problems experienced by 215 international students as they adapt to life in the U.S. The perceptions of 44 U.S. university faculty and staff regarding these adjustment problems were also collected. The faculty and administrators charged with working with international students received a modified version of the Michigan International Student Problem Inventory. Galloway and Jenkins' findings indicated that international students had three major problem areas of concern: "Financial aid, placement services, and the English language." Other problematic areas were "religious services, student activities, and orientation services" (p. 180). Check this and see if you cited it correctly.

They also found that faculty and staff often focused on issues that were not paramount in the student's life. For instance, a faculty or staff member of an institution might help a student acquire a driver's license, but never socialize with the student or invite him into conversations. Providing information for an international student is helpful, but it does not give the student the continual emotional support needed to acculturate into the society. Maslow (1943) addressed this problem in his Pyramid of Hierarchical Needs. Galloway and Jenkins (2005) explained that there are several important lessons for campus administrators and student affairs personnel to learn from these findings. Since 'language' is the most important determinant of international student success, it is imperative that quality language instruction be provided to help international students understand the nuances of the English language. Often international students are not given the opportunity to contribute what they know. They are treated like children who need to be 'taught'

everything. This attitude leads to a feeling of frustration and a disconnect to the society in which international students find themselves. It is extremely important that international students be provided opportunities to share their culture in a variety of ways.

Zhao, Kuh, and Carini (2005) compared the activities of international undergraduate students with American students in selected areas. They focused on "student learning, personal development, and satisfaction with college, including the degree to which they perceive their campus to be supportive of academic and social needs" (p. 211). After gathering data from 317 four-year colleges and universities, they concluded that first-year international students surpassed their American counterparts in levels of academic challenge and student-faculty interaction. International students used more computer technology in course learning activities because they felt comfortable with the technology and experienced immediate success through that medium. In addition, the researchers concluded that there must be an assessment process to understand international students, have strong team of administrators and counselors, and arrange the resources at the university to help ease the transition of international students.

A relatively recent research project conducted by Klomegah (2006) explored the social factors relating to alienation experienced by international students in the United States. Klomegah collected the data from 94 students in two semesters. His data, rather contrary to the previous research (Alexander et al., 1981; Klineberg & Hull, 1979; Owie, 1982), reported that international student and American student alienation, in a relatively small college, does not differ. He concluded that "frequent social contact with other students is a comforting factor that goes a long way to helping students' smooth adjustment to their new campus environment" (Klomegah, 2006, p. 315).

A more recent study by Poyrazli and Grahame (2007) found that students are more in need of support during their initial transition to overcome the challenges related to their academic lives, social interactions, health, transportation, and discrimination. They concluded that the institution has a very significant role in finding and implementing the resources needed to help international students have a successful adjustment experience.

In another significant piece of research, Hsieh (2007) conducted a narrative study to find out why a Chinese female international student kept silent in her American classes. For this study, Hsieh conducted face-to-face, open-ended, and semi-structured interviews. He concluded that the Chinese female was made disempowered in her classes by her American classmates because of their ideology of homogeneity. The participant internalized a deficient self-perception

Table 1
Requirements, Responsibilities, and Preferred Qualifications & Skills

Requirements:	Job Responsibilities:	Preferred Qualifications and Skills:
A bachelor's degree is required	Serve as Designated School Official for F-1 student visa purposes and as Alternate Responsible Officer for the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program	Overseas experience and bilingual skills are preferred.
Managerial experience with financial, business and human resources processes	Advises the College on policies and procedures regarding international students and scholars and serves as liaison with relevant U.S. government and non-government agencies.	Strong cross-cultural skills and fluency in more than one modern language
Experience in higher education, customer service industry, recruitment, marketing or sales	Manages the office's budget; supervises and evaluates student workers	Experience working in a multicultural setting preferred
Knowledge of computer databases, information systems and new technologies including the Student & Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)	Edits various publications, including the newsletters and website, and updates information related to various study abroad programs.	Experience living and/or studying abroad and mastery in at least one foreign language preferred
Experience in higher education admissions, international admissions or international education	Advises individual undergraduate students on available study abroad programs, requirements, and application process	Work within an international center at the college level, and/or experience working in foreign countries/cultures helpful.
Extensive experience related to advising, processing, and administering F and J visa classifications.	Advises individual international students and faculty on immigration, financial, cross-cultural adjustment, and related matters.	A Master's degree in a related field is preferred
Computer proficiency, including the use of databases	coordinates implementation of liaison agreements with institutions abroad	Experience with international academic programs
Evidence of strong administrative, communication, interpersonal and supervisory skills	Provides leadership in promoting proposals that support international funded research and/or development projects	Experience in a diverse community preferred.
Excellent interpersonal skills on both an individual and group basis required	Represent the University, as appropriate, at conferences, symposia, and working groups devoted to international student and scholar issues	Prior experience in a university international office, flexibility, and having a wonderful sense of humor are also helpful

Sources: NAFSA: Association of International Educators: <http://jobregistry.nafsa.org/search/results/>
Higher Education Jobs: <http://www.higheredjobs.com/admin/search.cfm?JobCat=32>
Chronicle of Higher Education: <http://chronicle.com/jobs/300/100/5750/>

as a useless person in her group discussions and perceived that a deficient identity was attributed to her. Hsieh then suggested that the educators should not attribute Chinese international students' silence to only their cultural but also consider the possibility of the disempowering nature of U.S. higher education settings.

Halic, Greenberg, and Paulus (2009) conducted a study exploring the experiences of non-native English-speaking international students regarding language, culture, and identity in the context of their graduate studies. They employed a phenomenological approach to explore eight international graduate students' experiences. They have concluded that the participants perceived English as both a barrier and a channel of access. They have recommended that there is a need for educators who work with non-native English speaking international students to address "not just the academic but also relational and affective issues" (p. 92).

Current Practices

If asked, institutions with international programs would argue that they have read the research and are using it to guide practice. In reality, they are doing "good things" when they foster "international nights" or help an international student with paperwork; however, this does not address the root of the problem expressed in the research which dates back to the late 1970s (Chu, 1978; Stafford, Marion, Salter, 1978:). Specifically, that most U.S. citizens and educators do not understand their roles in the acculturation of international students.

It is clear that there is a concern for international students and these concerns focus mainly on immigration requirements, financial requirements, and employment issues. However, effective communication with international students, while making them feel like they are a significant part of the U.S. cultural mosaic is not a priority, nor is making

their educational experiences worthwhile considered. This gap in service is caused by the fact that it is not a requirement for the people involved in communicating with international students in U.S. higher education institutions to engage in relationships to make their experiences culturally, socially, and educationally worthwhile. U.S. higher education institutions, rather than trying to figure out how to recruit more international students despite visa difficulties, should look into retaining their present international student population. An educational system, which does not recognize its weaknesses and challenges despite the readily available information provided by the literature, is bound to fail in the long run. "While all nations view education as an investment in the future, most nations other than the U.S. treat challenges of academic performance and of globalization as national priorities" (Houlihan, 2005, p. 217). It becomes even a more critical problem for universities when faculty does not see international engagement as a priority for themselves (Altbach, 1996).

Misunderstanding or lack of understanding stems also from the fact that the people hired to communicate with international student populations on campus are not necessarily required to have multicultural and intercultural communications skills. Below (see Table 1) is a quick review of Higher Education job announcements that identify expectations of an "International Student Advisor," or of "Assistant Director/Director of International Student Services."

Most of advising and mid-level administration positions require a minimum of a Bachelor's degree with two-three year progressive experience in international and/or educational settings. Requirements do not generally include knowledge of a second language knowledge or international living and studying experience for most entry and mid-level administration positions. Requirement for multicultural and intercultural communication skills are not emphasized in most of the reviewed announcements. What is more threatening is that, almost none of the faculty jobs require skills and education in multicultural and intercultural communication. This falsely paints a picture in which such communication skills are not required, not even in "preferred qualifications" section of job announcements.

Summary and Conclusion

Some researchers called for more study in the area of understanding cultural differences (Lin & Yi, 1997; Wan, 2001) but in reality, the real need is in application of what we already know. Researchers agree that when there is less cultural dissonance, more learning takes place (Bennett, 1995). Thus, in order to deal with the

concerns and needs of international students, U.S. professionals that work in international programs must develop a clear understanding of the concept of "other" as defined by Said (1979). Said defines "other" as people that are alien to the West.

Adjustment challenges encountered by international students in the U.S. have been well documented (Chu, 1978; Fernandez, 1988; Huntley, 1993; Sue, 1981). These challenges might be the result of psychological distress related to culture shock, and therefore may lead to high level of homesickness, social isolation and unhappiness (Dee & Henkin, 1999). This research points out the necessity of host countries knowing the adaptation process of its international students and how to meet their individual needs. If these challenges are taken as natural and expected to fade by time, international students will isolate themselves and form a stronger shell around their circle of trust.

All of the articles analyzed in this discussion agree that there is a great need to understand the international students on U.S. campuses. Wan (2001) recommended building relationships between individual professors and international students and promoting friendships among colleagues and other friends. Tseng and Newton (2002) explained that well being of international student life included personal satisfaction and pursuing a meaningful and successful academic life. Tomich, McWhirter, and Darcy (2003) concluded that that professors need to understand and learn to communicate more effectively with their international students as the cultural similarity/distance is a powerful determinant in the adaptation and adjustment of international students. Yi, Lin and Kishimoto (2003) explained that international students were concerned with academics, depression, and anxiety but did not offer any solutions.

Heggins and Jackson (2003) suggested that faculty and staff, resource centers, and student services offer mentoring opportunities for Asian international students to help them better use existing social support networks. Tomich et al. (2003) informed us of the differences in adaptation processes. Ngwainmbi (2004) confirmed that the American teaching style was considered to be interactive and Chinese students enjoyed this style of teaching. There was no solution offered but understanding the cultures of Chinese students are emphasized. Hinchcliff-Pelias and Greer (2004) concluded that as educators of international students are in a position to guide the learning of their international students, they should take responsibility for helping their students develop better skills that would allow them to communicate more effectively. They further suggested that the challenge in intercultural communication could be overcome through different learning experiences in which the international students are actively engaged.

Table 2
Recommendations for Practice

Recommendations	What this Looks Like in Practice
Hire staff that are not only qualified but also well suited for the positions in International Student Offices.	Staff with overseas living experience, knowledge of a second language, and offer an extensive probationary training period
Provide intercultural and multicultural communication programs/services	Insure that this professional development is provided for both faculty and staff
Plan a host-family program for newly-arrived international students	Newly arrived international students should spend a considerable time with U.S. families. There are already host-family programs at several universities in the U.S.
Offer courses that would encourage students to learn about different cultures	Colleges could offer courses on cultures once a semester and faculty should encourage students to register for those classes. These courses could be offered through Continuing Education at a reduced fee.
Encourage student exchange and study abroad programs	Student exchange and study abroad programs should be made financially and academically attractive. Subsidize the cost and strengthen/or establish partnerships in foreign countries for such programs. In addition, encourage faculty to study/teach abroad (see Özturgut, 2007).
Engage international students in student organizations not only of their own culture, but of other cultures as well.	Not only “International Student Association”, but “Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indian, etc. Student Associations” as well. They should also participate in Greek organizations, etc...
Offer ESL support for international students	Offer ESL program throughout their entire program of study not just the first semester.
Last but not the least, listen to what an international student has to say without being defensive and accusatory	When international students bring their issues to administrators, they are often made to feel that they are ungrateful for the opportunity of studying in the U.S. Ask them what the ‘good practice’ is for them before deciding on what the ‘best practice’ is for you.

Galloway and Jenkins (2005) reported that the three major problem areas of concern for international students were financial aid, placement services, and the English language. Zhao, Kuh, and Carini (2005) suggested that there must be an assessment process to understand international students, have strong teams of administrators and counselors, and arrange the resources at the university to help ease the transition of international students. Galloway and Jenkins (2005) and Zhao et al. (2005) further confirm that administrators and counselors need to help international students by giving them an opportunity to explore the differences and possibilities in intercultural communication. Klomegah (2006) explained that the smooth adjustment of international students heavily depends on frequent social contact with other students. Poyrazli and Grahame (2007) concluded that the institutions have significant roles in helping international

students. Halic et al. (2009) reported that the international graduate students have difficulties in expressing feelings, ideas, and knowledge. In summary, all of the articles examined in this paper agreed on the fact that international students are having adaptation problems. Both administrators and educators need to understand them better in order to help ease their adjustment.

Recommendations for Practice

After reviewing the literature, the authors add to the further discussions regarding how to help international students studying in the U.S. institutions, by making several additional recommendations (see Table 2). As mentioned above, it is the authors’ contention, after reviewing the literature that the root of the problem lies with U.S. citizens’ misunderstanding

of their roles in the acculturation of international students. Understanding a culture goes beyond the stereotypes of within a society, but requires a deeper understanding of the particularities, to the individual students and their historical and cultural influences, so that we can adjust our strategies for responding to their needs and expectations. The richness of the U.S. culture is its immigrant population and its acceptance of cultural differences. It is, as indicated above, not the lack of research on understanding the issues experienced by international students, but it is the lack of direction and focus from the U.S. institutions of higher education in making individual connections through effective communications.

We have become a data driven society. This is not necessarily a bad thing. "The world is offering educational leaders ways to learn from data, gain a fresh perspective, and engage in dialogue and practices" that will benefit us all (Houlihan, 2005, p. 218). Through this research, the authors wish to start a conversation about what is being done for international students on U.S. campuses while providing an extensive research database from which to begin this conversation.

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