

Public Abstract

First Name:Jeffrey

Middle Name:Richard

Last Name:Foot

Adviser's First Name:Phillip

Adviser's Last Name:Messner

Co-Adviser's First Name:Joyce

Co-Adviser's Last Name:Pival

Graduation Term:SP 2009

Department:Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis

Degree:EdD

Title:EXPLORING INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT USING THE NSSE FRAMEWORK

This was a qualitative study exploring how international students perceive their participation in educational activities such as studying alone or with peers, talking with other students about class, number of study hours per week, talking with professors, writing papers, making presentations, etc.

Understanding how this unique and varied population participates in academic activities is central to practice in higher education.

The research question driving this qualitative case study was: What are the academic engagement patterns that emerge among international students at a Midwest regional state university?

Five focus groups consisting of a total of fourteen international university students were interviewed. The data were then analyzed looking for relevant themes and patterns in the participants' responses.

Key findings of the study indicate strategies international students employ may change as students adapt to the academic climate. However, not all international students employ the same strategies. The strategies students report are similar to positive behavior measured in the NSSE theoretical framework. There is evidence, however, the students are coping with their environment using previously learned or home country strategies rather than intentionally employing positive educational behaviors NSSE seeks to highlight. Further, international students' academic needs vary depending on country of origin and home culture and these needs change over time.

Understanding nuanced international student perceptions will provide administrators and faculty with practical guidance to enhance academic engagement and assist students to develop meaningful and positive experiences. If successful, enhancing the international student experience should have positive benefit for other students and the entire academic community.