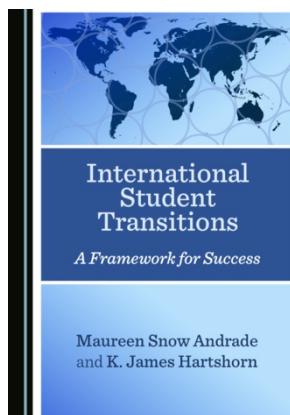


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International Student Transitions: A Framework for Success

Maureen Snow Andrade & K. James Hartshorn, Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019. 174pp. Paperback: £58.99. ISBN-13 978-1-5275-3034-8

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International students from developing countries come to developed countries with a dream to achieve higher education. These students face many challenges (e.g., language barriers, cultural shock) in their transition to the higher educational institutions that may hinder their achievement. Andrade and Hartshorn's latest publication (2019) surrounds the transition that international students encounter when they attend universities in developed countries. The authors describe how some countries including Australia and the United Kingdom host more international students than the United States and provide some guidelines for U.S. higher education institutions to follow as they seek

to host more international students.

The introductory chapter describes international student demographics in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. The data show that among these countries, the United States has the lowest percentage (5.2%) of international students (as a proportion of all enrolled students) due to poor policies and strategies in favor of international students, specifically in limited support for students' English language skill development. This chapter presents a framework for international student success that contains five steps: analyze, design, develop, implement, and evaluate. Across all five stages, vital components of the framework include the views and beliefs of administrators, support staff, and

faculty who may guide curricular and co-curricular activities of those international students.

The second chapter discusses the views and beliefs of university personnel who work closely with international students at U.S. universities. This includes personnel who work in international student admissions, as there are common misconceptions regarding students' English language proficiency. Administrators and faculty may assume that the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is sufficient to measure students' English language proficiency. However, the authors argue that this test is not the only scale to assess students' language proficiency, though they do not provide any specific alternative suggestions. The authors also argue that by analyzing employee views and beliefs, a set of new and effective practices to guide future actions can be established. Furthermore, the assertion is made that current programs ought to be under ongoing evaluation by universities to determine their effectiveness and student-centeredness.

The third chapter is about the role of academic courses (degree programs) in developing the English language proficiency of international students enrolled at U.S. institutions. The authors mention that Australian higher educational institutions have useful practices and principles in designing and delivering courses improving international students' academic English. The authors then present a curricular model for the U.S. institutions that they argue will be supportive of international students' English language skill development along with their coursework. The model suggests four types of course design: "Adjunct Weak," which refers to stand-alone basic English courses presenting generic academic content; "Adjunct Strong," which refers to the English language support related to discipline-based courses for the specific needs of the students (e.g., presentation, paraphrasing); "Integrated," or English language support alongside specific discipline-based courses in the form of individual tutorials or workshops; and "Embedded," English language development within discipline-based courses based on extended collaboration with an English language expert (i.e., trained professional). However, the authors suggest that the model can be modified based on institutional context and the level of higher education.

"Cocurricular Consideration," the fourth chapter, addresses the advantage of reinforcing co-curricular and extracurricular components along with curricular components for cultural and language acquisition. For instance, there are examples of churches providing support to their student members in understanding local culture as well as language development. The authors argue that although these co-curricular and extracurricular components are less significant for international students than the formal curriculum, they nonetheless strengthen academic success. The authors also state that many international students may have a lack of understanding, experience, or skills to successfully engage in curricular activities based at U.S. higher education institutions due to the lack of cultural knowledge. These students need extra support, and the co-curricular and extracurricular activities help to enrich their knowledge and support curricular activities. These elements also boost their professional capabilities. However, there is not a clear model presented, and this seems to reflect an area for further research.

The title of the fifth chapter is “Evaluation.” This chapter points to evaluation of university programs as essential, and shows the difference between assessment and evaluation. Assessment is the systematic process that gathers data to estimate students’ knowledge, skills, attitude, and beliefs. The authors argue that assessment of students’ learning is needed for their development in the field. On the contrary, evaluation is the process that judges the efficacy of a program, event, or product, necessary for institutions to evaluate their programs, academic curriculum, and extracurricular activities.

“Implementation,” the sixth chapter, introduces the theory of constraints that focuses on the restrictions that limit an organization’s ability to intervene. The theory consists of five steps: identify (identify obstacles that hinder goal achievement), exploit (implement existing resources immediately), subordinate (review other factors to enable maximum contribution), elevate (consider additional action), and repeat (continue the process). The authors also introduce the well-known Lean Six Sigma framework to improve current services and to offer new programs and services.

The last chapter of this book is “Institutional Change.” The authors start this chapter with a rationale as to why organizational change is necessary given “cultural change” associated with international students enrolling at U.S. colleges and universities. However, the authors do not specify current areas of deficit thinking regarding international students’ English proficiency. Instead, the authors say that many higher education institutions have been practicing the same policies for decades, which are not suitable for the international students in the present time. The authors then provide eight steps for creating change: increasing urgency, building the guiding team, getting the vision right, communicating for buy-in, enabling action, generating short-term wins, not letting up, and making change stick.

The book is a prescription for higher educational institutions of the United States to attract more international students like other developed countries (e.g., Australia, United Kingdom). The authors have provided guidelines on how to bring change in institutional policies to improve programs and culture impacting international students and facilitating their academic success. I support the authors’ suggestions for taking a variety of practical measures to attract more international students. However, as a limitation, the authors do not provide any empirical study results indicating that their theories will increase the number of international students in the United States.

As an international graduate student, my understanding is that international students’ academic success has an impact not only on them but also on their communities. Not only do students personally achieve better quality education but also they serve their community with new knowledge and experience. The community, in turn, gets a sophisticated workforce. These students are beneficial for the host countries, too. Referring to the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Institute of International Education (2020) reported that in 2019, international students contributed \$44 billion to the U.S. economy. Besides contributing to the U.S. economy, international students enhance campus diversity (Hughes, 2019).

Thus, this book's suggestions for increasing international student numbers in U.S. universities through various initiatives are essential.

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