

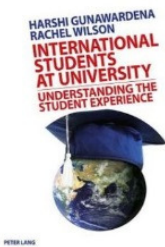
Book Review

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International Student Experience in Australia

Gunawardena, H., & Wilson, R. (2012). *International students at university: Understanding the Student Experience*. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, pp. 200; \$72.95 (paperback), ISBN 978-3- 0343-1036-9

Reviewed by: *Jennifer Bernard and Krishna Bista*, University of Louisiana at Monore (USA)



This book introduces a theoretical framework and research tools for evaluating the experiences of international students from the Indian subcontinent as they adapt to one university in Australia. Gunawardena and Wilson focus on the importance of understanding and molding student services to each individual cultural group and meeting specific needs based on communication, learning style, personal preferences, and grade level. For example, some English language learners have been put in classes below their grade level because of their lack of competency in English (written and spoken).

In chapter one, the authors focused on the background and cultural differences of international students studying in Australia. The authors suggest that the recognition of student needs is not fully understood therefore, the best academic support is not always available in the classroom. In chapter two, the authors suggest that the most important factor for international students is the individual and personal growth in a cultural and academic setting.

In chapter three, the authors offered examples and an extensive review of literature in the field to support the importance of integrating different cultures into a school curriculum. This integration in the curriculum provides educational benefits to domestic and international students. Another aspect this book highlights is allowing international students to use their "voice"—share their perspectives at the university with faculty and other students. The author presented voices (obtained from interviews, observations, and classroom situations) of students from the Indian subcontinents and their academic staff from one Australian university featured in this book.

In chapter four, the authors also presented cases studies and specific situations regarding international students traveling to study abroad. International students who make friends and have a supporting community can ease the transition into a new environment. Clubs and societies are mentioned in the book for facilitating international students to make new friends in the community. In chapters five and six, the authors pointed out differences in classroom interaction, differences in academic practices, and differences in academic environments. Students who have an International Baccalaureate background (students who study globally standardized examinations) have an easier time interacting and fitting into new classroom environments. The authors bridged the gap between cultural differences and how non-native English speaking students may not comprehend Australian classroom activities.

In conclusion, this book can be used as a useful resource for educators interested in international higher education, study abroad and comparative education. This book was primarily based on international students in Australia.