

Coping strategies used by international students to deal with stress while studyi...

[Business](#), [Strategy](#)



COORDINATOR: TUTOR:

Literature Review

International students often face unique challenges when they move abroad to study. The severity and the type of the challenges that they face depends heavily upon their home culture and their level of familiarity with both travel and the English language. Much research has been done on the different ways that international students struggle in Australia; similarly, there has been much research done on the ways that international students cope with the changes that come with a life-changing decision of the magnitude of choosing to live abroad.

Different educators and researchers often focus on specific ethnic groups when conducting their research, and their research does suggest that different ethnic groups cope with the move from their home country to Australia very differently (Carroll and Ryan 2005). Carroll and Ryan suggest that students from English-speaking countries who speak English at a native level adjust much more easily to the move than their peers from non-English-speaking countries (Carroll and Ryan 2005). In particular, students from Asian countries and the Indian subcontinent tend to struggle with social integration in Australia, although there is no evidence that the language barrier affects their studies in any real way (Yeh and Inose 2010; Lin and Yi 1997).

Lin and Yi (1997) suggest that the first step to addressing the issues that international students face in their new environment is to recognize the problems that these students are facing, and in particular, to recognize the problems that the students face in the cultural context of the international

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students' native culture (Lin and Yi 1997). Some groups of international students in Australia self-sequester, isolating themselves by ethnic group (Kao and Gansneder 1995). This has a tendency to happen at a higher rate when the students are not native English speakers; they will frequently restrict their social circles to those people who speak their native language (Kao and Gansneder 1995). This coping strategy is used as a way to maintain a sense of connectedness with their home culture, and to decompress from the stress of speaking a second language regularly (Kao and Gansneder 1995).

Some international students face more challenges than others in Australia, and one of the issues that can arise is the issue of differences in learning styles between Australia and the home country (Hellsten 2010). Hellsten (2010) suggests that level of satisfaction and overall success in the Australian educational system is dependent upon the student's ability to adapt to the educational styles of learning in the Australian tertiary education system (Hellsten 2010).

Coping with the stress of an international move from the home country to Australia is a process that is deeply affected by culture (Barron and Arcordia 2002). Institutional structures that assist students in coping with the cultural changes that they face have been shown to be effective in many cases, but students from cultures that are most commonly affected by the international transition do not usually seek out resources (Abe, Talbot and Geelhoed 1998). Rather, students must be actively funnelled into these programs for assistance with coping; without this guidance and attention, many students will be unaware of the programs or disinterested in utilizing them to their

fullest extent (Abe, Talbot and Geelhoed 1998). Coping strategies may be personal coping strategies or structural coping strategies-- that is, the student may create his or her own support system, or he or she may rely upon structural supports to help with coping strategies for the move (Abe, Talbot and Geelhoed 1998).

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