Unfamiliar Territory: A Phenomological Study of International Students Enrolled in a Large Urban Community College

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The international community college student population faces challenges that their domestic student counterparts do not confront. Adjusting to college can be difficult for many students without the added stress of exposure to a new country and culture. These students contribute to the financial bottom line and ethnic, racial, and religious diversity to the community colleges they attend. Considering this an understanding of their experience is needed.

**Research Question**

Exploratory in nature, examining the shared experience of international students and identifying themes. Specifically investigating:

- How does culture shock effect success?
- How do international community college students interpret their sense of connection and belonging to their college community?
- What obstacles are encountered, real or perceived, by this student population?
- What opportunities are available to better serve these students?

**Methodology**

Data Gathered:

- Interviews
  - 8 International Students
  - 6 Faculty and Staff
- Observations
  - ESL Conversation Group

**Analysis**

The transcripts and observation notes were coded for themes and examined for similarities and/or disparities and compared/contrasted to relevant recent literature.

**Findings**

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<th>Literature Themes</th>
<th>This Study's Themes</th>
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**Constructs**

Eligible participants in this study were enrolled/or worked in a large urban community college. ICCS must have met 1 or 2 definitions:

1. Attending college with an F-1 visa status, attending college on a full-time basis.
2. Born and raised for all or part of their lives outside of the United States and now living in the U.S. as a permanent resident.

**Literature**

- B. K., & Wilson, K. B. (2009). The academic and social integration of persisting community college transfer student... (Vol. 10), 83.
- Liao, H., & Edlin, M. (2012). Motivation, self-regulated learning efficacy, and academic achievement among international and domestic students at the University of the United States and now living in the U.S. as a permanent resident.
- M. H., & Edlin, M. (2012). Motivation, self-regulated learning efficacy, and academic achievement among international and domestic students at the University of the United States and now living in the U.S. as a permanent resident.