



SOMEONE CALL THE INTERPRETER:

EXAMINING THE EXPERIENCES OF ACADEMICALLY AT-RISK INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Examination the benefits of academically at-risk international students get from westernized academic and career coaching courses at a mid-western religious affiliated four-year private institution. This study offers insight into the academic and career-coaching services from an international student perspective and how it relates to the perceived future academic success of international students. This study informs how academic coaching services can be designed to meet their unique needs so that future international students can thrive and succeed in U.S. higher education systems. Data was collected through qualitative in person interviews with current or former international students whole were required to participate in an academic and career-coaching course. This study revealed that despite the overall positive outcomes from participating in the academic and career-coaching course there were persisting challenges unique to international student experiences that were not directly addressed in the course.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

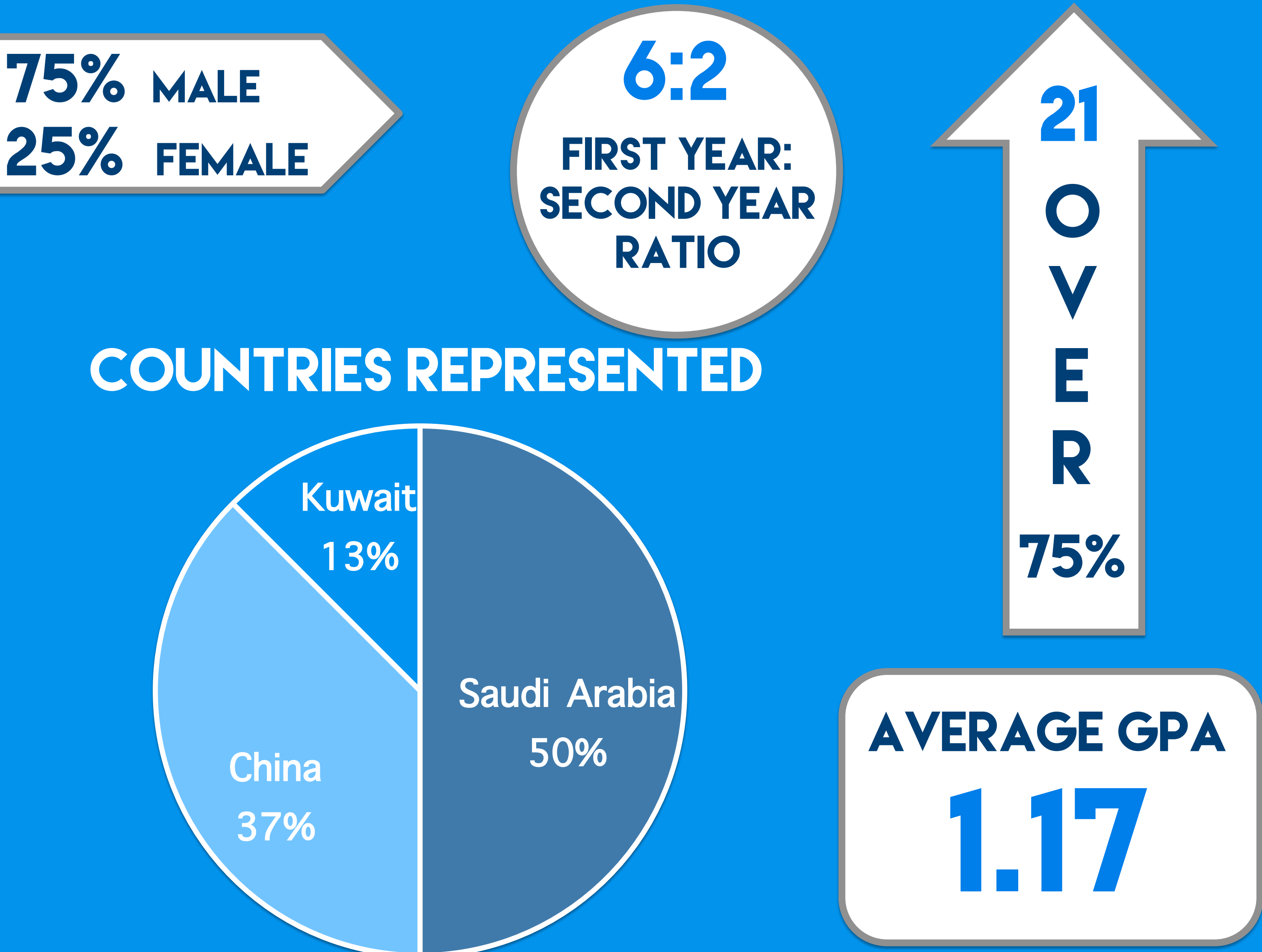
1. What are academically at-risk international students’ perception of additional and/or assistive learning opportunities utilized?
2. What are the experiences and biggest challenges of academically at-risk international students?
3. Do academically at-risk international students feel the that additional and/or assistive learning opportunities, like coaching courses, meet their needs?

METHODS

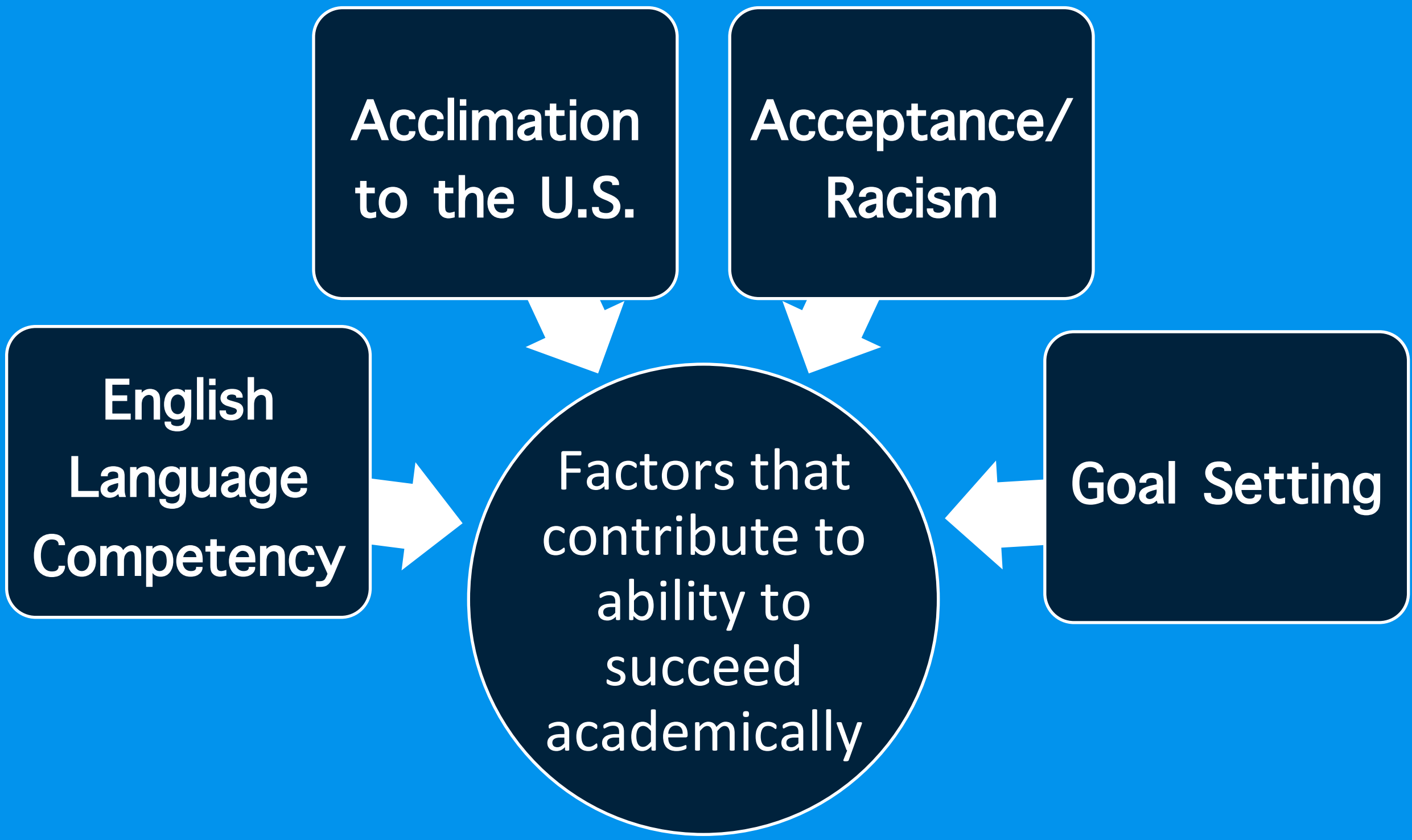
Qualitative phenomenological research was conducted through the volunteerism of eight academically at-risk international students, six first year students and two sophomore students, who participated in structured interviews conducted in the Spring on 2015. Volunteers were recruited by the researcher with a sign-up sheet targeted to students who were currently enrolled in academic and career-coaching course. There students provided their name and contact information and were reached out to via email to schedule in person interviews.

Questions included students’ lived experiences in the United States, their perception of attending college in the United States, and their perception of the academic and career-coaching course in which they were enrolled.

RESULTS



CHALLENGES



THEMES (SELECTED STUDENT QUOTES)

UNDERSTANDING MATERIAL/TIME MANAGEMENT

RELATING TO COURSE PURPOSE

RACISM

WHERE AM I?

“I have no clue about that [academic coaching course] class. I just come and finish the homework” (Tom, 21)

“I think that half of American say that Muslim is a bad person...when they see your skin they say you’re either a terrorist or a Mexican” (Josh, 22)

“The environment, I did not adjust to it and I don’t know where I am [emotionally]... when I get to college I lost many of my energy...” (Mitch, 21)

“Language is the biggest challenge...I mean I can study in like two hours if its in my language, but I would spend two hours more to translate some of the words and understand.” (Cole, 21)

CONCLUSIONS

- The challenges and needs of academically at-risk international students do not align with the curriculum and course offerings of academic and career coaching courses offered
- The most pressing challenge related to the academically at-risk international student experiences is English language competency
- Academically at-risk international students generally like the academic and career coaching class, however they were unable to articulate the purpose and content of the course

IMPLICATIONS

- Because the challenges that academically at-risks international students articulated does not match the course design collaboration between departments could be utilized to design a more intentionally focused academic and career coaching experience
- Pre-screening efforts could be implemented before international students are placed into various academic and career coaching sections so challenges can be self-identified and reflected upon prior to the commencement of the course
- Further research could examine the longitudinal experiences of academically at-risk international students in academic and career coaching to see if similar perceptions are revealed

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