Creating an Intensive Learning and Support Environment for International and Domestic Students

Michael B. Smithee
Creating an Intensive Learning and Support Environment for International and Domestic Students

A Symposium Presentation for Faculty and Staff of Tottori University

by

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Part 1 – Introduction

Part 2 – Understanding Student Services in an International Learning Environment

Part 3 - Preparation for an Exchange Learning Environment

Part 4 – Training for Advisors and Front Line Staff and the Role of Managers

Part 5 - The Converging Process of the Learning Environment: Peer Education & Retention
Part 2

Understanding Student Services in a Learning Environment
Student Services for Domestic and International Students

> Convergence <

and

< Divergence >
**TABLE 1: Services to Domestic/International Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Student Services Converge</strong></th>
<th><strong>Student Services Diverge</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>• Most willing to Communicate with</td>
<td>• Communication with student may be awkward and slow but can be successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can anticipate behavior</td>
<td>• Behavior of student sometimes difficult to put into context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recognizes Personality Differences</td>
<td>• May have difficulty in recognizing student sub-cultural cultural cues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Culturally similar</td>
<td>• Unsure if student knows the rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interaction Rules known</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>• Student is recognized as having a need</td>
<td>• Student is recognized as having a special need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Student is treated with respect and understanding</td>
<td>• Standards and Principles services different from domestic student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Principles for interaction are similar to domestic students</td>
<td>• Interaction complicated by culture and language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sensitivity is exhibited for interaction rules</td>
<td>• Staff sensitivity depends on perception of the student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Student must follow domestic laws</td>
<td>• There are some special laws and rules that apply only to this group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Symposium on Internationalism*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language/Communication</th>
<th>OWN Culture</th>
<th>OTHER Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OWN</td>
<td>• Most willing to Communicate with</td>
<td>• Communication awkward and slow but can be successful</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Can anticipate behavior</td>
<td>• Behavior sometimes difficult to put into context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recognizes Personality Differences</td>
<td>• Difficulty in recognizing cultural cues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>• Using non-native language with fellow countrymen awkward</td>
<td>• Least willingness to communicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Behavior mixed</td>
<td>• Most awkward to communicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cultural cues mixed</td>
<td>• Unsure in use of foreign language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Unsure of behaviors to present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why Internationalize?

Depends on the Meaning Given to it.
Why Internationalize?

**Purpose**
- Directives
- Desire

**Benefits: Asian Institution View**
- Student, Staff & Teacher Development
- Research
- Teaching & Learning

**Risks: Asian Institution View**
- Increased Costs
- No Risks
Best Practices

Simon Awards – 53 Institutions Recognized in Five Years

**Arcadia University:** advocates “preparing students to live and work in a rapidly changing global society.”

**Purdue University:** elaborates that: "This award confirms that we are on the right path in developing the next generation of global leaders and that we are ensuring that every Purdue student has the opportunity to become globally competent,"

**Binghamton University:** allows that: “Rather than having activities take place in a single or couple of offices, programs and activities involving international education permeate throughout the University.”

**San Diego State University:** espouses that: “No matter how good our education is here at SDSU, there is no substitute for study abroad.”
Part 3

Preparation for an Exchange Learning Environment
What is a Mind Set?

A *mind set* is a pattern or picture of the reality of one’s world, which is influenced by one’s cultural values, attitudes, and beliefs.
How do you differ from students 18 years old?

- These students experience life differently
- These students have different perceptions of reality

Their responses may be:

1. What Berlin Wall?
2. Bottled Water has *always* been here
ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES FOR STUDENT SERVICES STAFF

1. Leadership
2. Teaching and Training
3. Counseling and Advising
4. Consultation and Mediation
5. Multiculturalism
6. Program Development and Group Advising
7. Assessment, Evaluation, and Research
Competencies and Job Skills for *International Exchange Staff*?
Competencies and Job Skills for *International Exchange Staff*?

- Background education
- Personal Characteristics
- Cultural Fluency
- Life Experiences
- Inspiration
- Professional *mind set*
What competencies do institutions look for when hiring staff?

- Experience related to the field
- Capacity to Learn Quickly
- Study of Subject Matter
- Travel to other countries
- Communication Skills
- Other skills (technology, publication)
- New Energy for Office Programs
Counter Persons
Diversity in Office Staff

Ireland
Japan
Ukraine
Ecuador
Holland
Iran

Syracuse University
Educational Background

- Russian Literature
- Sociology
- International Relations
- Former Airline Stewardess
- Business
- Interior Design

Syracuse University
Some of the Languages Spoken (In addition to English)

Russian
Ukrainian

Chinese

Japanese

Dutch
French
German
Malaysian

African-American
Spanish

Farsi
Turkish
German
Characteristics of an International Student Advisor*

1. Mental Flexibility
2. Patience
3. Nonjudgmentalness
4. Interest in Cultural Differences
5. Respect for Others
6. Tolerance for Ambiguity
7. Sociability
8. Self-Awareness
9. Kindness
Communication Tenets for Interacting with Domestic and International Students

Don’t assume sameness, even if you look similar
What you think of as normal or human behavior may only be cultural behavior

Familiar behaviors to you may have different meanings

Don’t assume that what you meant is what was understood

Don’t assume that what you understood was what was meant

You don’t have to like or accept “different” behavior, but you should try to understand why the behavior occurs.

Most people behave rationally, you just have to discover the rationale

The rationale may not make sense to you, but it is the basis for behavior in another culture
Part 4

Managers and Staff Training for Advisors and Front Line Staff
Staff Training

• Must have support of the University

• Utilize Professional Organizations

• Provide Department Specific Training
How to Enhance Staff Training

Conceptual Buy-In

Focus on Outcomes of the Process

Know your clientele

Seek Innovations
INNOVATION CASE STUDY

SUIQ

Syracuse University Improving Quality

See Note 11
What are the possible roles the Counter Person/Advisor FSA fulfill?

1. Professional Person
2. Good Person
3. Educator
4. Student Developer
5. Monitor
6. Sheriff
7. Avenging Parent
8. All Powerful Person
Part 5

The On-Going Process of the Learning Environment:

• Peer Education

• Retention
### PEER EDUCATORS / ASSISTANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Greece</td>
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<td>India</td>
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<td>Egypt</td>
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</table>

**Slutzker Center for International Services**
Peer Educators / Assistants
Roles of Peer Educators / Assistants

1. Peer Mentors
2. Peer Counselors
3. Peer Resident Advisors
4. Alumni Mentors
5. Peer Teachers
6. Peer Tutors
7. Supplemental Instruction (SI)
8. Peer Writing
9. Peer Co-Instructors for First-Year Seminars
Programs that Peer Educators Participate In

Orientation Programs for New Students
Departmental Peer Advisors
Teaching Assistant Program
English Conversation Groups
Clubs
Special Events and Needs by the ISO
Programs that Peer Educators Participate In - Continued

Cultural Bridge *

The International Living Center

Learning Communities

Community Members Peer Programs
Essential Bridge-building qualities

- Non-judgmental
- Open-minded
- Respectful
- Patient
- Comfortable with ambiguity and silence
- Tolerant and appreciative of differences
- Flexible in perceptions
- Self-aware
- Empathic
- Curious
- Warm
- Accepting of mistakes and learning from them
- Ability to function in both problem-solving and relationship-building modes
- Ability to function in both problem-solving and relationship-building modes

Tomoko Kudo*
Example

International Living Center Activities
Retention of Students
CASE STUDY:
Syracuse University Division Student Support and Retention = SSR

Do a fly in….. For these

What is included?

✓ College Preparatory Programs
✓ Summer Programs (immediately preceding first year)
✓ Tutoring, Counseling & Supportive Services (during college)
✓ Graduate Prep Programs
✓ Alumni Program
Functional Topics for SSR

1. Academic Counseling
2. Career Counseling
3. Computer skills instruction
4. Developmental courses (Personal & developmental support)
5. Financial aid and advocacy
6. Leadership experiences
7. Peer Mentoring
8. Professional and peer tutoring
9. SummerStart (Summer Orientation program)
10. Writing Support (enhancement)
Exploring the International Soul through Books

The World is Flat

Intercultural Marriage

Tokyo Cancelled

Reading Lolita in Tehran

My Forbidden Face
Symposium on Internationalism

Tottori University

Phi Beta Delta Induction

Lillian Slutzker and International Student ‘family’

Fujitsuka Award Recipients

Honors

International Thanksgiving Dinner
Symposium on Internationalism

Tottori University

Orientation
“The Beginning”

The Middle

“Classes”

Graduation
“The End”
Thank You !