

ABSTRACT

WARD, DURENDA JOHNSON. America's Doors: International Students Adjustment to American Institutions of Higher Education. (Under the direction of Dr. Siu-Man Raymond Ting)

International students have a difficult time adjusting to the American collegiate system due to facing many stressors such as linguistic, academic, interpersonal, and financial problems (Mori, 2000). International students underutilize counseling services to aid them in their adjustment. In this study the investigator tried to show that group counseling and interactive activities would improve the overall adjustment of international students with a treatment and control group of 10. The investigator conducted four-group sessions to show that international students adjustment to the American collegiate system would be improved. The outcomes of the treatment group ($n = 10$) were compared to a control group ($n=10$). The College Student Experience Questionnaire (CSEQ) and the International Student Adjustment Questionnaire (ISAQ), a questionnaire developed by the investigator, were used as dependent variables in measuring the changes. In the findings, no significant changes were found as a result of the group sessions. Limitations for the study and implications for future research were discussed.

**America's Doors: International Students Adjustment to
American Institutions of Higher Education**

by

Durenda Johnson Ward

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Approved by:

Dr. Siu-Man Raymond Ting
Chair of Advisory Committee

Dr. Marc A. Grimmett

Dr. José A. Picart

DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to my loving and supportive husband, Robert, and my family. Without the consistent patience and encouragement of my husband this report could not have been done. Thank you for loving me unconditionally!

BIOGRAPHY

Durenda Johnson Ward is the daughter of Ronald Johnson and Debra Tyler-Horton and Carl Horton. Ms. Ward has two younger siblings including Ronald Maurice Johnson and Danita Johnson. Ms. Ward has been married to Robert A. Ward for three years. A graduate of The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) with two Bachelor of Science Degrees in International Business with Minors in French and Political Science and Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing. Ms. Ward received her Masters of Science Degree in Counselor Education with a concentration in Student Development in Higher Education from North Carolina State University (NCSU) in May 2005. Ms. Ward has worked as an Interim Assistant Director of Multicultural Affairs at UNCG; worked as a Program Coordinator at Ipas, an international women's rights organization; and completed in May 2005, an assistantship as Residence Director of an international residence hall at NCSU. In Fall 2005, Ms. Ward will continue her education by working towards her Ph.D. in Counselor Education at NCSU. Ms. Ward thrives on excellence and the development of young adults as they pursue their dreams in higher education.

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America's Doors: International Students Adjustment to American Institutions of Higher Education

Introduction

This research report looked at the adjustment issues of international students at North Carolina State University (NCSU). The report proposed that group sessions would improve the adjustment issues faced by international students at institutions of higher education. The author of this research study Durenda Johnson Ward is noted as the investigator throughout this report. In the literature review of the report it will discuss issues facing international students, group counseling and a proposed adjustment model to be used by student affairs professionals. In the methodology the procedures, participants and dependent variables will be noted. At the end of this report the results and discussion are addressed.

Use of Counseling Services

International students heavily underutilize mental health services on college campuses (Mori, 2000). In a recent study that looked at the usage of counseling services by international students it was found that only 2% out of a sample of forty-one international students sought counseling services (Nilsson, Berkel, et. al., 2004). The results also showed that for those students that went to counseling a third of them dropped out after they went through the initial intake session (Nilsson, Berkel, et. al., 2004). Mori believed that disclosure to a counselor in many international countries is seen as disgraceful and considered to be a sign of weakness (Mori, 2000). It is not just the shame of the individual but the whole family becomes shamed (Mori, 2000). "Some international students develop a tendency to 'somaticize' their psychological problems and express them through physiological disorders" (Mori, 2000, p. 139). Herbalists or root doctors, are usually sought

by students for healing, not therapists (Mori, 2000). As a result, most students share their concerns or stresses amongst their fellow nationals (Mori, 2000).

“Student focus groups may provide deeper understanding of the issues faced by these students on campus,” (Carr, Koyama, & Thiagarajan, 2003). This is supported by a research study that examined the utilization of counseling services by international students at a major university in Texas (Yi, Jun-Chih Giseala Lin, & Kishimoto, 2003). A culturally specific psycho-educational group was offered by the personal counseling services at the university (Yi, Jun-Chih Giseala Lin, & Kishimoto, 2003). Within a year of the group being established 46% of the international students who utilized the counseling center attended the group (Yi, Jun-Chih Giseala Lin, & Kishimoto, 2003). Therefore, in the results of this study it showed that more than half of the students were self-referred to the counseling center (Yi, Jun-Chih Giseala Lin, & Kishimoto, 2003). By having a support group with international students they will be able to learn from each other’s experiences (Arthur, 2004). Students will be able to learn about coping strategies and resources from one another in dealing with adjustment issues (Arthur, 2004). As a result of a beneficial experience in a group counseling session, international students may feel more comfortable in approaching a counselor for individual consultation (Arthur, 2004).

International Students: Who are they?

“America is a welcoming nation and keeping our doors open to men and women of good will from every part of the globe is vital to mutual understanding and to our own well-being,” said Patricia Harrison, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs (Open Doors, 2003, Opening Section, ¶1).

Since the end of WWII, the population of international students studying in American Universities has increased (Mori, 2000). “International students can be defined as individuals who are culturally different from the host culture and are temporary residents in pursuit of educational goals” (DeLucia-Waack, Gerrity, et al., 2004, p.254). The Institute of International Education (IIE) published an annual report on international education with support from the State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (Open Doors, 2003). The 2003 report stated that international students attending colleges and universities in the US was up less than 1% in 2002/03 with a total of 586,323 international students studying at American Universities. This is surprising especially since the past five years there had been steady growth. India continues to be the leading country with 74,603 students studying in America (Appendix A) (Open Doors, 2003). Out of the twenty leading places that international students study in America, Russia has the fewest students studying, with 6,238 (Open Doors, 2003) (Appendix A). International students overall net contribution to the U.S. economy in 2002/2003 was \$12,873,000,000 (Open Doors, Economic Impact, 2003). This contribution was through tuition and fees and living expenses (Open Doors, Economic Impact, 2003). International students add considerable amounts of wealth to our economy, but do not seem to be receiving adequate services to help them succeed in their studies.

In 2003, there were 8,599 international students studying in North Carolina (Appendix B) (Open Doors, 2003, Statistics). North Carolina State University had the highest number of international students in North Carolina with 1,659 students (Open Doors, 2003, Statistics). The leading field of study for most of the students was Business and Management, and Engineering (Open Doors, 2003, Statistics). Most students studying in NC

are from China and India (Open Doors, 2003, Statistics). In all NC schools there were 5,644 American students enrolled through study abroad programs (Appendix B) (Open Doors, 2003, Statistics). At North Carolina State University (NCSU) there were 29,854 students enrolled in 2003, most were graduate students (Appendix C-1) (University Planning & Analysis, *Enrollment and Persistence*, 2004). At NCSU, there were 237, non-resident aliens enrolled as undergraduates (University Planning & Analysis, *Enrollment and Persistence*, 2004). International students are defined as non-resident aliens (Appendix C-2) (University Planning & Analysis, *Enrollment and Persistence*, 2004). According to the NCSU definition of a non-resident alien, they are, “a person who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who is in this country on a visa or temporary basis and does not have the right to remain indefinitely” (University Planning & Analysis, Definitions of Terms, 2004).

Needs for Counseling: Mental Health of International Students

The mental health of international students is a concern. With the population of international students increasing there is a growing need for administrators and counseling services at institutions of higher education to tackle the issues facing this unique population (DeLucia-Waack, Gerrity, et al., 2004). They are faced with many stressors in adjusting to the American culture such as linguistic, academic, interpersonal, and financial problems (Mori, 2000). Because it costs so much to attend an American school and their families expect them to do well, it is an unimaginable thought to fail or drop a class (Mori, 2000). Therefore, international students who seek counseling deserve effective counseling services (Mori, 2000). In contrast to immigrants, international students are in the US for only short periods of time and in most cases plan to return home at some point in time (Mori, 2000). As a result of these students attending American schools they are here for the purpose of

achieving an educational goal; they are in a constant state of transition (Speck & Carmichael, 2002). The networks and/or social support systems of the international students are very different than their American peers (Speck & Carmichael, 2002). Since the families and friends of international students are not as close by as compared to most American social support systems that are, it makes it more difficult for international students to adjust (Speck & Carmichael, 2002).

Group Counseling for International Students

In this study the investigator attempted to show that group counseling and other interactive activities improve the overall adjustment of international students at NCSU. Psycho-educational and structured groups may be used when working with international students. A psycho-educational group is an appropriate way for issues related to cross-cultural transition to be introduced to international students (Arthur, 2004). The purpose of a psycho-educational group is to work with members who are somewhat well functioning but may need help in a certain area (Corey & Corey, 2002). “Without challenge, leading to dissonance, learning and growth cannot occur. Without support for the individual responding to these challenges, learning and growth may be stunted.” (Stage & Dannells, 2000, p. 19) Psychosocial and social development theories help students in their development of their own identity and the relationships between themselves and society (Stage & Dannells, 2000). The goal of a group will be to prevent participants’ educational deficits and psychological problems from increasing (Corey & Corey, 2002). A structured group usually focuses on a particular theme with the goal of providing awareness to the participants dealing with a life problem and tools to cope for daily living (Corey & Corey, 2002). International students time is precious therefore, they may come to a group session with a purpose to learn

strategies that will support their personal and academic success (Arthur, 2004). At the beginning and end of a structured group it is common to have the participants take a questionnaire on how they are coping with the area of concern in order to assess the participants potential progress as a result of the group sessions and/or other interventions (Corey & Corey, 2002).

As a counselor working with international students it is important for the counselor to be self-aware by being sensitive; aware of assumptions and values; having respect and tolerance for various value systems and ambiguity; and, a desire and genuineness to learn with and from the clients (Pedersen, 1991). Without the counselor being self-aware, unrealistic expectations for the counseling approach could be formed between the counselor and international student, which would make the process difficult (Pedersen, 1991). In recruiting international students it is best to go to their places of comfort when reaching out to various student organizations, to build a connection, trust and credibility with them (DeLucia-Waack, Gerrity, et al., 2004). Some type of prescreening is important when working with international students to prepare them for group work and to assess their language skills, acculturation levels, and overall appropriateness for the individual to be involved in a group (DeLucia-Waack, Gerrity, et al., 2004). In the first meeting the purpose, topics, and format of the sessions must be shared with the students (DeLucia-Waack, Gerrity, et al., 2004). Then through guidance from the group leader, goals must be set and confidentiality must be stressed in order to begin building trust amongst the group members (DeLucia-Waack, Gerrity, et al., 2004). The groups should consist of 8 to 10 international students with an hour or two (DeLucia-Waack, Gerrity, et al., 2004). There are some group sessions that can be 30 to 45 minutes for 4 to 15 weeks depending on the type of group and

timeframe for the group (Corey & Corey, 2002). Overall groups can be an “excellent social support for international students who are faced with transitional adjustment problems and issues in foreign cultures” (DeLucia-Waack, Gerrity, et al., 2004, p.262).

Group Counseling and Theory

There has been little research on group counseling with international students (DeLucia-Waack, Gerrity, et al., 2004). “The lack of grounded theory has been a major factor inhibiting research about international students” (Pedersen, 1991, p. 14). Grounded theory is the “systematic discovery of the theory from the data of social research,” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 3). “David (1972), Church (1982), and Kealey (1988) point out, an overemphasis on identifying adjustment problems or successful outcomes, without exploring the dynamics or process of adjustment itself, has inhibited the development of theories” (Pedersen, 1991, p. 14). Each international student needs to be viewed as a special case due to many existing theories not being able to provide a link between the values of international students home cultures and general theories of college student development (Pedersen, 1991). Most current research on international students is situational and a sample of convenience is used in looking for ways to improve the managing and supervising of international students; as a result, there is no mixture of research even with existing theories (Pedersen, 1991).

Pederson states, “In developing theories to understand the unique and complicated factors influencing international students’ success, it may be necessary either to modify theories now in use – as we must do to meet the needs of minority student populations, in any case – or to develop new theories” (Pedersen, 1991, p.15).

As a result, for the purpose of this study transitions theory, although it is a theory created for adults in transition, has many ideals that help to understand the transitions that international students go through as well. *Using Transition Theory to Understand Students' Global Experiences and Development* was presented at the 2004 annual American College Personnel Association (ACPA) convention in Philadelphia by Carolyn Bair of the University of Iowa and Connie Webster of the National-Louis University. The presentation highlighted their preliminary results of individual interviews of international students studying here in America and American students who were studying abroad and their dealings with transitioning through the American cultural experience (Bair & Webster, 2004). Transition is defined broadly as, "any event, or non-event, that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles," (Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman, 1995, p. 27). This transition is more related to the individual's perception of change (Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman, 1995). Schlossberg's three-phased model proposes that student's successful coping with transitions depends on how their four "Ss" are developed, available, and used (Bair & Webster, 2004). These four S's are:

1. Student's unique situation;
2. Student's sense of self (personal qualities);
3. Support available to the Student; and,
4. Strategies employed by the student in coping with the transition. (Bair & Webster, 2004).

The investigator proposes that international students transition through three phases: Moving In, Moving Through, and Moving On. In phase one, Moving In, international students are learning how to adjust to their new cultural environment through orientation

activities that will help them in understanding the cultural differences between them and Americans. In phase two, Moving Through, the students are becoming a part of the American culture by being engaged in events and/or activities with the Americans. By phase three, Moving on, the students will find that they have changed and/or grown. If they are returning to their home country, culture shock will be a hindrance towards their successful re-entry into their home country (Bair & Webster, 2004). These three stages can be utilized as a developmental model for student affairs' professionals as they continue to "challenge and support" international students through their transitions.

Proposed Adjustment Model for International Students

Schlossberg's theory has significant utility for understanding the overall adjustment of international students at American universities. International students are trying to define themselves and are constantly going through transitions. The investigator proposed a programming model, adapted from NCSU's Transitions model for Student Affairs' professionals to use when planning programs and interventions for college students (Grant, Phillips, et al., 2000). In the NCSU Transitions model students go through three main stages:

1. Adjustment to College Life;
2. University Life; and,
3. Life Beyond College.

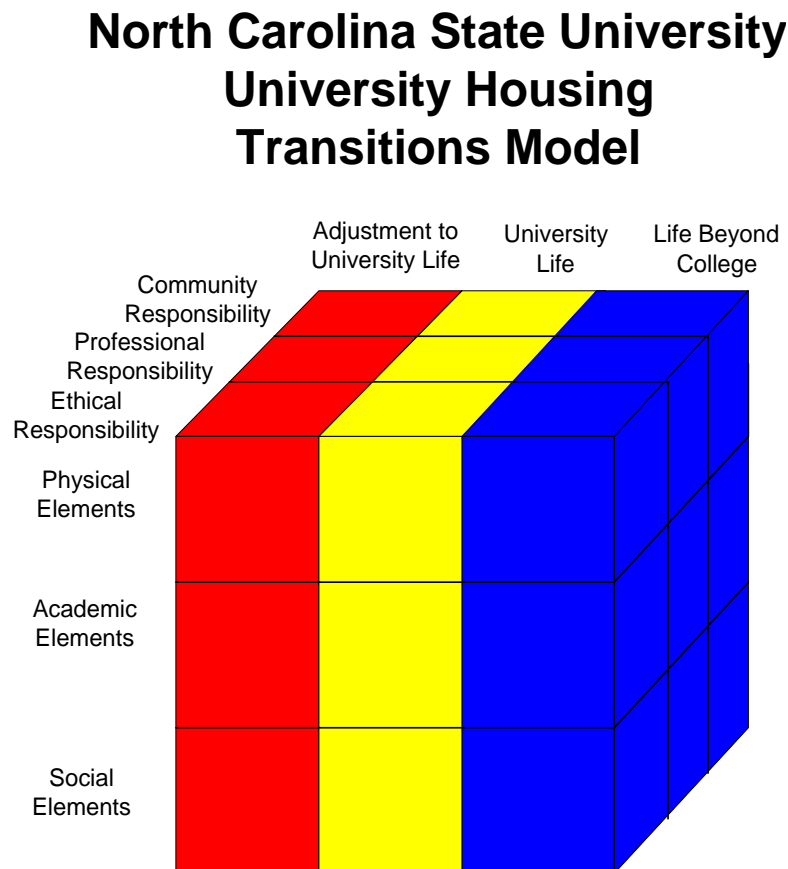
Within these three stages Student Affairs' professionals must include programs that deal with the following areas:

1. Community;
2. Professional; and/or,
3. Ethical.

Then within each of those areas the programs must address:

1. Physical;
2. Academic; and/or,
3. Social awareness.

The NCSU University Housing Transitions Model: (Figure 1) (Grant, Phillips, et al., 2000)



The investigator proposed a similar model, called the International Student Adjustment Transitions Model (ISATM) and adapted it for transitions theory. Student Affairs' professionals can use it when planning programming and intervention techniques for international students to help them with their overall adjustment to American culture. This

model can be used as a foundation for creating counseling groups for international students.

This proposed program model could be used in helping international students adjust to living in America. The group sessions can be set up to help students transition through the three main stages. Within the stages, interactive activities could also be introduced to aid the students in their development.

With this Transitions Model students go through three main stages:

1. Moving In;
2. Moving Through; and,
3. Moving On.

Within these three areas Student Affairs' professionals should offer programs that deal with the following topics:

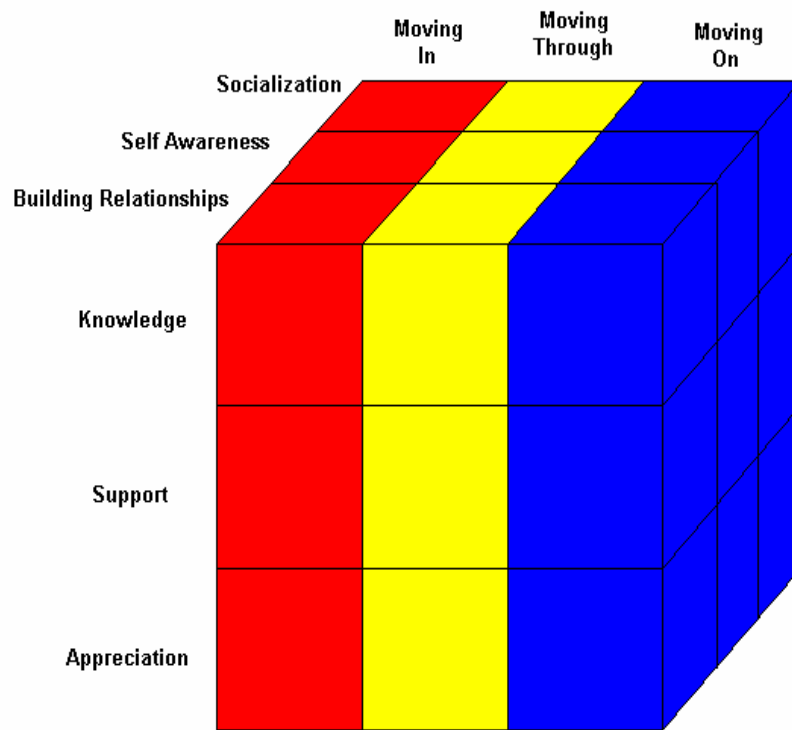
1. Socialization;
2. Self-Awareness; and,
3. Building Relationships.

Then within the above-mentioned areas programming can be created that will focus on:

1. Knowledge;
2. Support; and,
3. Appreciation.

See the proposed model below: (Figure 2)

International Students Adjustment to Institutions of Higher Education Transitions Model



Program Suggestions

Moving In: Socialization: Knowledge

- Orientation to the US: Have current international students participate in the orientation sessions of the international students by helping them to understand the American educational system from their experiences.
- Provide a resources handout with some of the following on it: Websites for American Slangs, Dave's ESL Café <http://www.eslcafe.com/>, at this sight international students can learn about American idioms and slang (Speck & Carmichael, 2002).

Moving In: Building Relationships: Support

- Living in a residence hall, where roommates in the hall must be an American and international, so that students will be able to learn and practice their English and vice versa, American students can practice the language that they are studying.
- Faculty and/or student Mentors: since international students like to have older role models this will be helpful in their initial adjustments (faculty can act in the role of older and/or more wise advisors).

Moving Through: Self Awareness: Support

- Support Group, in place of individual counseling, that allows students to discuss issues related to homesickness, language problems, and academic and social stressors (Carr, Koyama, & Thiagarajan, 2003).

Moving Through: Socialization: Appreciation

- Co-sponsorship of cultural programs with support services on the campus such as: Office of international Student Services and the Office of Study Abroad.
- Ongoing global discussions with faculty and staff.

Moving On: Self Awareness: Support

- Group sessions on dealing with re-entry into their home countries.
- Life planning skills: marriage, family, etc.

Examples of actual groups for international students going through transition:

This example demonstrates how a group could be created to help students as they are going through the Move In stage of the transitions model. In March 1983 an intensive group experience in coping with transitions was conducted by three professional members of the Division of Academic Counseling for Overseas Students and the Psychological Services Center of the Hebrew University (Bendersky, Casoy, et al., 1984). The sample included nine South American students, four men and five women of the ages of 17 to 20 who were undergoing significant changes in adapting to a new society, culture, and language at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Bendersky, Casoy, et al., 1984). Students were recruited via letters inviting them to an informational meeting and personal interviews were conducted for those that were interested (Bendersky, Casoy, et al., 1984). The group workshop was divided into 2-days for two one and a half hour sessions each day focusing on a particular theme proposed by the participants (Bendersky, Casoy, et al., 1984). There were three main objectives of the group:

- 1) To create an exploratory and cooperative atmosphere in the group so that the participants could become aware of their feelings, reactions, and behaviors concerning their adjustment;
 - 2) To help students develop a better cognitive understanding of transitional situations by providing selected theoretical concepts related to coping with major life changes;
- and,

3) The creation of a network of interpersonal relationships that could serve as a source of support in the future. (Bendersky, Casoy, et al., 1984, p. 555).

Overall the group's purpose was to show that the students were not alone in having to deal with coping with change (Bendersky, Casoy, et al., 1984). The results of the group showed that there was a willingness of the participants to open up and explore coping abilities with others (Bendersky, Casoy, et al., 1984). This suggests that there is a need for more experiences such as this one to aid people in living in transition situations (Bendersky, Casoy, et al., 1984).

In this next example it demonstrates how a group could be created to help students as they are going through the Move On stage of the transitions model. A pilot study was done to suggest that a group program would be a strategy for assisting international students in their sojourn home (Westwood, Scott, et al., 1986). Such a group program could minimize the disorientation and shock of re-entry of international students to their host countries (Westwood, Scott, et al., 1986). There was increased contact between participants as a result of trust and inclusion being created and defensiveness being decreased (Westwood, Scott, et al., 1986). By having the group establish common goals and strategies they become invaluable resources to each other as they go throughout the group process (Westwood, Scott, et al., 1986). There was a pre- and post- questionnaire utilized by the 46 participants in the pilot group study to see if the group impacted them or not (Westwood, Scott, et al., 1986). In describing the benefits of the workshop, the students were appreciative of group discussions and visualization for helping them cope with re-entry to their home countries from their host country (Westwood, Scott, et al., 1986).

The International Students Adjustment Transitions Model may be used to aid professionals in student affairs with international students in their adjustment. For the purpose of this study, group sessions were developed to help students move through the International Students Adjustment Transitions Model.

Research Questions

The investigator proposed that a support group for international students will help them in their adjustment to the American college system. As a result, the investigator will attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. Research Question 1: Does the treatment group have higher mean College Student Experience Questionnaire (CSEQ) scores after the group sessions?
2. Research Question 2: Does the treatment group have higher mean International Student Adjustment Questionnaire (ISAQ) scores after the group sessions?
3. Research Question 3: Does the treatment group have higher mean College Student Experience Questionnaire (CSEQ) scores than the control group students?
4. Research Question 4: Does the treatment group have higher mean International Student Adjustment Questionnaire (ISAQ) scores than the control group students?

Methodology

Procedures

The investigator contacted the NCSU's Office of Registrar and Records to obtain email information for all international students that came into the university in the fall of 2004 and spring of 2005. There were a total of 416 international students currently enrolled for the 2004-2005 academic year. Out of the 416 international students, 368 of them enrolled in the fall of 2004 and 48 enrolled in the spring of 2005. The investigator emailed the

students enrolled at NCSU to see if they would be interested in being a part of the research study (Appendix D-1). Attached to the email were a pre-questionnaire and the Informed Consent form (Appendices D-2 and D-3). In addition to the email, the investigator attended orientation sessions for international students at the beginning of the spring semester. The purpose of the pre-questionnaire was for the investigator to be able to review before making final decisions on which student would be a part of the support groups in order to prevent the groups from going over ten participants.

Treatment and Control Groups

The treatment group consisted of 10 participants that participated in a four-week group intervention from the week of February 9th through March 3rd, 2005. The 10 participants took a pre-test at the beginning and a post-test at the end of the four group sessions. The one-hour meetings from 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm were held in a central part of the NCSU campus for easy access of the students to the meeting location and ethnic food was provided for each group session.

The control group consisted of 10 participants who did not participate in the group interventions; this group of students took the post-test only. The investigator proposed to show that the international students adjustment to the American collegiate system would be improved as a result of the four group sessions.

The investigator created the following plan for each group session:

Interactive Activities

During the month of February 2005, the participants of the group were encouraged to attend programs in an International Residence Hall, programs offered by OISSS and programs around the campus of NCSU. By participation in these activities, the investigator

expected to enhance the international students overall adjustment. Some of these activities were as follows:

- o Ethnic Dinners
- o Trip to Local Museums
- o Celebration of Cultural Holidays: Example- Chinese New Year
- o English Conversation Club (OISSS)
- o Global Gatherings (OISSS)

Group Sessions

In order to reach the students at NCSU, the investigator created a four-session group intervention for international students with the goal of aiding them with their overall adjustment to the American university system based on the investigator's International Students Adjustment Transitions Model (ISATM). At the end of the sessions the group members were asked to record their reactions in journals. The purpose of journaling was to help the students in processing their thoughts and feelings after each session. Corey 2002 notes that by having participants document their thoughts they will be more able to verbalize them during group sessions; overall it helps participants to gain more from the group experience (Corey & Corey, 2002). The journal entries were not used as a part of the results of this study. The goals for the group sessions were as follows:

- To help international students build trust with the overall group counseling process.
- To provide a safe place for international students to come together and share their thoughts and experiences and to realize they are not alone.
- To provide coping skills for international students to better adjust to the American collegiate experience.

There were a total of four sessions. Each session had a specific objective and focus. The investigator served as the group leader for all group sessions.

First Session Topic: Why are we here?

ISATM focus: Moving In - Self Awareness - Support

Objective: To get the group to assess the purpose of the group, goals, and what they hope to gain from the group sessions.

Description of Activity: The first group session was an introductory session of the group process and its purpose. Group members were asked, why they were here and what they hoped to gain from the group process over the next four weeks. Then the group came up with overall expectations of the group. The group leader discussed the importance of confidentiality. Knowing that the group members could potentially see each other on the campus at various events. The leader reassured students that the things discussed in the group sessions would stay in the group and would be held in confidence. The group leader went over the importance of respecting one another when sharing personal stories. The leader explained that the purpose of the support group was not to tell them how they should think or do things, but to help them assess for themselves the best way to deal with the challenges of adjusting to the American culture and collegiate system. Students were encouraged to be willing to share what is important to them and what makes them who they are. By listening to one another's stories the others were able to learn how others cope with adjusting to the living and learning in America. The investigator hoped to show by learning from others the participants could develop new ways of coping.

Second Session Topic: Who am I?

ISATM: Moving In - Self Awareness – Appreciation

Objective: To get the group members to gain trust of one another by defining whom they were and then sharing their personal experiences in a safe and welcoming environment.

Description of Activity: This was a trust building exercise to help the international students become comfortable with sharing their personal experiences with others. Group members were asked to go around and share anything that they would have liked about themselves. If the members were quiet the investigator prompted them with questions such as: What is your name? Where are you from? Describe your family make up. What do you love about your home country? What do you love about your home school? What traditions from your home country are most important to you? What are important values to you? What are you studying? What made you decide to be an international exchange student? Have you had an international exchange experience before? If yes, please describe the experience. What suggestions would you have for those who are experiencing an exchange for the first time?

After each group member introduced themselves, the group leader checked in with the group to see how did it feel to share so much about them? Did they still have some of the same resistances they initially had when first entering the room for the group meeting? Did they feel more comfortable and why or why not? The hope would be that group members would build trust and appreciation of themselves and others in the group.

Session Three Topic: Overcoming Culture Shock and Cultural Awareness

ISATM: Moving Through – Socialization – Knowledge

Objective: To get the group to share what were key concerns prohibiting them from having an enjoyable international exchange experience and to get the group to understand and be able to live with the culture around them.

Description of Activity: First, the group defines culture shock. The investigator then posed questions relating to culture shock to the group and let them share their responses with one another. As a result of hearing what each other had to say about culture shock and how they had dealt with it, the hope was that the others would be able to see new ways of dealing with culture shock.

The group leader posed some of the following ideals and/or questions to the group:

Culture shock is, “an initial reaction of adjustment to a different cultural environment.” (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001, p.39). Many of us have experienced culture shock as a reaction to missing someone or something close to us (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001).

With culture shock, you may feel a loss of personal control (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001). Little things such as getting the local news or buying your favorite item from the grocery store could cause culture shock (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001). “Have you experienced such a loss of personal control over the events around you after your arrival to the United States? If yes, how long did it last? Who did you expect to help you? Who helped you the most during your first few days here in the United States?” (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001).

Language barriers can also be a part of culture shock (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001). “Have you experienced difficulties in understanding other people? Have you ever felt embarrassed because of this? Did you feel that sometimes people could not understand you? Did you feel disappointed about having these problems? Did you ever blame yourself for the lack of your language skills?” (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001).

Habits and lifestyles change when you are in a new environment (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001). The food you eat or newspaper you read (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001). These changes can be positive (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001). When thinking of yourself, “after arriving in the United States, did you acquire new habits that you consider useful and valuable? Did you lose some habits that you’re glad you got rid of?” (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001).

To ensure the session was ended on a good note. The last set of questions were used if needed to help the group see that they are developing new habits and lifestyles that are enhancing their overall life experiences that make them more valuable members of this world that they can take back with them to their home countries.

In discussing cultural awareness the investigator worked towards having the group understand the culture around them by first asking and responding to questions they have had about American culture; with the hope of the group learning to be able to change their thinking about their overall cultural experience.

“How often do you feel that your personal values are different from the values of most people around you?” (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001). Values that are understood in your country may not be respected in your host country (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001). There is a feeling of disappointment at times when you realize that your values are not the same as the host country (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001). “What values that are widely accepted in the US are somewhat difficult to accept by those who are going through an adjustment process?” (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001). “Can you recall any wrong perceptions or expectations you had about the United States prior to your arrival here but later changed your opinions to more positive ones?” (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001).

Session Four Topic: Coping Strategies for Daily Living

ISATM: Moving Through – Socialization – Knowledge

Objective: To encourage international students to develop new thinking strategies to deal with their adjustment to American culture and their collegiate experience.

Description of Activity: In this final session the group leader posed ideals and questions to the group to help them assess how they were coping in-order for all participants to gain insight on different ways of coping outside of the group sessions.

The group leader posed some of the following ideals and/or questions to the group:

By beginning to self-evaluate yourself, you will see strengths in areas that you will have the opportunity to improve in. “What if some people do not understand your English?” (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001). What is your strength? You know more than one language. You have time, with the help of your American counterparts and peers to help you improve on your English. You must encourage yourself and others. Do you agree? What are your thoughts on this? Give other examples.

Based on our previous sessions and your experiences thus far in the US, how many of you have had false perceptions of America before coming here? (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001). Did you perceive Americans to live like the new hot show, *Desperate Housewives*, *Bernie Mac Show*, *My Wife and Kids*, *Still Standing*, *Raymond* or *The George Lopez Show*? Did the media in your country influence your perceptions of America? (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001). As a result of these group sessions, will you be able to re-evaluate your expectations of American culture? (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001).

Restate for the group, from our first session, what are important holidays or traditions you miss from your home countries? How can you share your important traditions here in

the collegiate setting? By remembering what is important to you and sharing that experience with others, we will be able to learn from you just as you are learning from us. For example, you can lead a program in which we will celebrate, Chinese New Year. This would be a great opportunity for students to come together and learn about the history and traditions associated with Chinese New Year. By doing this you are creating your own social climate to help you feel comfortable in this new environment; you are creating your own self-discovery method (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001).

Participants

The total voluntary sample consisted of 20 students. The investigator organized two treatment groups to accommodate the meeting availability of the volunteers. The first group met on Wednesday and consisted of 3 participants and the second group met on Thursday and consisted of 7 participants. The investigator led both groups following the same format set up for this study as mentioned in the procedures section. The treatment group consisted of a total of 10 international students participating in a four-week group intervention. The control group consisted of 10 international students who took the post-test only.

In the treatment group there were 5 female and 5 male participants. The participants were from China, Denmark, France, India, Ireland, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, and the Bahamas. There were 2 Asians, 1 Bahamian, 1 Hispanic/Latino, 2 Irish, and 4 Caucasian participants. The participants ranged in ages 18 – 35. They were classified as 7 undergraduates and 2 graduate students.

The control group consisted of 8 males and 2 females. They were from China, England, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Philippines, and Spain. There were 6 Asian and 4

Caucasian participants. The participants ranged in ages from 20 – 33. Six of the students were undergraduates and four were graduate students.

Dependent Variables

The dependant variables used for this study were scores on the CSEQ and ISAQ:

C. Robert Pace developed the CSEQ in the 1970s at the University of California Los Angeles and in 1979 it was introduced as a multi-institutional survey tool (Gonyea, Kish, et. al., 2003). Since the 1970s it has been revised three times, the second edition in 1983, third edition in 1990, and the forth edition in 1998 (Gonyea, Kish, et. al., 2003). There have been more than 300,000 students from more than 400 colleges and universities in the United States that have taken this instrument (Gonyea, Kish, et. al., 2003). The fourth edition has been administered to over 100,000 students from over 200 institutions (Gonyea, Kish, et. al., 2003). As of 1994, Indiana University Bloomington houses the CSEQ research program under the leadership of George Kuh, Chancellor's Professor of Higher Education and Director of the Center for Postsecondary Research, Policy, and Planning (Gonyea, Kish, et. al., 2003). This instrument remains as one of few in the nation that "inventories both the processes of learning (e.g., interactions with faculty, collaboration with peers, and writing experiences) and progress toward desired outcomes of college (e.g., intellectual skills, interpersonal competence, and personal values)" (Gonyea, Kish, et. al., 2003, p.3). The instrument has over 150 items to help student affairs professionals obtain a comprehensive view of the student experience (Gonyea, Kish, et. al., 2003). The instrument collects data on the "students' background (such as: age, sex, class, race and ethnicity, residency, major, and parent's education level) and asks questions about the student's experience with the

institution in three areas: (a) quality of effort or college activities, (b) the college environment, and (c) estimate of gains” (Gonyea, Kish, et. al., 2003, p.3).

The reliability for the items for each scale correlated significantly with each other, and each item correlated well with the total score for its scale. The intercorrelation of the 14 Estimate of Gains scales ranged from .08 to .80. The intercorrelation of the College Environment items ranged from .21 to .59 and the Quality of Effort scales correlated with each other from .06 to .63. The alpha reliability ranged from .81 to .91 for all scales. Test-retest correlations are not available. (Connolly, 1997, ¶20).

The logical relationships among the items on the same scale are how face validity is based on the CSEQ (Connolly, 1997). There are three major scales: Quality of Effort (College Activities), College Environment, and Estimate of Gains (Connolly, 1997). A dominant factor in every scale was indicated by a factor analysis and resulted in three general factors (Connolly, 1997). Person-social and academic-intellectual were two factors on the factor analysis of the Quality of Effort scale (Connolly, 1997). On the College Environment Scale, three factors emerged as a result of the factor analysis: scholarly and intellectual emphasis; quality of personal relations; and vocational and practical emphasis (Connolly, 1997). For the Estimate of Gains there were five factors that emerged from the factor analysis: general education, personal/social development, science and technology, vocational preparation, and intellectual skills (Connolly, 1997). Through the correlations among the activity scales construct validity is shown (Connolly, 1997).

The CSEQ was designed to measure student experience not student adjustment. The investigator did not find any instruments that measured adjustment for the purposes of this study. The investigator utilized the instrument as an antecedent variable. The CSEQ was

used as a predecessor variable to reach a desired outcome. The outcome for the purpose of this study was adjustment. As a result, the investigator believed that the better a student's experience in the collegiate environment the better their adjustment. A researcher may use the CSEQ to identify various combinations of the survey items to measure constructs that relate to their particular study within higher education (Gonyea, Kish, et. al., 2003). The college environment section was the main focus for this study. In the college environment section it reviews what people perceive to be characteristic of the environment (Gonyea, Kish, et. al., 2003). Therefore this section assesses "student perceptions of the psychological climate for learning that exists on the campus" (Gonyea, Kish, et. al., 2003, p. 5). There are ten college environment rating scales in this section of which seven of them ask students to rate how strongly the campus emphasizes various aspects of student development and the remaining three ask the student's perceptions of relationships with students, faculty, and administrative personnel at the institution (Gonyea, Kish, et. al., 2003). For the purposes of this study the investigator focused on the last three areas only in the environment section regarding relationships; the other items on the CSEQ could be used for future studies in the area of international student adjustment. These three items are labeled as the Quality of Personal Relations and are: 1) Relationship with other students, student groups, and activities, 2) Relationship with administrative personnel and offices, and 3) Relationship with faculty members (Gonyea, Kish, et. al., 2003). "These are rated on a seven-point Likert scale with one end defined by such terms as competitive, rigid, and remote and the other end defined by terms like friendly, approachable, and helpful" (Gonyea, Kish, et. al., 2003, p.5). The areas surrounding relationships were used in this study because it is important to the overall adjustment of international students. A research study conducted at an American

university examined factors that influenced the personal adjustment of international students and “provided evidence of a strong relationship between the development of strong ties with others and the personal adjustment of international students studying at an American university as measured by their levels of self-esteem” (Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998, p. 722). By having American friends as resources in interpreting and assimilating into the American culture internationals become more adjusted to the American collegiate experience (Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998). Therefore, it is important for institutions of higher education to foster these interactions by providing opportunities for internationals and American interactions (Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998).

The second dependent variable scores on the International Student Adjustment Questionnaire (ISAQ), was designed to measure how students were adjusting to the American collegiate experience (Appendix E). The ISAQ includes demographic questions such as: gender, home country, ethnicity, classification, country of citizenship, age, classification and language. The questionnaire consists of 11 questions of student adjustment issues or concerns such as use of English, fear of failing a class, and worries about finances. The participant is asked to respond with yes or no, with yes coded as (1) meaning there is a concern or adjustment issues and no coded as (0) being no concern or issue. Therefore the higher the score the more concerns or adjustment issues the students are going through. In contrast the lower the score the fewer adjustment issues the students are going through. For the purposes of this study the investigator used all the responses except for questions 9 and 10, because these questions related to planning for the future. The highest score that a student could attain would be 9 and the lowest 0. The second part of the ISAQ had open-

ended questions. For the purposes of this study the qualitative data were used only to help interpret the results from the CSEQ and ISAQ.

Results

The total participants in this study was 20. For the purposes of this study a p-value of .10 was used due to the explorative nature and low number of participants in each group session. There was a higher chance for a Type I Error. The investigator was willing to accept more risk due to this study being based on group therapy, which yielded minimal risk to the participants; therefore, a p-value of .10 was a reasonable p-value for this type of study.

In responding to the research questions:

1. Research Question 1: Does the treatment group have higher mean CSEQ scores after the group sessions?

- a) There were no significant differences found between pre-test and post-test mean CSEQ scores for the treatment group. (Tables 1 and 2) (Appendices F and G)

2. Research Question 2: Does the treatment group have higher mean ISAQ scores after the group sessions?

- a) The second time the group took the test their mean scores increased, but the significance was low, therefore there were no significant differences. (Tables 1 and 2) (Appendices F and G)

3. Research Question 3: Does the treatment group have higher mean CSEQ scores than the control group students?

- a) There were no significant differences between the treatment and control group. (Table 3) (Appendix H)

4. Research Question 4: Does the treatment group have higher mean ISAQ scores than the control group students?

- a) There was a significant difference between the treatment and control group. The control group's level of adjustment was not as high as the students in the treatment group. (Table 3) (Appendix H)

Discussion

With the investigator's instrument, the ISAQ, there was one difference between the treatment and control group, where it appeared that the control group was dealing with more adjustment issues than the treatment group. Some positives of group interaction from international students is that the group sessions helped enhance their social networks, allowed them to practice English, and opened the doors to mental health services on campus, and the participants, etc. (Smith, Chin, et al., 1999). The fact that the treatment group was meeting with other international students over a four-week period may have aided them in building social networks. Although this appears to be favorable to the group sessions there is no proof that the students in the group adjusted better as a result of being in the group sessions. There could have been more factors affecting their overall adjustment, such as activities and/or interactions with other international and/or American students outside of the group sessions that aided them in their adjustment.

Based on the overall findings there was no significant difference between the control and treatment groups. This may have been due to the instruments. The CSEQ was designed to measure student experience. The investigator utilized the instrument as an antecedent variable. This instrument showed that there was no impact within the college environment. The investigator created the ISAQ and had no validity or reliability tests done to ensure its

accuracy on measuring adjustment. There was no variability in the responses on the ISAQ's eleven questions. The participants had to answer yes or no to the questions which limited the variance in the responses and could have affected the results of this study.

The investigator did not have a pretest for both the treatment and control group. As a result, there was no baseline for the results of the study to be compared. If there were a true baseline there could have been a better comparison that could have shown a significant change. The investigator chose to test the control group only once due to the short duration of time, four weeks.

Based on the findings, the group process had no significant impact on the students. This may have been due to the self-selection, length of time, and/or the sample size of participants being too small. Self-selection versus random assignment to groups could have biased the research as well because the participants in the study may have already been doing things to increase their adjustment and/or knew that they needed some assistance in adjusting. Students could have had pre-existing characteristics that were brought into the group. These pre-existing characteristics could have been due to the group meetings starting in February instead of January. The participants may have already developed relationships that had aided them in their overall adjustment. The sessions should have been set to begin in August 2004 and go through December 2004 in order to allow time to accurately assess the students adjustment over a semester. Some of the participants had been at the university since August of 2004, which means they had five to six months before the sessions began to adjust. If there was a bigger sample size there may have been more of a change in the results. In a research study on the effects of a structured group intervention on academic achievement and retention of first year college students, it was found that a limitation to the

study was the small sample size (Stonehouse & Ting, 2000). In the study only 28 of the 70 voluntary students attended a portion of the program sessions (Stonehouse & Ting, 2000).

Another reason for no change on the students adjustment may have been the overall format or content of the group meetings. The group sessions were divided into four sessions that focused on the investigator's International Student Adjustment Transitions Model. The sessions were set up to help the students move through the three stages of: Moving In, Moving Through and Moving On. The sessions were set up with objectives to help them move through the transitions model such as who they were, why they were here in America, cultural shock and awareness and coping mechanisms for daily living. A similar model for Asian students was developed to help students in their adjustment to an American collegiate experience. There were four stages proposed: Prearrival, initial, ongoing, and return-home adjustments are the four-stages proposed (Lin & Yi, 1997). The four stage model for Asian students proposed that the students would be able to move through these stages over a six-month period or more. The investigator's proposed model could not be proven due to the time-limited set of group sessions.

Implications

The most common advantages to groups include (a) creating a sense of belonging among students facing common issues associated with American university life, (b) experiencing support from one another through sharing common experiences and concerns, and (c) learning coping behaviors in dealing with stressful life changes in an unfamiliar environment. (DeLucia-Waack, Gerrity, et al., 2004, p.262).

The investigator believes that the group did create a sense of belonging and were able to share common experiences that would continue to enhance their overall coping skills. The

treatment group's responses on the open-ended questions section on the ISAQ indicated that participants benefited from some of the interactions. In a response to the first open-ended question, "what will help you, an international student, in your overall adjustment to American culture?" on the post-test (Appendix E), the student stated: "international group meetings like this are very helpful because experiences are similar among international students." Another student stated, "to have group meetings like this one." Additional responses from the ISAQ were: "being introduced to other international students going through the same experience. ... ", "having people around me who are going through the same experience," would help in their overall adjustment. This shows that there is a need for international students to interact with other international students to share and cope with their experiences.

The group process is a good way to open up the doors of counseling to international students. When a group intervention is framed as an educational experience international students are more likely to attend (Arthur, 2004). By having groups in place international students overall adjustment to the American collegiate system will be increased.

Future studies

For future work with international students and group intervention it would be best to begin at the beginning of the fall semester and conduct the groups over an entire semester for at least a one and 1/2 hour sessions. The investigator could recruit participants during the orientation sessions and set up meetings for the whole semester. In 2001, Jacob and Greggo in order to provide ongoing adjustment support for international students and increase their social support networks with Americans they developed a cultural exchange program (CEP) model (Jacob & Greggo, 2001). During orientation events international students were

encouraged to participate in CEP which, included picnics, club or business meetings, and a focus group (DeLucia-Waack, Gerrity, et al., 2004). The focus groups were used to examine various adjustment issues that were faced by international students, such as: “(a) cultural/social, (b) environment, (c) language, (d) classroom, (e) social, and (f) contact with counseling students” (DeLucia-Waack, Gerrity, et al., 2004, p. 257). By recruiting earlier and having the sessions earlier international students may benefit more from the sessions in helping them to build friendships and/or relationships with other international students.

Additional instruments could be explored and/or created to measure adjustment. There could be more investigation on the current existence of an adjustment questionnaire for the purposes of examining the adjustment issues of international students. Or, an adjustment questionnaire could be created and/or modified from the investigator’s ISAQ and then tested for reliability and validity to be used in future studies. If the CSEQ were to be used again for this type of study the other scales that were not analyzed in this study could be explored such as the quality of effort or estimate of gains scales. Also, within the college environment scales there were seven additional scales that were not analyzed in this study that could be explored in the future to see if there was any significant changes.

Closing

Student affairs professionals should utilize this report as a resource towards working to help international students in their overall adjustment to the American collegiate system. The research has shown as mentioned in this report that it is important for student affairs professionals to utilize diverse methods for reaching out to the international students by having staff specialize in international student counseling and services, attending orientation sessions and group meetings of international students, providing group sessions to foster

support, etc. Student affairs professionals should continue to seek new ways in reaching this diverse population in order to assist them in having a healthy and memorable student experience not plagued by mental health issues or concerns. The first step in change is today, for if change is put off for tomorrow it may be too late.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Table 1

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TOTALS BY LEADING PLACES OF ORIGIN					
				2002/03	% of U.S. Int'l
Rank	Place of Origin	2001/02	2002/03	% Change	Student Total
1	India	66,836	74,603	11.6	12.7
2	China	63,211	64,757	2.4	11.0
3	Korea, Republic of	49,046	51,519	5.0	8.8
4	Japan	46,810	45,960	-1.8	7.8
5	Taiwan	28,930	28,017	-3.2	4.8
6	Canada	26,514	26,513	0.0	4.5
7	Mexico	12,518	12,801	2.3	2.2
8	Turkey	12,091	11,601	-4.1	2.0
9	Indonesia	11,614	10,432	-10.2	1.8
10	Thailand	11,606	9,982	-14.0	1.7
11	Germany	9,613	9,302	-3.2	1.6
12	Brazil	8,972	8,388	-6.5	1.4
13	United Kingdom	8,414	8,326	-1.0	1.4
14	Pakistan	8,644	8,123	-6.0	1.4
15	Hong Kong	7,757	8,076	4.1	1.4
16	Kenya	7,097	7,862	10.8	1.3
17	Colombia	8,068	7,771	-3.7	1.3
18	France	7,401	7,223	-2.4	1.2
19	Malaysia	7,395	6,595	-10.8	1.1
20	Russia	6,643	6,238	-6.1	1.1
	WORLD TOTAL	582,996	586,323	0.6	

(Open Doors, 2003)

Appendix B

STATISTICS ON INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE IN NORTH CAROLINA (Table 1)

FOREIGN STUDENTS IN NORTH CAROLINA 2002/03 (Rank # 21)	8,599 (down 4.0%)
ESTIMATED FOREIGN STUDENTS EXPENDITURE IN NORTH CAROLINA 2002/03 (in millions of dollars)	\$183.4

TOP NORTH CAROLINA INSTITUTIONS WITH 1,000 OR MORE FOREIGN STUDENTS 2002/03 (Table 2)

Institution	City	Total
<i>North Carolina State University</i>	<i>Raleigh</i>	<i>1,659</i>
<i>Duke University</i>	<i>Durham</i>	<i>1,533</i>
<i>University of North Carolina</i>	<i>Chapel Hill</i>	<i>1,412</i>

LEADING FIELD OF STUDY FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS IN NORTH CAROLINA (Table 3)

Field of Study	% Total
Business & Management	19.0
Engineering	18.9
Other	15.3
Math & Comp. Sci.	10.3
Physical & Life Sciences	9.2

LEADING COUNTRY OF ORIGIN FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS IN NORTH CAROLINA (Table 4)

Country of Origin	% Total	<i>Total Number</i>
China	16.0	1,378
India	15.1	1,299
Republic of Korea	8.5	730
Canada	4.6	393
Japan	4.3	370

AMERICAN STUDENTS ABROAD (Table 5)

TOTAL NUMBER OF U.S. STUDY ABROAD STUDENTS ENROLLED THROUGH NORTH CAROLINA INSTITUTIONS (01/02)	5,664
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(Open Doors, Statistics, 2003)

Appendix C-1

NCSU Common Data Set for 2003-2004

(University Planning & Analysis, 2004)

Institutional Enrollment as of October 15, 2003 (Table 1)

GRAND total Enrollment: 29,854

EX 1. In-State Out-State Enrollment				
Student Level	In-State	Out-State	Internat'l	Total
Undergraduate Degree-seeking	18,568	1,563	183	20,314
Undergraduate Non degree-seeking	2,453	145	59	2,657
Subtotal	21,021	1,708	242	22,971
First Professional Degree Seeking	280	27		307
First Professional Subtotal	280	27		307
Graduate Degree Seeking	3,907	515	1,243	5,665
Graduate Non degree-seeking	804	87	20	911
Graduate Subtotal	4,711	602	1,263	6,576
Grand Total	26,012	2,337	1,505	29,854

(University Planning & Analysis, *Enrollment and Persistence*, 2004)

Appendix C-2

Enrollment by Racial/Ethnic Category. Provide numbers of undergraduate students for each of the following categories as of the institution's official fall reporting date or as of October 15, 2003. Include international students only in the category "Nonresident aliens." (Table 2)

	Degree-seeking, First-time, First- Year	Degree-seeking Undergraduates (Includes first-time first-year)	Total Undergraduates (both degree- and non-degree-seeking)
Non-resident aliens	25	179	237
Black, non-Hispanic	384	2,085	2,351
American Indian or Alaskan Native	27	141	158
Asian or Pacific Islander	164	999	1,229
Hispanic	87	406	477
White, non-Hispanic	3,244	16,504	18,519
Race/ethnicity unknown			
Total	3,931	20,314	22,971

(University Planning & Analysis, *Enrollment and Persistence*, 2004)

Appendix D-1

Email to international students:

Hello, my name is Durenda Johnson Ward; I am a counseling graduate student here at NCSU. I am so excited that you are here at NCSU! I hope that you will have a great experience here. I am emailing to see if you would like to be a part of an international student support group for five weeks only in February 2005. The purpose of the group will be for you to come and share your experiences at NCSU, to learn how to adjust well, and learn from other international students about their experiences. Food will be provided for each meeting from a different country for each of the five meetings. There will be new international students who are here for the first time and international students who came five months ago to NCSU for the first time.

I am conducting a research study on the overall adjustment of international students to the United States American college system. I am inviting you to be involved in the group meetings so that I can observe your adjustment and provide a safe place for you to learn from others as you work towards having a good experience here at NCSU. If you agree to participate you will be asked to take a questionnaire before the group meetings begin and after they end. I will use the results from the questionnaire and the group meetings to be able to evaluate how you are adjusting to living in United States. I believe that by being a part of such a support group, it will help you have a great experience at NCSU. Also, if you would like, you will be invited to various activities at NCSU to also help you in your overall adjustment.

If you would like to be involved in my research study but not involved in the actual group meetings. Please let me know. I will need about 20 students to agree to just take the questionnaire at the beginning of the five weeks and at the end of the five weeks, but you will not be a part of the group meetings.

If you are interested in the Group Meetings please let me know if you can meet on Wednesdays or Thursdays from 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm starting the week of February 9th and ending on the week of March 3rd (our last meeting would be that week). If you would like to participate in the group meetings, please fill out the attached Pre-Questionnaire.

Thank you for considering this request. Please respond to this email by Friday, January 21st stating your interest in the group meetings or just to take a questionnaire. Please read and keep the attached NCSU Informed Consent Form for Research.

I would love to have you be a part of this group or a part of the research! If you have any questions please feel free to contact me by email at durenda_ward@ncsu.edu or call me at 512-0750.

Thank you!

Durenda Ward, NCSU Graduate Student in Counselor Education

Appendix D-2

Pre-Questionnaire for International Students

Directions: Please answer the questions below honestly. Thank you!

1. Is this your first time to the United States?
2. If no, when did you last visit the United States?
3. How would you judge your ability to speak English?
4. I feel comfortable talking to other international students about myself?
5. I am excited about studying in the United States because:

6. I am not excited about studying in the United States because:

7. I want to learn about: _____ while in
the United States.
8. I want to do this: _____ while in
the United States.
9. When I return home I want to be able to say this: _____ about my
experience in the United States.

**North Carolina State University
INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH**

Title of Study: *America's Doors: International Students Adjustment to American Institutions of Higher Education*

Principal Investigator: Durenda Johnson Ward, Counseling Graduate Student

Faculty Sponsor: S. Raymond Ting, Ph.D.

We are asking you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate through attending group counseling and interactive activities how international students enhance their overall adjustment to the American collegiate system or NCSU. Also, we hope you will develop a group of new friends to socialize with and who will provide you support and information on how to deal with changes in your current living environment.

INFORMATION

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in one or both of the following: 1) Take two questionnaires at the beginning of and at the end of a four-week period in the beginning of the spring semester. 2) If you agree, you will participate in a 4-week support group. The group will meet for 1 hour on a Wednesday or Thursday evening at 7:30 pm on campus. The purpose of this meeting is for you to meet with other international students who have been in the U.S. recently or have just arrived. During the meetings ethnic food from your country will be provided. In the meeting, we will share experiences of living in the U.S. and suggestions on how to cope with any problems living in the U.S. At the end of the five-week study, the researcher will summarize information noticed during the meetings and information gathered from the questionnaires. If you would like, the researcher will provide you a copy of the information gathered. In the summary, the researcher will not use your names; only group information will be shared.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks to your participation in this research study. It is possible you may become upset or homesick while answering some questions or participating in the support group. If necessary, the researcher can refer you to student counseling services. If at any time you feel uncomfortable you may withdraw from this study.

BENEFITS

The benefits will be that you will be able to learn from others about their experiences studying in the U.S. You will also be able to develop friendships. Overall, the group will enhance your adjustment to living and going to school in the U.S.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely on diskettes and any hard copies of information will be kept in a file box locked in the researcher's apartment. No reference will be made in oral or written reports, which could link you to the study.

COMPENSATION

For participating in this study you will not receive any compensation, except for free food.

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Durenda Johnson Ward, at <durenda_ward@ncsu.edu>, or call at 512-0750. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Matthew Zingraff, Chair of the NCSU IRB for the Use of Human Subjects in Research Committee, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-1834) or Mr. Matthew Ronning, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research Administration, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-2148).

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed at your request.

CONSENT

"I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may withdraw at any time."

Subject's signature_____ Date_____

Investigator's signature_____ Date_____

Appendix E

**Pre- and Post- Questionnaire for
International Student Adjustment Research Study (ISAQ)**

General Information: Please fill in the blanks for the following:

Gender: _____
Home Country: _____ Country of Citizenship: _____
Ethnicity: _____ Age: _____
Classification at NCSU: _____ (Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Graduate Student)
Language: What is your native language? _____
What other Languages do you speak? _____

Please Read the Questions below and put the correct number in the blank to the left of the question.

1 – Yes

0 - No

- ____ 1) Is English hard for you to understand?
- ____ 2) Is it difficult for you to understand an American talking to you?
- ____ 3) Do you have a fear of failing your classes?
- ____ 4) Do you plan to obtain your degree here in the U.S.?
- ____ 5) Do you worry or have concerns about money?
- ____ 6) Do you plan (or are you currently working) to work while studying at NCSU?
- ____ 7) Do you worry or have concerns about the political government here in the US?
- ____ 8) Do you worry or have concerns about your safety in the US?
- ____ 9) Do you plan to stay in the US after finishing school?
- ____ 10) Do you plan to go back to your country after finishing school?
- ____ 11) Would you seek individual counseling to help your adjustment to the American Collegiate setting?

Please answer the questions below and on the back of this page:

- 1) What will help you, an international student, in your overall adjustment to American culture?
- 2) What has been your experience at this American University at this point? Please tell how you are feeling honestly.
- 3) Tell how your experiences have been meeting and interacting with American students?
- 4) Tell how your experiences have been meeting and interacting with your faculty here?
- 5) Tell how your experiences have been meeting and interacting with your professional staff here such as: counselors, advisors, residence advisors or any housing professionals, etc.?
- 6) How do you wish your experiences with students could be better?
- 7) How do you wish your experiences with faculty could be better?
- 8) Is there anything that you would like to add about how you are feeling or concerns you have?

Appendix F

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation scores on the CSEQ and ISAQ

Treatment and Control Groups mean and standard deviation scores

(To illustrate a change or not within the 10 individual scores from the pre-test to the post-test)

Scales	Group	Pre/Post Test	n	Mean	SD
CSEQ					
Relationships: Other students	Treatment	Pre	10	4.90	1.44
	Treatment	Post	10	5.60	1.07
	Control	Post	10	5.70	1.16
Relationships: Administrative personnel	Treatment	Pre	10	5.40	1.50
	Treatment	Post	10	5.00	1.41
	Control	Post	10	4.70	1.63
Relationships: Faculty members	Treatment	Pre	10	5.50	1.50
	Treatment	Post	10	5.80	1.68
	Control	Post	10	4.70	1.25
ISAQ					
Responses of yes ^a	Treatment	Pre	10	2.60	1.26
	Treatment	Post	10	3.10	1.79
	Control	Post	10	4.40	1.95

^aresponses of yes = 1; responses of no = 0

Appendix G

Table 2: Paired Sample Test on CSEQ and ISAQ

Treatment Group Pre-test and Post-test mean scores for the sample

(To illustrate a change or not within the 10 individual scores from the pre-test to the post-test)

Scales	n	Mean	SD	t	df	p (2-tailed)
CSEQ						
Relationships: Other students (Minus Post-test)	10	-.70	1.25	-1.76	9	.11
	10					
Relationships: Administrative personnel (Minus Post-test)	10	.40	1.42	.88	9	.39
	10					
Relationships: Faculty members (Minus Post-test)	10	-.30	1.05	-.89	9	.39
	10					
ISAQ						
Responses of yes ^a Minus post-test	10	-.50	1.26	-1.24	9	.24

^aresponses of yes = 1; responses of no = 0

Appendix H

Table 3: T-Test on the CSEQ and ISAQ

Post-test mean scores of Treatment and Control Group

Scales	Group	n	Mean	SD	t	df	p (2-tailed)
CSEQ							
Relationships: Other students	A	10	5.50	1.08	-.39	18	.69
	B	10	5.70	1.16			
Relationships: Administrative personnel	A	10	5.10	1.37	.59	18	.56
	B	10	4.70	1.63			
Relationships: Faculty members	A	10	5.70	1.63	1.53	18	.14
	B	10	4.70	1.25			
ISAQ							
Responses of yes ^a	A	10	2.60	1.26	-2.44	18	.02
	B	10	4.40	1.95			

A = Post-Test Treatment Group; B = Post-Test Control Group

^aresponses of yes = 1; responses of no = 0