

Are you feeling connected? How students perceive university integration and their own role in success

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Why more Research on University Students?

Access

Engagement



Withdrawal

Completion

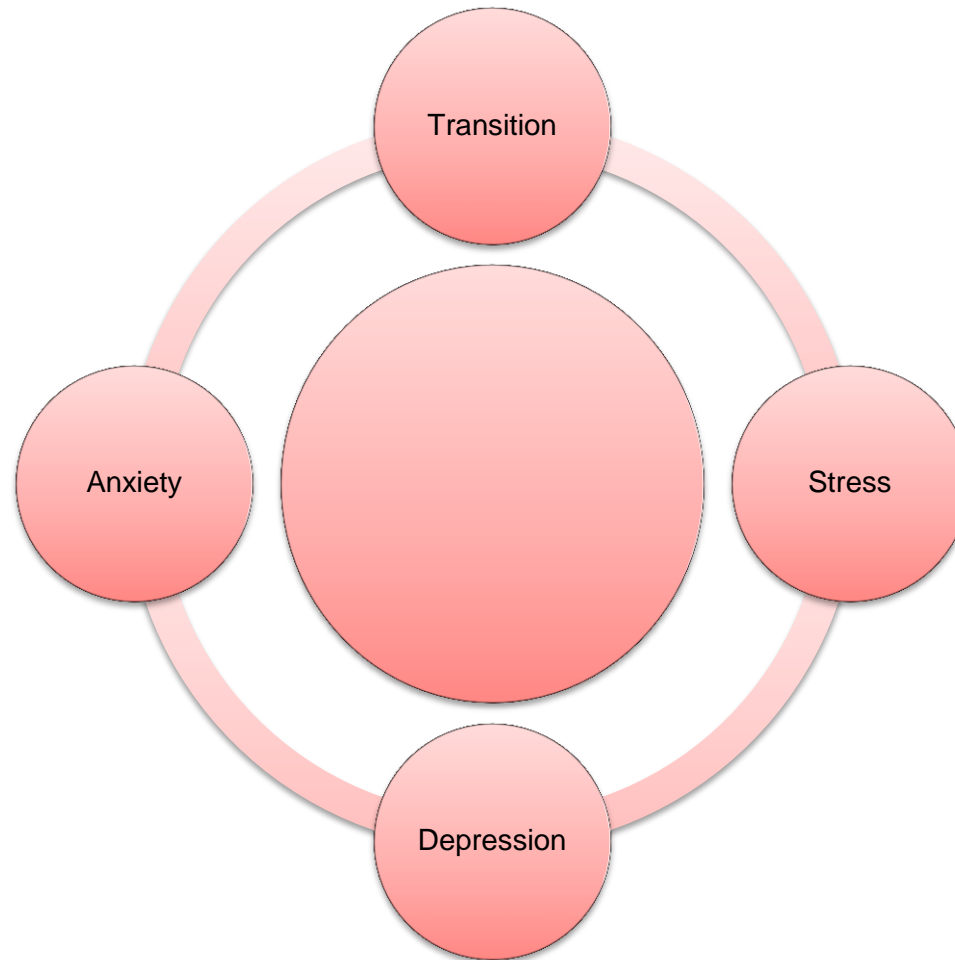
Integration



Could integration also be used to predict mental health, wellbeing, and help seeking behaviours?

Instead of targeting at-risk students or those presenting to the student counselling service, could improving integration positively impact all students, beyond academic outcomes?

Student Mental Health



Integration and the “Freshman Myth”

- Students tend to have an unrealistically positive expectation of what university life will be like (Stern, 1966)
- Students had unrealistic expectations of the need to take greater responsibility, the need for greater independence, and the different learning environment between high school and university (McPhail, Fisher, & McConachie, 2009)

Student perceptions of integration in first year university students

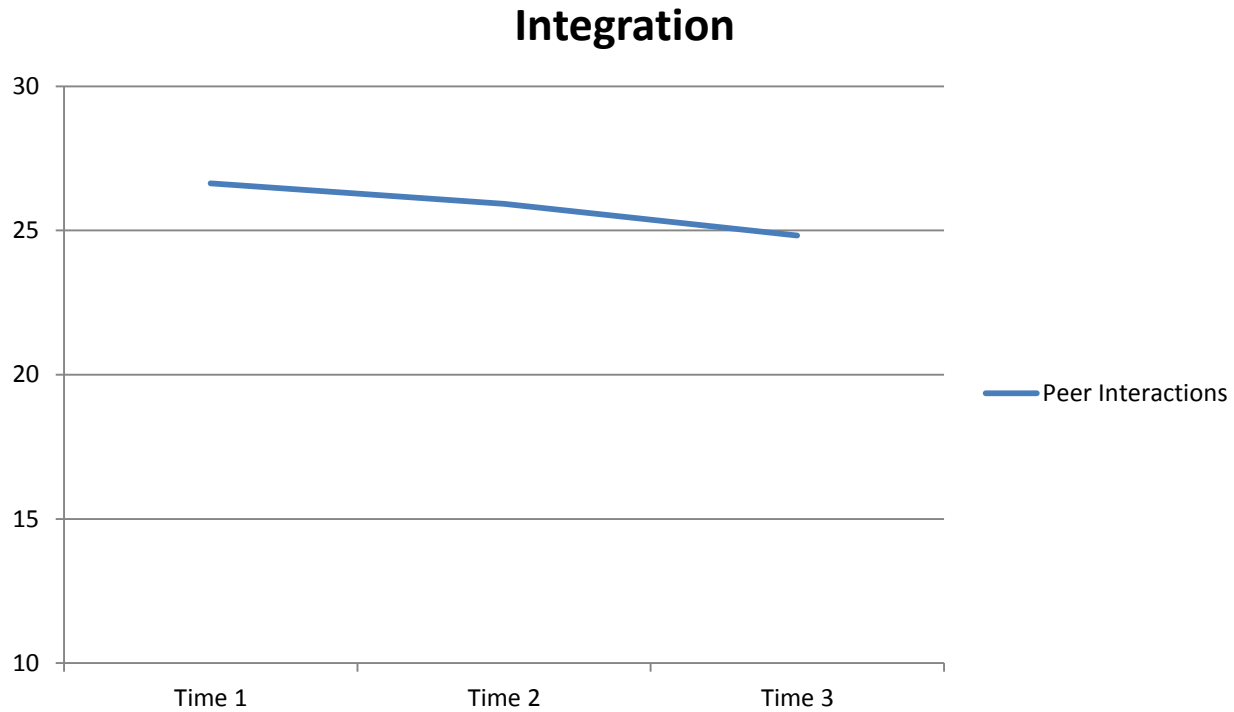
- Longitudinal Self-report Survey ($N=241$)
 - Data collected at 3 time points in 2011
 - beginning of first semester
 - end of first semester
 - end of second semester

- Questionnaire Battery included:
 - Demographic Information
 - Integration (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980)
 - Qualitative Interviews

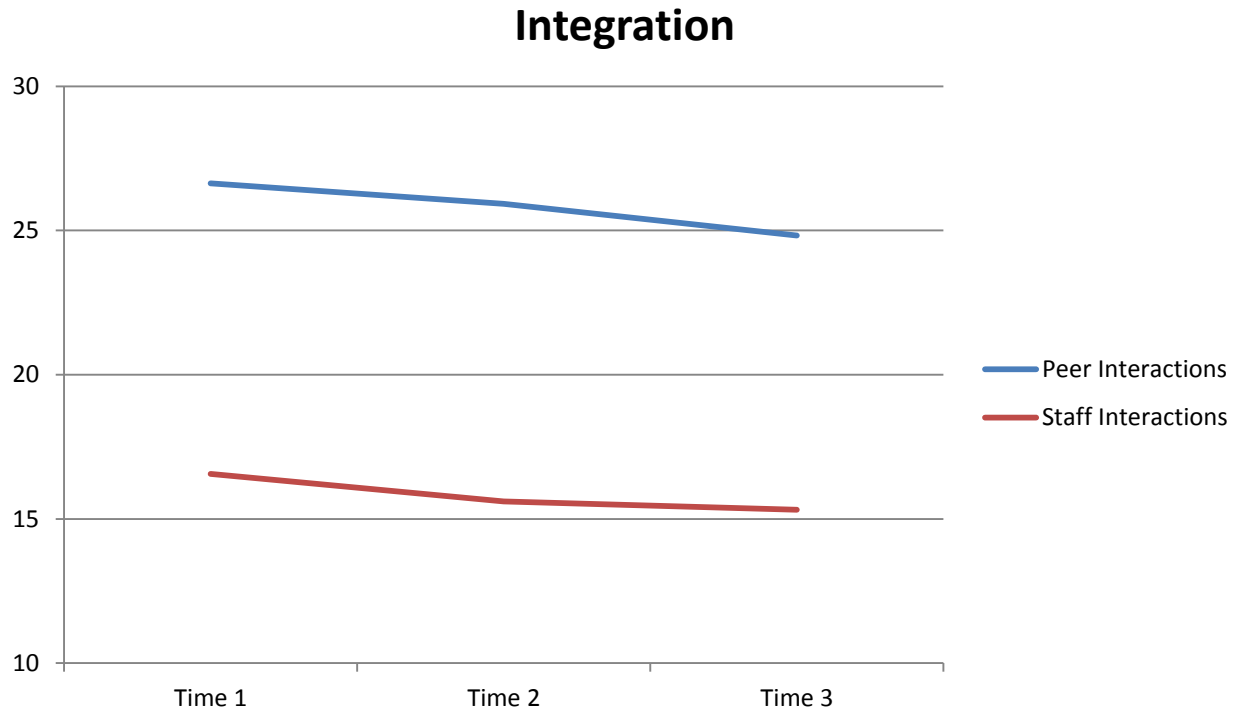
Measuring Integration

- Peer-Group Interactions
- Interactions with Faculty
- Faculty Concern for Student Development and Teaching
- Academic and Intellectual Development
- Institutional and Goal Commitments

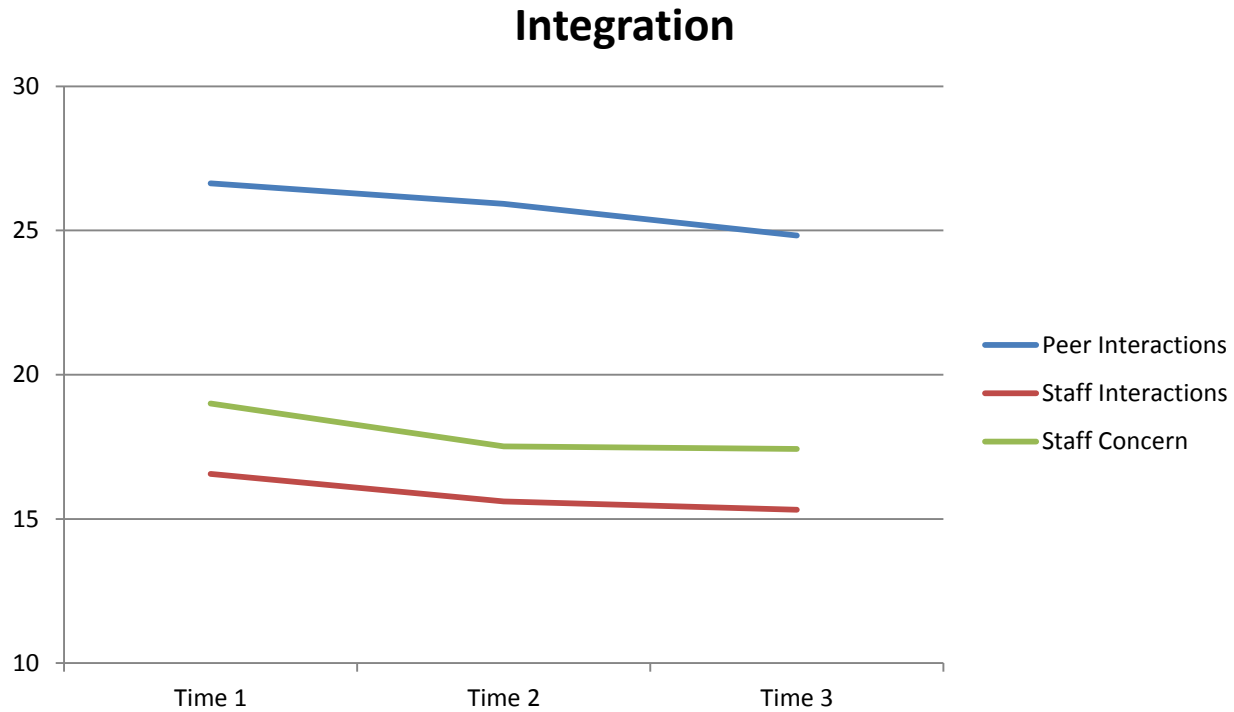
Integration: Change Across Time



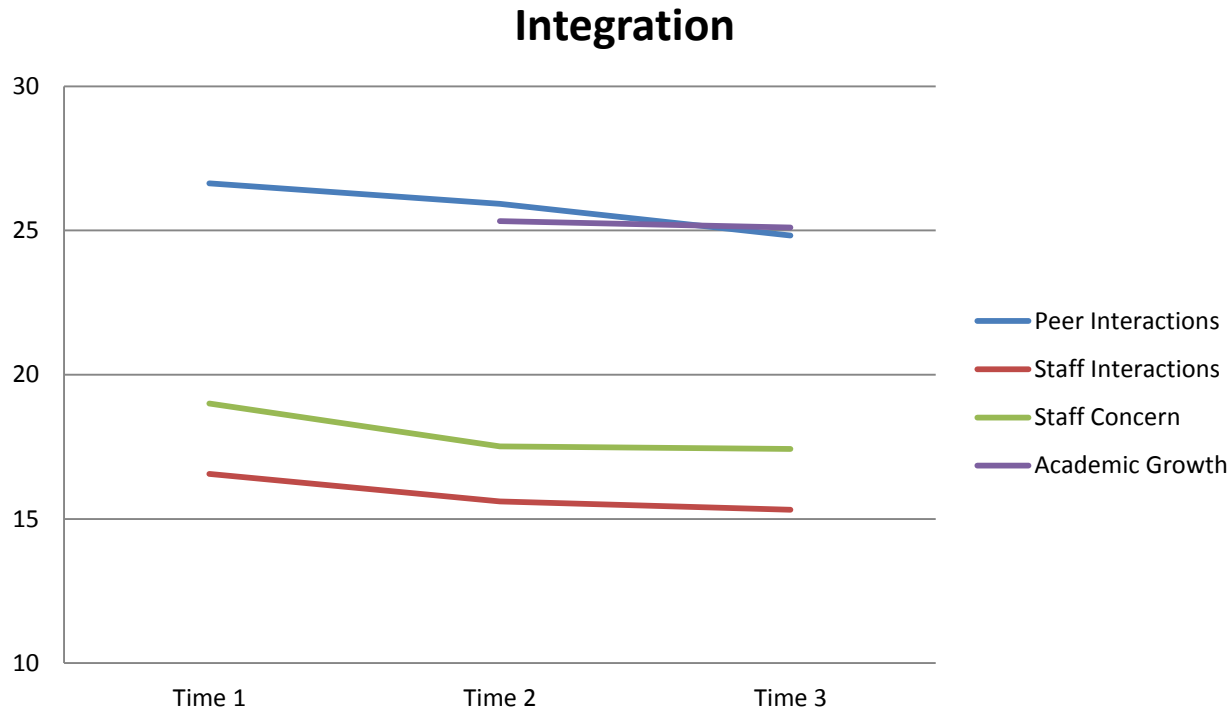
Integration: Change Across Time



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Integration: Change Across Time

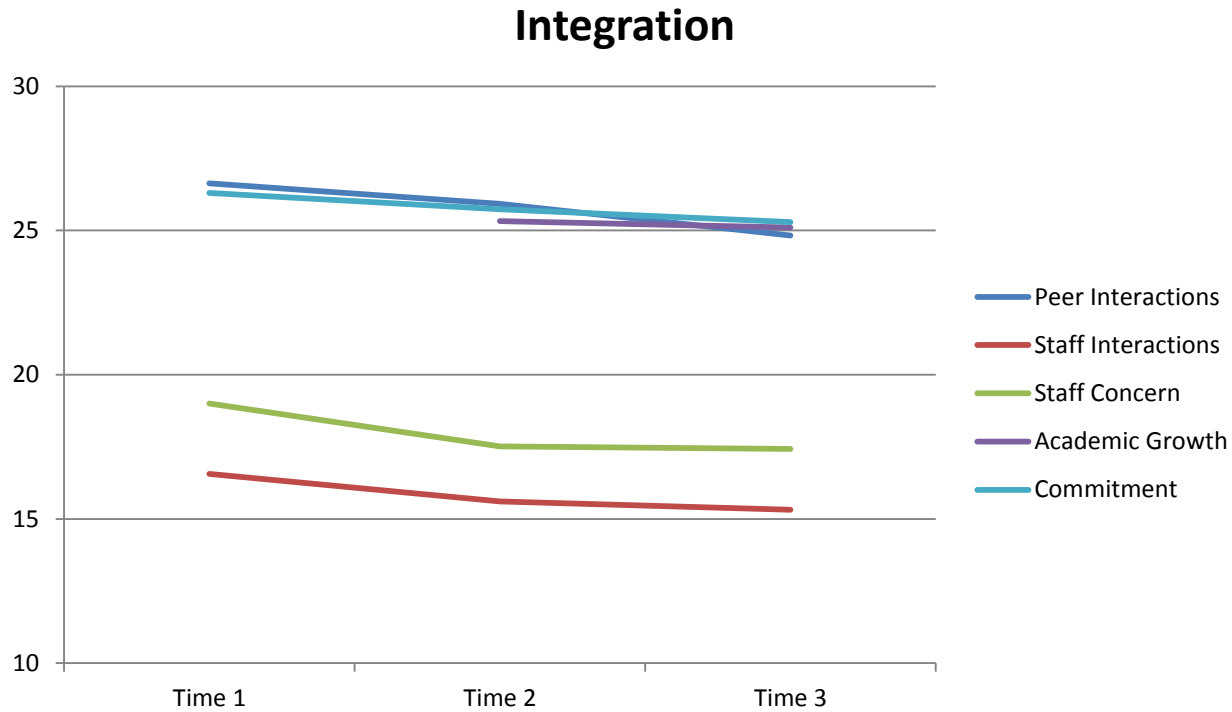


Table 7
Integration Scores across an Academic Year

Scale	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Wilks' Lambda	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Peer Interactions	26.63	25.93	24.83	.91	1.46	2,29	.25	.09
Staff Interactions	16.56	15.61	15.32	.96	0.62	2,29	.55	.04
Staff Concern	19.00	17.52	17.43	.83	3.03	2,29	.064	.17
Academic Growth	-	25.33	25.10	-	-	-	-	-
Commitment	26.30	25.74	25.29	.96	0.56	2,29	.58	.04

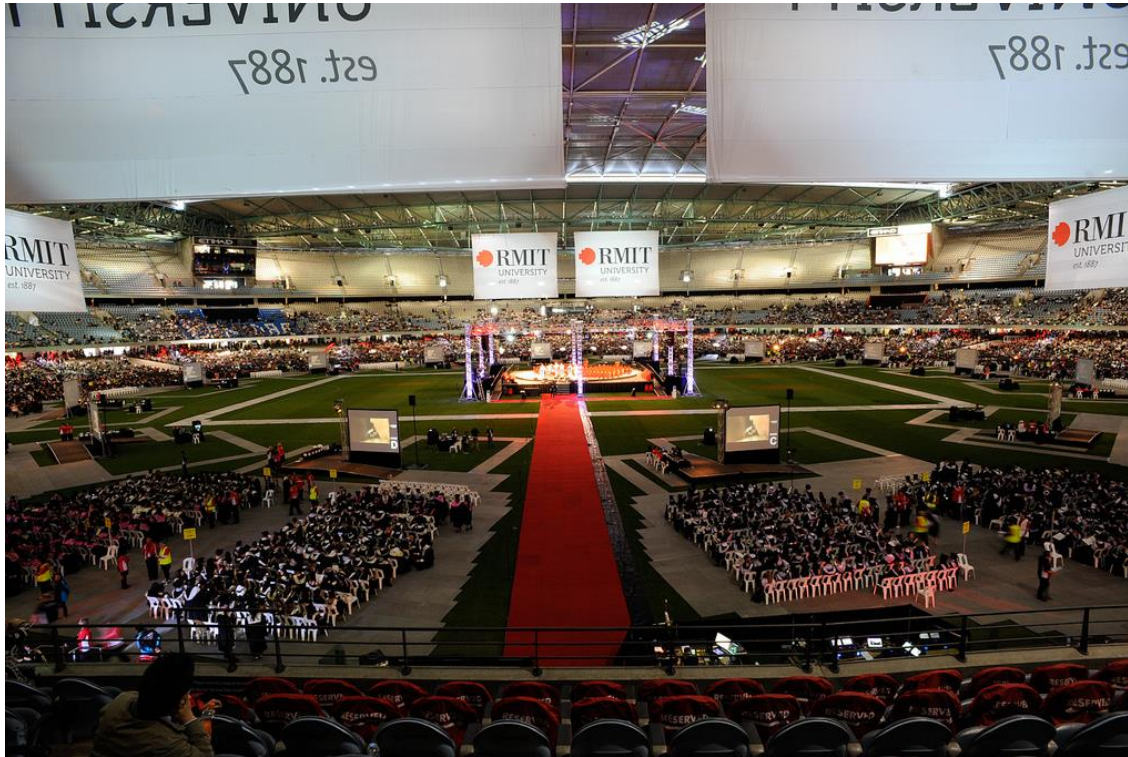
Qualitative Themes

- “I’m socially proactive”
- Program Level Integration
- Student Identity

Recommendations

- Students need to be made aware of the challenges they face, and the benefits of connecting with their peers
- Students returning to university often learn from the mistakes of previous, unsuccessful attempts at university - prevention
- The delivery of integration interventions needs to be done at the program level

What does it all mean?



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