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?
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

![Graph showing integration change across time]

Integration

Time 1  Time 2  Time 3

Peer Interactions

Integration over time shows a decrease from Time 1 to Time 3.
Integration: Change Across Time

Integration

Time 1  | Time 2  | Time 3
---|---|---
Peer Interactions
Staff Interactions
Integration: Change Across Time

Integration

- Peer Interactions
- Staff Interactions
- Staff Concern

Time 1 | Time 2 | Time 3
Integration: Change Across Time

Integration

Time 1 | Time 2 | Time 3
---|---|---
Peer Interactions
Staff Interactions
Staff Concern
Academic Growth
Integration: Change Across Time

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**Integration**

- Peer Interactions
- Staff Interactions
- Staff Concern
- Academic Growth
- Commitment

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**Axes:**
- Y-axis: Integration Score
- X-axis: Time Points (Time 1, Time 2, Time 3)
### Table 7

**Integration Scores across an Academic Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
<th>Time 3</th>
<th>Wilks' Lambda</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$df$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer Interactions</td>
<td>26.63</td>
<td>25.93</td>
<td>24.83</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff Interactions</td>
<td>16.56</td>
<td>15.61</td>
<td>15.32</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff Concern</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>17.52</td>
<td>17.43</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Growth</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25.33</td>
<td>25.10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>26.30</td>
<td>25.74</td>
<td>25.29</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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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