

International Students' Socializing: Implications and Potential Solutions

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Introduction

Socializing is a behaviour of human nature essential to a healthy mental state, which involves sociable acts such as hanging out, partying and studying together. It is a significant practice for all students in college because it helps build good relationships, reduces stress, improves grades and develops self-confidence.

As international students at University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, we do not interact with native students as much as we would like to. For that reason, our group aims to examine the way international students feel about their socializing skills at UWEC, as well as providing them with possible solutions for help if needed.

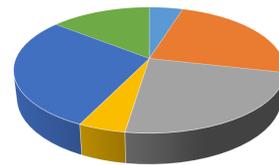


Methods

Our group used Qualtrics to send out a 10 question survey to international students on campus in order to find out socializing issues like cultural differences and maintaining conversations.

Results

Do you have common conversation topics with American students?

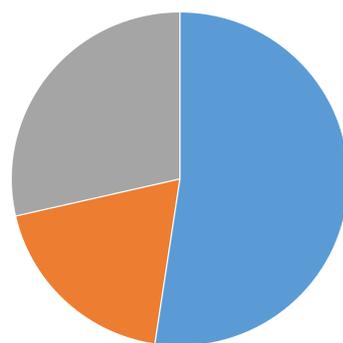


■ Never ■ Occasionally
■ Sometimes ■ Often
■ Usually ■ Always

- According to the survey, 46% of students always or often think they have common conversation topics with American students.
- 23% of students sometimes find common conversation topics with American students.
- 31% of students occasionally or never find common conversation topics with American students.

The main problem is not language problems. It is cultural differences.

Where are most of your friends from?



■ My homecountry ■ USA ■ Other country

- Some of them feel they do not have common topics to talk with native speakers, and some of them are afraid to start a conversation.
- They feel comfortable when they communicate with students from the same or similar culture.

Solutions

We came up some solutions to help international students communicate with American students and other international students.

- 1) We will cooperate with CIE. Advertise our project through using posters and emails. We will show our project's poster during orientation week to attract international and American students' attention.
- 2) Ask CIE to help us, during orientation week, with surveying and separating 8-10 people groups of American and international students according to their interests. In addition, we will try to make groups of students who do not know each other previously.
- 3) According to students' interests, we will cooperate with UWEC clubs to hold activities, such as skiing, canoeing, or skydiving. They could meet more people in these activities. After they attend same activities, they could have more topics and experiences to share. For example we can cooperate with EAC(Environmental Adventure Center)
- 4) We will hold parties, invite international and American students, and provide free food and games, such as draw something.



Budget

Subjects	Unit price	Amount	Total Prices(\$)
Advertisements	10	20	200
Activities	50	30	1500
Parties	400	3	1200
Total			2900

Conclusion

- Language problem is not the main problem in international students' socializing.
- Before we get results of the survey, we thought many students have socializing problems. But the results are more positive than our expectation.
- Cultural differences may be the main problem at this time because half of the students have been here for at least 3 semesters. Along with time's change, they gradually fit in the new culture.
- Therefore, we recommend to put attention to providing services to help international students quickly fit in the new culture.

References

"Socializing." Definition of Dictionary by Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dictionary>, 20 April 2018

Qualtrics, <https://uweauclaire.qualtrics.com> 24 April 2018