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## A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF LEARNING COMMUNITY IMPACTS ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUCCESS

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### ABSTRACT

This paper presents a systematic review of the literature concerning the role and impact of learning communities in fostering the success of international students within higher education settings. With the ever-increasing globalization of education, understanding the dynamics and effectiveness of learning communities for international students has become imperative. This review synthesizes findings from various scholarly works, examining the influence of learning communities on engagement, learning outcomes, and overall satisfaction among international students. The synthesis of literature reveals that learning communities play a pivotal role in supporting international student success across multiple dimensions. Firstly, these communities facilitate greater engagement among international students by providing platforms for interaction, collaboration, and cultural exchange. Through active participation in learning communities,

international students develop a sense of belonging and connection within their academic environment, which is essential for their overall well-being and academic achievement. Secondly, the review underscores the positive impact of learning communities on the learning outcomes of international students. By fostering collaborative learning environments and encouraging peer support, these communities enhance academic performance and promote deeper understanding of course materials. Additionally, participation in learning communities exposes international students to diverse perspectives and alternative learning approaches, enriching their educational experience and enhancing their critical thinking skills. Furthermore, the synthesis highlights the significant role of learning communities in promoting overall satisfaction among international students. By providing social support networks, academic resources, and opportunities for personal growth, these communities contribute to a positive student experience and increase retention rates among international student populations. This systematic review provides valuable insights into how learning communities serve as pivotal support systems for international students within higher education contexts. By fostering engagement, enhancing learning outcomes, and promoting satisfaction, learning communities play a crucial role in facilitating the success and well-being of international students in their academic pursuits.

**Keywords:** Learning, Community, Impacts, International Students, Success.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary landscape of higher education, the success of international students holds profound importance, reflecting the global nature of academic institutions and the interconnectedness of the world (Cohen, and Kisker, 2009; Guruz, 2011; Kettle, 2017). With universities attracting a diverse cohort of students from different cultural backgrounds, ensuring the success and well-being of international students has become an imperative for educational institutions worldwide. Not only does the success of international students contribute to the reputation and competitiveness of universities, but it also fosters cultural exchange, diversity, and global understanding within the academic community (Guo, and Chase, 2011; Caruana, and Ploner, 2010).

Central to the discussion of international student success is the concept of learning communities. Learning communities represent collaborative and supportive environments within educational institutions where students engage with one another and faculty members to achieve common academic goals (Hord, 1997; Stassen, 2003; Sipple, and Lightner, eds., 2023). These communities provide platforms for interaction, mentorship, and shared learning experiences, cultivating a sense of belonging and connectedness among students, particularly for those navigating unfamiliar cultural and educational landscapes (Eden et al., 2024; Ayeni et al., 2024; Chisom et al., 2024). By fostering a supportive and inclusive environment, learning communities contribute to the academic and personal development of students, promoting their engagement, persistence, and overall satisfaction with their educational experiences (Mlynarczyk, and Babbitt, 2002; Brouwer, et al., 2022).

The significance of learning communities in supporting international student success lies in their multifaceted impact on various aspects of the student experience. These communities facilitate greater engagement and active participation among international students, fostering collaboration,

cultural exchange, and peer learning opportunities. Moreover, learning communities are instrumental in enhancing learning outcomes by providing academic support, promoting critical thinking, and facilitating deeper understanding of course materials through collaborative inquiry and discussion (Baier, et al., 2019; Fisher, et al., 2020).

The purpose of this systematic review is to comprehensively examine the role and impact of learning communities in supporting the success of international students within higher education settings. By systematically synthesizing existing literature on this topic, this review aims to elucidate the mechanisms through which learning communities contribute to international student success, including their influence on engagement, learning outcomes, and overall satisfaction (Al Hamad et al., 2024; Eden et al., 2024; Ayeni et al., 2024). Through a rigorous analysis of empirical research, theoretical frameworks, and case studies, this review seeks to provide nuanced insights into the effectiveness of learning communities as pivotal support systems for international students across diverse disciplinary and institutional contexts (Andrade, 2007).

In essence, this systematic review aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on enhancing the educational experiences and outcomes of international students in higher education. By shedding light on the role of learning communities in supporting international student success, this review seeks to inform institutional practices and policies aimed at fostering inclusive, supportive, and enriching learning environments for international students worldwide.

### **Research Gap**

Despite the growing body of literature on learning communities and their impact on student success, there remains a notable gap in the understanding of the specific mechanisms through which learning communities support the success of international students. While existing research has identified the benefits of learning communities in fostering engagement, enhancing learning outcomes, and promoting satisfaction among students in general, there is limited empirical evidence that specifically examines the unique needs, experiences, and challenges faced by international students within these communities (Smith, and Khawaja, 2011; Krsmanovic, 2021). Moreover, the majority of studies exploring learning communities have been conducted within the context of domestic student populations, overlooking the distinct cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic factors that may influence the effectiveness of learning communities for international students (Eden et al., 2024; Chisom et al., 2024; Al Hamad et al., 2024). As such, there is a need for research that specifically focuses on the experiences of international students participating in learning communities, examining how these communities address the unique needs and challenges faced by this population. Additionally, while some research has examined the role of learning communities in promoting cross-cultural understanding and intercultural competence among students, there is a dearth of studies that specifically explore the impact of learning communities on the acculturation process of international students (Kashima, and Loh, 2006; Gómez, et al., 2014). Understanding how learning communities facilitate the integration of international students into the academic and social fabric of their host institutions is essential for developing effective strategies to support their success and well-being. Furthermore, there is limited research that explores the role of faculty members and institutional support structures in facilitating the effectiveness of learning communities for international students (Eden et al., 2024; Ayeni et al., 2024; Chisom et al., 2024). Investigating faculty attitudes, practices, and perceptions towards

international students within learning communities can provide valuable insights into how these communities can be tailored to better meet the needs of international students and promote their success (Jimoyiannis, and Tsiotakis, 2017; Tseng, 2020; Vescio, et al., 2008).

In summary, the research gap identified in this systematic review underscores the need for further empirical research that specifically examines the experiences of international students within learning communities. By addressing this gap, future research can contribute to the development of evidence-based practices and policies aimed at enhancing the success and well-being of international students in higher education.

### **Methodology**

The methodology adopted for this systematic review aimed to rigorously identify, select, and analyze pertinent literature concerning the role and impact of learning communities in supporting the success of international students within the higher education landscape. A comprehensive search strategy was devised to locate relevant literature across multiple electronic databases including PubMed, ERIC, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar (Ng, et al., 2022; Hirt, et al., 2020). The search strategy involved the utilization of predefined keywords and Boolean operators to ensure thorough coverage of the topic. Additionally, manual searches of reference lists from identified articles and systematic reviews were conducted to capture any potentially missed studies, thus ensuring the inclusivity of the literature.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to guide the selection process. Studies eligible for inclusion focused on learning communities within higher education contexts and their effects on international student success (Meeuwisse, et al., 2010; Sarmiento, et al., 2019). There were no restrictions on study design, and eligible sources included peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and dissertations. Non-English studies were included provided English translations were available. Studies solely focusing on domestic student populations or lacking relevant outcomes pertaining to international student success were excluded.

Data extraction was conducted systematically, with key information extracted from selected studies. This included details such as study characteristics (e.g., author(s), publication year, study design), participant demographics (e.g., sample size, nationality), intervention specifics (e.g., type of learning community, duration), measured outcomes (e.g., engagement, learning outcomes, satisfaction), and significant findings. To ensure reliability and consistency, two independent reviewers performed data extraction, with any discrepancies resolved through discussion or consultation with a third reviewer. Quality assessment of included studies was undertaken to evaluate methodological rigor and potential biases. Depending on the study design, appropriate quality assessment tools were employed, such as the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale for observational studies or the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist for qualitative research (Purssell, et al., 2020). While studies were not excluded based solely on quality assessment outcomes, their methodological strengths and limitations were considered in the synthesis of findings.

Overall, the methodology adopted for this systematic review was meticulously designed to ensure a comprehensive and transparent approach to identifying, selecting, and synthesizing relevant literature, thereby providing robust insights into the pivotal role of learning communities in supporting international student success within higher education settings.

## **Engagement in Learning Communities**

Engagement in learning communities is a multifaceted construct that plays a crucial role in shaping the academic experiences and success of students, both domestically and internationally (Ferrer, et al., 2022; Chapman, and Aspin, 2001). For international students, engagement within learning communities is influenced by a myriad of factors including cultural adjustment, language proficiency, social interactions, and institutional support systems. Understanding these factors and their impact on engagement is essential for fostering inclusive and supportive learning environments that promote the success and integration of international students.

Cultural adjustment poses one of the most significant challenges for international students when engaging in learning communities (Wu, et al., 2015; Zhao, et al., 2005). The transition to a new educational system, cultural norms, and social practices can be daunting, often leading to feelings of isolation and alienation. Additionally, differences in communication styles, classroom dynamics, and academic expectations may further exacerbate these challenges, hindering international students' ability to fully engage with their peers and faculty members within learning communities (Croese, 2011). Therefore, initiatives aimed at supporting cultural adjustment, such as orientation programs, cross-cultural workshops, and mentorship schemes, are essential for facilitating international students' engagement within learning communities.

Language proficiency also plays a critical role in international students' engagement within learning communities (Miyake, and Yoshida, 2017; Duff, 2010.). For non-native English speakers, language barriers can impede effective communication, participation, and collaboration within academic settings. International students may experience difficulties expressing themselves articulately, comprehending complex course materials, and actively contributing to group discussions, thereby limiting their engagement within learning communities (Eden et al., 2024; Al Hamad et al., 2024; Chisom et al., 2023). To address these challenges, institutions can provide language support services, such as English language courses, writing centers, and conversation partners, to enhance international students' language skills and facilitate their integration into learning communities.

Social interactions within learning communities significantly influence international students' engagement and sense of belonging (Luo, et al., 2017; Peacock, and Cowan, 2019). Establishing meaningful connections with peers, faculty members, and academic advisors fosters a supportive and inclusive learning environment where international students feel valued and accepted. However, cultural differences, social norms, and interpersonal communication styles may pose barriers to social integration for international students, potentially leading to social isolation and disengagement within learning communities (Al Hamad et al., 2024; Chisom et al., 2023). Thus, initiatives promoting intercultural dialogue, peer mentoring programs, and cross-cultural activities are essential for fostering positive social interactions and enhancing international students' engagement within learning communities (Arthur, 2017; Wong, et al., 2022).

Institutional support systems play a crucial role in facilitating international students' engagement within learning communities. Adequate access to academic resources, support services, and campus facilities is essential for promoting the academic success and well-being of international students. Additionally, proactive institutional policies and initiatives that recognize and address



the unique needs and challenges of international students, such as visa support, financial assistance, and housing accommodations, are instrumental in fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment conducive to international students' engagement within learning communities.

The impact of engagement within learning communities extends beyond social integration to academic performance and overall integration into the university community (Adeniyi et al., 2024). Research indicates that higher levels of engagement are associated with improved academic outcomes, including higher grades, increased retention rates, and greater satisfaction with the learning experience (Chisom et al., 2023; Adeniyi et al., 2024). Actively participating in learning communities enables international students to develop essential academic skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication, which are vital for success in higher education and beyond (Hord, 1997; Mlynarczyk, and Babbitt, 2002).

Moreover, engagement within learning communities facilitates the integration of international students into the university community, providing opportunities for cultural exchange, peer support, and academic collaboration. By actively participating in group discussions, team projects, and extracurricular activities within learning communities, international students develop a sense of belonging and connection to their academic environment, which enhances their overall integration and satisfaction with the university experience (Kingston, et al., 2014).

Comparative studies have shown disparities in engagement levels between international and domestic students within learning communities. International students often report lower levels of engagement compared to their domestic counterparts, attributed to various factors including language barriers, cultural differences, and social isolation. Additionally, international students may face unique challenges such as homesickness, acculturative stress, and visa restrictions, which further impede their engagement within learning communities. Despite these challenges, international students demonstrate a strong desire to engage with their peers and faculty members within learning communities, highlighting the importance of providing tailored support and resources to facilitate their integration and success in higher education (Rukmana, et al., 2023; Garrison, and Kanuka, 2004).

In conclusion, engagement within learning communities is essential for promoting the academic success and integration of international students within higher education settings. Factors influencing international students' engagement include cultural adjustment, language proficiency, social interactions, and institutional support systems. Higher levels of engagement are associated with improved academic performance, social integration, and overall satisfaction with the university experience. While international students may face unique challenges in engaging within learning communities, proactive support measures and inclusive initiatives are essential for fostering their success and well-being in higher education.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Learning outcomes within the context of learning communities encompass the academic achievement, skill development, and long-term career prospects of international students (McLaughlin, and Talbert, 2006; Svanström, et al., 2008). These outcomes are influenced by various factors including engagement, teaching methodologies, peer interactions, and institutional support systems. Understanding the learning outcomes associated with participation in learning

communities is essential for evaluating their effectiveness in promoting the success and well-being of international students within higher education settings.

Academic achievement is a fundamental learning outcome for international students participating in learning communities (Beachboard, et al., 2011; Vescio, et al., 2008). Research indicates that international students who actively engage with their peers and faculty members within learning communities demonstrate higher levels of academic performance compared to those who do not participate. By collaborating on group projects, participating in discussions, and receiving peer feedback (Li, and Grion, 2019), international students enhance their understanding of course materials, improve their critical thinking skills, and achieve better grades. Furthermore, the supportive and inclusive environment fostered by learning communities enables international students to overcome academic challenges, adapt to the rigors of higher education, and thrive academically. In addition to academic achievement, participation in learning communities facilitates the development of key skills and competencies essential for success in higher education and beyond. These skills include critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and intercultural competence. Through collaborative learning experiences, international students acquire valuable skills such as active listening, conflict resolution, and cultural sensitivity, which are highly valued in today's globalized workforce. Moreover, engaging in group projects, presentations, and debates within learning communities provides international students with opportunities to refine their communication skills, articulate their ideas effectively, and collaborate with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. As a result, participation in learning communities equips international students with the skills and competencies necessary for success in their academic and professional endeavors.

The long-term impact of participation in learning communities extends beyond academic achievement and skill development to career prospects. Research suggests that international students who actively engage within learning communities are better prepared for the challenges of the global job market and demonstrate higher levels of employability compared to their peers. By participating in collaborative projects, internships, and networking events facilitated by learning communities, international students gain practical experience, expand their professional networks, and enhance their career readiness. Furthermore, the interpersonal and intercultural skills developed through participation in learning communities are highly sought after by employers seeking to recruit diverse talent in today's multicultural workplaces. Consequently, participation in learning communities enhances international students' competitiveness in the job market, improves their career prospects, and increases their overall employability (Shantini, et al., 2024; Saito, and Atencio, 2015).

In conclusion, learning outcomes associated with participation in learning communities encompass academic achievement, skill development, and long-term career prospects for international students. Participation in learning communities facilitates higher levels of academic performance, enhances key skills and competencies, and improves career readiness among international students. By providing collaborative learning experiences, peer support, and professional development opportunities, learning communities contribute to the success and well-being of international students within higher education settings. Furthermore, the skills and competencies developed through participation in learning communities position international students for

success in today's globalized workforce, enhancing their employability and advancing their career prospects in the long term.

### **Satisfaction with Learning Communities**

Satisfaction with learning communities is a critical aspect of international students' experiences within higher education settings. It encompasses the perceived benefits and challenges of participating in learning communities, factors influencing satisfaction levels, and comparisons between international and domestic students' satisfaction (Wilson, et al., 2009; Swan, 2002).

Participation in learning communities offers a plethora of perceived benefits for international students. Firstly, these communities provide a supportive and inclusive environment where students can connect with peers, faculty members, and mentors, fostering a sense of belonging and community. International students often value the opportunity to collaborate with diverse peers, engage in cross-cultural exchanges, and gain insights from different perspectives, which enriches their learning experiences. Additionally, learning communities offer academic support, resources, and opportunities for personal and professional growth, which contribute to overall satisfaction with the university experience.

However, international students may also face challenges when participating in learning communities. Language barriers, cultural differences, and social norms may hinder effective communication, collaboration, and integration within learning communities, leading to feelings of isolation or exclusion. Moreover, differences in educational systems, teaching methodologies, and academic expectations may pose challenges for international students as they navigate unfamiliar learning environments (Spielmann, and Radnofsky, 2001; Gu, et al., 2010). Additionally, international students may experience difficulties balancing academic responsibilities with other commitments, such as part-time work or family obligations, which can impact their satisfaction with learning communities.

Several factors influence satisfaction levels among international students participating in learning communities. Firstly, the quality of interactions and relationships within learning communities significantly impacts satisfaction levels. Positive interactions with peers, faculty members, and mentors enhance international students' sense of belonging, support, and engagement within learning communities, leading to greater satisfaction. Conversely, negative interactions, conflicts, or lack of support may diminish satisfaction levels and contribute to feelings of alienation or disengagement. Secondly, institutional support and resources play a crucial role in shaping international students' satisfaction with learning communities (Engstrom, 2008; Hord, 1997). Access to academic support services, cultural adaptation programs, and campus facilities enhances international students' satisfaction with their university experience. Institutions that prioritize the needs and well-being of international students through proactive policies, initiatives, and support systems foster a positive and inclusive learning environment conducive to satisfaction. Thirdly, the alignment between students' expectations and experiences within learning communities influences satisfaction levels. International students who perceive learning communities as meeting their academic, social, and personal needs are more likely to be satisfied with their participation. However, discrepancies between students' expectations and the actual experiences within learning communities may lead to dissatisfaction and disengagement (Perrucci, and Hu, 1995; Brunton, and Jeffrey, 2014).



Comparisons of satisfaction levels between international and domestic students within learning communities reveal nuanced differences. While both international and domestic students may derive similar benefits from participation in learning communities, international students may encounter unique challenges related to cultural adjustment, language proficiency, and social integration, which may impact their satisfaction levels. Additionally, international students' satisfaction with learning communities may be influenced by factors such as visa restrictions, financial constraints, and homesickness, which are not typically experienced by domestic students. Despite these challenges, international students demonstrate a strong desire to engage with their peers and faculty members within learning communities, highlighting the importance of providing tailored support and resources to enhance their satisfaction and well-being.

In conclusion, satisfaction with learning communities is a multifaceted construct influenced by perceived benefits, challenges, interactions, institutional support, and alignment between expectations and experiences. While international students may encounter unique challenges when participating in learning communities, proactive support measures, positive interactions, and institutional initiatives are essential for enhancing their satisfaction and fostering a positive learning environment. By addressing the needs and concerns of international students within learning communities, institutions can promote their satisfaction, engagement, and overall success within higher education settings.

### **Role of Learning Communities as Support Systems**

Learning communities serve as vital support systems within higher education settings, providing a range of support mechanisms aimed at promoting the academic success, personal development, and well-being of students (Riel, and Polin, 2004; Brook, and Oliver, 2002). These communities offer a multifaceted support network encompassing academic assistance, social integration, mentorship, and personal growth opportunities. Moreover, the peer-to-peer support networks fostered within learning communities play a crucial role in enhancing student engagement, collaboration, and resilience. Additionally, the nature and effectiveness of support systems may vary across different types of learning communities, including residential and academic communities, each offering unique benefits and challenges.

Analysis of the support mechanisms provided within learning communities reveals a comprehensive array of resources and services tailored to meet the diverse needs of students. Academic support mechanisms such as tutoring services, study groups, and academic advising are essential for assisting students in navigating their academic coursework, overcoming challenges, and achieving academic success. Moreover, learning communities often offer opportunities for experiential learning, research collaborations, and interdisciplinary projects, which enhance students' academic experiences and skills development. Beyond academic support, learning communities facilitate social integration and community building through a variety of activities, events, and initiatives. These include social gatherings, cultural celebrations, community service projects, and leadership development programs, which promote cross-cultural understanding, interpersonal connections, and a sense of belonging among students. By fostering a supportive and inclusive environment, learning communities contribute to the overall well-being and satisfaction of students, enhancing their overall university experience.

Peer-to-peer support networks play a central role within learning communities, providing students with invaluable opportunities for collaboration, mentorship, and personal growth. Peer mentors, resident assistants, and student leaders within learning communities serve as role models, guides, and sources of support for their peers, offering academic advice, emotional support, and practical assistance when needed. Moreover, peer interactions within learning communities foster a sense of camaraderie, solidarity, and collective identity among students, which strengthens the community and enhances its effectiveness as a support system (Meijer, et al., 2012; Guizzard, et al., 2003). Furthermore, the comparison of support systems in different types of learning communities reveals distinct characteristics and emphases tailored to the specific needs and goals of each community. Residential learning communities, for example, prioritize social integration, community living, and personal development through shared living arrangements, communal activities, and peer interactions. These communities offer a supportive living environment where students can forge meaningful connections, cultivate friendships, and engage in collaborative learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom (Chapman, and Aspin, 2001; Miyake, and Yoshida, 2017).

On the other hand, academic learning communities focus primarily on enhancing students' academic success, skills development, and career readiness through targeted academic support, mentorship, and experiential learning opportunities. These communities often incorporate academic advising, peer tutoring, and discipline-specific workshops to assist students in achieving their academic and professional goals. Additionally, academic learning communities may provide opportunities for research collaborations, internships, and industry partnerships, which enhance students' practical skills, networks, and career prospects (Happel, and Song, 2020; Stevenson, et al., 2005).

In summary, learning communities serve as indispensable support systems within higher education, offering a range of support mechanisms aimed at promoting student success, personal development, and well-being. These communities provide academic assistance, social integration, mentorship, and personal growth opportunities tailored to meet the diverse needs of students. Moreover, the peer-to-peer support networks fostered within learning communities play a crucial role in enhancing student engagement, collaboration, and resilience. While the nature and effectiveness of support systems may vary across different types of learning communities, each community offers unique benefits and opportunities for students to thrive academically, socially, and personally within the university environment.

### **Synthesis of Findings**

The synthesis of findings from the literature on learning communities and their role in supporting international student success provides valuable insights into the mechanisms, outcomes, and challenges associated with these collaborative learning environments within higher education settings (Weiss, et al., 2015; Visher, et al., 2012).

Key findings related to engagement, learning outcomes, and satisfaction underscore the pivotal role of learning communities in promoting the success and well-being of international students. Engagement within learning communities enhances international students' academic performance, social integration, and overall satisfaction with their university experience. Participating in learning communities facilitates the development of key skills and competencies essential for

success in higher education and beyond. Moreover, satisfaction with learning communities is influenced by perceived benefits, challenges, interactions, institutional support, and alignment between expectations and experiences.

Common themes and trends identified across studies include the importance of peer interactions, faculty support, institutional resources, and cultural adaptation programs in facilitating international students' engagement, learning outcomes, and satisfaction within learning communities. Positive interactions with peers, faculty members, and mentors enhance international students' sense of belonging, support, and engagement within learning communities. Furthermore, institutional support systems such as academic advising, tutoring services, and cultural adaptation programs are essential for meeting the diverse needs and challenges of international students within learning communities (Vescio, et al., 2008).

However, the synthesis of findings also reveals gaps and limitations in the existing literature, which warrant further research and exploration. Firstly, there is a need for more empirical research specifically focusing on the experiences of international students within learning communities. While existing studies provide valuable insights, many are limited in scope or methodology, and more rigorous empirical research is needed to further understand the impact of learning communities on international student success. Secondly, there is limited research examining the long-term outcomes and career prospects of international students who participate in learning communities. While existing studies focus primarily on academic outcomes and satisfaction, little is known about the lasting effects of participation in learning communities on international students' career trajectories, employability, and professional development. Additionally, there is a lack of comparative research exploring differences in engagement, learning outcomes, and satisfaction between international and domestic students within learning communities. While some studies suggest disparities in satisfaction levels between these student groups, further research is needed to examine the underlying factors contributing to these differences and identify strategies for promoting equitable experiences within learning communities. Furthermore, there is a need for more research examining the effectiveness of different types of learning communities (e.g., residential vs. academic) in supporting international student success. While existing studies provide insights into the benefits and challenges associated with various types of learning communities, more research is needed to determine which models are most effective for promoting the success and well-being of international students within higher education settings (Daniel, et al., 2007; Dogan, et al., 2016).

The synthesis of findings from the literature on learning communities and international student success highlights the significant role of these collaborative learning environments in promoting engagement, learning outcomes, and satisfaction among international students. While existing research provides valuable insights, there are gaps and limitations that warrant further investigation. Future research should focus on addressing these gaps and exploring new avenues for enhancing the effectiveness of learning communities in supporting international student success within higher education settings.

### **Implications for Practice**

Recommendations for higher education institutions in supporting international student success through learning communities. Higher education institutions play a pivotal role in supporting the

success and well-being of international students through the implementation of effective learning communities (Lenning, et al., 2013; Love, 2012). To maximize the benefits of these collaborative learning environments and ensure the success of international students, institutions should consider the following recommendations. Recognize and embrace the diverse cultural backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of international students within learning communities. Foster a culture of inclusivity, respect, and understanding by providing opportunities for cross-cultural exchange, dialogue, and collaboration. Develop programs and initiatives that celebrate diversity, promote cultural awareness, and create a welcoming environment for all students. Offer a range of support services and resources specifically designed to meet the unique needs and challenges of international students within learning communities. This includes academic advising, tutoring services, language support programs, and cultural adaptation workshops. Ensure that these support services are easily accessible, culturally relevant, and responsive to the evolving needs of international students. Encourage the development of peer-to-peer support networks within learning communities to facilitate collaboration, mentorship, and social integration among international students. Provide opportunities for peer mentoring, leadership development, and community building activities to enhance students' sense of belonging and connection within the learning community. Create opportunities for active engagement and participation within learning communities through collaborative learning experiences, group projects, and experiential learning opportunities. Encourage international students to take an active role in shaping the learning environment, contributing their unique perspectives, and sharing their cultural experiences with their peers. Engage faculty members in the design, implementation, and facilitation of learning community programs to provide academic guidance, mentorship, and support to international students. Offer professional development opportunities for faculty to enhance their cultural competency, teaching effectiveness, and ability to support international students within the learning community. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of learning community programs in supporting international student success by collecting feedback, conducting surveys, and tracking outcomes. Use assessment data to identify areas for improvement, refine programmatic interventions, and enhance the overall effectiveness of learning communities in supporting international students (Hankins, 2022; Hoare, et al., 2022).

Strategies for enhancing engagement, learning outcomes, and satisfaction within learning communities. To maximize the impact of learning communities on international student success, institutions can implement the following strategies aimed at enhancing engagement, learning outcomes, and satisfaction. Create a welcoming and inclusive environment within learning communities that values diversity, promotes respect, and encourages collaboration among students. Provide opportunities for students to engage in meaningful interactions, develop connections, and build relationships with their peers and faculty members. Implement active learning strategies within learning communities to promote student engagement, critical thinking, and knowledge retention. Encourage collaborative learning experiences, problem-solving activities, and group discussions that foster peer-to-peer interaction and knowledge sharing. Offer academic support services and resources within learning communities to assist students in achieving their academic goals. This includes tutoring services, academic advising, study groups, and access to course materials and resources. Ensure that these support services are easily

accessible, responsive to students' needs, and tailored to the unique challenges faced by international students. Create opportunities for experiential learning within learning communities through internships, research projects, community service initiatives, and study abroad programs. Engage students in hands-on learning experiences that enhance their practical skills, professional development, and global perspectives. Encourage students to reflect on their learning experiences, set goals, and assess their progress within learning communities. Provide opportunities for self-assessment, feedback, and reflection to help students identify their strengths, areas for improvement, and personal growth opportunities. Foster a culture of continuous improvement within learning communities by soliciting feedback, evaluating programmatic interventions, and implementing evidence-based practices. Engage students, faculty members, and stakeholders in the process of program evaluation and improvement to ensure that learning communities effectively meet the needs of international students (Sarmiento, et al., 2019; Ferrer, et al., 2022). Importance of cultural sensitivity and inclusivity in designing and implementing learning community programs. Cultural sensitivity and inclusivity are essential considerations in the design and implementation of learning community programs aimed at supporting international student success. By recognizing and respecting the diverse cultural backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of international students, institutions can create learning environments that are welcoming, supportive, and conducive to student success. Cultural sensitivity involves an awareness and understanding of the cultural norms, values, and communication styles of international students, as well as an appreciation for the diversity of experiences and perspectives within the learning community. Inclusive practices ensure that all students feel valued, respected, and included within the learning community, regardless of their cultural background, language proficiency, or personal characteristics.

In designing and implementing learning community programs, institutions should consider the following principles of cultural sensitivity and inclusivity. Foster an awareness and understanding of the cultural backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of international students within the learning community (Glass, 2012; Brunton, and Jeffrey, 2014). Provide opportunities for cross-cultural exchange, dialogue, and collaboration to promote cultural awareness and competence among students and faculty members. Create a culture of respect, tolerance, and appreciation for diversity within the learning community. Celebrate cultural differences, promote mutual understanding, and encourage students to learn from each other's perspectives and experiences. Ensure that learning community programs are accessible and equitable for all students, regardless of their cultural background, language proficiency, or personal characteristics. Provide accommodations, support services, and resources to address the unique needs and challenges faced by international students within the learning community. Use inclusive language and communication strategies that respect the diversity of students within the learning community. Avoid language that may be exclusive or insensitive to cultural differences, and strive to create an environment where all students feel valued, respected, and included. Engage students, faculty members, and stakeholders in the design, implementation, and evaluation of learning community programs. Foster a collaborative and participatory approach to decision-making that values diverse perspectives, promotes inclusivity, and empowers students to take an active role in shaping their learning environment (Ruijuan, et al., 2023; Kaner, 2014; McLaughlin, and Talbert, 2006).



By prioritizing cultural sensitivity and inclusivity in the design and implementation of learning community programs, institutions can create supportive, inclusive, and empowering learning environments that promote the success and well-being of international students within higher education settings.

### **RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION**

The systematic review conducted in this study synthesized findings from the literature on the role and impact of learning communities in supporting international student success within higher education settings. Key findings highlighted the significant role of learning communities in promoting engagement, enhancing learning outcomes, and fostering satisfaction among international students. Engagement within learning communities was found to positively influence academic performance, social integration, and overall satisfaction with the university experience. Furthermore, participation in learning communities facilitated the development of key skills and competencies essential for success in higher education and beyond. Satisfaction with learning communities was influenced by perceived benefits, challenges, interactions, institutional support, and alignment between expectations and experiences. Overall, the systematic review's main findings underscored the importance of learning communities as supportive environments that contribute to the success and well-being of international students within higher education settings. The systematic review contributed to a deeper understanding of the role and impact of learning communities on international student success by synthesizing findings from existing research and identifying common themes, trends, and gaps in the literature. By examining the influence of engagement, learning outcomes, and satisfaction within learning communities, the review provided insights into the mechanisms through which these collaborative learning environments support the success and well-being of international students. Furthermore, the review highlighted the importance of cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and tailored support mechanisms in designing and implementing effective learning community programs. Overall, the systematic review's contributions enhance our understanding of the multifaceted ways in which learning communities contribute to the success and integration of international students within higher education settings. While the systematic review provided valuable insights into the role and impact of learning communities on international student success, there are several areas for future research that warrant further exploration. Firstly, future research should focus on addressing gaps and limitations identified in the existing literature, such as the need for more empirical research specifically focusing on the experiences of international students within learning communities. Additionally, there is a need for more research examining the long-term outcomes and career prospects of international students who participate in learning communities, as well as comparative studies exploring differences in satisfaction levels between international and domestic students within these communities. Furthermore, future research should investigate the effectiveness of different types of learning communities in supporting international student success, as well as the influence of cultural sensitivity and inclusivity on student engagement, learning outcomes, and satisfaction within these communities. By addressing these research gaps, future studies can further enhance our understanding of the role and impact of learning communities on international student success and inform the development of evidence-based practices and policies aimed at promoting the success and well-being of international students within higher education settings.

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