

# **International Student Program Structures: Optimising Intercultural Interactions**

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Since the beginning of international education in Australia, education providers have faced the difficult task of establishing international student programs (ISPs) that meet the myriad needs of their overseas cohorts. However, until now there has been negligible research into ISP structures. In particular, there is paucity in terms of empirical studies that investigate the connections between programs and international student wellbeing. This paper reports on some of the findings from recent research into the welfare of adolescent international students and the ways in which schools provide for their needs. Three types of ISPs emerged where international students were: 1) fully integrated into the school community; 2) partially integrated through sporting and extra-curricular programs; and, 3) segregated from their local peers. The findings indicate that the structures of international student programs affect the degree to which overseas students integrate with their classmates. The programs were also found to influence the extent to which overseas young people feel comfortable when interacting within Australian cultural contexts and the levels of ongoing culture shock that they experience.

## **Key Words**

International Students, international student programs, integration, student wellbeing