

Rapid Acculturation Mateship Program:
An 18-Week Peer Mentoring Intervention to Facilitate Adjustment

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† in memory of our dear friend and colleague, 1 June 2019

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Socially integrating international students into the host university is a challenge for any university. We present the Rapid Acculturation Mateship Program (RAMP), a comprehensive 18-week higher education peer mentoring/acculturation program for incoming international students in an Australian university. A group of 43 local partners (Mates) were paired with 126 international students (Participants), a control group of 238 students did not follow the program. Quantitative data were collected among participants and controls prior to the program, in the middle of the semester, and after completion of the semester. Inventories of acculturation, self-esteem, cultural intelligence, cognitive complexity, experienced prejudice, and satisfaction with life were administered. Small score increases were found after the program only in the acculturation domain. Mates also evaluated Participants' skills (communication skills conducive to functioning in the university and Australian context) before and after the program. Large increases in all skills were reported. Qualitative responses from participants after completing the program confirmed the substantial increase in communication skills. Thus, effects of the program appeared primarily in the domain of intercultural communication, and that only small effects were observed in other domains of cultural adjustment and well-being. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed at the individual and group levels.

Keywords: Mentoring, Social Learning Theory, International Students, Culture, Adjustment