13.9.2026

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Title

Learning diversity in higher education : a comparative study of Asian international and Australian students / Prem Ramburuth ; John McCormick

Publication year

2001

Source/Footnote

In: Higher Education. - 42 (2001) 3, S. 333 - 350

Inventory number

13236

Keywords

Ausland : Australien : Hochschulwesen allgemein ; Ausland : Australien : Studenten, Studium, Lehre ; Studentenschaft : Studienverhalten

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the learning style preferences and approaches to learning of international students from Asian backgrounds, and make comparisons with the learning styles of Australian students. The sample consisted of 78 newly arrived international students from Asian countries, and 110 Australian students, studying at the same university.Two survey instruments, the Study Process Questionnaire (Biggs 1987c) and Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (Reid 1987) were used to investigate cognitive and environmental dimensions to student learning. Descriptive statistics and multiple discriminant analyses were employed for data analysis.No statistically significant differences were found between Asian international and Australian students in their overall ?Approaches to Learning?. However, Asian international students demonstrated significantly higher use of deep motivation, surface strategies, and achieving strategies, whilst Australian students demonstrated higher use of deep strategies and surface motivation. The groups

also differed significantly in their ?Learning Style Preferences? in group, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic modes of learning, with the strongest difference being in group learning, supporting the notion of Asian students being more ?collaborative? in their learning styles.The findings draw attention to dimensions of learning diversity that may be present in Australian tertiary classrooms, and could have implications for teaching and management of this diversity. The findings may also have relevance to countries with similar ?western? traditions to Australia and cross cultural student populations. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Prem Ramburuth, E-Mail: p.ramburuth@unsw.edu.au