

‘Rethinking Widening Access: How do we improve student outcomes across the lifecycle?’

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Other ways of thinking

1. Belonging
2. Mattering
3. Resilience
4. Community cultural wealth

Implications for evaluation

Belonging

- Belonging is a multifaceted concept.
 - Relates to feelings of connectedness, attachment to other people, places, or modes of being
 - More than need for simple social contact: active processes of social contact and interaction
 - *At the heart of any negotiation or competition that ensues between [such] groups is the question of who has the right to make claims over how 'we' do things – that is, who 'really' belongs* (May, 2013, p. 98)
- We only know we don't belong when we don't belong

Everyday belonging

- For many students:
 - Everyday world structured by power relations
 - Everyday world as problematic
 - Tensions between the ordinary and the extra-ordinary
 - Contested belongings
 - Drawing boundaries
 - Multiple belongings
- Implications for
 - Identity/sense of self/self esteem
 - In/equitable student experience
 - Fundamental in how privilege produced and reproduced

Mattering

- Subjective perception that we make a difference to others
- Essential to the way we value ourselves, our sense of self and our sense of identity (Tovar, 2013).
- You can superficially belong (be part of a social group) but also feel that you don't matter; unless you feel you matter you do not in reality truly belong
- Four distinct elements:
 - attention, importance, dependence, appreciation

Resilience

- *The potential to exhibit resourcefulness by using available internal and external resources in response to different contextual and developmental challenges (Pooley & Cohen, 2010, p. 34).*
- Risk factors/mechanisms
- Vulnerability factors
- Protective factors

External/internal factors

External protective factors

- Good educational experiences
- Family support and cohesion
- Social/community networks
- Interests/social commitments

Internal resources

- Determination
- Endurance
- Adaptability
- Recuperability

Much resilience work

- Positions students who lack access to conventional social, economic and cultural capital on entering HE as lacking
- Focusses on developing internal resources deemed to be lacking
- Can ignore/avoid developing external resources
- Avoids recognition of structural inequalities
- Institutional interventions
 - Activities that focus on the individual building grit e.g. out door residential/team building activities
 - Counselling services etc.

So what am I arguing for

- Belonging
- Mattering
- Recognition of resilience

- Needs to be built on understanding what students bring/have the potential to bring to HE

Yosso's 2005 framework

- Starts with what students bring to the classroom not what they don't; recognises resources; asks reflective questions of our practice
 1. Aspirational capital
 2. Linguistic
 3. Familial capital
 4. Social capital
 5. Navigational capital
 6. Resistance capital

To end

- What are we evaluating?
 - What students bring or what students lack?
 - The need to change them or the institution?