
Designing ethical pedagogic research: World's Most Rigorous Ethics Board activity

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STUDY 1

Patterns of participation in higher education for care-experienced students in England: why has there not been more progress?

Children who spend time in the care of their local authority, usually due to neglect or abuse within the birth family, tend to experience significant educational disruption and have lower educational outcomes, on average, than other young people. However, little is known about those subsequently participating in higher education, who comprise just under one percent of the student body in England.

The paper synthesises three contrasting datasets to map participation patterns among care-experienced young people for the first time. Considerably more enter higher education than previously thought, but they remain significantly less likely to participate than other young people. Furthermore, they tend to enter later, with less prestigious qualifications and to lower status institutions.

The paper concludes by discussing key differences between the datasets, reflecting on difficulties with identifying and recording care-experienced students which may account for an apparent lack of progress in encouraging their participation despite concerted policy efforts.

STUDY 2

‘When it comes to what employers are looking for, I don’t think I’m it for a lot of them’: class and capitals in, and after, higher education

Much research on adults in higher education has focused on issues of access and participation. As a result little is known about what happens to working-class students after leaving university: even though employability is high on the agenda HE research on this topic in relation to such students is sparse. This research focuses on the voices of working-class students and their aspirations in relation to employability. Using two student narratives this paper draws on the findings of two countries, England and Ireland, from a six-country European project on employability of non-traditional students using biographical research methods. Their stories reveal an awareness of class inequalities in the labour market in relation to cultural, economic and social capital and issues of locality, gender and age. The stories also indicate a sense of precarity in their lifecourse in a society which has become highly reflexive and fluid.

STUDY 3

Tracing EFL students' flipped classroom journey in a writing class: Lessons from Malaysia

The study explored English as a Foreign Language (EFL) low proficiency students' reflections and experience of learning in a structured flipped writing program, in a foreign university branch campus in Malaysia. It investigated the areas in which students showed improvement after flipped classroom learning. Qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews of a sample of 18 students revealed that most students had positive experiences of the use of flipped classroom, reporting that they had greater time preparation before class; increased practice, engagement, interaction, motivation and immediate feedback during class, and a higher level of self-efficacy after class. Some shortcomings of this approach included the feeling of boredom and that it was time-consuming.

STUDY 4

Retaking a course in economics: Innovative teaching strategies to improve academic performance in groups of low-performing students

Students who have to retake courses at university are often not only low achieving, but also unmotivated and lacking in self-confidence. In this study, we present the first report of a teaching strategy based on the implementation of the flipped classroom model, team-based learning, and frequent testing strategies in groups of students retaking a subject. A sample of seven groups of an average of 68 students followed the new teaching approach. The groups are distributed across four subjects and three semesters. By comparing the average performance across groups that apply different teaching strategies – traditional versus innovative – we find a significant increase in the academic performance of the students following the new approach.

STUDY 5

Teaching and learning cultures in higher education: a mismatch in conceptions

Instructional approaches in higher education that foster learning based on internal values are required with the enrollment of wider and more diverse audiences. The current study explores this challenge with a focus on the relationship between students' learning cultures and the way instructors' view them. We interviewed 76 students and six instructors at an established academic institution. Data comprised of 210 students' and 146 instructors' utterances that were analyzed using mixed methods. Findings revealed a mismatch of instructors' conceptions about the learning culture of the typical student, potentially leading to compromises in their teaching practices. We provide evidence that reciprocal relations exist between cultures of teaching and learning, contributing to the wicked challenges of rethinking the role of teachers in reinforcing passive learning cultures in undergraduate education. Adoption of internal-based values teaching approaches can help break this feedback loop.