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Valuing students of the future

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Introduction

The neoliberal agenda and widespread marketisation of higher education in the Global North has blindsided many institutions from their core purpose of education and research (Collini 2012). League-table judgments of higher education institutions now frequently rely on their capacity to foster an individual's economic prosperity alongside customer satisfaction. Neoliberal contexts thus create tensions between the traditional and contemporary identities of academics as scholars versus service providers, and of students as learners versus customers (King & Bunce, 2020). This chapter considers how to encourage those working within marketised higher education contexts to challenge the neoliberal orthodoxy and navigate the tensions it creates by engaging meaningfully with the student body through 'progressive education'. This is where didactic, teacher-focused, and content-focused models are replaced by active, student-led, and skills-focused pedagogies that draw on the rich diversity of individuals who come through our doors. The aim is to create not satisfied customers, but students with an enthusiasm for learning that extends beyond their higher education experience.

In this chapter, we take a psychological approach to understanding the learning process, and challenge the notion of learning through didactic means of the traditional lecture. We remind ourselves of the work done by both seminal and contemporary thinkers on the principles that underpin pedagogical thinking and practice. We suggest that these philosophies value students not as commodities, but as individuals with a passion for learning and discovery, motivated by a desire to deepen their understanding of the discipline. Progressive educators can facilitate this by valuing future students through curriculum innovation. Such innovation should enable students to appreciate diverse perspectives, equip themselves to work in dynamic and changing environments, and contribute to a

broader societal future as global citizens and future leaders. Subsequently, we describe two teaching interventions (Taylor, 2022; Cook-Sather et al, 2018) and a curriculum innovation tool (Dalrymple et al, 2023) that provide educators with practical ways to value student diversity and reclaim the teaching discourse with respect to multiple identities that exist within the student community. Our aim is to show that we can, and should, judge our students' futures not just in terms of their potential earning power, but in terms of their value to societal improvement.

Multiple Student Identities in Contemporary Higher Education

The neoliberal free market ideology drives political, social, and economic decisions. Education, which was traditionally thought of as a common or public good, becomes a commodity: 'Institutions and the programmes they offer become marketable goods; reputation and knowledge come with price tags; and graduates themselves have financial value' (Magne, 2019, p25). In this neoliberal context there is a cost-benefit analysis at play. Studying for a degree comes with a price tag. The savvy student, or those who provide financial support to the prospective student, pay careful attention to the league tables that measure comparative data across institutions, and choose accordingly. In this competitive field universities have become service providers, and students have become the consumer (Molesworth et al, 2011). Whilst universities of the 21st Century are subject to a market economy and coerced to be independent businesses in their own right, this neoliberal model of higher education is at odds with the notion of education as a public good (Overton et al, 2023).

Situated amidst the competing demands of these politically shaped models of education are the students. The experience of going to university offers every student the opportunity to define or re-define who they are, or who they want to be. By going to university the student enters into a series of new social, cultural, political and educational dynamics. This set of new circumstances can be challenging and disorienting. It may leave some students feeling isolated as they fall between the cracks of these multiple spaces, or struggle to negotiate their path through a confusing set of dynamics that remain unexplained or impenetrable (Holdsworth, 2009; Scanlon et al, 2007). Other students relish the experience of a series of 'turning points' (O'Shea, 2014) during their university experience and discover

a new freedom to define themselves. Those new selves may have multiple identities: one student may be a young mother, first in family to attend university, volley-ball player, artist, and entrepreneur; another may identify as a mature, international, black, non-binary, engineer, with financial responsibilities for older relatives. What is important is for academics to recognise that there is no such thing as an homogeneous student group or the 'ideal student' (Wong et al, 2023). Whilst there may be some common characteristics, every student is unique (Jones and Abes, 2013). Each student will have their own desires, values, preferences, motivations, and challenges. What the next section hopes to demonstrate is that there are a series of fundamental educational principles, borne out of research, that enable academics to connect meaningfully with students during this process of learning and identity formation. By employing a range of approaches, the academic can help each student to navigate their way through the university experience, engage with the learning opportunities offered to them, and become autonomous and purposeful individuals with a clear sense of who they are and how they can contribute to the world that they inhabit.

Valuing students of the future through contemporary pedagogies

If we really want to value students of the future in a way that goes beyond monetary measures, we need to consider the ways in which educators interact with students and ignite a transactional passion for learning. In the model of the public good, the university 'is a place to immerse oneself in learning and in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding. It [the university] is a bastion of inquiry, a proponent of philosophical openness and the guardian of reason and dialogue' (Magne, 2023). In this model the student is not a consumer, but a learner, and the educator is not a didactic mouthpiece, but a provocateur in the development of learning and transformative critical thought. This approach demands more from educators than the 'traditional', 'teacher centred', 'passive', 'content heavy' forms of teaching; it challenges them to immerse students in interactive, thought provoking, critical forms of engagement.

Pedagogy, described as the science or artistry of teaching and learning, and indeed andragogy, the science or artistry of teaching and learning with adults, draw on several research fields including: neuroscience, psychology, sociology and education. This chapter is largely written through the lens of psychology. From this we learn several key principles which underpin contemporary pedagogical

thinking and practice, and which challenge the notion of learning through didactic means of the traditional lecture. The following paragraphs indicate how seminal thinkers such as Pavlov, Chomsky, and Vygotsky, and more contemporary researchers including Bale, Seabrook, Telio, and Jackson investigated mechanisms that facilitate learning. For almost a century we have become increasingly aware of approaches that stimulate deep learning (Marton and Säljö, 1976). Yet, whilst contemporary research demonstrates a range of innovative approaches that reflect the intention of institutions to remain at the cutting edge of learning, there are many examples in pedagogic practice of the traditional 'chalk and talk' lectures that fail to value ways in which the students of today and tomorrow learn.

Research in cognitive neuroscience demonstrates that we build knowledge with the use of small building blocks associating things we already know with new knowledge (Ausubel, 2000). In order to push those building blocks of learning into the long-term memory the brain needs to actively engage in the processing power of the short term memory, to make connections between facts and create neural networks and new language systems (Chomsky, 1975). This processing power is called upon by tasks that invite learners to engage in critical thought, abstract reasoning, frequent recall and metacognition (Guy and Byrne, 2013). What we learn from cognitive research is that to value the students of the future, it is not enough to simply present information to students as passive listeners: more active approaches are needed.

Vygotsky (1978) suggested that the development of knowledge, and making meaning of what one is learning, occurs through a process of working with a more knowledgeable other (MKO). By making use of this MKO the boundaries of learning, or 'zones of proximal development' are extended allowing the learner to grow. More recent research does not limit that meaning-making dialogue between the learner and the MKO, but suggests that our understanding of the world and the disciplines that students study is developed through discussion, exploration, critique and debate with peers (Burr, 2003). This principle of social constructivism indicates that learning design should include social elements that encourage our students of tomorrow to work in collaboration with one another (Bale and Seabrook, 2021).

Pavlov (1927) and Skinner (1957) each demonstrated in their research on mice and dogs that learners are responsive to reward and punishment stimuli. Watson and Rayner (1920) established that

this was also true in human subjects through the 'Little Albert' experiments. This behaviourist approach strongly indicates that fear, failure and reward are key components of the learning journey. Just as reward can stimulate learning, so too can failure. Negligence to treat failure in positive regard risks the shut-down response and the risk of ending the learners' journey (Eskreis-Winkler and Fishbach, 2019). What we learn from this is that learning should involve a dialogic and emotionally intelligent feedback approach which promotes reflection and positive critical thought (Telio, 2015), even around elements of failure, thereby ensuring that they become a natural, if not essential, part of the learning journey (Jackson et al, 2022).

Research also indicates that learning is enriched when it is situated in a relevant context (O'Brien and Battista, 2020). None of this should be a surprise! For example, if a student is training to be a nurse, it is common sense that they should spend time in a range of health-care settings. Here their learning will develop through application to the real world environment in which they experience the complexities of nursing, and ways in which multiple factors will affect their decision-making. Lave and Wenger, (1991) indicate that situating learning, in the real world environment, as an active participant, offers learners a heightened level of legitimacy in relation to their academic endeavours. In the case of learners training for a specific profession, whether that be in the music or gaming industry, theatre, nursing, teaching, law, engineering, social work, business, economics, or hospitality, situated experiential learning can offer the learner a sense of personal and professional value that they will bring to the workplace. Experiential learning, whereby learners engage in a series of experiences designed to challenge, apply and deepen their thinking (Dewey, 1938) can similarly offer learners a sense of self value, even if not embedded within a workplace. By engaging in activities that are connected, relevant and reflective learners add value to their learning by beginning to understand the opportunities their own learning capacity may afford them (Silberman, 2007).

Maslow's 'Hierarchy of needs' (1943) founded the bedrock of humanist thought in relation to learning. Maslow demonstrated how a learner is only likely to be able to engage effectively with the learning process when the most basic of needs are met. The business of self actualisation, the level where learning can take place, sits at the top of this hierarchical pyramid demonstrating that physiological needs, personal safety, relationships and self-esteem need to be met before the learning

enters the learning space. Whilst Maslow's model has come in for some critique, for example, for being hierarchical and downgrading the role of culture and social interaction (Trigg, 2004), it is still thought to hold perceptive insights (Neher, 1991). For example, we know that there are many competing needs in the lives of adult learners including financial responsibilities, and health and housing circumstances that they may have to juggle alongside learning. The adult learner may arrive in the learning space determined to learn, driven by intentionality and values (Kurtz, 2000), but their basic needs, according to Maslow, may not be satisfied. Universities are increasingly recognising these challenges and offering (limited) financial and other support schemes for students with the most need. Rogers (1969) also reminds us that human beings have a natural potentiality for learning and that the educator or facilitator's job is to not only permit students to learn, but to ignite the process. In this humanist model, therefore, educators need to be cognisant of students' needs and do their utmost to create a conducive environment for learning which promotes students' natural curiosity and agency.

So what do we learn from these learning philosophies, and the research that underpins them, in relation to the way in which we value students of the future? Academics, lecturers, educators, whatever you wish to call those who teach in the setting of higher education, should be called to be 'progressive educators'. A progressive education is one which responds to the motivations of the learner. It values truth and knowledge that are born from experience and rigorous critical thought (Locke, 1894) rather than a series of didactically transmitted facts. It promotes the building of knowledge through a series of activities that engage the learner in a range of cognitive processes that enables them to construct building blocks of knowledge (Guy and Byrne, 2013). It utilises collaborative approaches in which learners critically review their own thinking and test ideas with their peers (Burr, 2003). Progressive education immerses students in real world learning, whether that be through situated placements, experiential activities or through case studies and debate. It actively creates learning environments in which the learner is invited to question, explore, lead, reject, argue, posit and reflect.

The aim of progressive education is not to produce a graduate as a commodity, a product that will in turn act as a marketing tool for the institution. It is not driven by National Student Survey (NSS) metrics, Graduate Outcomes and league table results. It is not tied to the apron strings of traditional didactic transmission models of learning. The aim of progressive education is to ignite a passion for

exploration and discovery in whatever discipline the student has chosen to study. It is to provide meaningful and dynamic learning experiences that encourage students to think, investigate, and deepen their understanding of their discipline and the context in which it exists. As Freire (1992) reminds us, a progressive educator is invested in the values of freedom and equality. If this chapter is about the way that we value the students of tomorrow, Freire suggests that we have a duty, as progressive educators, to facilitate learning that provides space for learners to gain agency and voice. Progressive education should value learners as individuals, respect individual motivations for learning, promote agency, and with this, responsibility for the ways in which individuals will make their own contribution, however big or small, to societal improvement.

A case study: contemporary student identities

In the next part of this chapter, we provide a practical example of how educators can create a dedicated learning space in which to support our students of the future in neoliberal higher education contexts. A teaching toolkit was developed by the first author (Taylor, 2022), which provides materials for educators to facilitate a workshop with students. The components of the toolkit provide opportunities for interactive, reflective and student-led activities, which value diverse perspectives on learning. The toolkit was developed in light of recent research showing that students who have stronger consumer identities are more likely to engage in superficial learning strategies and have poorer experience and grades (Bunce et al, 2017; Bunce and Bennett (2021) King and Bunce, 2020; Taylor-Bunce et al, 2022). The activities in the toolkit enable students, in collaboration with one another (Burr, 2003), to experientially consider and reflect on their identities as learners and consumers of their education, and consequently build a shared identity as members of their discipline. The activities give pause for students and educators to reflect on their motivations as students of the future and as progressive educators respectively, and ultimately aim to ignite students' natural potential and intrinsic motivation for learning (Rogers, 1969; Ryan and Deci, 2000).

The toolkit was designed to surface some of the possible tensions that marketisation of higher education may present for our students and educators (King and Bunce, 2020). Through the activities, it addresses these tensions in a way that is commensurate with the values of a progressive education.

Tensions include: conflict between the perceived purposes of higher education, such as the perception that it is a place to receive a degree in exchange for tuition fees versus being a place to read for a degree as a personally transformative experience; conflicts between the expectations of the roles of students, e.g. as customer versus scholar; and conflicts between the expectations of the role of educators, e.g. as service provider/entertainer versus educator.

Background research informing the identities toolkit

In designing the toolkit, long-established principles from social psychology and social constructivism were employed. A robust body of research shows that our social identities, i.e., our perception of ourselves in relation to the groups to which we belong (e.g., 'British' or 'Oxford Brookes University Student') influence our beliefs, attitudes and behaviours (Haslam, 2017). In different contexts, particular social identities may become more salient than others, e.g., when arriving at work our professional identity may become more salient than our family role, or during an election our political party identity may become more salient than usual. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) suggests that when a particular social identity becomes activated, we instinctively coordinate with other group members and create a shared set of values and beliefs, which in turn guide behaviours that are viewed as appropriate by group members.

Psychologists have applied these ideas to student learning in higher education. A social identity approach views learning as a fundamentally collaborative social endeavour rather than as an individual isolated one (Haslam, 2017). Research has found that a strong discipline social identity (e.g., as a psychology student) is associated with approaches to learning that support transformational growth and higher achievement. For example, Bliuc et al, (2011a, 2011b) (see also Smyth et al, 2015) found that students with strong social identity as a psychology student achieved higher grades than those with a weaker identity, and this was because students with a strong identity were more likely to adopt learning approaches that support 'deep' as opposed to 'surface' processing. Although the distinction between deep and surface approaches to learning is highly criticised (Lindblom-Ylänne et al., 2019,) deep learning approaches are those which involve an intention to understand material and make meaningful

connections between topics, as compared with surface approaches, which are characterised by instrumental intentions to pass assessments (Marton and Säljö, 1976).

Similarly, in a longitudinal study, Platow et al, (2017) found that deep learning approaches in Semester 1 predicted a strong discipline identity in Semester 2, and this was mediated by academic achievement. In other words, deep learning approaches predicted stronger discipline identity because they positively predicted academic achievement. More recently, discipline identity strength has been associated with the extent to which students engage in low-level or everyday complaints about their course (Taylor-Bunce et al, 2022). Student complaints have become ubiquitous in neoliberal higher education contexts (Hammonds et al, 2017). Although some complaints certainly stem from poor service, others may be due to a sense of consumer entitlement of lack of engagement by students (Newman and Jadhi, 2009). In a survey with over 600 students in England, UK, Taylor-Bunce et al, (2022) explored potential relations between discipline identity, approaches to learning and complaining. As predicted, students with a strong discipline identity (irrespective of their actual discipline) were found to be less likely to complain than students with a weak discipline identity, and this was because these students also adopted more deep approaches to learning. The authors suggest that complaining is a socio-psychological behavioural variable that is affected by group norms (shared sets of values and beliefs). When the group norm is influenced by a strong discipline identity and its associated deep-learning approaches, those norms support the perception of learning as intrinsically satisfying. Therefore, these students are less likely to complain, for example, about 'difficult' content or a low grade because that is perceived as part of learning.

Bunce and Bennett (2021) extended these findings to explore the impact of identity on educational approaches and outcomes. Specifically, they examined the extent to which a student has a consumer educational identity and its impact on approaches to learning and academic achievement. As found in Bunce et al, (2017), they found that a stronger consumer identity was associated with poorer academic achievement, but, additionally, they found that this was mediated by approaches to learning. In other words, students who identified more strongly as consumers were less likely to adopt deep approaches to learning, and more likely to adopt surface approaches, which helps to explain the link between consumer identity and academic achievement. In sum, this research strongly suggests that

social identities in education, both in terms of consumer/learner identities and sense of belonging to other students within their discipline, predict approaches to learning and academic success. It was with these issues in mind that the toolkit was developed, and this will now be described in the next section.

The toolkit: Balancing students' identities as learners and consumers

The materials and activities aim to 'enable students to consider their own identities and to learn about the impact of identities on learning approaches and academic achievement. More broadly, the workshop enables students to consider the attitudes and behaviours that support learning in their discipline in order to develop a shared social identity that supports effective learning and teaching' (Taylor, 2022, p. 7).

The different activities available in the toolkit, which collectively comprise a 90-minute workshop, are outlined in Table 10.1. The first activity involves students completing a questionnaire or 'quiz' to ascertain the strength of their learner and consumer identities. They respond with their level of agreement to a number of statements. The statements to assess consumer identity are adapted from Saunders' (2015) 18-item Customer Orientation scale, and include: 'If I cannot earn a lot of money after I graduate, I will have wasted my time at my institution', 'For the most part, education is something I receive, not something I create', and 'I think of my university education as a product I am purchasing'. The statements to assess learner identity are based upon the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (Pintrich et al, 1993), and include 22 items such as: 'I think the course material in this class is useful for me to learn', 'In a class like this, I prefer course material that arouses my curiosity, even if it is difficult to learn' and 'It is my own fault if I don't learn the material in this course' (for more information see Taylor, 2022). Upon completing the quiz, students are provided with two scores and a sentence to indicate whether each of the learner and consumer identities are strong or weak. Based on their two scores, they are also allocated and informed of their student 'type'. The 4 possible student types are defined in Figure 10.1.

[Table 10.1 about here]

Table 10.1: Key activities in the workshop with suggested timings for a small group of students

	Individual Activities	Approximate timings
1	Students complete the self-assessment questionnaire ('Student Profiler Quiz') to establish the strength of their learner and consumer identities and discover their student 'type'.	15 min.
2	Educator provides students with the infographic handout, then presents PowerPoint slides provided, describing the four student types and the impacts of identities on learning	15 min.
3	Students break-out into small groups to engage with the discussion questions.*	35 min.
4	Educator leads a plenary to develop with students a set of attitudes and behaviours that support learning, in order to create a shared social identity as an 'X student', where X = name of discipline. Students complete the infographic handout, adding the finalised list of statements to take away for reference.	20 min.
5	Students and educator complete relevant feedback form to evaluate their experience of the workshop.	5 min.

*A short break may be given after this point if necessary.

[Figure 10.1 about here]

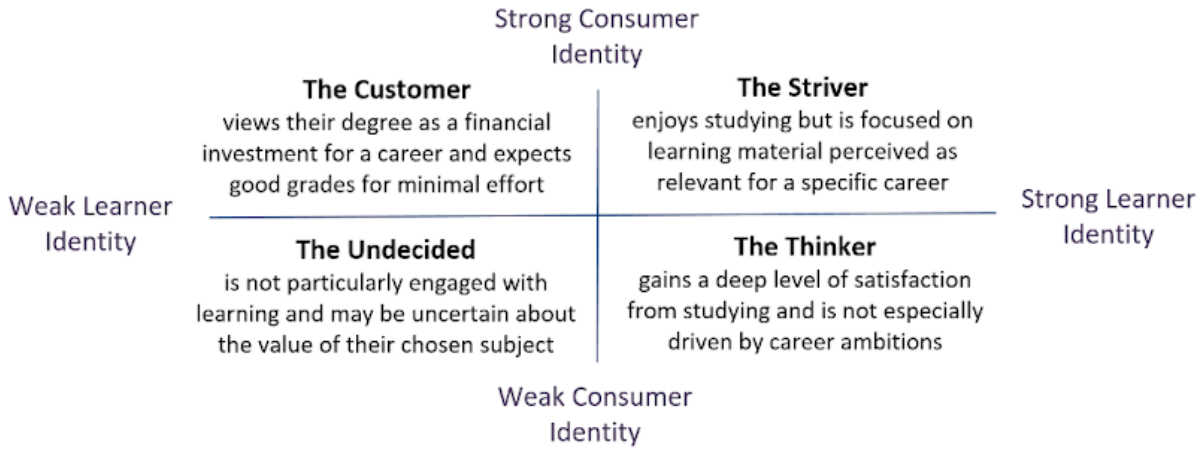

Figure 10.1: The four student types according to the strength of students' learner and consumer identities

Once students have established their identity type, the educator presents some of the core research findings on identities (as described above) using the available PowerPoint slides and notes, before students get into smaller groups (approximately 5 students per group) to debate the discussion questions. The questions build upon one another, and were designed to surface possible tensions between the neoliberal identity of students as consumers and the more traditional identity of students as learners. As such, the questions encourage students first to: consider their own motivations and the different motivations for university study of the 4 student types, then to discuss the ways they feel treated by the institution, their educators, and peers in relation to the idea that they can be defined as

customers versus learners. Next students are encouraged to debate the ways that education may be similar to or different from other types of customer services, such as attending a gym or eating at a restaurant, and what the roles of the customer (or student) are compared to the service provider (or institution). Then they are encouraged to engage with previous research as summarised in a blog post by Bunce (2020) to understand the influence consumer and learner educational identities on approaches to learning and academic achievement. Finally, students are asked to consider the flexible nature of identities, and consider situations in which the balance between their learner and consumer identities may change. During the group discussions, the educator should try to engage with the different student groups in order to facilitate discussion, learn about the students' views, and advance their debates.

The final and perhaps key identity-building activity within the workshop is the educator-led plenary. The aim of this is to develop and strengthen a social identity as members of their discipline. This is achieved by students and the educator co-creating a set of attitudes and behaviours that they believe will support learning within their disciplinary context. This is intentionally open in that the workshop participants can decide on the exact balance of values that pertain to both identities of students as learners and consumers. Students are provided with the sentence starter: 'Being a successful X student (where X is the name of their discipline) means …'. Students and the educator jointly complete this sentence starter, using the handout provided, by recording the attitudes and behaviours that describe successful learning (and teaching). This activity thus explicitly attempts to develop attitudinal and behavioural norms that will foster a strong social identity as a member of a discipline, which research demonstrates provides a positive educational experience and ultimately supports academic success (e.g. Bliuc et al., 2011a, 2011b; Taylor Bunce et al., 2022).

Valuing students' multiple identities

While the workshop provides a focus on these particular group aspects of students' identities, social identity is a complex concept, not least because we all have multiple social identities. For example, we may identify with a particular cultural group, a gendered group, a religious group, a community, or a professional group. Starting university provides opportunities to develop a new identity, as well as experiencing challenges to existing identities (Ecclestone et al, 2010). Our different identities can be

compatible (for example, identifying as female and being a mother), but at other times, apparent conflicts between different identities can arise (for example, identifying as female and being a physicist). These conflicts are most likely when we see a social group as having particular characteristics that we do not ourselves possess (or they lack characteristics that we do possess). For example, 'students' as a social group might be predominantly perceived as comprising young adults; a student who enrols at university as a mature student may experience a sense of being different from the group, and as such may not fully identify with them or may question their ability to belong to the group. For non-traditional students, there is the potential that they may experience a sense of identity incompatibility or 'unbelonging' on multiple levels, arising from intersecting marginalised identities (for example, Black woman, gay man). Although sector metrics focus on various levels of group identities, there is no such thing as an homogeneous student group or even the student 'voice' (Winstone and Hulme, 2019), but every student has their own voice that needs to be valued. Unfortunately, diversity is often problematised within the sector. The phrase 'attainment gaps', which describes differences in levels of academic performance for different demographic groups, conceptualises gaps as a deficit in the lower performing group. Consequently, this phrase suggests that interventions should be aimed at reducing the deficit by providing additional support to students in those groups. Now, the phrase 'awarding gaps' is used more commonly to symptomize wider structural inequalities that result in inequitable outcomes. Work by institutions to address these inequalities is still in its infancy.

In working to address these wider inequalities to value the unique identities of students of the future, we need to recognise that multiple aspects of our identities inform how we as individuals think, feel, and act in different situations, and that these can change across contexts and evolve over time. It may be helpful to consider at this point what it means to create learning and teaching environments that can value individual identities through being inclusive. Hockings (2010: 1) defines inclusive learning and teaching as 'the ways in which pedagogy, curricula and assessment are designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant and accessible to all. It embraces a view of the individual and individual difference as the source of diversity that can enrich the lives and learning of others'. For us, the key aspect of this quote is the latter part that advocates for individual differences being the source of diversity for learning. Individual differences in identities should be articulated and

affirmed to work against discriminatory stereotypes and histories in education. Cook-Sather et al, (2018) have developed this idea by designing an intriguing intervention for students studying at one institution in Pennsylvania, USA, which they hope can be adapted across other higher education contexts. Its aim is to 'affirm diversity and foster a sense of inclusion among students' (p. 374). We will now describe this teaching initiative as a way to end this chapter and to demonstrate how it is possible, in partnership with students, to recognise and value the diversity of identities of our students of the future.

A teaching intervention that centralises student identities

A critical part of the project by Cook-Sather et al, (2018) was that students co-created the course. Partnership approaches to designing curricula can address power imbalances, disrupt traditional notions of 'expertise' within educator-student relationships, and serve to empower students, particularly those from underrepresented student groups. For example, one such student explained that participating in a co-creation project 'made me feel like who I am is more than enough—that my identity, my thoughts, my ideas are significant and valuable' (Cook-Sather et al, 2015: 18). The teaching intervention by Cook-Sather et al, (2018) was part of a course 'Advocating Diversity in Higher Education', that sought to affirm diverse student identities by articulating them through interviews (in confidence), and subsequently informing all members of the course about them. Interviews were conducted by a student and began by inviting the participant to list their identities and intersections, using their own terms. Then they were invited to discuss how they experienced belonging/alienation in order to construct an understanding of that students' experience on campus. The participants were also asked what they believed was necessary for positive change. The interviews were shaped by the student interviewer into anonymous and detailed 'portraits' that became essential reading for the course, either in preparation for class discussion or during class time itself. The latter was achieved through 'Gallery Walks' whereby students could read hard copies of the portraits that were displayed on classroom walls. Students were challenged to reflect on and discuss the diversity of voices and experiences as an integral part of their course.

In course evaluation feedback, students often cited the Gallery Walks as having a 'profound' effect on how they thought about issues relating to identity, diversity and belonging. They explained that the insight they obtained into individual identities helped to shape positively their interactions with their peers, both within and beyond the campus environment. Students whose own identities were reflected in the portraits also reported the importance of being given the space to be able to articulate their own identities, and reported having experienced a sense of 'solidarity, visibility and validation' through the class activities. As the course unfolded, each and every student was given the opportunity to interview and be interviewed by a peer, which formed a fundamental part of the learning and assessment process. While the interview content was flexible and could be adapted by students to meet their interests, specific guidance for others wanting to replicate this course was provided in Appendix 1 of Cook-Sather et al, (2018). The authors argue that courses like this one, that make space for and articulate diverse student voices, can work alongside leadership efforts at institutional level to work against historical discrimination and begin to undo the structural inequalities that persist in our education systems.

Institutional frameworks that centralise student identities

There are many frameworks and models that use different means towards a similar end focusing on inclusion and repositioning the student voice as an equal partner in the endeavour of Higher Education (e.g. Advance HE framework for student engagement through partnership). Oxford Brookes employs the IDEAS inclusive curriculum model (https://www.brookes.ac.uk/staff/student-support/ideas-model/what-is-ideas), a tool which was itself designed in collaboration with students (Dalrymple et al, 2023). The IDEAS framework engages curriculum design teams in a series of activities that challenge those teams to consider 5 key elements from the perspective of the student:

- **I**nclusive learning
- **D**igital inclusivity
- **E**mployability Learning
- **A**ssessment as, of and for learning and
- **S**ustainability mindset

Each element concentrates on a series of eight or nine questions devised by and written from the student standpoint. For example, in relation to inclusivity the students' ask, 'How will you get to know me, and how will I get to know my peers?' and 'What aspects of the learning culture help me to feel I belong here?' In relation to employability learning students ask, 'In what ways is my experience of the programme reflective of a diverse range of career role models, promoting awareness of equality of rights and opportunities in the workplace?' and in reaction to assessment teams consider, 'How does the assessment regime motivate me to learn?' The full set of questions can be found on the Brookes IDEAS website. In addition to having student voices in the room posing these questions as programme teams design or redesign their curriculum, the IDEAS model uses a design thinking approach (Interaction Design Foundation, attributed to Simon, 1969). This approach asks academics to consider their offer from the perspective of a range of student personas. By merit of engaging this approach, which is built into the accreditation and validation of new and revised programmes at Brookes, there is a re-balance of power from the institution towards the student. The process situates the student and their multiple identities at the heart of the curriculum design process and challenges all parties to construct an educational offer that speaks to the contemporary student body.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have demonstrated ways in which universities and educators can begin to challenge the neoliberal orthodoxy, whereby higher education has become at odds with the notion of education as a public good. Valuing students of the future involves moving beyond traditional didactic and teacher-led content to more engaging pedagogies that locate the diverse, intersecting identities of our students at the heart of the curriculum, to ensure our graduates can contribute to improving the world in which they live. We have described two specific teaching interventions that provide educators with practical tools to foster inclusion and affirm diversity: the identities toolkit produced by Taylor (2022) and the activities described by Cook-Sather et al, (2018). We have also outlined a curriculum design tool (Dalrymple et al, 2023) which, together with these teaching interventions, enables those who teach to reclaim the teaching discourse with respect to multiple identities that exist within the student community. Unfortunately, these individualised interventions alone are insufficient for levelling out

differential attainment rates of typically underrepresented student groups compared to traditional students. Educational change to make higher education an inclusive place also requires leadership at institutional level to undo historical social injustices that persistently create an inequitable HE system. The Brookes IDEAS framework (Dalrymple et al, 2023) is one example of an institutional approach to curriculum redesign that places students and their unique identities at its heart. Such projects of this type are seeking more than just inclusion, but 'recognize the importance of providing structural support for that goal, thereby making accessibility more than just a call for inclusion, but rather, a generative invitation for revision' (Cook-Sather et al, 2018, p. 384). If we truly are to value our students of the future, educators and institutions need to invite students with all their intersecting identities, not only to revise but *rebuild* a curriculum that values students for their ability to improve society rather than their future earning value.

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Abstract

The neoliberal agenda and widespread marketisation of higher education in the Global North has blindsided many institutions from their core purpose of education and research (Collini 2012). League-table judgments of higher education institutions now frequently rely on an institution's capacity to foster an individual's economic prosperity alongside customer satisfaction. This chapter considers how to encourage those working within marketised higher education contexts to challenge the neoliberal orthodoxy and navigate the tensions it creates by engaging meaningfully with the student body. In this chapter, we remind ourselves of the work done by both seminal and contemporary thinkers on the principles that underpin pedagogical thinking and practice. We suggest that these philosophies value students not as commodities but as individuals with a passion for learning and discovery, motivated by a desire to deepen their understanding of the discipline. We describe two teaching interventions (Taylor, 2022; Cook-Sather et al, 2018) and a curriculum innovation tool (Dalrymple et al, 2023) that provide educators with practical ways to value student diversity and reclaim the teaching discourse with respect to multiple identities that exist within the student community. Our aim is to show that we can and should judge our students' futures not just in terms of their potential earning power but in terms of their value to societal improvement.