**Equity groups: Students from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds in Australian Higher Education**

Literature Review

There has been a strong focus on low SES students in Australian higher education since the then-Labor government chose to focus exclusively on low SES students despite the suggested target groups of low SES, Indigenous and rural and remote students in the 2008 Bradley review. As with the strong focus of federal policy and funding on low socioeconomic status (SES) students, there is a large body of literature that attends specifically to the experiences of low SES students, and the challenges/ barriers to learning that they face. These challenges are highly pertinent to the selection and admissions processes and the ‘poverty of aspirations’ argument that has fuelled the federal focus on widening the participation of low SES students. As described above, there are patterns in the participation of low SES students that are salient to the equity story. Edwards & Coates’ (2011) work illustrates that low SES students are more likely to:

* Attend institutions that are less than 50 years old and/or in regional locations;
* Study in the fields of education, engineering, IT or business;
* Attend part-time or externally or by distance;
* Be slightly older;
* Come from a provincial or remote area (p. 155)

Research clearly shows that coming from a low SES background is significant influence on the likelihood of completing high school and aspiring for higher education, especially when combined with geographic factors (for example, James, 2001, 2002; James et al., 2008; Edwards & Coates, 2011; McInerney & Smyth, 2014). Indeed, as James (2001) contends, “…educational advantage and disadvantage are the result of a three-way intersection of family socioeconomic background, the characteristics of the urban or rural context in which people live, and the physical distance from campuses” (p.469). Indeed, in later work James and colleagues have argued that there is a significant distinction to be made in terms of participation between rural and urban low SES students (James et al., 2008). They argue that there is considerable variation between Australian universities in terms of the proportion of students from low SES backgrounds, which is due partly to geography and partly as a result of competitive selection based on school achievement. This is in part due to the shape of the school curriculum, but is also due to the subjects offered to senior secondary students, which are dependent on the resources a school has to allocate. For instance, Tranter (2012) argues that “the senior secondary curriculum and higher education selection processes are heavily skewed against students from low SES schools” (p.911), as a result of the subjects offered for study in Years 11 and 12 which impact on a student’s potential ATAR score. Tranter found that there was a proliferation of VET subjects on offer in the low SES schools, which hold less currency in higher education applications, and where academic subjects were offered, they were offered in limited subject areas, or with insufficient support offered to facilitate student success. Similarly, McInerney & Smyth (2014) argue that there are a lack of opportunity-structures in public education to support low SES students’ participation in post-school futures, as a result of poor resourcing and funding of public schools and the neoliberal focus on the individual, which combined erode the possibilities for public education and teachers to support low SES students.

In other work, Cardak, Bowden & Bahtsevanoglou (2015) add further detail to the picture of inequitable application to/ participation in more competitive institutions; their work suggests that low SES school leavers are not as adept at navigating the process of admissions for university entry as their higher SES counterparts, with low SES as active in the window between receiving their ATAR score and finalising their applications through the University Admissions Centre (UAC). Cardak, Bowden & Bahtsevanoglou (2015) argue that more needs to be done at school to help students better understand process and options: “policy actions should be taken towards the end of high school to improve student understanding of university application processes and thereby outcomes for low SES students” (p.2).

When the lens is focused on participation in higher education, similar patterns of disadvantage emerge, resulting in beliefs that students from low SES backgrounds are more difficult to teach and are ‘lacking’ core competencies, ‘skills’ and capital that their higher SES peers bring with them to their university studies. Although many of the contributions in this review challenge the deficit framing applied to ‘non-traditional’ students (Devlin, 2011; Devlin & O’Shea, 2011, 2012; Thomas, 2014), the literature is replete with examples of perceptions and attitudes that denote deficit views with regard to low SES students. In their 2015 paper, McKay & Devlin cite the kinds of deficit thinking that their participants (higher education staff) had observed from colleagues, such as “low SES barbarians”, and characterisations such as ‘lazy’ and ‘disengaged’ (p.5). Thomas (2014), working from a similar space of contestation, contends that such deficit thinking serves to worsen disadvantage, arguing that “Even forward-thinking policies and initiatives will falter if the intended beneficiaries (the students from low-SES backgrounds) are blamed by the academics teaching them for the difficulties these students encounter” (p.815). In both papers, a strong commendation for diversity to be valued, rather than ‘remedied’, is put forward.

In her extensive work on resisting deficit framings of low SES students, Marcia Devlin puts forward a three-part conceptualisation of deficit:

1. Students are the problem
2. Institutions are the problem
3. Schools/ preparatory institutions are the problem

While the first theorisation is a common framing for federal policy, and is also evident anecdotally and presented from empirical evidence in the research literature (see McKay & Devlin, 2015; REFS), the second theorisation is more often the position taken in equity-focused literature (REFS). Devlin (2011) argues that the third concept is often implicit in discussions of ‘academic under-preparation’, but is rarely explicitly articulated. In related work, O’Shea, Onsman & McKay (2011) make a similar argument, proposing that notions of student deficit exist on a continuum, with the student-must-adapt position at one end, and the institution-must-respond at the other, and where a level of misunderstanding between the two poles perpetuating misunderstandings and inequities. To counter these misunderstandings and (mis)ascriptions of blame, Devlin (2011) argues that the deficit positioning of low SES students (and other equity groups), is attributable to ‘socio-cultural incongruence’, whereby universities are best understood as ‘alien environments’ that need language, culture and norms to be explicitly unpacked to all students. Therefore, rather than locating the onus of change on any one particular agent, Devlin recommends a ‘joint venture’ between students and universities and other institutions, so as to avoid resting on ‘implicit expectations’ and ‘tacit understandings’.

In other work, Devlin and colleagues have sought to identify what strategies facilitate success for low SES students (Devlin & O’Shea, 2011, 2012; McKay & Devlin, 2014, 2015). Devlin & O’Shea (2011) suggest that individual attitudes and behaviours, such as motivation, time management, perseverance, communication, study skills, are the most commonly cited ‘success factors’, followed by teacher-related factors – in particular their availability and enthusiasm (Devlin & O’Shea, 2012) - and institutional support services. However, they also highlight the constraints that some students – low SES included – face, and thus advocate for the use of as “a vehicle through which universities can assume that all students can be reached” for student engagement, embedding guidance, and advising what behaviours and attitudes lead to success (p.533), a contention that is also proposed in Thomas (2014). For Tones et al. (2009), the challenges can differ according to the age of the student. They contend that for older students there are two significant barriers to learning: ‘responsibility conflict’ and adjustment to university life. The relative lack of flexibility of course scheduling and assignment deadlines can add layers of stress to an adult student’s life due to the multiple roles and duties they hold (study, family, work, care), although there is a significant body of literature that illustrates that younger students are also balancing study and employment (for example Richardson, Bennett & Roberts, 2016; Li et al., 2016). In Tones et al.’s study, they showed that low SES students generally make more use of support services such as financial services but are less likely to access supports like disability support/ counselling and academic services; for the older students, this was attributed to the services not being available when needed. Tones et al. contend that older students, particularly those aged over 45, need greater support adjusting to university life and suggest that support services are inadequately promoted, with high numbers of both low SES (76%) and higher SES students (54%) reporting being uncertain of where to go for assistance.

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**Equity and Higher Education Annotated Bibliography Series**

**Equity Groups: Low SES and working-class students (international literature)**

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| **Citation** | **Annotation** |
| Archer, L. & Hutchings, M. (2000). [‘Bettering Yourself’? Discourses of Risk, Cost and Benefit in Ethnically Diverse, Young Working-Class Non-Participants’ Constructions of Higher Education,](mailto:https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/713655373) *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 21(4), 555–574.  UK  Annotation written by Sally Baker | **Context:** Widening participation in English HE, post-New Labour election and new imposition of 50% target, viewed from perspectives of working class non-participants. Contrasts institutional position statements on WP with what is known about working-class constructions/ perceptions about HE (noting arguments that HE is viewed in alignment with employment; see argument that HE was perceived as irrelevant by working class because of job opportunities available; Metcalf, 1997). Notes work by Reay (1998, Reay et al., 2001) on classed and racialised expectations of higher education – middle class ‘common sense’ with relation to unequal distribution of power and access to resources  **Aim:** To argue that risk and benefits of participating in higher education = unequally distributed according to social class and is therefore “more difficult and costly ‘choice’ for working-class students” (p.555); “to contribute to an analysis of the multiple factors underpinning ‘working-class’ participation in higher education” (p.556)  **Theoretical frame:**  **Methodology:** Draws on MORI-funded large scale mixed methods study of educational decision-making/ constructions of HE for working-class students and non-participants. Paper reports on qualitiative data collected via 14 x focus groups with 109 working-class non-participants in London aged 16-30. 10 of groups recruited from FE colleges; 4 groups = recruited from general public; these 4 = deliberately mixed by gender and ethnicity (white/ African Caribbean)/ 10 from FE = more ad hoc. 1/3 = Black, 1/3 = Asian, 1/3 = White. Most (n=72) taking Level 1 or 2 vocational courses; 16 = taking Level 3; 21 = not studying – most had left school at 16 to start work  **Findings:** Participants “constructed HE aspirations, and the ability to 'get there', as mediated by the risks and costs that they themselves would experience**”** (p.560) – risks in terms of time, money and effort. Main benefits = family expectations.  Participants associated few benefits with studying at university; instead seeing it as ‘boring’, ‘hard work’, ‘pressure and stress’ (see p.560). Some viewed university as associated with sex and drinking, but not enough to outweigh other perceived costs.  Participants also acknowledged lack of network (that middle-class peers may have) for support. Possibility of failure = most common perceived risk, with failure “constructed in economic, social and personal terms” (p.561), and familial pressure (not letting parents down/ wasting parents’ money), particularly for Black and Asian participants.  Many participants perceived themselves as disadvantaged by mature age, FE/ vocational qualifications, money, perception of HE as middle class, white: some data “can be read as drawing on white working-class notions of territoriality that exclude ethnic-minority groups and deny them equal access to resources” (p.563) = ‘racist resistance’ (Cohen, 1988).  *Post-graduation perceptions*: most viewed benefits of graduating at individual level = only African/Caribbean women talked about community/ national economic benefits. Many of benefits construed as ‘better job opportunties’ (not ‘getting stuck; see p.564) and therefore ‘better pay’ and ‘bettering oneself’ and pleasing parents/ family, especially for immigrant children (See Mirza 1992 for arguments about black women in HE and Skeggs (1997) for discussion of working class women in HE)  Some participants expressed concern about being ‘overqualified in an overcrowded job market’ – this discourse used more by participants who didn’t want to go to university. Authors note literature that points to further disadvantage for working-class students who are constrained to attend local, less prestigious institutions.  Participants concerned with debt **Core argument:** Young working-class people generally index dominant discourses about individual (economic and employment) benefits of HE but construct HE as “**i**nherently risky, demanding great investment and costs, and yielding uncertain return” (p.569) |
| Cardak, B., Bowden, M. & Bahtsevanoglou, J. (2015.) [*Are Low SES Students Disadvantaged in the University Application Process?*](mailto:https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/publications/are-low-ses-students-disadvantaged-in-the-university-application-process/)Report submitted to the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), Perth: Curtin University.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Context:** Focuses on university admissions/ application processes, in particular examining differences between high and low SES students. Based on VTAC data (2011 VCE). Works from other research that suggests low SES students are less likely to participate in HE  **Aim:** To develop an economic model to explain student behaviour and decisions regarding university applications by exploring the number of changes to admissions portfolios post-ATAR  **Theoretical frame:**  **Methodology:**  **Findings:**   * High SES students “seem to construct application portfolios that are more attentive to the application process and ultimate admission” (p.63). They also make more changes to their application portfolios than low SES students;Students who make more changes to their application portfolio get more benefits from the opportunity to revise, therefore high SES get more benefits than low SES; * NESB student portfolios are more ambitious or aggressive (p.58); * Students applying for p/t study/ deferred offer have less ambitious portfolios; * Students from independent schools/ Catholic schools and adult schools submit more aggressive portfolios; * Low SES students are not as active in window between ATAR and finalizing application; aka – do not take advantage of window to update it; * Authors suggest these differences occur because high SES understand the university application procedure better than low SES students, which is partly a consequence of different knowledge sources/ unfamiliarity at home/ cultural capital   **Core argument:** More needs to be done at school to help students better understand process and options: “policy actions should be taken towards the end of high school to improve student understanding of university application processes and thereby outcomes for low SES students” (p.2) |
| Devlin, M. (2011). [Bridging socio-cultural incongruity: conceptualizing the success of students from low socio-economic status backgrounds in Australian higher education](mailto:https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03075079.2011.613991). *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(6), 939–949.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *low socio-economic status; socio-cultural incongruity; cultural capital; student success* | **Aim:** Examine conceptual frames that could be used to consider [deliberate avoidance of ‘measure’??] success and achievement for low SES students.  **Theoretical frame:** Uses notion of socio-cultural incongruence to conceptualise differences in cultural and social capital between SES  **Methodology:** Literature review  **Findings:** Relates incongruence to adjustment to discourses of university (Jennifer Lawrence, see 2003; 2005); understanding v. mastering the student role (Collier & Morgan, 2008) – distinguish between students’ academic skills and *actual* capacity v. cultural capital and *demonstrated* capacity = demonstrated capacity is assessed at university. University = based on ‘implicit expectations’ and ‘tacit understandings’ – lack of tacit knowledge can hinder success and achievement [relates to hot knowledge/ school background]  **Core argument:** Threeconceptions of deficit:   1. Students are the problem - current Australian policy supports student deficit conception with regards to low SES [see Wheelahan, 2009] 2. Institutions are the problem – James, Krause & Jenkins (2010) advise universities to amend expectations of students [‘ideal’ student??] 3. Schools/ preparatory institutions are the problem = pointed to but not discussed   Socio-cultural incongruence: points to [predictable] literature on ‘non-traditional students’ (UK/US studies predominantly) – universities are alien environments (Bamber and Tett, 2001), ‘other’/marginal positions (Read, Archer and Leathwood, 2003), academic discourses in context of diverse student body (Northedge, 2003). Recommends ‘joint venture’ between students and universities and other institutions (schools/TAFEs) |
| Devlin, M. & O’Shea, H. (2011). [Directions for Australian higher education institutional policy and practice in supporting students from low socioeconomic backgrounds](mailto:https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1360080X.2011.605227), *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management,* 33(5), 529–535.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *institutional policy; institutional practice; low socioeconomic status; student success* | **Context:** Describes research on low SES students’ success in HE working from context of Bradley Review. Brief scope of literature on low SES students (heavy on Devlin 2010 references)  **Aim:** “to uncover and document the factors that contributed to that success for [low SES students]” (p.530), with success defined as having met criteria/ academic achievement level high enough to progress to next year. To over implications for international policy and practice  **Theoretical frame:**  **Methodology:** Adopts ‘success-focused’ methodology: ‘what works’. Research with 53 ‘later-year’ low SES UG students examining strategies for success and overcoming barriers. Students recruited from potential 2047 low SES students who had completed one year of UG study (FT or PT). Used postcode method to identify low SES. First 100 students to respond to invitation = participated in 3 interviews over following 3 weeks (f2f and phone interviews). 81 of original 100 = interviewed from 3 campuses and distance learners. Number of participants whittled down to 53 by controlling for FiF  **Findings:** Most commonly citing success factors = related to individual attitudes and behaviours (motivation, time management, perseverance, communication, study skills). Second most common factor = related to teachers (availability, enthusiasm, communication); third factor = institutional support (e.g. discussion forums, online facilities, library). Implications for policy: need to use curriculum as “a vehicle through which universities can assume that all students can be reached” for student engagement/ embedding guidance/ advising what behaviours and attitudes lead to success (p.533). |
| Devlin, M. & O’Shea, H. (2012). [Effective university teaching: views of Australian university students from low socio-economic status backgrounds](mailto:https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13562517.2011.641006), *Teaching in Higher Education,* 17(4), 385–397.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *effective teaching, low SES, widening participation, success* | **Context:** Describes same research as Devlin & O’Shea (2011). “To achieve the successful participation of LSES students, the collective understanding and practice of effective university teaching in the Australian context will  need to evolve to incorporate their particular needs” (p.386). Paper focuses on participant responses regarding teachers and teaching  **Aim:** “to determine student views on what factors had contributed to their retention and to their progress through their course. The central aim of the research was to uncover and highlight strategies, initiatives and knowledge that contributed to success and document these” (p.386)  **Theoretical frame:**  **Methodology:** Adopts ‘success-focused’ methodology: ‘what works’. Research with 53 ‘later-year’ low SES UG students examining strategies for success and overcoming barriers.  **Findings:**  Most significant/ helpful factor = available and enthusiastic teachers. Teachers’ ‘communication skills’ = third most common factor, including range of aspects of communication ‘skills’, such as “from making learning fun to integrating conceptual material with ‘ real world’ examples and otherwise making effort to communicate about the material with students” (p.391) – particularly with clarity of assessment criteria **Core argument:** 3 main foci: “unpacking academic discourses and expectations; high quality interpersonal interactions about these expectations; and ensuring high standards are necessary for effective teaching of students from LSES backgrounds” (p.394-5) |
| Edwards, D. & Coates, H. (2011). [Monitoring the pathways and outcomes of people from disadvantaged backgrounds and graduate groups](mailto:https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07294360.2010.512628), *Higher Education Research & Development,* 30(2), 151–163.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *educational planning; graduate outcomes; higher education policy; reducing disadvantage; social inclusion* | **Context:** Works from starting point that vibrant knowledge economy and managing ‘national productivity’ is dependent on ‘building successful learning outcomes’ among university graduates (p.151). Authors argue that “entrenched patterns of disadvantage inhibit the full development of individual talent and, hence, of the system overall” (p.151).  **Aim:** To examine Graduate Pathways Survey data to seek patterns in outcomes of ‘disadvantaged learners’ five years after course completion. Particular focus = pathways taken *after* completion of degree  **Theoretical frame:**  **Methodology:** Examines data collected via GPS and focuses specifically on indigenous, low SES, rural/remote and disabilities. All 40 (38 public, 2 private) universities in Australia invited to participate, “making the study a census” (p.153). Invitations to participate sent to all undergraduates who graduated in 2002 (choice between paper/online versions). N=9238 responses (=12% response rate). Data weighted accordingly. Analysis also compares genders (thus NESB is only equity category not included). Data collected in 2008  **Findings:**  *Indigenous*: 60 = indigenous = less than 1%. Results show that these respondents = slightly more likely to be working by 5th year after graduation (96.9% compared with 90.9% of non-indigenous). Indigenous students more likely to be positive about higher education, about overall benefits of work and for long-term career goals. 65.4% of indigenous students said their degree had been ‘very beneficial’ (compared with 50.3% of non-indigenous). 63.8% = saw it as ‘very beneficial’ for long-term career (compared with 49.6% of non-indigenous)  *Low SES*: calculated according to parents’ occupation, parents’ education level and childhood postcode.  Low SES students more likely:  ● attend institutions that were less than 50 years old or in regional locations;  ● study in the fields of education, engineering, IT or business;  ● attend part-time or externally or by distance;  ● be slightly older;  ● have a non-English speaking background;  ● be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin;  ● identify themselves as having a disability; and  ● come from a provincial or remote area (p.155)  These students = just as likely to be doing more education/ training in 1st, 3rd and 5th years after graduation as other students. After 5 years, low SES = slightly less likely to have done PG study (22% compared with 25%). This group = more likely to be looking for work in 1, 3 and 5 years after graduation.  *R&R*: 55% of R&R students were living in state/territory capital 5 years after graduation. 84% students who attended metro universities = still living in capital cities. Little difference in type of work for all students by 5 years (but differences noted between R&R/ metro students in year 1/3 after graduation). Metro students slightly lower unemployment rates one year after but unemployment rate patterns leveled after 3 and 5 years  Gender: large differences in disciplines – more females in health and education, more men in IT and engineering. Males more likely to be involved in further study in 1st/3rd year after UG graduation but slightly less so 5 years after. Men = more likely to hold PG research qualification p.159. Men more likely to be participating in labour force 5 years after graduation (96% to 91%), even more for full time employment (96% to 87%). Women’s wages are also lower (AUS$70k to $57k) – with a steady gap growing from year 1 out of university  All equity group students less likely to be in ‘professional or managerial’ jobs 5 years after graduation. Median salary = on par in 1st year post-graduation. Overall, students from disadvantaged backgrounds who were retained through to graduation “reported educational and occupational outcomes equal to their relatively less disadvantaged contemporaries” (p.156). **Core argument:** After 5 years, most social and cultural barriers are removed; however, “there are still clear gender differences apparent among higher degree educated people five years after completing university studies, even after controlling for a range of other influences on salary” (p.160). Authors argue that “studying graduate outcomes provide a useful critical frame for investigating aspects of university education – including the examination of disadvantaged groups” (p.161) |
| Fleming, M. & Grace, D. (2015). [Eyes on the future: The impact of a university campus experience day on students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds](mailto:https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0004944114567689), *Australian Journal of Education,* DOI: 10.1177/000494411456768  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *disadvantaged, socioeconomic status, aspiration, university attendance, Secondary school*  *students, gender differences* | **Context:** Describes impact of *UC 4 Yourself* university experience day (part of HEPPP-funded *Aspire UC* outreach) for students from low SES (‘financially disadvantaged backgrounds’). Navigates literature on SES and aspirations (lower rates of Yr 12 completion/ lower levels of parental education/ lack of support networks/ stratification of school system =reproduces inequity. Barriers to study = distance, cost, low academic achievement, and low otivations/ aspirations (Gale et al. 2010). Imagined futures (draws heavily on Sellar/Gale et al.)  **Methodology:** 2 x surveys (n=525 students; 231 m/ 294 f from 29 high schools – most Yr 9. 31 = indigenous) administered before/after visit. Survey 1: students rated 3 statements 1) ‘I have often considered going to university’; (2) ‘I like the idea of going to university’; and (3) ‘My plans for after high school don’t include university’. Survey 2= (i) ‘I like the idea of going to university’; (ii) ‘I feel more comfortable on a university campus’; (iii) ‘I can imagine myself as a uni student’; (iv) ‘I feel more confident that I could attend uni’; (v) ‘I want to find out more about uni’; and (vi) ‘I want to go to university’.  **Findings:** Attendees = more likely to attend university and better able to imagine themselves as university students  Survey 1= no differences found between students on basis of year level, indigineity, previous experience with Aspire UC. Revealed ‘high levels’ of interest in HE. Females reported more interest than males but scores for both genders =high  Survey 2 = difference found between students who had experienced Aspire UC before (“additional visits further enhance the capacity to picture oneself in the situation, that is, to conceive of oneself as a student of the university” (p.91). No gender effects with regards to barriers. Students reported uni = less expensive than expected **Core argument:** Provision of information = paramount (p.92); tangible experience (physical experience) = important and facilitates imagination of self as uni student. |
| Gore, J.; Holmes, K.; Smith, M.; Southgate, E. & Albright, J. (2015). [Socioeconomic status and the career aspirations of Australian school students: Testing enduring assumptions](mailto:https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13384-015-0172-5). *The Australian Educational Researcher,* 42, 155–177.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords: *Equity, Higher education, Educational aspirations, Career aspirations, Socioeconomic status* | **Context:** Set in Australian context where recent policy and funding efforts have concentrated on raising aspirations for higher education, especially in low SES students in relation to 20/40 targets set in Bradley Review (2008). Discusses the appropriacy of offering career advice in Year 10 when pathways to post-school destinations are set in motion before this age. Also makes the point that relatively little is known of younger students’ aspirations or insight into how aspirations change over time  **Aim:** To test two key assumptions that underpin recent efforts to raise aspirations in low SES students: 1) that low SES student have lower career aspirations and 2) outreach activities are appropriate for secondary school students.  **Methodology:** Quantitative study.Paper maps career aspirations of [different] students’ aspirations in Years 4,6,8,10 with their SES and other demographic information. Two RQs drove the paper: 1) how early do career aspirations take shape? 2) how do career aspirations vary by SES? Data drawn from Year 2 of 4-year study through purposeful sampling (50% schools metropolitan/ provincial) and used school-level Index of Community Socio-Economic Advantage to determine SES (in line with NSW DET). Also examined NAPLAN and demographic data for each student. Team developed measure of occupational certainty (certain, tentative, unformed)/ prestige/ justification. 3504 students in total surveyed.  **Discussion:** Aspirations of younger students similar to those of older students; weak relationship between age and occupational prestige (older students chose slightly more prestigious careers). Older students more likely to justify choice on basis of interests and strengths = students draw on dominant discourses of career education. With regards to SES, weak/ moderate relationship between SES and job prestige but vast majority of all participants expressed interest in professional or skills/paraprofessional careers (vet, teacher, sportsperson = consistently in top 5). High SES more likely to justify choice according to interest; low SES more likely to cite money as reason. Students with higher prior achievement (NAPLAN) more likely to be unclear about future career (possibly due to array of options available to them) |
| Horn, A.; Maddox, A.; Hagel, P.; Currie, M.; & Owen, S. (2013). [Embedded Library Services: Beyond Chance Encounters for Students from Low SES Backgrounds](mailto:Embedded%20Library%20Services:%20Beyond%20Chance%20Encounters%20for%20Students%20from%20Low%20SES%20Backgrounds), *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, 44(4), 235–250.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  *Keywords: student outcomes; socio-economic status; learning management system; embedded librarianship; teaching partnerships; evaluation* | **Context:** Set in post-Bradley Australian higher education context (targets for expansion; greater attention to experiences of non-traditional/ equity students. Looks specifically at students’ experiences of library services. Discussion of measurement of SES; adopts postcode method. Scopes literature on low SES students; discusses barriers, cultural mismatch. Draws on literature that argues best site for integration help = curriculum and argues that a similar argument can be made about library support [but: LMS and curriculum are not the same thing]. Discusses issues with LMSs (potential to hide library information / make less visible); discusses increase of online students  **Aims:** Examines impact of embedding library services into LMS on experience of low SES students  **Theoretical frame:**  **Methodology:** Mixed methods: surveys with students (Year 2, UG health studies) and interviews with library and academic staff. Most students = female; participants = online and on campus; 67% = alternative pathways/ ‘non-traditional’; 25% = low SES. Surveys = evaluation of embedding library information/ support into course LMS = conducted start/end of course. Survey 1: n=17; Survey 2: n=23  **Findings:** Data suggests that students felt more confident/ aware of/ satisfied with library services (easier to use/ easier to find) – measured between start and end of course. Decline in not being aware of additional services. Level of confidence in using eBooks = remained same  Staff perceptions = better visibility of materials and services and conversations with students about information literacy. Library staff benefitted from strengthened relationships with academic staff. Based on success of evaluation, whole of institution roll out of embedding library services within LMS **Core argument:** In on online form, libraries and their services can become less visible; “The development of information literacy is too important to be left to chance encounters with the library – particularly for students at risk. Embedded librarianship, through the LMS, provides an effective means for equitably facilitating these encounters” (p.248).  **Limitation:** Only one trimester; no focus on outcomes beyond perceptions (e.g. future research could look at impact on assessment results) |
| James, R. (2001). [Participation disadvantage in Australian higher education: An analysis of some effects of geographic location and socioeconomic status](mailto:https://www.jstor.org/stable/3448100?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents), *Higher Education,* 42, 455–472.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords: *access and equity, higher education access and participation, rurality and isolation* | **Context:** To explore goals and plans of Australian school students + attitudes towards education = focusing specifically on low SES. Drawing on previous research, James hypothesises that proximity (or lack of) to university campuses = significant factor, especially because Australian students tend to stay at home/close to home . Also notes SES-related family values and support for higher education  **Methodology:** Survey of Yr 10,11 ,12 students (n=7023; 40% usable responses) from both urban and rural settings. Critiques postcode methods of categorising SES and instead uses parents’ education as level, with higher SES = parent(s) have university degree; low SES = parents may or may not have attended school. Physical access = measured by distance from home to nearest university, which connects with rurality. Uses 4-part categorisation of access = low access (300km+ to uni), medium access (151-300km), high access/rural = fewer than 150km, high access/urban (fewer than 150km). Low + medium = rural students  **Findings:**  SES is significant influence on likelihood to aspire to HE, especially when combined with rurality – particularly related to completion of high school  Participation for R&R students less likely to be affected by distance/ social context than SES   * Low SES students = on average less likely to report experiencing range of encouraging factors (p.465) * High SES students = stronger perceptions of teacher/parental encouragement * More ambiguous findings re: urban v. rural students * Low SES = report more agreement with barriers to access * High SES students more likely to aspire to HE (70%); medium SES = 50%; low = 42% * Over 20% of low access = report having no intention of going to university   **Core argument:**  “…educational advantage and disadvantage are the result of a three-way intersection of family socioeconomic background, the characteristics of the urban or rural context in which people live, and the physical distance from campuses” (p.469) |
| James, R. (2002). [*Socioeconomic Background and Higher Education Participation: An analysis of school students’ aspirations and expectations*](mailto:https://melbourne-cshe.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1669939/eip02_5.pdf). Centre for the Study of Higher Education: The University of Melbourne.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker | **Context:** Research commissioned by Higher Education Council (HEC). At the time, low SES students = half as likely as mid/high SES peers to go to university. “With the expectation of completing secondary schooling now close to a social norm, tertiary education remains the locus of differing class expectations regarding educational participation” (p.49)  **Aim:** To investigate attitudes of senior secondary students towards higher education  **Theoretical frame:** Based on data previously collected from 7000 students from NSW, VIC, WA for HEC  **Methodology:** Based on data collected in 1998 by CSHE and YRC: students from Yr 10, 11, 12 from stratified schools (urban/rural/isolated, SES and gender). Survey asked students about post-school priorities/ intentions  **Findings:**  “The study reveals appreciable social stratification in the opinions of senior secondary students about the relevance and attainability of a university education” (Exec Summary). Differences in aspirations/attitudes = based on SES (biggest factor), gender and geographic location.  90% expressed desire to go to further study (in ideal circumstances) = 2/3 = university; ¼ = TAFE  High SES = stronger confidence in getting to university study (approx 70%) compared with 50% mid-SES and 42% low SES students. 16% low SES desired uni but did not think it was possible.  Low SES = more likely to view TAFE as more useful; have weaker interest in future subject(s); less confident that their parents supported desire to go to HE; stronger motivation/interest to earn money after school. Also, less confident academic results = good enough for entry to university; less likely to believe subjects studied at school = good for uni study.  Low SES = more likely to view cost as barrier to university study. 41% believed families would not be able to support costs and 1/3 perceived that they would have to self-support if they went to uni. View of cost as deterrent = heightened for rural students.  Gender: females more likely to show commitment to school. Males = less likely to see relevance and attainability of higher education. Females more likely to believe friends will go to uni and more likely to believe their teachers were supporting that aspiration.  Level of parental education = most closely tied with students’ aspirations for uni study  **Core argument:** Lower participation of low SES appears to be “created by the cumulative effect of the relative absence of encouraging factors and the presence of a stronger set of inhibiting factors” (p.xi). Five areas for further consideration:   1. measurement of SES (parental education = better than postcode method) 2. more research needed to understand how HECS is perceived, especially by low SES students/ families 3. more research into early outreach/ collaborations between universities and schools 4. more research to ascertain influence of curriculum on students’ aspirations/ how can curriculum accommodate p/t work   system-wide rethink of selection procedures = “vital ingredient” for making progress on access/entry for low SES students |
| James, R.; Anderson, M.; Bexley, E.; Devlin, M.; Garnett, R.; Marginson, S.; & Maxwell, L. (2008). [*Participation and equity: review of the participation in higher education of people from low socioeconomic backgrounds and Indigenous people*](mailto:https://dro.deakin.edu.au/eserv/DU:30006777/devlin-participationandequity-2008.pdf)*.* Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Context:** The Australian Higher Education sector has experienced persistent underrepresentation in HE for various ‘equity target groups’. At the time this report was being prepared, the proportion of low SES students of all Australian students had showed no progress since the statistics started being collected in 1991.This report was prepared in 2008 for Universities Australia (peak body established in 2007 representing the university sector in Australia) by the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne, an institution without a longstanding record in supporting students from underrepresented backgrounds. This study followed a Universities Australia funded report by the same Centre at Melbourne title Australian University Student Finances 2006 (Universities Australia 2007) which found that HE students were worse off in 2006 in financial terms than in 2000 when the previous study was undertaken.  **Aim:** Report reviewed available literature relating to “participation and success of people from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds and Indigenous people in Australian higher education” (p.1). The authors explain that they are attempting to provide a clearer picture of participation in HE in Australia and an understanding of the factors that have led to areas of persistent underrepresentation for different groups in Australian society. The authors raise yet recoil from the question of “whether equity matters” (p.1) leaving the notion of ‘representation’ untested in terms of considering notions of parity of participation.  **Findings:**  1). There are major limitations in terms of using indices based on the postcode of students’ home address to monitor participation in HE of people from low SES backgrounds and from rural and isolated areas;  2). PGCW and areas of competitive entry are where you tend to find areas of underrepresentation for students from low SES backgrounds;  3). “Social imbalances” in Australian higher education might not be as large as those in some developed nations, though direct comparison is difficult and the reasons are not well understood;  4). Australian universities vary considerably in the proportion of students from low SES backgrounds due partly to geography and the effects of competitive selection based on school achievement;  5). Low SES rural more underrepresented than low SES urban.  **Relevance to PGCW/ equity:**  The report finds the following that is in direct relation to PGCW:   Students from low SES backgrounds comprise less than 10 per cent of postgraduate students   Geographical measures of SES are even less appropriate for mature-age students and postgraduates   Without an individual measure of SES that is sensitive to the circumstances of mature-age students it is not possible to draw confident conclusions about equity and access in postgraduate education  **Points to future research agenda?**   The report makes it clear that study of the impact of low SES backgrounds and circumstances upon the educational achievements of mature-age students would be valuable.  Report makes the following recommendation on page 9 - “Priority 3: Improve the level of Indigenous postgraduate enrolment, enhance Indigenous research and increase the number of Indigenous researchers.” - |
| McInerney, P. & Smyth, J. (2014). [‘I want to get a piece of paper that says I can do stuff’: youth narratives of educational opportunities and constraints in low socio-economic neighbourhoods](mailto:https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17457823.2013.873349), *Ethnography and Education,* 9(3), 239–252.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords: *educational disadvantage, funds of knowledge, opportunity structures* | **Context:** Works from economic disadvantage and impact on/ influence of education, resulting in significant under-representation of low SES students in higher education. Young people have differentiated views of education; some see the product (certificate) as passport to jobs/ security; others eschew the system and further others are moved out of the system by disciplinary mechanisms  **Aim:** “to make sense of young people’ s understandings of what it means to be educated in low-income neighbourhoods of regional Australia” (p.240); study of ‘place-based interventions’.  **Theoretical frame:** That “‘young people are experts in their own lives ’ (Mason and Danby 2011, 185)”, on p.240 - connects with Freirean view (people, including children, are not “mere ‘ objects’ who are acted upon, but are ‘ subjects’ with a capacity to act upon and transform the world” (p.240). Draws on ‘funds of knowledge’ approach (Moll et al. 1992) and ‘opportunity structures’ (Roberts, 2009).  **Methodology:** Ethnographic study of young people in ‘Federation City’ (regional city in SA) with several severely disadvantaged suburbs. Interviews conducted over 11 months with 60 participants in two public schools (aged 14-17 years old) + observations + document analysis (individual and group interviews). Interviews crafted into ‘narrative portraits’. Paper focuses on 14 of participants from one school which works on adult learning principles (Years 11 & 12). Most of these participants came from single parent, low SES families  **Findings:**  Many of the participants described dissatisfaction with mainstream schooling but were committed to completing Year 12. Half intended to proceed to higher education. Most were optimistic about their future and had clear ideas of what they want to do in the future. Narrative portraits presented of 3 students, which “reveal themselves as articulate, thoughtful and hopeful young people who value education” (p.246). Makes theoretical connection using Funds of Knowledge theory between young people’s past times and interests and familial experiences; “these stories challenge common but ill-informed assumptions about working-class parents who are often accused of not caring about school and showing little or no interest in their children’ s learning” (p.247). Authors argue that funds of knowledge can be extended outside of home and into community and institutions like schools – many students were positive about the school because it “gave them opportunities to further their academic and vocational interests in a more hospitable setting than a traditional high school” (p.248). Poor resourcing and funding of public schools (which can be enormously important) and neoliberal focus on the individual = erode the possibilities for public education and teachers to support low SES students. In addition, using Roberts’ theory of opportunity structures, authors argue that public policy “fails to deliver adequate opportunity structures to disadvantaged young people and creates enormous barriers to their participation in further education and training” (p.249) **Core argument:** Offers rich pictures of what it means to “be educated in a context of regional disadvantage from the perspectives of young people” (p.250). There are a lack of opportunity structures in public education to support low SES students’ participation in post-school futures. Authors offer Finland as an example of how to work against neoliberal model and reform and transform a nation’s educational future. “What we have at present is not so much a poverty of aspiration but a poverty of opportunity” (p.250) |
| McKay, J. & Devlin, M. (2014). ‘[Uni has a different language… to the real world’: demystifying academic culture and discourse for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds](mailto:https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07294360.2014.890570), *Higher Education Research & Development,* 33(5), 949–961.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords*: academic culture; academic discourse; diversity; equity; low socioeconomic students; student success* | **Context:** Within context of increasing student numbers (because of gov’t policy; cites 20% low SES target post 2009) – takes the view that it is necessary to demystify higher education culture: “the invisible pedagogy, the often unstated expectations and requirements of higher-education institutions, the specialist discourses and the wider university culture” (p.949). Demystifying = “making the implicit explicit” (p.949). Takes view that “*not being taught* the language of the academy… can marginalise LSES students, deny them an ‘academic voice’ and exclude them from the knowledge community” (p.953; cites Gee, 1991). Draws heavily on Jil Lawrence and Andrew Northedge to position argument.  **Theoretical frame:** Connections made to belonging; Devlin’s (2011) conceptualisation of bridging sociocultural incongruence – neither students nor institutions in deficit, instead = incongruity between middle class ideals and low SES backgrounds  **Methodology:** Literature review and reports on qualitative national study (OLT project) on effective teaching and support for low SES students; ‘success-focused’/ what works methodology [??]. 89 low SES students (post-Year 1) interviewed (from 3 HEIs); 26 staff from 6 HEIs interviewed  **Findings:** Offers findings that substantiate the literature but add little new. Offers a very brief summary of teachers’ views of how to teach discourse (support workshops for LSES run by ALL staff but without othering/ signifying a view of deficit) but this is not expanded (‘outside the scope’ of the paper) **Core argument:** That LSES students need to be taught the discourse of the academy.  \*says nothing new – see academic literacies research for more nuanced and detailed treatment of this topic\* |
| McKay, J. & Devlin, M. (2015). ‘[Low income doesn’t mean stupid and destined for failure’: challenging the deficit discourse around students from low SES backgrounds in higher education](mailto:https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13603116.2015.1079273), *International Journal of Inclusive Education,* 20(4), 347–363.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords: *low socio-economic students; higher education; deficit discourse; widening participation; deficit thinking* | **Context:** OLT-funded research. Set against dominant discourse and framing of deficit with regard to low SES students: associations with low entrance scores, decreasing standards and academic struggle and failure. This is subject of discussion in context of increasing numbers of low SES students participating in higher education. “‘Difference’ is all-too often associated with deficit, dysfunction and disadvantage and thus needs to be overhauled if students from minority  groups are to succeed” (p.349) – deficit thinking in both teachers and students [= interpellation].  **Aim:**  **Theoretical frame:**  **Methodology:** Again [?!] drawing on same framing of ‘success-focused’/ what works methodology. Interviews 89 low SES students (post-Year 1) interviewed (from 3 HEIs); 26 staff from 6 HEIs interviewed  **Findings:**  Data suggests that the experience of being a low SES student in higher education can be brutal, with academics’ quoted as saying awfully prejudicial things, and students reporting experiences of feeling less than worthwhile [but conflation of other issues here like TAFE transition/ working while studying]. Authors caution against collapsing nuance into stereotypes: “The problem, however, is when this becomes the collective view of all students from low SES backgrounds” (p.352)  63% of student-participants attributed success to being hard workers and focused/determined **Core argument:** It barely needs saying but “students from low SES backgrounds make a valuable contribution and are an asset to higher education” (p.348). Call for educators to be more aware of hegemonic practices and discourses at play. Paper “urges for a more nuanced conceptualisation of students from low SES backgrounds students in higher education – one that recognises the contribution they make to higher education (p.359) |
| McTaggart, B. (2016). [Modern higher education students within a non-traditional higher education space: not fitting in, often falling out](mailto:https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13596748.2015.1126420), *Research in Post-Compulsory Education,* 21(1–2), 86–97.  NORTHERN IRELAND  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *UK,* *dual-sector further and higher education; habitus; cultural capital* | **Context:** Explores ‘the fit’ between students and educational institutions (dual-sector FE-HE) that are claiming to meet the needs of local populations (research situated in Northern Ireland). FE seen as significant source of future undergraduate enrolments – especially HE in FE. HE in NI = similar to other parts of UK (participation rate in 2009/10 = 50%). NI has two universities; other HE programs are offered in FE colleges. Many NI students move to other parts of UK to study and do not return  **Aim:** To explore the fit between dual-sector spaces and non-traditional (aka not middle class) students  **Theoretical frame:** Bourdieu: capital; Tinto: transition [doesn’t use that word]  **Methodology:** Offers a case study of one dual-sector college in rural NI (history of conflict during the troubles) = high levels of ‘employment inactivity’ and categorised as ‘economically deprived’. ‘Socio-cultural approach’ taken (focus groups, interviews). Grounded theory = analytic frame. Participants = completing and non-completing students (foundation degrees and higher national diplomas) –most = FinF and worked over 20 hours a week. Mix of genders.  **Findings:**  Three themes presented/discussed: poor planning of workload, lack of academic/personal support, insufficient knowledge of support.  Poor planning of workload: cited by both completing/non-completing students = poor organisations (lack of acknowledgement of students’ paid work duties) and bad timetabling  Lack of availability of staff = cited by completing/non-completing students and refusals of requests for help (“look it up in your book” – see p.92)  Many students reported not being aware of internal support (such as help with UCAS applications) **Core argument:** There appears to be a significant lack of understanding (institutional habitus) of who the students are and capacity to organise/ design teaching and learning that meets their needs: “internal organisational barriers were the result of a lack of understanding, and acceptance by the institution of the difficulties that HE students who attend this institute encounter as part of their learning journeys” (p.93-4). Therefore, dual-sector institutions are not ‘the fit’ they promise to be. |
| Nordlander, E.; Strandh, M. & Brännlund, A. (2015). [What does class origin and education mean for the capabilities of agency and voice?,](mailto:https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01425692.2013.820126) *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 36(2), 291–312.  SWE  Annotation written by Sally Baker | **Context:** Explores relationship between class, attainment and ‘capabilities of agency and voice’ (abstract), which are viewed as central components of the capacity to contribute to civic/social life. Notion of agency “is closely connected with the opportunity to act as a full member of a social context” (p.293). Class origin defined by parents  **Aim:** “to explore how class origin and education interact in shaping young people’s chances in life, and to consider whether higher education reduces or reinforces any structural inequalities in the social aspects of life” (p.292). RQs:  “First, are there differences in the capabilities of agency and voice between young adults of different class origins?  Second, does educational attainment affect the capabilities of agency and voice?  Third, can any differences in these capabilities between young people of different class origins be related to differences in educational attainment?  And finally, are there any differences between young people of different class origins in the significance of educational attainment for the realization of the capabilities of agency and voice?” (p.292)  **Methodology:** Longitudinal survey called ‘Swedish Survey of Living Conditions’ (n=1085 young people, aged 16-19 years old who first participated in 1988-95 and then again 8 years later; 528w/ 530m). Sweden is pertinent location to engage in this research because of its reputation for equality and school reforms where sorting and choice happen at 16 and all education is free.  **Core argument:** Class background does impact on agency and voice and educational attainment between interview 1 and 2 also influenced participants’ agency and voice, and higher education “is crucial for acquiring agency and voice” (p.309). Thus, even if there was a class difference before, access to HE ‘equalises’ difference, “indicating that higher education provides the individual with resources that will increase their agency and voice and, by extension, their social participation and opportunities in life” (p.309) |
| O’Shea, H.; Onsman, A.; McKay, J. (2011). [Students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds in higher education: An annotated bibliography 2000-2011.](mailto:http://www.lowses.edu.au/assets/LSES-Annotated-Bibliography.pdf) Higher Education Research Group (HERG): Deakin Australia  AUS  Annotation written by | **Context:** Works from idea that social inclusion is a fairly empty discourse – translation into practice/pedagogy not easily visible. Examines impact of widening participation + casualization of workforce/ increased workload of academics (see Bexley, Arkoudis & James, 2013). Examines literature relating to academic capital/ institutional habitus of university and impact on ‘non-traditional’ students = impact of deficit discourse (Foucauldian position adopted; aka – not residing in individual, but as product of discourses. Smit (2012) = argues that ‘disadvantage’ = “umbrella term to cover a wide array of perceived shortcomings’ (p. 370)” (p.10)  **Aim:** To examine the perceptions and understandings of university staff – how they perceive their role in relation to social inclusion  **Theoretical frame:** Foucauldian notion of discourse, power, deficit  **Methodology:** 2-stage mixed methods; in-depth interviews with 32 academics (representing broad spectrum of roles/levels/employment types) and an online survey (n=272) – 26 questionnaire items including: ‘What does the term inclusivity mean to you?’, ‘Which students tend to require extra support with their learning, assessments and completion of coursework?’, ‘How do you implement inclusive pedagogies in your coursework?’, ‘How would you describe/identify student from LSES backgrounds?’ and ‘Do you feel you need extra support/what could the university do to support inclusive teaching?’ (p.5). 63.6% = female; 36% = male. 84.9% = experience of UG teaching; 27.9% =HDR experience; 58.1% = casually employed/ on session contracts (thus ineligible to supervise HDR). Only 4% = professors  **Findings:**  Survey = strong support for notion of inclusive teaching = “essential to HE” and “basics of good teaching” (81%), but also 20% expressed cynicism/ lack of clarity/ neutral (“lip service is not enough”, p.6; “inclusive is a vague term”, p.8). Concern expressed about terminology and that inclusive teaching = ‘dumbing down’ (p.7). Concern also about adding to workload. 79% agreed that inclusive teaching = difficult to do well, especially for casual staff (lack of resources – time, money, space, practical assistance). But 63% thought that inclusive teaching = not enough to overcome challenges faced by students: 22 comments = teachers have responsibility; 28 = responsibility outside remit of teaching role; 20 comments = students ill-prepared for university  **Core argument:** “From the analysis of our data, it is difficult to get away from the conclusion that, following  Foucault (1984), for LSES students the politics of truth is one entwined with deficit” (p.10) – existing practices “promulgate deficit discourses” (p.10). Framework of deficit [appears to operate on a continuum] – one extreme =notion of student deficit (student must adapt); at other end = focus on institution (needs to respond to diversifying student body). There is a level of misunderstanding that keeps inclusion/ equity a concern. Also point to influence of casualisation: “It is difficult to expect people to enact inclusion when they do not feel included or valued in the institution… The lack of permanency may also translate into a sense of powerlessness around the issue of inclusion: how can staff make others feel included when they feel excluded?” (p.11) |
| Priest, A. (2009). ‘[I have understanding as well as you’: Supporting the language and learning needs of students from low-socioeconomic status backgrounds](mailto:https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/5f66/905bb6e4af986a9108e61eaf93aa975c7c4d.pdf), *Journal of Academic Language & Learning,* 3(2), A70–A81.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords: *low SES students, academic discourse, language and learning.* | **Context:** Set against literary backdrop of Jude the Obscure – pushing the point that for low SES/working class (both terms used in this paper), there are still critical disconnects with higher education: “experience a disabling mismatch between their social world and that of academe” (p.A71), particularly with reference to their language and literacies. Scopes efforts to widen participation for low SES students in UK, US and AUS – noting higher level of attrition and critiques of methods of measuring SES. Notes classed/SES-impact on language and literacies: “the better you are at using academic discourse, the more successful you are likely to be at university” (p.A.73). Implicitly recognises brokerage/ mediating role of ALL professionals in terms of students’ home discourses/language v. academic discourse/ language and literacies. Recognises ethics and politics of ALL: “On the one hand, we have an ethical imperative to recognise, validate and, ideally, learn from the literacies these students bring with them…On the other hand, if we do not teach them the dominant discourses of the academy, there is a very good chance the academy will never recognise or acknowledge what they have to offer” (p.A75).  **Aim:**  **Theoretical frame:** Draws on Bourdieu, Passeron & St Martin (1994) – academic discourses = aligned with cultural privilege. Language = key part of habitus, so that “a person’s language is “the most active and elusive part of the cultural heritage which each individual owes to his background” (p. 9; cited on p.A73). Language =thus power of hegemony. Draws on theories of language use that assert that students have different (home) forms of language (e.g. Black English, Hispanic English), which should be recognised in the academy (see Bruch & Marback, 1997), but “acknowledging this right and instituting it in the classroom are two different things” (p.A74) = accommodation or assimilation [is there a third option??]. Impact = on identities, connection, recognition, voice, performance etc.  **Methodology:** Essay  **Findings:** Scopes arguments about language and ‘essayist literacy’, drawing on discussions of race and Indigeneity. Discusses strategies such as acknowledging the power of ‘essayist literacy’ – co-negotiating confusion, acknowledging history and power of these ways of knowing and communicating. Draws on Delpit’s argument about code switching (learning to switch between, rather than replace, codes). Young (2004) argues that codes are not exclusive; rather, they can contribute to each other. Discusses Elbow’s (1991) proposition that students initially use home code first to adjust to conventions of academic work (see p.A77). Makes connection between Newman (2003) discussion of ‘borderland’ students (Hispanic/bilingual students) and low SES students. Needs attention beyond punctuation and grammar in feedback: requires conversation about ideas and meaning making. Also, without explicit teaching of grammar, students and teachers lack a metalanguage to understand errors. Notes other work that can be useful (e.g. Gale’s 2009 call for under-represented students’ epistemologies and ontologies should be recognised) **Core argument:** Need to think carefully about how to deal with/ position language and literacies for under-represented (such as low SES) students – need to recognise and valorise knowledges, languages and literacies of all students and to privilege view that they “have knowledge that those institutions can learn from, that their presence can unsettle and ultimately transform higher education in powerful and positive ways” (p.A79). Effective strategies suggested = including students in debates about what counts and in ‘teaching them the questions’. |
| Reay, D.; Crozier, G. & Clayton, J. (2010). [‘Fitting in’ or ‘standing out’: working-class students in UK higher education](mailto:https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01411920902878925), *British Educational Research Journal,* 36(1), 107–124.  UK  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords (Sally’s): *learner identity, self-perception, working-class, institutional habitus* | **Context:** Looks at working-class participation in UK higher education (approx. 25%) in context of concerns about WP and student retention/ attrition – high drop out with high levels of WP and polarisation of institutions according to WP/ class (16% of RG enrolments = 3 lowest social classes) – only 1% of less affluent submissions = accepted by top 13 universities (Sutton Trust, 2007). Key focus of ESRC-funded research reported = social class as marker of identity (also gender and ethnicity intersect). See Crozier et al., 2008 for other report on same project.  **Aim:** Research study conducted to: “find out whether these students strive to change and conform to the institutional milieu or to reproduce their identities in an act of resistance, or whether they merely seek validation for who they are; to discern to what extent they fit in or stand out” (p.110)  **Theoretical frame:** Bourdieu: institutional habitus (described as “a dynamic concept, a rich interlacing of past and present, individual and collective”, p.108) – academic status of university = important part of its habitus (and ‘expressive order’ = cultural capital – see Reay et al., 2005) and field.  **Methodology:** Analytic category of class based on national statistics (social economic classifications) and parents’ educational profiles/ first in family. Research = mixed methods in 4 universities (elite = Southern, civic = Midland, FE college = Eastern, and post-1992 = Northern). Looked at limited range of subjects (see p.110). Questionnaire distributed to Year 1 & 2 students for collecting demographic data (n=1209). Used survey data to identify working-class students for follow up case studies. 27 students followed over a year (over 2 academic years) and interviewed students at ‘key decision-making moments’. In total, 97 face-to-face interviews conducted – focusing on perceptions of self and changes over time. Observations of lectures and seminars also conducted “in order to gain a better understanding of both institutional habitus and the students’ learning dispositions” (p.110)  **Findings:** Working class students = patterns and differences across 27 students according to factors such as mature student, different academic levels, poor financial circumstances, career ideas.  Institutional habitus – the 4 HEIs = very different. Largest % of working-class students in Northern, although FE college doesn’t record these statistics (but 50% of questionnaire respondents at Eastern= working class). All 4 “have identifiable institutional habituses in which their organisational culture and ethos is linked to wider socio-economic and educational cultures through processes in which universities and the different student constituencies they recruit mutually shape and reshape each other” (p.111).   * *Eastern* = students lack access to normal uni resources, although they can share with local uni but many students do not because of time/ location. Nearly all students live at home, with that being a key driver for choosing Eastern. * *Northern* = economically deprived urban area – students either live at home or off-campus; nearly all work part-time. Academics perceive most students as working class but statistics suggest = 40%. Lectures = not compulsory and no formal tutor time. Many students = low levels of commitment. * “At both Eastern and Northern the congruence between individual and institutional habitus often lulls working-class students into a sense of security and symmetry, providing a comfort zone where the working-class students feel they are accepted” (p.112) * *Midland* = very different from Eastern and Northern. Most students live in halls, it has more resources, less than half work part-time. Better sense of students intergrated into university life; students “described a wide spectrum of learners ranging from the hardworking and committed to those operating in more instrumental ways” (p.113), particularly related to first year assignments not counting to overall degree classification. 47% live on campus * *Southern* = [Oxbridge??] “intensive, highly academic teaching and learning supported by regular one-to-one or one-to-two supervisions and tutorials where the expectation is that students make substantial contributions and are challenged and questioned by both their peers and teachers” (p.113) – all students considered ‘studious’ (contrast to range of subjectivities in Midland). 82% live on campus   Influence on students: strongest impact = where students live (at home/ on campus). Intellectual challenge rated differently (77% = high at Southern; 27% = high at Northern); similar wide disparity in perceptions of academic support, particularly with regard to one-to-one support. Students at Northern perceived themselves as having to be more independent/ rely on themselves. Sense of selves as students diverse too; in Northern and Easter = partial student identity (likely result of other responsibilities in life such as work or family). In contrast, Southern and Midland = strong sense of self as academic learner.  Relationship between class and identity = spectrum of experience of being university student – Eastern and Northern at one end, Southern at the other. Eastern students largely consider themselves to be ‘college students’; at Northern, students = perceive selves as university students but also local and working class; at Southern (and Midland but not as much) = self as university student is much more common. Discussion of how some disconnections/ jostling between home/ parents and attending university (especially Southern and Midland students).  Fitting in? Working class student = not cool to be clever: “we see the power of institutional habitus in the form of a student learning culture defined by ‘laid-back’ attitudes and a casual, last-minute approach to academic work. Kylie mentions her desire to fit in with her student peers three times and it is obvious that she feels her enthusiasm for learning needs to be tempered, at least in front of other Northern students” (p.117). Same student = applying to RG uni to do PG study where she thinks she will ‘fit in academically but not socially’ (opposite of UG study at Northern) = standing out/ fitting in. **Core argument:** “The rewards and recognition of being a university student are powerfully differentiated across the higher education field” (p.120). “The crucial difference between students at the four institutions lies more in the learner identities that they bring to the higher education context than in differing identifications and social identities” (p.117). Working-class= heterogenous |
| Rubin, M. (2012). [Social Class Differences in Social Integration Among Students in Higher Education: A Meta-Analysis and Recommendations for Future Research](mailto:https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225090554_Social_Class_Differences_in_Social_Integration_Among_Students_in_Higher_Education_A_Meta-Analysis_and_Recommendations_for_Future_Research), *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 5(1), 22–38.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *social class, socioeconomic status, first-generation students, social integration, sense of belonging* | **Context:** Examines relationship between social class and social integration. Works from hypothesis that working class students need social integration more than middle class students because their parents usually do not have experience of higher education (aka they are more likely to be FinF)  **Methodology:** Meta analysis of 35 studies on SES and social integration; analysis = different measures (social class, gender, year of publication, type of social integration)  **Findings:** There is a positive correlation between low SES students and lower levels of social integration (and higher levels with middle class students) **Core argument:** “working-class students tend to be less integrated than middle-class students in higher education institutions” (p.31). |
| Rubin, M. (2012). [Working-class students need more friends at university: a cautionary note for Australia’s higher education quality initiative](mailto:https://www.researchgate.net/publication/224960791_Working-class_students_need_more_friends_at_university_A_cautionary_note_for_Australia's_higher_education_equity_initiative), *Higher Education Research & Development,* 31(3), 431–433.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Discussion:** Points for debate: starts from outlining HEPPP (from Bradley review). Uses term ‘working class’. Focuses specifically on supporting working class students – comments on meta-survey of 35 studies (included 62,000 students) – mostly US studies. Findings suggest a “significant positive relation between social class and social integration” (p.431), with working class less likely to integrate socially, such as “membership and participation in campus-based clubs, societies, and organizations (e.g., athletics, student governance, halls of residence activities)” (p.431). Claims this is significant because working class students tend to do worse in studies/ drop out more than middle class peers. Better/ more social interaction could help by “provid[ing] access to social and informational support, as well as motivational role model” (p.432) |
| Rubin, M. & Wright, C. (2015). [Age differences explain social class differences in students’ friendship at university: implications for transition and retention](mailto:https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269289955_Age_differences_explain_social_class_differences_in_students'_friendship_at_university_Implications_for_transition_and_retention), *Higher Education,* 70, 427–439.  AUS/USA  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: first*-generation students, friendship, social class, social inclusion, social integration, socioeconomic status* | **Context:** Based on idea that social integration = important for emotional and informational support at university, which helps students transition into higher education. Making friends is particularly important = Thomas (2012) suggests making friends at welcome lunch increases likelihood of retention and leads to “better learning, cognitive growth, critical thinking, personal and moral development, confidence, academic self-efficacy, and  academic performance” (p.428). Works from limited research (including Rubin, 2012) that working class students have fewer friends  **Aim:** Test of hypothesis that working class students have fewer friends and this is because lower SES students tend to be older than mid-SES  **Theoretical frame:**  **Methodology:** Quantitative: survey research at UON with 376 first year Psychology UG students (81% f; 19% m), with mean age of 22. Three scales of friendship used in survey design: Relevance of Friends to Identity scale, Openness to Friendships scale, and New Friends Concern scale  **Findings:** Clear evidence of social class differences in friendship at university: “working-class students reported having fewer identity-relevant friends and regarded the friends that they did have as being less relevant to their identity” (p.434) and less open/ less concerned about making friends. Age = salient factor but not more or less important than other (untested) factors – see Rubin 2012.  **Core argument:** Age should be taken into account when designing transition and retention activities: “*A key*  *implication of the present research is that arrangements for on-campus accommodation should take into account students’ social class, age, and concomitant family commitments”* (p.436); italics in original); universities should invest in accommodation for families to encourage students to live on campus*.* |
| Scull, S. & Cuthill, M. (2010). [Engaged outreach: using community engagement to facilitate access to higher education for people from low socio-economic backgrounds](mailto:https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07294360903421368), *Higher Education Research & Development,* 29(1), 59–74.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *community engagement, equity, access, outreach, disadvantage* | **Context:** Discusses a model of ‘engaged outreach’ –based on principles of community engagement to develop stronger links between universities and local communities -as an alternative to traditional outreach. Outreach program is specifically focused on two Pacific Island communities in southeast QLD (area of ‘high social deprivation’). Purposes of outreach = building aspirations and increasing access to HE.  **Aim:**  **Theoretical frame:** Initiative based on notion of ‘engaged scholarship’: “engaged outreach seeks to promote  a framework based on active engagement with multiple stakeholders, who work collaboratively to address factors impacting on higher education access” (p.60) – working with broad group of stakeholders – developing a sense of [co-]ownership of the program  **Methodology:** 2-year study to develop engaged outreach with two identified communities (based on a view of multiple disadvantage: low SES/CALD). Intentional move away from school-based outreach to collaboration and negotiation with range of stakeholders (see fig, p.63) = community-based participatory action research approach    Stage 1: preliminary scan of area for issues relating to access to HE for CALD communities = informal meetings with 76 different people (via snowball recruitment). Stage 2: interviews/ committee meetings/ literature review. Also recruitment of community liaison officers and community leaders identified. Stage 3: stakeholder analysis, community leaders’ workshop, action planning meetings. 24 interviews conducted in Stage 2: 11 young people/ 13 parents  **Findings:**   1. Access to HE is an issue for low SES/ CALD students 2. Lack of RPL = issue for adults from these communities 3. English language proficiency and time needed to acquire appropriate level for tertiary study = concern for many   Findings specific to Pacific Islander participants:   * Cost = significant issue * Parental involvement in children’s education = minimal * School engagement and attainment = ‘major issue’ * HE perceived to take a lot of time and investment and thus, while highly regarded, HE = not always prioritised * Few HE-educated role models in the communities studied   Three key strategies identified through community consultation:  Provision of accessible information  Provision of better support at school  Raise aspiration to higher education **Core argument:** “Key to facilitating increased access is a comprehensive understanding of current community attitudes and aspirations towards higher education and of the specific constraints impacting on higher education access” (p.71) |
| Thomas, G. (2013). [Closing the policy-practice gap for low-SES students in higher education: the pedagogical challenge,](mailto:https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07294360.2013.863846) *Higher Education Research & Development,* 33(4), 807–820.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *equity, higher education, pedagogy, student diversity, teaching practice* | **Context:** Set against post-Bradley context (HEPPP focus on low SES) in Australian higher education. Scopes literature on low SES students (unfamiliarity, less well resourced, lower perceptions of value of higher education) – examines notion that universities have communicated ‘it’s not for you’ message to low SES communities: “The fact that higher education has failed in the past to value these contributions potentially explains why many students from low-SES backgrounds have not had aspirations for higher-education study” (p.809) – problems with pedagogy (e.g. lecture/ authority of lecturer). Lack of whole-of-institution responses.  **Aim:** To “explore the strategies being used in 12 Australian universities to improve the recruitment, retention  and teaching of students from under-represented groups, particularly those from low-SES backgrounds” (p.807). Questions designed to answer:  (a) what strategies or processes were used to attract and retain low-SES and regional/rural students?  (b) were academics well positioned or prepared for more enrolments of students from under-represented groups?  (c) what initiatives were needed to support the needs of students (from under-represented groups) if their enrolments increased in the future? (p.810)  **Methodology:** Naturalistic inquiry approach; semi-structured interviews with 19 teachers and 5 leaders (directors of teaching and learning invited, but most referred Thomas on to colleagues in equity or academics in CTLs) from 12 Australian regional universities (7 worked with pathway programs, 7 worked in teaching and learning centres, 2 were Directors of the Equity Office and 8 were discipline academics/researchers). Data also  **Findings:** Organised around 4 themes: exemplary initiatives, promising teaching and learning strategies, under-valued expertise, deficit thinking.  *Exemplary initiatives*: 1) most HEPPP-funded projects focus on raising students’ aspirations in schools; 2) providing alternative entry pathways; 3) retention strategies via centralised student services + mentoring programs  *Promising teaching and learning strategies*: no articulation of a coherent, university-wide strategy addressing the teaching and learning challenges and opportunities of a more socially diverse cohort (p.812) = uncoordinated approach. Universal Design for Learning discussed for socially inclusive pedagogies: “What this does is shift the burden of being flexible and responsive from the student to the curriculum and its designers” (p.813) – discussion of internationalisation of curriculum; same needs to done for low SES students – needs ‘funds of knowledge’ approach.  *Undervalued expertise:* pathways teachers “appeared to be undervalued or marginalised within the university system. They tended to work on a casual or part-time basis and the funding mechanisms for the programmes created uncertainty about their long-term employment. For the staff in more permanent positions, most were not actively conducting research, they carried very high teaching loads and some reported a lack of confidence in the value of their voice” (p.815). Also staff lack confidence and only tacit understandings of aspects of their teaching experience that contributes to the effectiveness of their programs.  *Deficit thinking:* Most initiatives based on view of low SES students lacking skills, thinking, experience or resources and programs = designed to offset these deficits. Danger = deficit thinking makes disadvantage worse: “Even forward-thinking policies and initiatives will falter if the intended beneficiaries (the students from low-SES backgrounds) are blamed by the academics teaching them for the difficulties these students encounter” (p.815).  Need to reconsider and reframe so diversity is seen as a benefit and so that support for learning and studies is embedded in the curriculum, rather than outside or in centralized spaces + better staff training. **Core argument:** There is “little evidence of any theoretically sound, coherent or comprehensive plan to address the challenges and opportunities created by increased percentages of students from low-SES backgrounds” (p.818), but there are pockets of excellent practice |
| Tones, M.; Fraser, J.; Elder, R.; & White, K. (2009). [Supporting mature-aged students from a low](mailto:https://www.jstor.org/stable/40269199?seq=1" \l "metadata_info_tab_contents)  [socioeconomic background](mailto:https://www.jstor.org/stable/40269199?seq=1" \l "metadata_info_tab_contents), *Higher Education,* 58, 505–529.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords *Low socioeconomic status, Mature-aged students, Non traditional students, Study barriers, Student support services, Student marketing, Family, Employers* | **Context:** Sought to examine perspectives of mature age (25+) students’ experiences of support services and barriers to study. Works from Cullity’s (2006) estimate that 38% of commencing UG students = mature age. Cites work that argues mature age students = similar performance to younger students; mature age students more likely to have family responsibilities that impact on learning. Discusses ‘cycle of low wage employment’ and education as a means out of it. Returning to education = impact on learning identities. Works from rationale that low SES mature age students need support: “Mature students from a LSES background are likely to require additional support services to compensate for probable financial, educational, and social disadvantages” (p.509).  **Aim:** To examine a) barriers to study, b) use of current university support services, c) helpfulness of support  services if used, and d) responses to a range of proposed support strategies not currently offered by a major Australian institution among mature-aged students (p.509)  **Theoretical frame:**  **Methodology:** Mixed methods – interviews and focus groups; audit of university support services + online survey to explore patterns of usage/ barriers to usage. Study conducted in 2006 (presumably at QUT). Uni has 60% new enrolments = mature age students/ 16% = low SES. Attrition rates for mature/younger students = same/ retention/success ratios similar for mature/young low SES students. Low SES students enter via access scheme and go through specialised orientation program. Two-phased study: pilot study (focus groups/interviews with mature age students – findings fed into ‘multifaceted strategy’ to support mature low SES students (phase 2 = evaluation of these via online survey). Low SES identified by possession of health care card. 31 participants (10 = low SES: Year 1 – PG). Phase 1 = 23 participants (4 x focus groups); 8 x individual interviews. 223 students participated in online survey + statistical analysis  **Findings:** Analysis suggests patterns in terms of usage according to SES, age and enrolment status  Phase 1: Two main barriers: responsibility conflict and adjustment to university life  Lack of awareness of support services = issue  Suggestions generated = social events for mature age students, computing courses, greater flexibility in delivery  Phase 2:  Low SES made more use of financial services  No statistic difference in perceived helpfulness of services (by SES)  Low SES students less likely to use disability support/ counselling and academic services  Low SES students reported not using services because services not available when needed (same for 45+ years)  **Core argument:** Students aged 45+ need greater support adjusting to university life and support services are inadequate: “who indicated that several services were not available when they needed or wanted to use them” (p.519). Lack of awareness of where to go for help = significant: “uncertainty of where to go for assistance was reported by 76% of LSES students, and 54% of non LSES students suggests that current support services targeted at adjustment to university life are not adequately promoted, or that students are unaware of how services could help them” (p.523) |
| Tranter, D. (2012). [Unequal schooling: how the school curriculum keeps students from low socio-economic backgrounds out of university](mailto:https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13603116.2010.548102), *International Journal of Inclusive Education,* 16(9), 901–916.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *poverty and education; education policy; higher education* | **Context:** Explicitly examines the impact of school curriculum on maintain patterns of inequality (educational outcomes, participation) of low SES students and argues that universities are complicit. Explores alternative modes of entry “that disrupt the established curriculum hierarchy by valuing a broad range of knowledges for entry to university” (abstract). Positions curriculum = what is taught and how delivered = vehicle for social reproduction of classed inequalities. The traditional core of the curriculum “favours students who can draw on the cultural and intellectual resources of the middle class, who come from families where reading is encouraged, intellectual activities are valued above manual and ‘high culture’ is valued above ‘mass culture’” (p.903). Bottom of hierarchy of school subjects = VET/ vocational subjects. Discussion of scaling of subjects for TER on p.904.  **Aim:**  **Theoretical frame:** Bourdieu – cultural and social capital  **Methodology:** Ethnographic: draws on data collected from 3 schools as part of ethnographic project exploring experience of schooling in disadvantaged schools. Conducted small group/individual interviews with students (n=102) and teachers/school leaders (n=34) + observations at each site over 2 terms. Schools located in city in South Australia.  Inequity is reproduced through hierarchies in subjects, dichotomy between VET and academic courses and expectations of staff and students: “When university places are limited and access is based on relative (apparent)  merit, the secondary curriculum orders young people into a social hierarchy of post-secondary options where the success of more privileged students comes at the cost of students from low socio-economic backgrounds” (p.901)  **Findings:** Most disadvantaged school offered 6 HE selection subjects in Year 12: biology, English communications, PE, studies of society, food & hospitality, visual arts and more school assessed subjects and VET options: “The range of subjects offered suggests that the school had determined that the traditional competitive academic curriculum was not appropriate for its students” (p.905). By contrast, the largest school offered wide range of  HESS subjects and marketed itself on that basis. Members of staff in this school = divided in terms of how they viewed students capacity to cope with ‘higher level’ subjects (e.g. Extension Maths/ Physics), and for many students, the demands of the academic (traditional) curriculum = “overwhelming” (p.906) and attrition rate was high. The other school = high mix of diverse cultures and offered mid-range of HESS subjects. Also has agreement with local TAFE to allow school students to undertake Year 11 on TAFE campus to do Cert 2 VET qualification alongside school subjects. Students complained about strong direction towards maths and science and that TAFE pathways encouraged rather than HE, suggesting “the ‘taken for granted’ beliefs of many of these students: that students like themselves are not capable of achieving university” (p.907).  **Discussion**  VET in schools  “Vocational subjects dominate in low SES, government schools, often at the expense of academic options, and are rarely chosen by young people from the highest socio-economic backgrounds” (p.908); others have argued that VET provision = low quality (Polesel, 2008) and offers little post-school currency. Wheelahan (2007) argues that CBT = serves to exclude low SES students from ‘powerful knowledges’ of academic disciplines. Rather, VET and academic pathways should be kept as connected via school could help to reduce stigmatization of VET (p.909; Teese & Polesel, 2003).  Standards/ expectations  All students said Years 7-9 = waste of time because they didn’t have to do much to pass and thus does not prepare students well for academic study in Year 12. Teachers conversely viewed students as underprepared when they arrive at secondary school. Thus, “the stratification of the school curriculum operates [to limit] subject choices and steering students away from a university pathway” (p.913)  Alternatives?  ‘Capabilities-based approach’ to student selection for HE = portfolio admissions procedure with students asked to provide evidence they have the capacity to succeed [onus on student] and can include ECAs, voluntary work, other forms of learning. This approach disrupts traditional hierarchical curriculum by valuing a much broader ranges of knowledges and experiences beyond the school curriculum/ classroom. For example: UniSA = ‘Portfolio Entry Scheme’ [also see Harvey, 2012] **Core argument:** Tranter argues that “the senior secondary curriculum and higher education selection processes are heavily skewed against students from low SES schools” (p.911) |
| Wilkins, A. & Burke, P.J. (2015). [Widening participation in higher education: the role of professional and social class identities,](mailto:https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Expert-Summary-Monitoring-and-Evaluation-Final.pdf) *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 36(3), 434-452.  UK  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Context:** Academic culture in UK is “disciplinary, hierarchical, authoritative and entrenched (to differing extents) in institutional and cultural bias” (p.435), where students are “summoned to adjust their behaviour” (p.435) and have to learn to fit in with “culturally implicit norms and pedagogical demands” (p.435) – worse for low SES/ working class students. Working class is framed as deficit (culturally and linguistically)  **Aim:** To explore WP professionals’ talk to see if hegemonic neoliberal discourse can be unpicked and disentangled. WP professionals framed as people “who work to improve the success of working-class students” by “challenging, undoing and recoding the language of WP, either through invoking the language of social class or through promoting understandings of professional purpose and public interest” (p.435) = thus highlighting the tension between a desire to ‘do’ social justice work while inhabiting neoliberal spaces and discourses (through appropriation of terms like choice, empowerment, aspiration and achievement to construct students as consumers – p.436). Language of WP emphasises the demands/ opportunities of the global knowledge economy and neoliberal incentives: student as consumer (p.440)  Conceptual frame: Subjectivity and identity as performed through discourse “through patterns and rhythms of speech as vehicles for social action” (p.442) – Discourse analysis: Wetherall, 2005  **New Labour policies:** ‘Third Way’ solutions (Giddens, 1998): education reform bringing together market principles and progressive democratic values – AimHigher given as example of this; ‘double shuffle’ (Hall, 2005): “articulating and reconciling seemingly disparate and concordant political philosophies, governmental discourses and ethical imperatives” through a single governmentality (p.437).  **Methodology:** Interview data with WP practitioners and managers at 7 different UK universities (collected for Burke’s (2012) book ‘The Right to Higher Education: Beyond Widening Participation’). 7 universities chosen on basis of profile: new (post-1992), Specialist, Russell Group (similar to Go8) and each participant phoned/recorded.  **Findings:**  ‘Middle class but very interested’ – many participants emphasised social class as important factor (as working class themselves – e.g. Beth, Sarah = “generation of the discursive production of social selves” (p.443)) – also, mention of how affective aspects of social class inform inhabitation and performance of professional roles. With lots of middle class people in WP roles, it “risks becoming a colonizing project for the proselytization of middle-class norms and ideals” (p.444). Suggestion that *working-class empathy* is important for ‘authentic’ engagement (as opposed to *middle-class sympathy*).  Blurred boundaries and intersecting vocabularies – gives example of ‘choice’ – has been co-opted to create “citizens who inhabit and perform the logics and dynamics” of the consumer (p.447) and is evident in talk of some WP practitioners (e.g. Beth = ‘helping people to make the right choice’) which contributes to shaping of students as consumers; but see Josh for counter example.  **Core argument:** Some WP professionals see social class of practitioners as significant to their work. WP policy involves “innovation, experimentation and contestation rather than the rolling out of a stable programme of reform” (p.449). WP stands at intersection of number of “competing and potentially contradictory discourses” (e.g. progressive democrastic v. neoliberal). Points to a possible space of resistance and co-option by WP practitioners between policy (creation, amendment, repeal) and practice (implementation) |
| White, C. (2014). [Using principles of trust to engage support with students from low socioeconomic backgrounds](mailto:https://fyhejournal.com/article/view/234.html). A Practice Report, *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education,* 5(2), 81–87.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords (Sally’s): *Australia, higher education, low SES, support, trust, networks* | **Context:** Post-Bradley review Australian higher education system – emphasis on low SES students and human capital arguments. Points to idea that low SES students = “likely to have poor social and cultural capital that tends to limit their capacity and willingness to seek help for matters that may affect their retention and progression in higher education” (p.82) – explores role of Student Services – cites classic Tinto quote (“access without support is not opportunity”). Scopes similar focus on student support in UK and Europe  **Aim:** Reports on doctorial study that “aimed to determine what theoretical model can be developed that will inform the development of student support services in Australia to effectively respond to the non‐academic needs of LSES students” (p.83). [Not clear why focus = only low SES students]  **Theoretical frame:** Bourdieu/ capital mentioned but not specific theoretical framing of study – mentioned in introduction (commonsensical) and findings  **Methodology:** Qualitative, grounded theory (constructivist, interpretive). Methods = semi-structured interviews with mature age, low SES, on campus students (n=17) + 3 staff (regional university). Follow up focus groups conducted following analysis of interview data for patterns etc.  **Findings:**  Students = want suite of support (financial, child care, life-study balance etc.). Students = low understanding (demonstrated) of existing support services, or unlikely to access support services  Students = more likely to access/ take up support “if a person in their personal network encouraged them to do  so, for instance a lecturer, tutor, administration officer, peer, or family member” (p.84).  Social capital = increased by “formation of network of support established on trust” (p.84)  Trust = constructed as six principles: availability, responsiveness, pre-existing relationship, experience, willingness to help, credibility. See also ‘trust equation’ (Green 2005) **Core argument:** “For Student Services, this equates to educating key stakeholders across the institution about  services and forming referral pathways: a collaborative institutional approach to student support” (p.84). |