

A young woman with blonde hair is sitting at a desk in a classroom, looking bored or disengaged. She is resting her head on her hand. In the background, other students are visible, some looking at books or writing. The text "Engagement in context." is overlaid on the image in a yellow font.

# Engagement in context.

**Engagement as terminology, as concept  
and as principle.**

# *What is...*



I know my students are 'engaged' when they .....

# Terminology

Buzzword or fuzzword (Vuori, 2014)

Difficult to define  
Multi-faceted  
Who *owns* it?



<https://worldpoliticsblog.wordpress.com/2012/12/13/pedagogy-maintaining-student-engagement/>

# Concept- Theories and frameworks

(Adapted from Kahu, 2013)

- **Behavioural perspective**

“By focussing only on elements the institutions can control, a wide range of other explanatory variables are excluded, such as student motivation, expectations and emotions”(p.760).

- **Psychological perspective**

This brings together various dimensions:

Behaviour, cognition, emotion and conation.

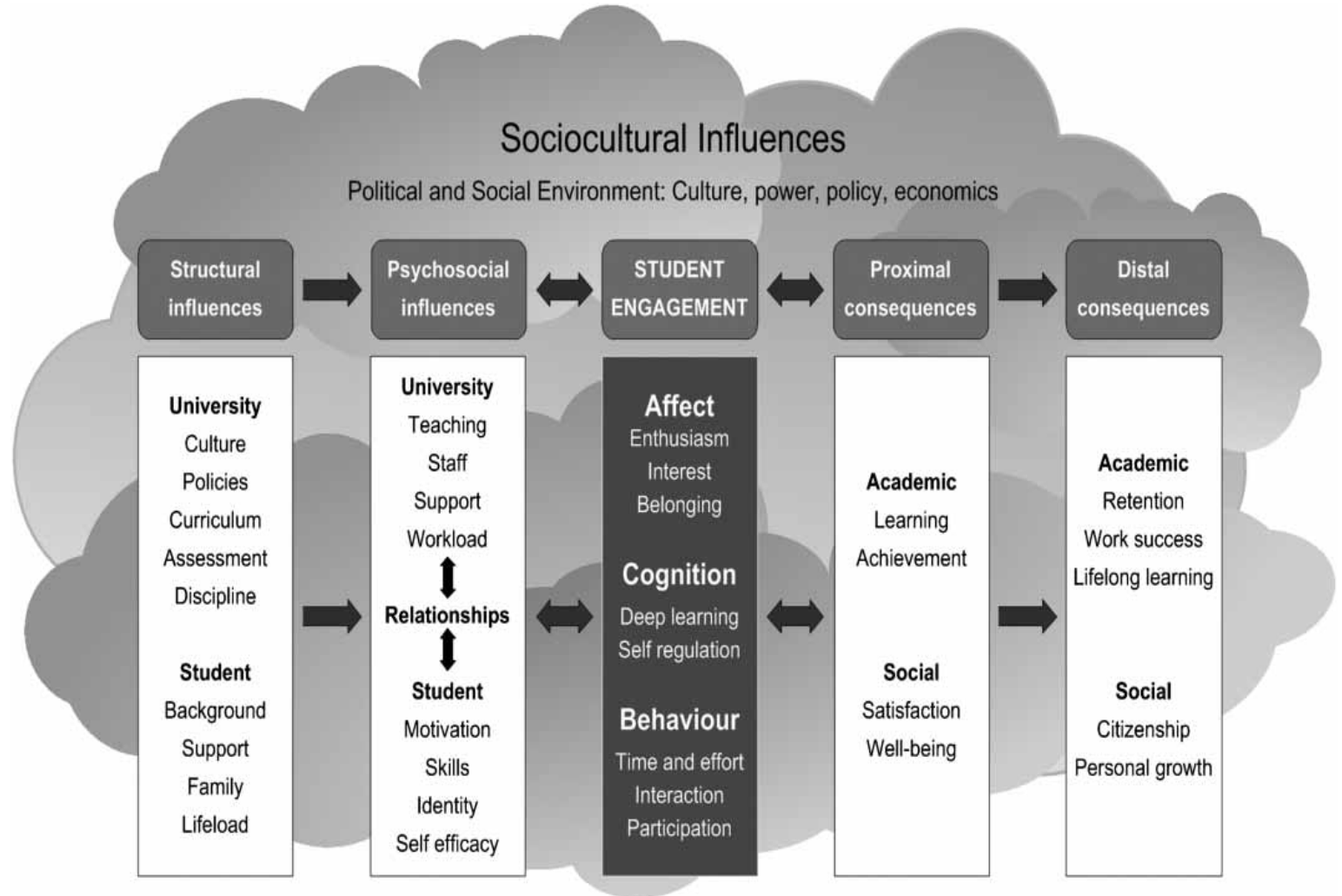
- **Socio-cultural perspective**

“It highlights the need for institutions to consider not just the student support structures but also the institution’s culture, and the wider political and social debates impacting on student engagement” (p. 764).

- **Holistic perspective**

According to the proponents of this perspective, engagement is a dynamic continuum with different locations, it is not measurable by survey but by in-depth qualitative research only (p. 764).

Conceptual framework of engagement, antecedents and consequences (Kahu, 2013, p. 766)



# Principle: in Policy & Practice

The Quality Code (*Chapter B5: Student Engagement*)

sets out the following Expectation about student engagement, which higher education providers are required to meet:

Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

[https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/chapter-b5\\_-student-engagement.pdf?sfvrsn=cd01f781\\_8](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/chapter-b5_-student-engagement.pdf?sfvrsn=cd01f781_8)



# ...in Policy and Practice ....

Office for Students Regulatory  
Advice 6 (February 2019) states:

*Collaboration between providers and their students should be mutually and reciprocally beneficial. [.....]  
The 'What works? Student retention & success programme' (2017) research report shows that students who are engaged with activities at their provider felt a greater sense of belonging and connection to the provider, and that this may contribute to improved retention and success.*

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<https://journals.studentengagement.org.uk/index.php/raise/>

# Question for reflection

A narrow definition of engagement, according to Zyngier (2008) leads to the idea that if a student is engaged then the teacher is responsible, whereas if the student is disengaged then the problem lies with the student.

**Our focus should not be on how *students* are engaging with the institution, but how *the institution* is engaging its students and engaging with its students...**

- *Do we really know our students? Do we know what our students understand by 'engagement'....*
- *Do we challenge our students sufficiently – to ignite their interest and enthusiasm?*
- *How?*



# Concluding thoughts

- ‘Engagement’ is complex.
- To measure student engagement is a challenge... current tools are not all fit for purpose..
- But there is evidence to suggest that the more students are engaged, the more likely they are to succeed, to achieve their goals and to reach their full potential.
- Research also shows that strong tutor-student and peer-to-peer relationships encourage engagement, and that where tutors “support students’ autonomy.... and hold high expectations ... “ (Fredricks, 2011; 2016) students are more likely to engage.

# Concluding thoughts

- According to Seemiller & Grace (2019), Generation X (1964-1980) can be characterized as cynical, independent and family-oriented; the Millennials (1981-1995) as digitally connected, optimistic and focussed on self; and Generation Z as open-minded, caring, diverse, grounded in a sense of integrity and tenacity, valuing financial security, family and relationships, meaningful work and happiness, motivated through relationships, engaging with their passions and achievement.

Are these *our* students? How do we tap into these qualities to engage, to challenge and to stretch students throughout their higher education journey?

# Translating ideas into practice - and projects...

Here are a few ideas...

- ‘Whole-class co-creation of learning and teaching’ (Bovill, 2019)
- Build curricula which encourage risk-taking; learning from failure – challenge all students to do and be the best that they can (see ‘Student as Practitioner’ project University of Lincoln; Collaborative Cross-Discipline Design, NTU ...). See also ‘Growth Mindset’ (Dweck, 2006; Bender, W.N., 2017).
- Build community(ies)- student-led
- ‘Real-world’ learning & teaching; create a curriculum relevant to all students ...

A group of approximately 20 people, including men, women, and children, are posing for a group photo on a playground structure. The structure features a prominent blue slide on the left side and a wooden roof at the top. The people are arranged in several rows, some sitting on the structure and others standing on the ground. The background shows a sandy playground area with some trees and buildings. The text "Thank you for listening" is overlaid in the center of the image in a yellow, sans-serif font.

Thank you for listening

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