

Belonging and engagement in competitive environments: Winners, losers and playing a different game

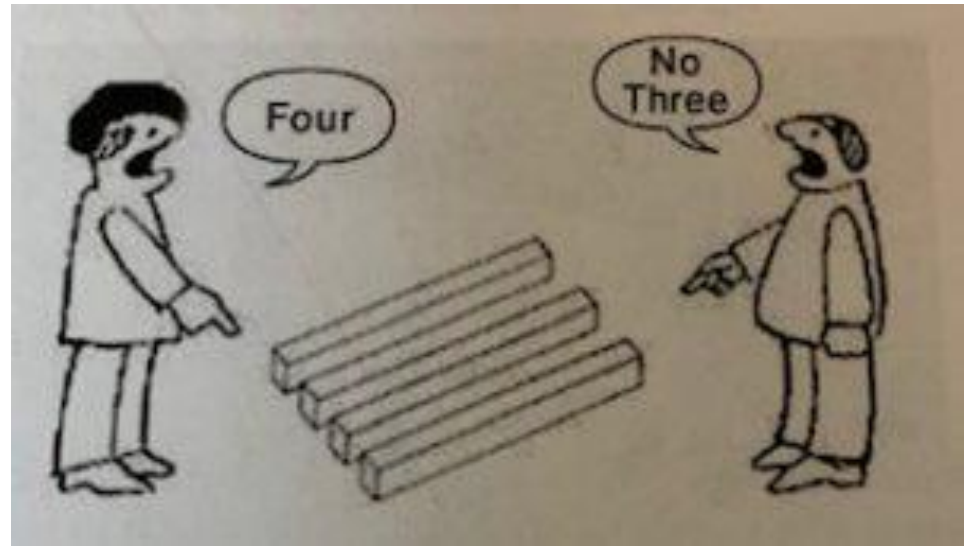
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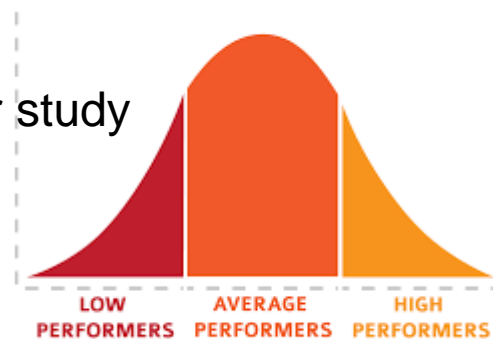
Overview

- Competitive environments
- Engagement and belonging
- Changing the rules of the game: from individual to collective belonging



Competitive academic environments

- Preconditions
- Staff-led
 - Pitting students against each other
- Student-led
 - Students competing with each other
- Employment and further study



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Effects of perception of competition

- extrinsic, performance orientation to learning (Dweck, 2000)
- lower levels of motivation, increased procrastination and value linked to individual success
- greater imposter feelings among students (Canning et al 2020)
- poor mental health, stress, anxiety and poorer performance (Posselt and Lipson 2016)
- fear of failure leads to assumption that success is necessary for them to feel proud of themselves or for others to reward them (Michou et al 214)

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Engagement and belonging



Engagement and belonging

Engagement

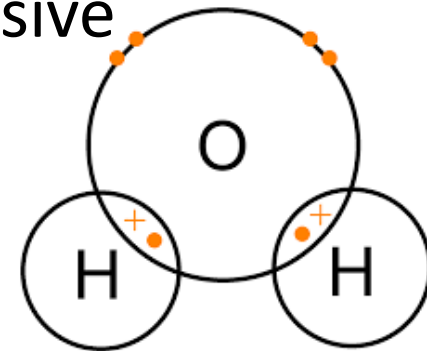
- normative ways of behaving and ‘being a student’
- ‘reification of participation’ and drive towards performativity and ‘measurable’ forms of engagement (Gourley 2015)
- collaboration and collusion

Belonging

- promote normative ways of feeling; academically and socio-economically homogeneous cohorts
- group conformity and adaptations to the institution

Social capital

- Bonding—inward looking, reinforcing exclusive identities and homogenous groups



- Bridging—outward looking, accepting, welcoming and encompassing of diversity, with powerful and positive social effects

(Putnam 2000)



Reorientation

- Diaspora concepts, acknowledging continually renegotiated contested spaces
- Move away from narrow conceptions and measures of engagement and belonging
 - not inclusive for diverse students and may
 - inhibit challenge and opportunities for all students



A new game

- competitive environments as sites of ‘disorienting dilemmas’ that can support transformation
- multiple versions of imagined belonging (Massey 1994)
- careful, intentional application of constructive competition as a pedagogical tool in the classroom



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References

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