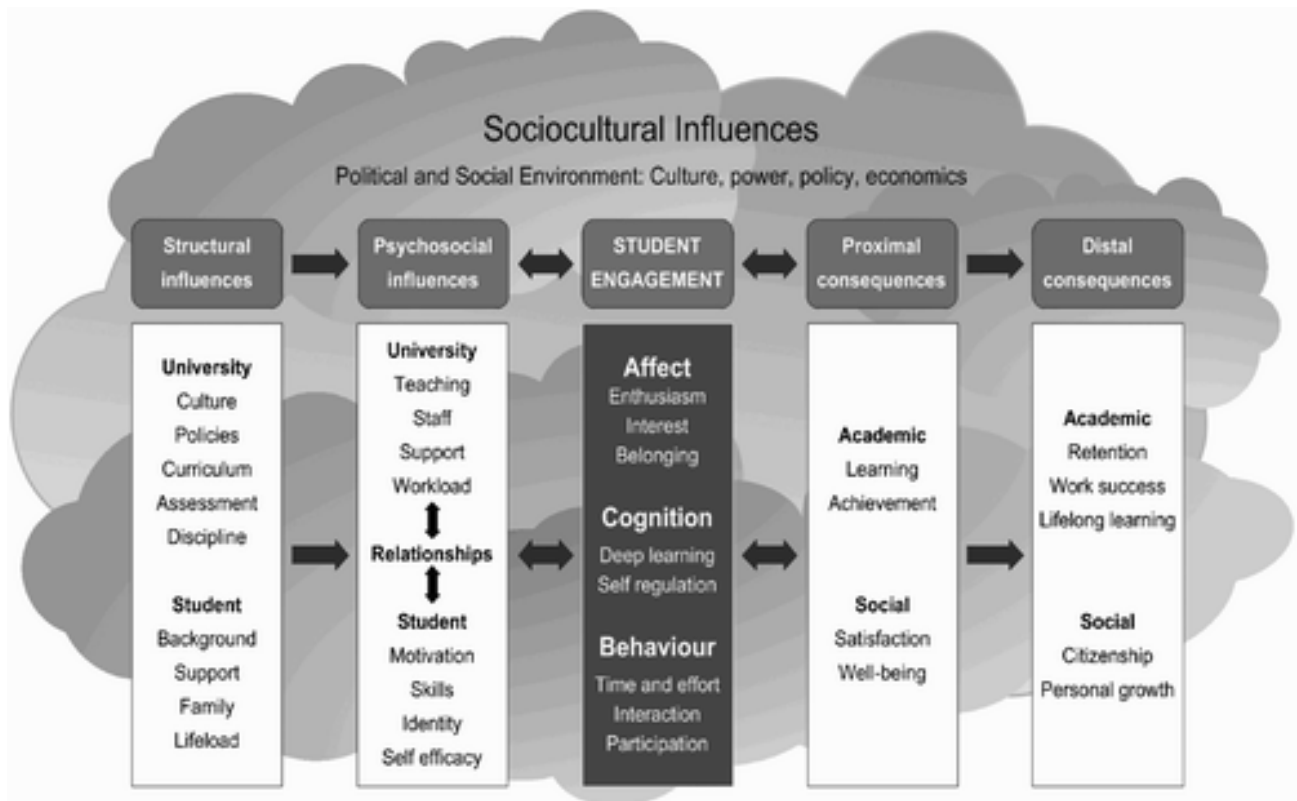


A brief annotated bibliography of student engagement

Cynthia Korpan, Learning and Teaching Centre, December 2013

Kahu, E. R. (2013). Framing student engagement in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education, 38*(5), 758-773. Doi: 10.1080/03075079.2011.598505

Kahu (2013) reviews the research regarding student engagement and categorises it into four major perspectives: behavioural, psychological, socio-cultural, and holistic. After identifying each perspective's strengths and weaknesses, the author constructs the following framework that is student centred and acknowledges the students' lived reality. The author cites previous research that confirms that teachers have the most influence determining student engagement but suggests that the following framework could encourage students to realize the complexity of all of the variables that impact their engagement at university. Ultimately, Kahu argues that engagement is about what the teacher and student do together within a broader framework of socio-cultural influences.



(Kahu, 2013, 766)

Zepke, N., & Leach, L. (2010). Improving student engagement: Ten proposals for action. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 11(3), 167-177. Doi: 10.1177/1469787410370680.

Zepke and Leach (2010) claim that the problem with much of the current literature on student engagement is that it only focuses on one dimension of that engagement. After analyzing the research, the authors synthesize the current work into four major perspectives and then identify ten potential action items to address each of them:

Table 1. A conceptual organizer for student engagement

Research perspectives	Proposals for action
<i>Motivation and agency</i> (Engaged students are intrinsically motivated and want to exercise their agency)	1. Enhance students' self-belief 2. Enable students to work autonomously, enjoy learning relationships with others and feel they are competent to achieve their own objectives
Transactional engagement (Students and teachers engage with each other)	3. Recognize that teaching and teachers are central to engagement 4. Create learning that is active, collaborative and fosters learning relationships 5. Create educational experiences for students that are challenging, enriching and extend their academic abilities
Institutional support (Institutions provide an environment conducive to learning)	6. Ensure institutional cultures are welcoming to students from diverse backgrounds 7. Invest in a variety of support services 8. Adapt to changing student expectations
Active citizenship (Students and institutions work together to enable challenges to social beliefs and practices)	9. Enable students to become active citizens 10. Enable students to develop their social and cultural capital

(Zepke & Leach, 2010, 169)

Further explanation of the proposals for action (I have provided an example for each action):

1. Give students opportunities to feel confident and increase their self-efficacy. If students feel like they are competent, they will engage in more active learning.
Example: early in the course, provide students with a low stakes assignment that has a low weighting in terms of grade but provides students with high personal returns. This can be in the form of a quiz that groups of students work on together.
2. Give students the opportunity to learn autonomously and in groups as this will increase their sense of competence that will lead to greater motivation to succeed and engage.
Example: each week incorporate some form of group activity such as think-pair-share, jigsaws, or small group work.
3. Teachers have to be approachable, sensitive to student needs, and well organized. Additionally, they must establish learning environments that are inviting, demand high standards of work, and challenge students. Most importantly for first-year students, teachers need to provide ample support to help students achieve their best. That means being available for students and

providing considerable formative feedback, especially early in the term. However, for teachers to actively support and engage students, the institution has to clearly value teaching!

Example: some instructors require students to have a one-on-one meeting with them within the first two weeks of class. This fosters an understanding relationship between the instructor and student.

4. Establish learning relationships through active learning in groups and peer-to-peer learning that will encourage a learning community in the classroom.
Example: have students review a peer's writing assignment and give feedback. Provide them with a rubric and points to look for and what to comment on.
5. Assessment is only one way to challenge students. Through active learning activities have students analyze, critique, and evaluate ideas put forth by the instructor.
Example: incorporate a reflective writing activity at the end of class about key concepts and ideas discussed and ask students a challenging question to further their thinking about the concept.
6. Make sure all students in the class feel welcome and are not singled out.
Example: do not single out students from particular cultural regions.
7. Ensure that all students are aware of the varied support services available to them.
Example: have the writing centre visit the classroom to give students information or take the whole class to the library and do a tour so that they know where to go for writing and research help.
8. Understand that students are experiencing diverse lives. Increasingly students are attending university part-time and hold full-time jobs.
Example: structure flexibility into the assignments and course so that students can easily adapt the course to their varied lives.
9. Encourage students who are interested in opportunities to engage with the world outside the academy in order to understand how they can impact and change the world we live in.
Example: assignments can give students the opportunity to write about the change and impact that they would like to see in their community.
10. Some students may not feel like they understand how the university works, especially in the first two years of their degree. Demonstrate transparency so that students can feel confident in their actions in and beyond the classroom.
Example: explain exactly how the class will progress, how assignments will be graded (provide a rubric), and how to succeed in the class.

Other resources:

Harper, S. R., & Quaye, S. J. (2009). *Student engagement in higher education: Theoretical perspectives and practical approaches for diverse populations*. New York: Routledge.

Knowlton, D. S., & Hagopian, K. J. (Eds.). (2013). From entitlement to engagement: Affirming millennial students' egos in the higher education classroom. *New Dimensions for Teaching and Learning*, 135.

Kuh, G.D., et al. (2008). Unmasking the effects of student engagement on first-year college grades and persistence. *Journal of Higher Education*, 79(5), 540-563.