

Chapter 2

Mainstream Perspectives and Frameworks

Abstract This chapter digs more deeply into the multiple views about student engagement introduced in Chap. 1. Three different meaning perspectives are discussed: a quantitative generic pedagogical perspective; a cognitive learning focused perspective and a holistic lifewide experience perspective. Together, these perspectives provide a historical account of the development of student engagement. But this account focuses on theoretical developments and does not offer a clear view of possible practical differences between perspectives. To offer a more practice orientated overview of student engagement, the chapter identifies four practice frameworks derived from the three broad perspectives. The quantitative generic pedagogical perspective and the cognitive learning focused perspective are retained as separate practice frameworks. The holistic lifewide experience perspective divides into psychocultural and sociopolitical frameworks. Four variables—how learning agency and motivation are stimulated; what key learning and teaching processes are practised; how learner wellbeing is promoted; and how active citizenship is conceived—reveal differences between them.

Student engagement may be a popular buzz phrase, but perhaps because of this popularity, it also suffers from conceptual complexity and uncertainty, even indigestion. Ramsden and Callender (2014, p. 28) bring this home with their description of student engagement as a convenient expression for almost any appealing form of teaching that encourages learning. They note that the following characteristics have all been noted in the research literature as leading to engagement.

- A component of quality enhancement and assurance: engaging students more effectively in shaping their learning experiences;
- The ‘student voice’;
- Participating in activities that lead to learning and development gains;
- Feeling a sense of belonging to (rather than disjunction from) an institution;
- Learning with and from other students;
- Learning on campus in a social community;

- A sense of accomplishment from successful academic learning;
- Adopting a deep approach to learning when undertaking academic tasks;
- Self-efficacy in learning; intrinsic motivation;
- Not being alienated through academic power and culture or market-driven changes to HE (especially non-traditional students);
- “Engaging the whole person”;
- Emotional attachment to learning deriving from good teaching, curriculum, assessment, resources and support;
- ‘Student-centred’ education (teaching that focuses on students’ needs);
- Involvement in learning, including time on task, participation in extracurricular activities, enjoyment and interest.

This profusion of understandings makes a singular and definitive definition difficult to construct, and we may be better served by a more detailed examination of some of the diverse perspectives given to engagement in research and practice.

The diversity of meaning and perspectives may be because conceptually student engagement has different roots in American and European (including the United Kingdom) traditions of researching learning and teaching. American researchers used the term *student engagement* early to research student learning behaviours. European researchers did not generally use the term until much later than the Americans. They preferred to focus on students’ approaches to, patterns of and intentions for learning. These two traditions of student engagement resulted in engagement research running along different lines. In Europe and United Kingdom the emphasis is more on understanding a student’s own sense of what learning is in a constructivist framework; the Americans view engagement more within a pre-determined and generic pedagogical framework (Solomonides et al. 2012). However, this geographical distinction can be overstated. Engagement researchers have constructed quite diverse meanings of and perspectives on engagement across and within such geographic boundaries. For example, in higher education in the United States, the generic pedagogical conceptual framework was constructed around a quantitative research instrument that measures quantitatively student and institutional behaviours. But in the American school sector more holistic perspectives emerged that include cognitive and emotional attributes in addition to the behavioural ones favoured in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). In Europe (including the United Kingdom) and Australia conceptual frameworks have been built around phenomenographic perspectives of student learning; building students’ sense of belonging; and providing space for student agency and voice.

This chapter offers first a broad sketch of what I consider to be important meanings and perspectives on mainstream student engagement research. Second, it constructs a more detailed map of the various mainstream practice frameworks that have been developed and activated.

Major Meaning Perspectives in Mainstream Student Engagement

A Quantitative Generic Pedagogical Perspective

In the United States the term student engagement has been used for more than 70 years (Axelson and Flick 2010). Work by Tyler in the 1930s, Pace in the 1960s and Astin in the 1980s laid the groundwork for combining involvement in active learning with student success. Students would be more likely to achieve their learning goals if they invested quality effort and energy into learning activities. Tyler, in developing his curriculum principles, found that time spent on learning tasks had positive effects. Pace developed the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ) which focused on students' quality of effort. He found that what matters most in learning is what students do well. He showed that learning was most gainful when learners spent time and energy on purposeful learning tasks by studying individually, interacting with peers and teachers and applying what they learnt in practical situations. Alexander Astin studied undergraduates in the 1960s and 70s to identify and specify university impact on student success. He developed a 'theory of involvement' which advanced and publicized the time on task and quality of effort concepts. He was a major contributor to the influential report *Involvement in Learning* which popularized the ideas of time on task and quality of effort. Like the work of Tyler and Pace, Astin's work takes the focus off disciplines and transmission of content. All were clear that the theory of student involvement puts the spotlight on generic learning and teaching behaviours leading to success (Kuh 2009; Solomonides et al. 2012).

Vincent Tinto is another major figure in the American tradition of engagement research. This is at first glance surprising as most of his pioneering work in the late 1980s and early 1990s focused on early departure. But a strong link has been found between retention and engagement leading to acceptance that the chances of retention are enhanced when students are engaged in their learning (Kuh 2009). Moreover, Tinto developed a model of retention that is easily transferable to engagement. The model has six progressive phases. Two focus on students' social and academic integration into their institution. Much student retention research is based on these two integrative constructs and engagement research builds on this. Tinto (1987) suggested that students who enrol in tertiary study leave their culture of origin and enter a different, academic, culture. Students who leave early may not have sufficiently integrated socially or academically into their institution and courses. This can be translated as students who don't sufficiently engage socially or academically with their learning may not taste success. Institutions, therefore, must act to facilitate the transition by helping students to integrate, and thereby optimize their retention, engagement and success. Tinto (2010, p. 73) suggested that a "key concept is that of educational community and the capacity of institutions to establish supportive social and academic communities, especially in the classroom, that actively involve all students as equal members". Other indicators are perhaps

more surprising. Tinto (1987) found that intellectual, social and emotional well-being was a vital factor in student participation (engagement) and success.

The work of Arthur Chickering and Zelda Gamson also contributes heavily to the development of the American engagement perspective. They confirmed that student success requires quality and intensity of effort from students that are socially and academically integrated into their programmes. They added that teacher work and institutional support also make critical contributions. In 1987 they published their well-known seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education: nurture positive student–teacher relationships, foster cooperation among students, promote active learning, provide prompt and constructive feedback on student work; ensure students have sufficient time to do set tasks, communicate that they have high expectations of students, and respect diverse talents and ways of learning. These are well accepted today as valuable guidelines for engaging teaching practice (Kuh 2009). Their list was based on many years of research on how teachers teach, students learn and on how students and teachers relate to each other. They suggested that each principle is important in its own right but when applied together their effects multiply. Chickering and Gamson (1987) suggested that together the principles release six powerful forces in the learning process: activity, high expectations, cooperative behaviour, interaction, diversity, and responsibility. While their principles are expressed in generic terms, Chickering and Gamson warn that the application of the principles will vary depending on the needs of students and how they are seen by different institutions.

Over the full 70 years of interest in student engagement American researchers developed surveys to identify and measure various behaviours associated with quality of effort and involvement in productive learning activities. By far the most influential of these surveys became the NSSE. Kuh (2009) discussed the political and economic stimulants that gave birth to NSSE and its Community College sibling, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). Kuh identified a growing emphasis on assessment, accountability and transparency in the work of a variety of commissions and academic groups. They sought a generic indicator of educational quality in student and institutional performance. Student engagement was the chosen indicator and this has been used to define quality learning and teaching in education policy circles, research literature, and the popular media. NSSE was not new and used many items from other surveys. According to Kuh its main purposes were threefold: to provide data institutions could use to improve the undergraduate experience; to learn more about effective educational practice in higher education settings; and to promote engagement and NSSE to the public to increase public acceptance and use of statistically driven conceptions of quality. Together, these purposes were conceived to establish in the public mind through repeated and well publicized reporting of survey results the validity and value of the survey's process indicators as proxies for learning success (Kuh 2009).

Individual items used in the NSSE have changed over time. In its original form the survey was organized around six benchmarks, each containing a variable number of behavioural and experiential items. The benchmarks were: level of

academic challenge; active and collaborative learning; student–teacher interactions; supportive campus environment; and enriching educational experiences. In 2013, after 13 years, the NSSE changed in response to research findings elsewhere and the needs of institutions (McCormick et al. 2013). The benchmarks are now called themes and students are asked to respond to questions about their experiences of higher order learning, reflective and integrative learning, quantitative reasoning, collaborative learning, effective teaching practices, and supportive environment and their participation in high impact practices such as learning communities, service learning, research with staff, and study abroad. Changes illustrate a search to find student experiences involving deeper forms of learning such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Introduced into this new version is specific recognition of engagement involving such behaviours. Likert style questions ask students to indicate how often or how much they have engaged with, for example, reaching conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information, or asking another student to help them with an academic problem. Despite these changes NSSE’s underpinning design still conceives of engagement as identifiable and quantifiable student, teacher and institutional behaviours. NSSE has spread its influence around the world having parented similar surveys in Canada, Australasia, China, South Africa, Ireland and latterly in the United Kingdom.

A More Qualitative Learning Focused Perspective

In Sweden, the United Kingdom and Australia a different research tradition for student engagement emerged over the last four decades. Instead of using generic surveys to identify how students behaved on predetermined indicators, these researchers focused more on discovering how students approached learning tasks through interviews, observations and inventories to gauge perceptions of learning. This gave rise to phenomenography, the research process developed to identify different approaches to learning. This change of perspective led to learning being seen as an individual construction of meaning not as a set of behaviours. Swedish, British and Australian researchers led the way in developing the methods and findings of this emerging tradition. In Sweden Marton and Säljö (1976) explored how students approached a particular learning task. Students were asked to read an academic text and to answer questions about this learning experience. From answers the researchers identified two approaches to learning. One group of students tried to understand and make meaning of the whole text. These students were identified as adopting a deep approach to learning. The second group focused on memory and tried to retain facts they thought they might be asked about after the reading. The researchers labelled theirs as a superficial or surface approach. Deep and surface approaches to learning are terms most teachers in higher education recognize. They connect to engagement in that they reveal the degree to which learners actively involve themselves in finding meaning in what they learn. Deep learning is seen as transformative; surface learning as reproducing.

Entwistle (2005) was also interested in approaches to learning in authentic, often subject specific, learning contexts and worked with Swedish and UK colleagues to refine the approaches to learning perspective. He and Ramsden (1983) developed the Approaches to Studying Inventory (ASI) to help better identify surface and deep learning approaches. The use of this inventory identified a third approach to learning. The strategic approach was used by students who had very high academic goals and mixed deep and surface approaches to achieve them. The approaches to learning construct now had three components—deep, surface and strategic. Entwistle (2005) suggested that learners using the deep transforming approach wanted to understand ideas for themselves. Key aspects included linking new ideas to previous knowledge and experiences; looking for underlying principles; checking evidence and relating it to conclusions; examining logic and arguments critically; and becoming actively interested in course content. The key intention of learners adopting a surface or reproducing approach was to cope with course requirements. This resulted in studying without reflecting on either purpose or learning strategy; treating the course as unrelated bits of knowledge; memorizing facts and procedures; finding it difficult to make sense of new ideas; and feeling undue pressure about assessments. The intention of students using the strategic or organizing approach was to achieve the highest possible grades by putting consistent effort into studying; finding the right conditions and materials for study; managing time and effort effectively; being alert to assessment requirements and criteria; and producing work to meet the perceived preferences of lecturers.

Researchers working outside Europe also contributed to the development of the approaches to learning perspective. In Australia Biggs (1978) used the Study Process Questionnaire (SPQ) to develop similar understandings to the approaches to learning construct identified by Marton and Säljö and Entwistle. But he considered the approaches to learning to be *congruent motive packages* with each package comprising a motive connected to learning strategies to realize them. He suggested that the motives for using the surface approach were external to the real purpose of the task. The motives for students engaging in deep learning were to engage with the task on its own terms. This was founded on an intrinsic interest in the task. This enables students to find a suitable strategy to realize their deep learning goal. In South Africa Jan (Erik) Meyer (1991) developed the term *study orchestration* to describe the learning process that students use in different contexts. The term orchestration captures an emphasis on self-direction in higher education and “focuses on the different ways students direct their resources in specific learning contexts (Meyer 1991, p. 67). It captures the unique nature of individual approaches to studying. Study orchestration is a qualitative approach to a qualitatively perceived context. Orchestration recognizes three features of student learning; the existence of qualitative individual differences in how students engage in learning tasks; the contextual influences on such engagement; and different conceptions of learning among individuals.

Just as the NSSE survey in the United States encapsulates key interests of American engagement researchers, so have ‘approaches to learning’ researchers developed inventories that offer a bird’s eye view of surface, deep and strategic

approaches. The Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for Students (ASSIST) (Entwistle et al. 2013) incorporates ideas from prior inventories. It uses a Likert scale to generate an overall score that identifies whether a student is a deep, strategic or surface learner. The deep approach contains five subscales: seeking meaning; relating ideas; using evidence; and interest in ideas. Seeking meaning probes understanding, author intent, reflection and problem analysis. Relating ideas investigates how ideas are connected and independent thinking. Use of evidence includes drawing conclusions, questioning, considering details and finding reasons. Interest in ideas probes intrinsic motivation—excitement, getting hooked and thinking about ideas, events and influences outside of class. Monitoring effectiveness includes revision, objective setting, planning and evaluation. The strategic approach has four subscales around organizing study, time management, identifying and achieving assessment demands. Organizing study involves study conditions, work systems, following up on suggestions and advance planning. Time management revolves around organizing time, keeping to schedules and making efficient use of time. Achieving is about motivation to do well. Alertness to assessment demands focuses on keeping on side with the marker, using assessment comments effectively, and mirroring teachers' expectations. The surface approach also has four subscales: lack of purpose; unrelated memorizing, fear of failure and boundedness. Lack of purpose includes questioning value, interest and relevance of study. Unrelated memorizing focuses on developing techniques, sense-making and judging importance. Fear of failure is about motivation for learning—coping with work load, making sense of the whole picture and just generally worrying. Boundedness probes situations where students stay strictly within course boundaries and expectations.

A Holistic Lifewide Experience Perspective

Without question the behaviourist (NSSE) and cognitive (approaches to learning) research perspectives provide the most influential source of ideas about student engagement in higher education. The behaviourist tradition provides indicators derived from quantitative research, while the cognitive perspective focuses more on indicators that draw on qualitative differences in approaches to learning that can be supported by more quantitative inventories. But these perspectives are not the only ones about student engagement. In the United States, school based researchers have provided further insights. Lam et al. (2012) attempted to conceptualize student engagement as a fusion of two elements. The first focuses on the learner. They support Fredricks et al. (2004) behavioural, emotional, and cognitive characteristics of engagement. Here behavioural engagement relates to active involvement in academic and social activities leading to positive academic outcomes. Emotional engagement is about reactions to and relationships with teachers, classmates and administrators that encourage a love of learning. Cognitive engagement points to investment in deep learning of concepts and skills. Lam et al.'s (2012) second

element focuses on facilitators of engagement, actors in the educational landscape that support engagement in a wide variety of ways. They include students themselves, teachers, institutions and external influences such as the background of students.

Such researchers generally built a more holistic view of student engagement. They bring together the American behavioural and European cognitive traditions and add an emotional dimension. Lawson and Lawson's (2013) sociocultural ecological perspective on student engagement situates student engagement within an ecology of social relations. "Guided in part by social–ecological analysis and social–cultural theory, engagement is conceptualized as a dynamic system of social and psychological constructs as well as a synergistic process" (Lawson and Lawson 2013, p. 432). In this perspective the focus moves off the individual learner and teacher and their behaviours to a wider social context. A sociocultural ecological perspective moves engagement beyond the boundaries of classrooms and institutions to acknowledge the contributions of significant others in their varied contextual ecologies. This broadens the scope of their learning from a narrow prescribed curriculum and technical pedagogy to one that engages learners in the cultural politics that provide the context for higher education (McLaren 2003). Engagement is now lifewide as it includes learning about individual and critical social wellbeing and active citizenship across the lifespan. Lawson and Lawson's (2013) socio-cultural ecological perspective explores relationships between people, but is mute about relationships between them and natural environmental ecologies. Furman and Gruenewald (2004) address this limitation by emphasizing that a critical engagement with the lived conflicts in diverse human and non-human communities is equally important.

Intuitively it makes sense that wellbeing is linked with engagement which, particularly in its holistic lifewide guise, requires cognitive, behavioural and emotional energy, a positive outlook on life, social connection, self-confidence and self-regulation. These indicators of engagement share some common features with research from positive psychology about subjective wellbeing which is often interpreted to mean experiencing a high level of positive affect, a low level of negative affect, and a high degree of satisfaction with one's life. Personal well-being requires autonomy, competence, engagement and self-esteem, and social well-being involves social engagement, sound interpersonal relationships and social competence. Field (2009) observes that learning impacts positively on these by stimulating employability and earnings, social participation and engagement and a sense of agency. With a sense of well-being, individuals are able to develop their potential, work productively, build positive relationships, engage in and contribute to their communities as active citizens (Field 2009; Seligman 2011). According to Forgeard et al. (2011), engagement for well-being occurs when individuals are absorbed by and focus on what they are doing. High levels of engagement are present when the individual has clear goals and is intrinsically interested in the task at hand; the task presents challenges that meet the skill level of the individual; the task provides direct and immediate feedback to the individual; the individual retains

a sense of personal control over the activity; and action and awareness become merged, such that the individual becomes completely immersed in what he or she is doing. This view of engagement echoes that found in student engagement research.

Another feature of the varied engagement landscape is worth considering. It emerges from critiques of the way engagement is generally constructed in the research literature (Báez 2011). McMahon and Portelli (2004, 2012), for example, view engagement research as too conservative and/or student centred. Conservative views interpret engagement as psychological dispositions and academic achievement leading to learning that lacks social context. They concede that student-centred conceptions of engagement do recognize context, require engagement by teachers as well as learners and are nested in the relationships they share. But both views, they argue, are too narrowly focused on operational matters. What is needed is a democratic–critical conception of engagement that goes beyond strategies, techniques or behaviours; a conception in which engagement is participatory and dialogic, leading not only to academic achievement but success as active citizens. Barnett and Coate (2005) expand this critique by distinguishing between operational engagement and ontological engagement. The former encompasses conservative and student-centred engagement; the latter reflects a level of commitment aligned to active citizenship in which the student commits herself, seizes opportunities and tries to extend the boundaries of the curriculum. They see three curriculum projects in ontological engagement for active citizenship. The first is the project of knowing—how students can learn to make legitimate claims in a world of uncertainty and how to negotiate challenges to such claims. The second is the project of acting—how students can learn to act constructively in the world. The third project involves students becoming aware of themselves and their potential in a world that is open, fluid, contested and in need of courageous knowledge acts.

On first sight, these perspectives in engagement research seem to sort themselves quite neatly into the quantitative ‘generic pedagogical’ and more qualitative ‘approaches to learning’ perspectives focused on the classroom on the one hand and the holistic perceptions which have a lifewide focus on learning across a student’s whole lifeworld (Barnett 2010) on the other. But such first impressions are hasty. The updated 2013 version of the NSSE, for example, includes items on out of class learning such as experiences of students with people unlike themselves and in public service activities (McCormick et al. 2013). The ‘approaches to learning’ work, while focused on *inner* teaching–learning environments in the classroom (Entwistle et al. 2002), also acknowledges that deep learning involves thinking about ideas, events and influences from outside the classroom. Additionally, it recognizes the importance of *outer* teaching–learning environments such as individual learning histories and supports, orientations, beliefs, norms and values. In short, motivation, learning and teaching processes, an interest in student wellbeing and engagement in active citizenship are lenses that provide important insights about student engagement in all mainstream perspectives.

From Meaning Perspectives to Practice

So far I have sketched three broad meaning perspectives in engagement research. These outline broad historical and theoretical developments but do not pinpoint potential differences in practice between these perspectives. So a more thorough mapping is needed to tease out differences in practice between the perspectives. In this section I extract four distinct practice-focused conceptual engagement frameworks from the three broad perspectives. Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 18) define a conceptual framework as a description that “explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied—the key factors, concepts, or variables—and the presumed relationships among them”. In this instance the conceptual frameworks comprise variables that focus on practice. Two of the perspectives, the quantitative generic behavioural and the mixed method cognitive perspectives, translate neatly into distinct frameworks. The diverse ecological and lifewide perspective conceptually divides into two frameworks: one offering a more psychocultural viewpoint, the other a more sociopolitical standpoint. The four resulting conceptual frameworks are discussed through the work of an author who is considered to be representative of that framework. The representatives used are George Kuh and colleagues to represent the perspective encapsulated by NSSE; Noel Entwistle and colleagues to represent the ‘approaches to learning’ perspective; Ella Kahu to stand for the psychocultural perspective; and Ronald Barnett and Kelly Coate represent the sociopolitical views of the holistic lifewide perspective. Four variables will be used to view key similarities and differences between the frameworks. These are: how learning agency and motivation can be stimulated; what key learning and teaching processes are engaging; how learner wellbeing is associated with engagement; and how active citizenship is nurtured.

Kuh and colleagues (2006) acknowledge that there are numerous pathways into and out of education, but argue that institutions have relatively little influence on these. So their framework focuses on the learning experience itself. This is made up of two central features: student behaviours and institutional conditions. They locate student engagement where these intersect. In a 2008 paper Kuh and colleagues summarize this framework; a summary that could also be used as a definition. Engagement is “both the time and energy students invest in educationally purposeful activities and the effort institutions devote to effective educational practices” (Kuh et al. 2008, p. 542). Questions asked in the NSSE 2013 survey provide a very good overview of practices valued in this conceptual framework. It pictures engaged students as active learners inside and outside the classroom. Assumptions about *student agency and motivation* are revealed in questions about what they are willing to do to be successful, and how long they spend on tasks individually and with others. A variety of *Learning and teaching processes* are indicated in NSSE but overwhelmingly involve specific and predetermined learning behaviours. Behaviours resulting in success include completion of set work, meeting learning task challenges and participating in out of class events. Cognitive successes focus

on memorizing, analysing, synthesizing, evaluating and forming opinions, for example, about numerical problems and discussion with diverse others. Appreciating others' points of view can be associated with emotional engagement. Questions about *wellbeing* are indirect. They ask about services such as health care, learning support and management of out of course responsibilities provided by the institution. *Active citizenship* is considered in questions about attending meetings, taking leadership roles and activities in learning communities.

The 'approaches to learning' perspective also focuses on actual learning activities. But rather than students reporting how they perform on specific and generic items, researchers analyse how students approach academic tasks cognitively, such as in subject related readings. Researchers used interviews and inventories to sort learning into the two primary deep and surface groups and later also into the strategic category. The word 'engagement' did not feature in their work although both Meyer (1991) and Entwistle et al. (2002) use it. Depth of learning is the major yardstick for judging whether a learner is engaged. The conceptual framework is represented in Entwistle and colleagues Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for Students (ASSIST) (Entwistle et al. 2013) to identify learners engaged in this way. *Learning agency and motivation* are features of engagement in this tradition. Deep learners are intrinsically motivated which is evidenced by student interest and emotions like excitement, getting hooked and behaviours like thinking about ideas outside of class. *Learning and teaching processes* aim to generate deep or strategic learning. Success for deep learners lies in seeking meaning, connecting ideas, using evidence and being interested in ideas, events and influences, even when they originate from outside the classroom. For strategic learners' success is achieved by effectively organizing study, time management, identifying and achieving assessment demands. Surface learning is not associated with learning success, being couched in largely negative feelings like lack of purpose, unrelated memorizing, fear of failure and boundedness. *Wellbeing* in this conceptual framework is an implied rather than explicit variable, but it can be associated with deep and strategic learning. *Active citizenship* is not part of this framework with the research focussing largely on learning in specific and variable contexts.

The psychocultural holistic tradition reaches beyond the classroom into personal, family and community life. Holistic frameworks connect lifewide experiences (Barnett 2010). These are framed as antecedents to and consequences of engagement as part of an engagement algorithm. Kahu's (2013) engagement framework is an example of such a holistic and lifewide framework. It is pictured as a psychocultural process involving institutional and personal factors that are embedded in a wider social context that connects cultural, psychological and behavioural views (Ramsden and Callender 2014). Kahu offers a three-phase framework of engagement. At its centre is a narrowly conceived state of engagement resulting from learning activities, often in a classroom setting. But engagement does not happen just as a result of events in this setting. It is influenced by structural and psychosocial antecedents and is followed by personal and social consequences. Antecedents include influences such as institutional culture and curriculum; student background, peer relations and community influences; teaching, personal skills,

identity and self-efficacy. *Student agency and motivation* is extrinsic or intrinsic and applied in the state of engagement and its consequences. *Learning and teaching processes* are activated with students' cognitive, emotional and behavioural involvement in educational activities. Cognitive engagement involves deep learning and self-regulation; emotional engagement motivation and belonging; behavioural engagement involves time and effort on tasks and participation in learning activities. A sense of *wellbeing* is associated with the state of engagement through feelings of belonging but is most evident in immediate and distal consequences of engagement, where personal satisfaction contributes to a sense of personal growth and wellbeing. *Active citizenship* is mentioned in Kahu's model as a consequence of engagement but its nature is not explored.

A sociopolitical perspective leads to another holistic and lifewide conceptual framework. This emerges from the notion that student engagement is more than just a generic set of behaviours or context bound deep learning experiences. It focuses on a conception of engagement that goes beyond strategies, techniques and behaviours; a conception that leads to success as active citizens (McMahon and Portelli 2004). Barnett and Coate (2005) suggest a three level framework to give substance to engagement for active citizenship. Their framework is based on the higher education curriculum. It suggests that engagement for active citizenship is first about reproductive knowing. It involves learners knowing about prevailing structures and cultures and how they operate on their and other's behalf. Second, it is about acting constructively in uncertain times. Students apply what they learnt about the system and its operation. At the third level active citizenship is a socially critical perspective. This enables engaged learners to challenge the status quo and be prepared to pursue a greater level of social justice in classroom and wider society. *Student agency and motivation* at the first level is readiness to engage with knowledge outside the usual vocational curriculum; at the second level it is about acting on such knowledge; and at the third it is being willing to critique and change the status quo. Trowler (2010) operationalizes active citizenship in higher education by suggesting that the *learning process* enables engaged students to be co-producers of knowledge in classrooms while also emphasizing working within structures and processes to build identity in the classroom, institutional and wider community. Individual and social *wellbeing* is enhanced when students engage in these ways in curriculum, classroom and community.

These four conceptual frameworks are not all that are on offer. For example, in Australasia Nelson et al. (2012) adapted Biggs' Presage–Process–Product (3P) model to suggest a transition pedagogy that serves also as a model for student engagement. Their version of the 3P model recognizes the major factors involved in engagement within institutions and classrooms. They propose input factors such as what students, institutions and teachers contribute to engagement. These enable transforming learning experiences which in turn result in output or success factors such as completion and employment. Coates (2007) constructed a four cell matrix that recognizes the importance of academic and social factors for engagement applicable to online and face-to-face learning. He maps student attitudes to engagement as collaborative, intense, independent or passive. Solomonides et al.

(2012) offer a relational framework to identify some of the factors helping learners to make sense of their experiences. A feeling of engagement emerges when students gain a sense of being and transformation by being professional and commanding discipline knowledge. They also summarize a variety of other frameworks. For example frameworks where engagement is a measured quantity and either more or less than a desired state; where it is made up of different categories; and a multi-dimensional view that combines diverse aspects of the student experience.

Engagement: One Word, Many Meanings and Applications

These conceptual frameworks highlight considerable similarities and differences in how student engagement is understood. Overarching the frameworks is a shared view that engagement contributes to success, be it academic, personal or lifewide. All accept the importance of a learning centred pedagogy in which learners actively construct their own meanings. They concur that quality learning experiences, often provided by teachers, contribute to engagement. Indeed, there is a consensus that learning occurs in partnership between teachers, students and institutions. They also agree that learning experiences are shaped by behavioural, cognitive and emotional effort. Each framework considers questions about motivation and agency, learning and teaching processes, how engagement furthers student wellbeing and that student action can promote a healthy classroom climate. In short, there is considerable agreement with Kuh et al.'s (2008, p. 542) conclusion that engagement is “both the time and energy students invest in educationally purposeful activities and the effort institutions devote to effective educational practices”.

But there are also considerable differences in focus, emphasis and nuances between the frameworks. These emerge, for example, when considering the four practice variables: agency and motivation; learning processes; subjective wellbeing and active citizenship. Kuh's work, for example seems to make no explicit distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation; for Entwistle and the ‘approaches to learning’ researchers’ engagement is the result of intrinsic motivation; for the psycho-cultural group of scholars represented here by Kahu, motivation precedes engagement. Learning processes according to Kuh et al. do involve behavioural, cognitive and affective engagement, but the emphasis is on the behavioural whereas to Entwistle and colleagues engagement is largely cognitive and the holistic group of researchers focus on lifewide learners’ experiences. Subjective wellbeing is implied rather than explicit in the work of Kuh and Entwistle but a specific and important aspect in the work of both holistic/lifewide frameworks. Kuh et al. recognize that leadership in, for example, learning communities is valuable for engagement whereas the ‘approaches to learning’ group are largely silent on citizenship, something recognized by both holistic/lifewide groups as an important consequence of engagement.

Each of the lenses affords a similar overview of engagement, while detailed analysis also shows up differences. The focus on learning behaviours is brought into strong focus by the lenses used by Kuh et al.; cognitive processes are highlighted in

the ‘approaches to learning’ framework represented by Entwistle et al.; emotional engagement is visible in the sociocultural framework offered by Kahu; and political activism both inside and outside the classroom can be recognized in the framework built around the work of Barnett and Coate et al. Another key difference is the orientation of the frameworks. The ‘approaches to learning’ framework is focused almost totally on the classroom and in the institution. The Kuh et al. and Kahu frameworks are centred there but with greater reference to the learners’ environments. The Barnett and Coate framework is ontological and leads to engaging with knowledge generating political action.

The practice variables used in this analysis are of course only the tip of the iceberg of possibilities in constructing a coherent view of student engagement. They do, however, lay a foundation for understanding the difficulties of constructing a singular representation of mainstream student engagement; something attempted in the next chapter.

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