

Enhancing Student Success Through Belonging and Learning Communities

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By

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and Dliman Salim

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INTRODUCTION

The present volume explores the themes of belonging and otherness among young people. In order to address the aforementioned issues, an analysis was conducted of data collected from higher education students and staff at Windesheim University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. The middle section of the book presents data on belonging and otherness from Windesheim.

Concurrently, an analysis of interviews conducted in primary and secondary schools in Amsterdam was undertaken (Crul et al., 2024). The following interviews address manifestations of othering and belonging, or the absence thereof. The present chapter explores the themes of othering and belonging in primary and secondary education in Amsterdam, following an examination of higher education. We will start by looking at the concepts of belonging and othering.

“Othering is not about liking or disliking someone. It is based on the conscious or unconscious assumption that a certain identified group poses a threat to the favoured group. It is largely driven by politicians and the media, as opposed to personal contact¹.”

The concept of othering will be examined in greater detail, as it is the technique employed by extreme right-wing politicians and leaders to exclude individuals. The extreme right-wing has been known to treat these people as inferior. The commitment to prioritising the needs of the individual is emphasised by the slogan, 'putting our own first'. The notion of belonging is examined through the lens of indigenous pedagogy. This pedagogical approach asserts that Western pedagogy is founded upon shaky theoretical foundations, with a paucity of empirical evidence to support its claims. Consequently, this book will also examine the core principles of

¹ <https://ap.lc/rZNUw>

adolescent education. This objective is pursued by employing the pragmatic, empirically substantiated approach characteristic of indigenous education.

The chapters that comprise the middle section of this book present the research that was conducted at Windesheim University of Applied Sciences in Almere. A qualitative and quantitative research study was conducted with a sample of students and teachers in order to ascertain their perceptions of what it means to belong. The concept of learning communities is also addressed in this section. Within the context of academic institutions, learning communities are employed as a means to emulate a collective entity, which in this case is the extended family within the school environment. This approach is of particular pertinence for immigrant and refugee students, who frequently find themselves navigating new cultural and linguistic landscapes. This chapter further explores all pertinent interventions that constitute the fabric of learning communities. The ensuing discussion and conclusions section is intended to reflect on the findings according to the framework outlined in Chapter 1. In addition to higher education, the book focuses also on primary and secondary education in Amsterdam.

The present introduction addresses several issues. The initial concepts under scrutiny are those of belonging and othering. The second is the phenomenon of othering in educational settings. The examination of belonging and othering is imperative within the context of the education of young people from non-Western backgrounds residing in the Western world.

The fundamental premise underlying this discourse is the notion that a positive approach to young people is more advantageous than a negative one, as demonstrated by the concept of 'othering'. The aforementioned assertion may also be made in relation to an approach that seeks solely the most elevated academic results, as if this is only of relevance in a working-class society. In contemporary society, young people are gradually entering a milieu in which the paradigm of the worker has evolved to encompass robotics, and in which their creative and innovative talents are highly prized, as is their capacity to engage in multidisciplinary collaboration.

A substantial proportion of the population is engaged in higher education, and of those attending primary and secondary education in Amsterdam, a significant number are migrants and refugees. It is evident that there is a struggle to feel at home in the 'white' world of the Dutch primary, secondary and higher education systems in Amsterdam and Almere. This is a matter of concern, given that a sense of belonging has been proven to be an

important predictor of academic success. However, the reverse appears to be true of the 'othering' they experience on a daily basis.

The data on primary and secondary education in Amsterdam are of a qualitative nature. The saturation model was employed in this study. Consequently, the conduction of additional interviews was deemed unnecessary if the desired information had already been obtained through prior interviews.

The fundamental objective of the higher education study is to provide empirical and qualitative evidence. Information was collected from Windesheim Social Work students and teachers. The random sampling method was employed in this study. The data were collected during a period when classroom teaching was severely curtailed due to the pandemic. The present study employs the concept of learning communities, hypothesising that a safe learning environment is necessary for migrant and refugee pupils. The proposal under consideration is for the involvement of the extended family in the education of migrant and refugee students. In essence, the optimal number of educators required to raise a child is between five and ten (Doucleff, 2021). This research provides guidance for 'white' institutions of higher education where a significant proportion of students are not indigenous to the location of the college or university.

This book is a valuable resource for all professionals working in education. Chapter 5, entitled 'Improvement of Learning Interventions and Learning Communities at the University of Applied Sciences Windesheim', focuses on a range of interventions designed to promote a sense of belonging among students, teaching staff and the organisation as a whole. This knowledge is widely applicable in all educational institutions that resist othering, whether politically driven by right-wing extremist parties or not, as is currently the case in many European states.

This book can be widely used by all professionals working in education. Chapter 5, entitled 'Improvement of Learning Interventions and Learning Communities at the University of Applied Sciences Windesheim', focuses on a range of interventions designed to promote a sense of belonging among students, teaching staff and the organisation as a whole. This knowledge is widely applicable in all educational institutions that resist othering, whether politically driven by right-wing extremist parties or not, as is currently the case in many European states.

1.1. Belonging and Othering

The definition of belonging and othering provided by Susie Wise (2021) in her book is utilised in this study. The design process is intended to be a rewarding endeavour. How to Build Representation, Equity, all-encompassing, Comprehensive approaches and Collaboration in Your Communities'.

Belonging. The preceding text suggests that the concept of belonging is self-explanatory. In summary, what should the organisational structure and the learning community, in addition to other educators of young people, embody so that students (in this case) experience a sense of belonging? The response to this question has been expounded by Susie Wise (2022) in terms of inviting, entering, participating, contributing, following, recovering, deviating and leaving. Furthermore, the phenomenon of code-switching is evident throughout the entire process. A definition of codeswitching can be found in the following text:

“Code switching relies on the meaningful juxtaposition of what speakers must consciously or sub-consciously process as strings formed according to the internal rules of two distinct grammatical systems (Gumperz, 1982). It means that code switching occurs when the speaker mixes two different languages in a speech (Chapter II, uny.ac.id).”

“Still others emphasise identity. In short, what strengthens the organisation or learning community? Is it global, national or local identity? We ourselves believe that this should be done in consultation with the consumer, in our case the student, and the transferor of knowledge and skills, the teacher.”

“**Belonging** is being accepted and invited to participate; being part of something and having the opportunity to show up as yourself. More than that, it means being able to raise issues and confront harsh truths as a full member of a community.”



Figure 1: Belonging at Work to foster Inclusion and Collaboration (link: <https://ap.lc/rCcPX>)

In addition to the social dimension of belonging mentioned above, belonging also has design levers.

“These leverages are powerful tools for generating ideas. They set you up to try new things, engage in different ways, and prototype your ideas with safe-to-fail experiments (Wise, 2022, p. 85).”

These leverages are: a) space (in- or outdoors. “Space is used to construct who is in who is out”), b) roles (often assumed rather than assigned, roles are powerful for redesigning how a community interacts), c) events (events can also be designed to reduce othering), d) rituals (rituals signal careful intention and help create meaning), e) grouping (there are a lot of positive ways to group people according to their affinities), f) communication (you might need to explicitly tune this ubiquitous design lever), g) clothing (it is not as frivolous as it might seem), h) food (breaking bread together may be the ultimate form of belonging according to Christianity), and i) schedules and rhythms (we live in real time and can shape it for the world we want to see) (Wise, 2022).

These levers can be used in safe-to-fail experiments. These experiments can test ideas with vulnerable people and their traumas in mind. Safe-to-fail experiments is also known as safe space. A term that originated in psychotherapy to talk about trauma. Safe space arose because people want to talk freely and safely about their own traumatic experiences.



Figure 2: Design for Belonging: How to Build Inclusion and Collaboration in Your Communities (source: Wise, 2022)

“A safe space is an area where individuals do not encounter discrimination, criticism, harassment, or physical and emotional harm. A safe space can both refer to physical locations, emotional and ideological interactions. A safe space is important for learning and creating a sense of belonging and well-being among individuals and communities. While the perception of safety is personal, there are common principles and practices that help create safe spaces².”

Safe-to-fail experiments generate signals that we read with our bodies. Related questions are: a) how does this feel, and b) and to whom (Wise, 2022, 85)?

² <https://bkp.refuge-ed.eu/education-and-mental-health/creating-a-safe-space/>

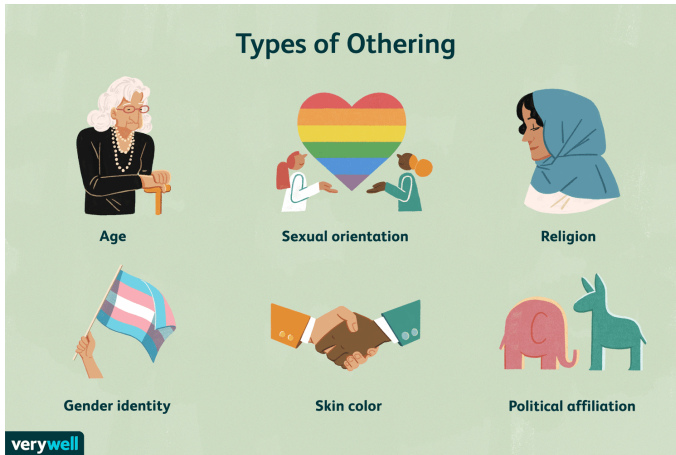


Figure 3: Types of Othering (Source: <https://ap.lc/EFIVd>)

Othering. Now we want to focus on othering. This is also called the opposite of belonging. First we will give some definitions. Then we will discuss the causes of othering.

Definition 1: “People are different. We can use our differences as an opportunity to share and learn or we can use our differences as an excuse to build walls between us. When we highlight differences between groups of people to increase suspicion of them, to insult them or to exclude them, we are going down a path known as “othering (Canadian Museum for Human Rights³).”

Definition 2: “Othering⁴ refers to the way in which some individuals and groups are defined as not fitting within a certain group or community. They are often also attributed to negative stereotypes or characteristics.”

Definition 3: “Othering⁵ (or otherness) is a marginalization process in which an individual or group of individuals is excluded from another group, culture or society by people who consider them to be incompatible with their own values and principles. Factors such as race, ethnicity, class, gender identity and sexual orientation typically play a role, which is why othering

³ <https://humanrights.ca/story/us-vs-them-process-othering>

⁴ https://developdiverse.com/deib_dictionary/othering/

⁵ https://developdiverse.com/deib_dictionary/othering/

is closely connected to issues of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and antisemitism.”

“**Othering**, by contrast, is treating people from another group as essentially different from and generally inferior to the group you belong to.”

Research and practical applications on belonging and othering can be found at the Othering and Belonging Institute in Berkeley, USA. They have a website⁶ where all their findings can be found. They start with the following lucid statement:

“Othering is the problem of our time. Belonging is the solution”.

According to Powell et al. (2016):

“Othering” is a term that not only encompasses the many expressions of prejudice on the basis of group identities, but they argue that it provides a clarifying frame that reveals a set of common processes and conditions that propagate group-based inequality and marginality.”

According to Powell et al. (2016), how does othering occur?

“Through talk, tales, stories, gossip, anecdotes, pronouncements, news accounts, orations, sermons, preachments, and the like, definitions are presented and feelings expressed...If the interaction becomes increasingly circular and reinforcing, devoid of serious inner opposition, such currents grow, fuse, and become strengthened. It is through such a process that a collective image of a subordinate group is formed, and a sense of group position is set.”

According to these authors, the phenomenon of othering has become increasingly prevalent in the 21st century. Examples of such actions include the genocidal actions of Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu against Palestinians, Lebanese, Iranians and Syrians; the actions of Vladimir Putin's Russia and the North Korean military against Ukraine; Narendra Modi's actions against Muslims in India; and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's oppression of the Kurds. It is imperative to address the issue of right-wing extremists on the global stage who establish a distinction between 'our people' and foreigners. Exemplary cases of such individuals include Donald Trump in the United States of America, Viktor Orbán of Hungary and Geert Wilders in the Netherlands.

⁶ <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/>

It is important to note that the phenomenon of othering predates the current era as understood by English speakers. This issue has been highlighted in an article on xenophobia by the Dutch newspaper NRC Handelsblad (Funnekotter, 2025).

“The ancient Egyptians called them ni-remetjoe, non-humans. The Mesopotamians called them apiru, people of the dirt. And the Greeks called them bárbaros, babblers.

Anyone who thinks that xenophobia - Greek for fear of strangers - is a modern phenomenon is mistaken. As soon as a civilisation discovered writing - be it hieroglyphs, cuneiform or the alphabet - there was a pejorative term for outsiders: a word to describe people who were outside their own culture as different and inferior. Such foreigners were always contrasted with one's own people. This was civilised, noble and brought order to chaos.”

Using the mechanisms of othering, this figure shows how institutional racism (including everyday racism) is created.

Right-wing extremists sabotage society. This is how they hope to get right on their side. See the following research report:

“Since the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russia has conducted a covert campaign of sabotage and subversion against Europe. Over the past three years, these operations have increased in both scale and intensity. This year alone, Moscow has stepped up its tactics-by switching to political assassination, sabotaging water facilities in several European countries and targeting civil aviation⁷.”

The promotion of a 'more and less' climate by these government leaders and right-wing extremists constitutes an explicit call for depopulation, the deprivation of nationality, and the ridicule of the norms and goods of others. In practice, the responsibility for the perceived lack of housing and employment opportunities, as well as for the deterioration of neighbourhoods and the emergence of ghetto-like areas, is attributed to immigrants and refugees. From the standpoint of right-wing extremists, immigrants and refugees are to be regarded as criminals by definition.

⁷ <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/onderzoek/onderzoeksprojecten/governance-and-global-affairs/bewaken-en-beveiligen#tab-3>

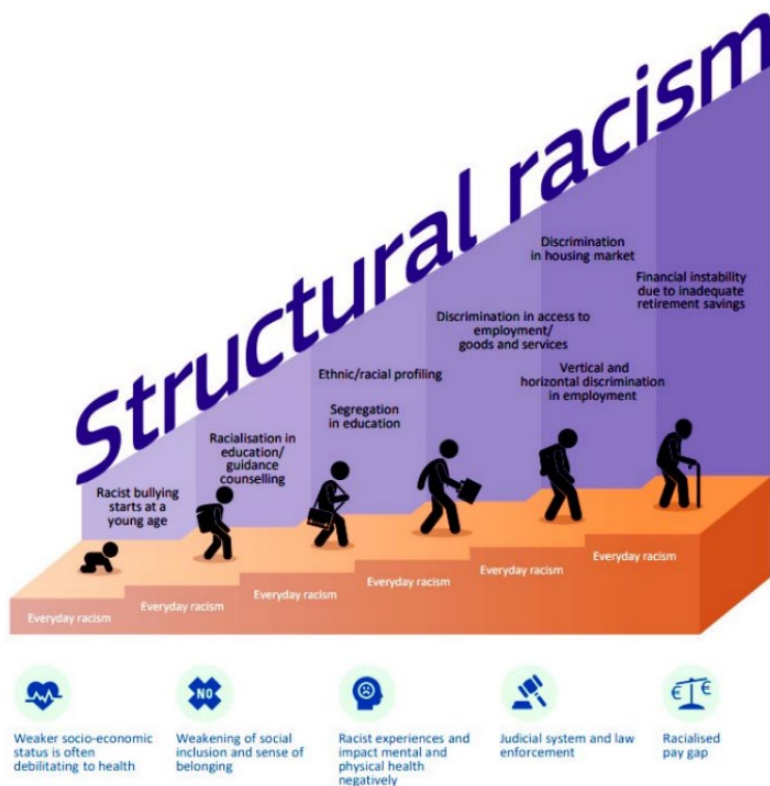


Figure 4: Michaela Mous on X⁸

Consequently, a significant proportion of these individuals are detained in border facilities, police cells, and prisons, as well as in refugee shelters that, in many cases, are comparable to prisons in terms of conditions. A salient illustration of this phenomenon is provided by the numerous refugee camps in the Middle East. Despite their designation as temporary accommodation, these encampments frequently bear a striking resemblance to prisons due to their structural and operational characteristics. Powell et al. (2016) paint a picture of the United States in which the history of otherness through right-

⁸ Structural racism is the systemic and institutional policies, practices, and cultural norms that perpetuate racial inequality and discrimination embedded in the fabric of society, influencing how resources are allocated, laws are enforced, and opportunities are distributed

wing extremism is an ebb and flow. In this ebb and flow, right-wing extremism prevails in one era and equality and democracy in another.

“The idea of stoking anxiety, resentment, or fear of the “other” is not a new electoral strategy in American politics. Appeals to nativism, racism, and xenophobia are evident in almost every period of American history (Powell et al. 2016).”

The sociological concept of positional theory (see Powell et al., 2016) is employed to elucidate the notions of belonging and othering. Positional theory seeks to elucidate the process by which in-groups and out-groups come into existence. This assertion is made in a civil manner. In application, the phenomenon displays a high degree of variability. The subsequent illustration will elucidate this assertion: It has been posited by Trump that immigrants should consume pets. This phenomenon has been observed to result in a significant number of mortalities. The capacity to distinguish between individuals is an inherent aspect of human nature. The hypothesis under consideration is that individuals have a tendency to make rapid decisions. The following questions must be given due consideration:

1. The fundamental question that must be addressed is whether this group of people represents those with whom it is desired to associate.
2. The fundamental question that must be addressed is whether this political party aligns with one's personal beliefs.
3. The fundamental question that must be addressed is whether the speaker wishes to establish any form of association with the individuals and families under discussion.

This human trait of being able to make a decision quickly, without full information, is an integral part of the human toolkit for survival (Smith, 2023). In the absence of this element, a considerable proportion of the scientific community asserts that the continued existence of the human species would have been jeopardised by this point in time.

The article by Powell et al. (2016) offers a compelling demonstration that the concept of belonging is inextricably linked to that of othering. The present article provides a more detailed examination of the mechanisms of othering. The concept of othering is predicated on the existence of a discernible mechanism or characteristic that serves to differentiate between distinct groups. For instance, the assertion that 'I belong to the people of New York, and you belong to the people of Rome' could be considered as an illustration of this phenomenon. It can be argued that this distinction is

reasonable and possibly harmless. However, it is important to note that this does not imply a universal truth. There is a risk that individuals who are members of a 'subordinate' group may be subjected to judgement, ridicule and exclusion by those who perceive themselves to be superior. The following example is provided to illustrate this point: It is evident that individuals of Caucasian descent are permitted to partake in chess play, while those of an African or Caribbean descent are not granted the same privilege. It is noteworthy that the word "human" is absent from this sentence. This is a deliberate act on the part of the commentator, who fails to recognise the 'coloured' individual as a person. In this particular instance, it is evident that the other is being excluded and despised.

“Positioning theory, originally outlined by Brownyn Davies and Rom Harré in 1990, aims to examine and explore the distribution of rights and duties to speak and behave in certain ways among the participants of face-to-face interaction or intra-group relations. These rights and duties set the basis for the discursive construction of interpersonal positions and positioning (Hirvonen, 2016).”

Fiske et al.'s (2016) and Langenhove's (20-23) social psychological positional theories are explored for the origins of othering. In the following statement Fiske et al. (2016) present the current state of the science and comment on the theory of positioning:

“In the last fifteen years, social cognition research has produced similar findings that support elements of group position theory. In particular, scholars have identified two universal dimensions that locate group positions in society: warmth and competence. According to this model, social groups rating low warmth and low competence are regarded as “despised outgroups,” which include poor blacks and the homeless according to research findings. Social groups that are viewed as low warmth and high competence are an “envied outgroup,” and groups that are viewed as low competence and high warmth are viewed as a “pitied outgroup.” Researchers cite Asian Americans as example of the former, and the elderly as examples of the latter (Fiske et al. (2016).”

The following definition of positioning theory is used by Langenhove (2023):

“Positioning Theory stresses that understanding what people do and what they don't do requires to look at what is permissible to do according to the local moral order that is followed and to the positions that people take in that order. “Positions” are clusters of beliefs that people have with respect to the rights and duties to act in certain ways. “Positioning” refers to the processes of assigning, appropriating, or rejecting positions. Every position

both opens and closes possible actions. What people possibly can do is a function of three determinants: the **capacities** of people to do certain things, the **restrictions** imposed upon people to do certain things, and the **intentions** that people have to do certain things. One of the basic functions of society is to both stimulate and contain the possibilities of human agency (Langenhove, 2023).

Many of the publications on Positioning Theory look at humanity from a macro perspective. Hirvonen (2016) notes that little attention is paid to the fine group dynamics when applying positioning theory. Hirvonen (2016) does, based on an educational application of the theory. At the heart of this application is a focus on positioning.

“Positioning acts can be divided to first-, second-, and third-order positioning. First-order positioning occurs when the positioning act is not challenged by others, whereas in second order, the position is challenged. Third-order positioning means that someone outside the ongoing social episode is being positioned by, let us say, referring to a previous episode (Hirvonen, 2016, p. 2).”

Orders of positioning		
First-order positioning: Positioning self/others, pre-positioning, performative positioning	Second-order positioning: Challenging previous positioning, re-positioning, accountive positioning	Third-order positioning: Positioning outside the original episode, accountive positioning
Forms of positioning		
Tacit positioning: Tacit positioning of self and others, for example, no explicit reference to the position	Deliberate positioning: Explicit positioning, expressing identity for example, by using pronouns and emphasizing one's agency	Task positioning: Shared moral order of the group, for example, how group work should proceed

Figure 5: Different orders and forms of positioning (source: Hirvonen, 2016, P. 4)

The key research questions in this article of Hirvonen (2016, p. 4) are:

“Research Question 1: How does decision-making come about as a product of conversational storylines in the context of positioning theory?

Research Question 2: How are the task and socially related aspects of decision-making associated with the concept of positioning in the context of small-group interaction?

Research Question 3: How does the local moral order become established in the forms of social and task positioning in small-group interaction?”

Othering - represented as an image



Global (politicians and business leaders) + social media

National (political parties, governments and business leaders) + social media

Local (institutions like education, health, municipality and labour platforms) + social media

Figure 6: Belonging and Othering (via Chat GPT 4:0)

“Positioning theory- oriented research into small groups, such as workgroups, can focus on multiple different aspects of group interaction and group processes. In addition to the analysis of decision-making episodes, the theory offers an interesting point of view to the study of group memberships, statuses, and roles as well as argumentation, social cognition, and conflicts in small groups.”

This figure is a summary of the descriptions of belonging and othering outlined above. It is evident that students of colour are marginalised and positioned in a separate category from their 'white' counterparts. The associated narrative is influenced by a variety of political actors, including global, national and local parties. One such narrative posits that the dearth of adequate housing, employment opportunities and educational facilities is attributable to immigrants and refugees. The narrative under discussion is driven by far-right party ideologues, politicians and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of very large corporations, such as Elon Musk.

1.2. Othering in right-wing universities and organizations

Right-wing extremists use all possible means to create a narrative that dismisses the other as 'dirty'. This includes political speeches in parliaments and governments, calls on social media to eliminate immigrants and refugees, incitement to violence against refugees and immigrants, etc. So how does the story creation process work? Below are some examples⁹:

- ✓ “Reluctance to interact with people outside of one’s own social group
- ✓ Feeling threatened by people from outside one’s own social group
- ✓ Attributing negative qualities to individuals from a different social group
- ✓ Undervaluing, underestimating or ridiculing people who do not belong to one’s own social group
- ✓ Attributing individuals from a certain group the same stereotypical qualities on the basis of *belonging* to that particular group or culture.
- ✓ Preventing individuals who are seen as outsiders from accessing the same rights, benefits or opportunities as everyone else.”

The question of whether far-right narratives are also being fabricated in universities has been raised. The language employed by the extreme right in relation to universities is that of neutrality. In actuality, the emphasis is not on neutrality, but rather on a nuanced critique of the self-styled left. The assertion posited by far-right factions is that academic institutions are responsible for the dissemination of left-wing conspiracy theories. The

⁹ https://developdiverse.com/deib_dictionary/othering/

documented tendency of far-right groups to disregard factual evidence is well-established. It is evident that a daily fabrication of narratives is preferred, with the objective of elucidating the position that certain individuals, predominantly those of foreign origin, including immigrants, refugees, expatriates, and labour migrants, are devoid of fundamental rights. From a far-right perspective, these individuals are regarded as being of inferior quality and deemed unworthy of inclusion within Western societies. Within the parameters of academic institutions, the right to freedom of speech is frequently subject to limitations. Consequently, right-wing extremists have effectively commandeered the discourse surrounding genocidal Israel among students, university personnel, and faculty members within and outside Western and non-Western academic institutions. In the United States, the issue has led to the resignation of several university presidents.

“Rector Minouche Shafik of the prestigious US Columbia University has announced her resignation. She had been under heavy criticism from the right and left for months over her handling of students demonstrating against the war in Gaza¹⁰”.

“Even prior to the highly visible encampments erected by students protesting the excessive violence in Gaza, many colleges and universities already faced considerable turmoil. Starting in 2021, Republicans in state legislatures around the country began mounting a political response to the Black Lives Matter movement. This political backlash, which right-wing provocateur Christopher Rufo called a counterrevolution¹¹, focused its ire on educators. K-12 teachers and public librarians faced book bans, gag orders, and accusations of being “groomers,” and Moms for Liberty groups hijacked school board meetings across the country. In this context, legislators also targeted higher education in an effort to ensure that political partisans could play a greater role determining the conversations taking place on campuses.

Much of the reporting on this legislation, such as the “Stop W.O.K.E. Act” in Florida or Texas Senate Bill 17 banning campus diversity efforts, focuses on individual bills. It often presents these bills as populist responses within a highly polarized America. However, the recently published white paper, released last week by the Centre for the Defense of Academic Freedom at the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), demonstrates that a network of well-funded and deeply interconnected right-wing think tanks played a critical role orchestrating this legislative attack on higher education.

¹⁰ <https://ap.lc/jNKfy>

¹¹ <https://www.city-journal.org/article/bring-on-the-counterrevolution>

The report identifies more than 150 bills introduced across the 2021, 2022, and 2023 legislative cycles, almost exclusively sponsored by Republicans. These bills included academic gag orders designed to restrict the teaching of so-called “divisive concepts” such as “critical race theory” (CRT), as well as efforts to weaken campus diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policies and to empower governing boards to circumvent faculty governance in shaping the curriculum. In addition to undermining academic freedom and institutional autonomy, this round of legislation also includes bills that weakened tenure and the accreditation process, two institutions historically designed to protect universities from external and partisan pressures. Twenty-one bills were signed into law, with multiple and reinforcing bills enacted in Florida, North Carolina, Tennessee and Texas (Kamola, 2024).”

To assess the state of academic freedom in universities, the Global Observatory on Academic Freedom (GOAF) was established in 2021 (Popovic, 2022).

“GOAF’s work is predicated upon the conviction that academic freedom is a necessary condition for universities to effectively pursue their duty of producing, transmitting and disseminating knowledge as a public good, locally and globally (Popovic, 2022).”

GOAF's work is based on the Magma Charter Universitatum (MCU). It was signed by 388 rectors of European universities in 1988 on the occasion of the 900th anniversary of the University of Bologna, Italy. A revision of this Magma Charter Universitatum was carried out in 2020 and published in 2021. The gist of the revision is described below:

“The MCU, in its revised version, reiterates its original 1988 three principles:

Research and teaching must be intellectually and morally independent of all political influence and economic interests; the inseparableness of teaching and research; and university “as a site for free inquiry and debate, distinguished by its openness to dialogue and rejection of intolerance”. To the three principles, MCU 2020 adds “intellectual and moral autonomy” as “the hallmark of any university and a precondition for the fulfilment of its responsibility to society”, underlining the responsibility of governments and society at large to recognize, protect and defend this autonomy. The MCU 2020 further states: “As they create and disseminate knowledge, universities question dogmas and established doctrines and encourage critical thinking in all students and scholars. *Academic freedom is their lifeblood; open enquiry and dialogue their nourishment*” (italics added).”

Paper is always a dud. Practice is unruly. In many Western university towns, students protesting against genocidal Israel have been beaten up by the police. This had the approval of the Rectores Magnifici of the universities,

the city councils where these universities are located and the respective national governments. All these parties are loyal to genocidal Israel. In fact, even they support, with knowledge and skill, Israel's murderous destruction of the Palestinians. There is no end to the destruction. The devastation has been extended to the Lebanese, Iranians and Syrians. An almost total attack on the inhabitants of the Middle East. Israel is run by a right-wing extremist government that regards Arabs as second-class and inferior citizens.

The above shows that there is no academic freedom for students in Western universities. Certainly the same is true for university staff and possibly professors suspected by right-wing extremists of having left-wing leanings.

1.3. Key principles of education adolescents

A book that explores the concept of belonging and otherness in pupils and students would benefit from a closer examination of the fundamental principles of education that inform the nurturing of children and young people.

The following teaching methods have been identified as the most common: a) reading books alone, b) attending lectures, c) doing practical work, and d) working on projects. It is therefore possible to designate these elements as the inputs of education. The outcomes of this process include tests and examinations, amongst other elements. In the domain of primary education, the aforementioned output is complemented by the teacher's assessment of the student's social-emotional development. The successful completion of these outputs is a prerequisite for the attainment of a diploma.

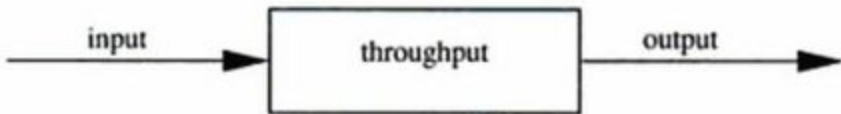


Figure 7: Input, throughput and output

“Input: Relationships that flow into the system from the environment. **Throughput:** internal processes that connect input and output; they realise the transformation changes into output.

Output: Relationships that flow out of the system into the environment¹².”

The following questions fall within the remit of this scheme, particularly with regard to throughput:

- a) Does a distinction exist between individual and collective learning strategies,
- b) Is there a focus on the culture of learning, as in belonging and othering,
- c) Are pupils and students led by example (teachers as learning role models)?

In order to facilitate a comprehensive discussion, it is first necessary to consider the contemporary role of the teacher as a role model. A notable illustration of this pedagogical model can be observed in the relationship between the renowned Dutch painter Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606/1607-1669) and his apprentice.

Within this model, the apprentice would typically receive instruction and guidance from their master, specialising in a particular discipline such as portrait painting. The apprentice participated in a structured training programme encompassing observation, practical training, and accompaniment of the master. The programme was meticulously designed to facilitate the acquisition of the necessary skills and knowledge for the successful completion of the trade. It was only subsequent to a prolonged period of diligent training and apprenticeship that the apprentice could legitimately claim the designation of "master" and become a journeyman.

The optimal apprenticeship ratio was determined to be three apprentices to one journeyman and three journeymen to one master. In the project's nascent stages, the learning team consisted of 13 individuals. The apprentice is employed by the master. The apprentice is instructed in the fundamental competencies of a mate by the master. In the event of the apprentice's success, membership of the master's guild is attainable. The acquisition of knowledge is considered to be of paramount importance to the guild. This assertion is applicable to individuals at all levels of the craft, including masters, journeymen, and apprentices. The process of learning is inextricably linked to the concept of identity. The learner is part of a learning community of professionals. In this setting, the dissemination of

¹² <http://www.raamstijn.nl/eenblogjeom/index.php/categorie-1/3672-processen-volgens-de-leeuw>

knowledge occurs through the medium of stories and interaction. Furthermore, learners progress from peripheral to core activities.



Figure 8: Learning tools (source: <https://hbr.org/2021/11/the-best-way-to-master-a-new-skill-try-this-creative-approach>)

What insights can be gleaned from this model of learning? The process of learning in this context is derived from the acquisition of skills, the comprehensive evaluation of the project in its entirety, the endowment of significance to the project through the utilisation of narratives and interactions, and the active involvement in a learning community.

The question that must therefore be posed is: what remains of this in modern education? The Industrial Revolution has had a profound impact on modern education, particularly with regard to the dissemination of knowledge and skills. In primary education, class sizes can reach up to 30 pupils, with the supervision of one teacher and, in some cases, an additional class assistant. Within higher education, particularly in the domain of social sciences, lecture halls frequently accommodate hundreds of students.

The process of learning can be likened to that of a factory, with its systematic and methodical approach. During the period of the pandemic, learning became even more anonymous. The implementation of online learning on a large scale is a recent development. A considerable number of pupils and students withdrew from the programme. It is conceivable that the process of learning will become increasingly mechanised and standardised. The role of artificial intelligence (AI), as exemplified by Chat GPT 5.0 and teacher robots, is relatively minor in this context. The fundamental principle

underpinning the factory learning paradigm is the dissemination of minute fragments of knowledge and skills to the maximum number of individuals.

What further information is available regarding the throughput of learning? A significant area of interest within the field of psychology pertains to individual learning styles. The central question pertains to the awareness of the psychologists responsible for researching learning styles regarding the underlying concept that individuals acquire knowledge through exposure. Within the domain of philosophy, this phenomenon is designated as individualism. Individualism is predicated on the notion that there is no context, no learning community, and no other students or learners. Despite the existence of such phenomena, individualism perceives them as a congregation of individuals, as was elucidated during the lecture. The philosophy of individualism is predicated on the pursuit of personal goals and the pursuit of independence and self-reliance. Individualists also advocate for the prioritisation of the individual's interests over those of the state or social groups. The notion of individual autonomy is predicated on the premise that individuals should be free from external interference in their personal interests by societal or institutional actors, such as government entities.

However, it is important to acknowledge the significance of individual learning styles, as this can demonstrate that not all individuals learn in the same way. The concept of learning styles introduces a layer of complexity to the pedagogical landscape, as educators are required to adapt their instructional methods to cater to these diverse learning preferences. It is important to note that the aforementioned considerations do not encompass the learning materials that are currently available. These are frequently books, articles or journals, which may or may not be converted into YouTube videos and infographics. Fortunately, recent advancements in the field have incorporated simulations, thereby facilitating the observation of knowledge in action. It is evident that other translation machines of this nature include all technical construction kits, which can be considered analogous to the Lego construction sets with which most people are familiar.

“The main four types of learning in education¹³ are: a) visual learning style (visual learners take their information with maps, graphs, diagrams, charts and others not necessarily to photos or videos), b) auditory learning style (auditory learners learn better when they take in information in auditory form when it is heard or spoken. For them good learning strategies are lectures and group discussions), c) kinesthetic learning style (kinesthetic

¹³ <https://bau.edu/blog/types-of-learning-styles/>

learners are individuals who prefer to learn by doing. They enjoy a hands-on experience. They are usually more in touch with reality and more connected to it, which is why they require using tactile experience to understand something better), and d) reading/ writing style (reading/writing learners consume information best when it's in words, whether that's by writing it down or reading it).”

Bay Atlantic University in Washington, USA¹⁴, has proposed the existence of alternative learning styles that have yet to be widely recognised. Furthermore, the hypothesis is proposed that the number of learning styles may fall within the range of 3-170. The authors cite the work of psychologists in this regard. The following taxonomy of learning styles is provided for convenience:

a) Those who demonstrate the highest level of efficacy in terms of **learning through logic and analysis**. These categories of learners are distinguished by their proclivity to seek out connections, causes, patterns and results in their learning. In order to engage and motivate students of this demographic, teachers are advised to pose questions that require interpretation, utilise material that activates problem-solving skills, and stimulate students to reach conclusions based on facts or reasoning.

b) In the context of **social and linguistic learners**, engagement in such activities can prove advantageous in two distinct ways. Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that the activity in question offers a valuable opportunity for socialisation, a prospect that is typically well-received by such students. Secondly, it has the capacity to facilitate a more profound comprehension of the subject matter. In order to motivate such learners, it is recommended that teachers implement role-playing exercises and diverse communication activities, such as fostering student interaction (e.g. posing questions, sharing anecdotes, etc.).

c) **Solitary learners**: The optimal study environment for an individual with a passion for nature should be characterised by tranquillity and calmness.

Finally, it is important to note that knowledge and skill are dominated by the northern hemisphere, which excels in the domestication of 'reality' (Lewis, 2022). The northern hemisphere is home to the colonists. The aforementioned entities have historically manifested as individual nation states, initially in Europe and the Soviet Union, and subsequently in the United States, Australia and New Zealand. These nation states outsourced

¹⁴ <https://bau.edu/blog/types-of-learning-styles/>