Framing approaches to addressing the attainment gap

Professor Jacqueline Stevenson, Sheffield Hallam University
jacqueline.stevenson@shu.ac.uk
@ProfJStevenson

Sheffield Hallam University | Sheffield Institute of Education

Aspiration vs. expectation

'Using Mickelson's (1990) distinction between abstract aspirations and concrete attitudes, pupils from Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic groups may evidence high aspirations in the form of general ideological beliefs about the value of education (e.g., "education is the key to success in the future"). However their concrete attitudes, derived from their experience of unequal returns to education for their family or community (e.g. "people in my family haven't been treated fairly at work no matter how much education they have"), may be lower than their White peers, and according to Mickelson it is these attitudes that most strongly inform achievement behaviour and school grades (Mickelson, 1990)' (Strand and Winston, 2008)

Potential and ability

- Deficit models are related to ways of imagining 'potential' and 'ability' & kinds of persons recognised, or not, as having the potential to benefit from HE

- Success needs to be understood 'in relation to collective and personal histories of under- and misrepresentation, as well as the ways some subjects (are made to) feel different and 'unworthy' of higher education access and participation"(Burke, 2012: 62).

- So not in terms of raising individual aspirations

Capital fixing: the jury is out

- Critiqued by Harrison and Waller: capital ill-defined and misunderstood
- Suggest thinking about Horizons for Action (Hodkinson)
- Possible Selves

Sheffield Hallam University | Sheffield Institute of Education

Alternative model: Possible Selves

- Through personalized beliefs about the future-self individuals able to project *'what they might become, what they would like to become, what they are afraid of becoming'* (Markus & Nurius 1986: 954).

- Are dependent on social, cultural, economic and historical backgrounds (Oyserman et al., 1995; Vick, 2011)

- More elaborated the future self, more likely to engender action but requires focused direction of strategies (Oyserman et al. 2006)

- Road maps (Oyserman, 2004)

Sheffield Hallam University | Sheffield Institute of Education

Cultural vs community capital

A traditional view of cultural capital is narrowly defined by White, middle class values, and is more limited than wealth—one's accumulated assets and resources. CRT expands this view. Centering the research lens on the experiences of People of Color in critical historical context reveals accumulated assets and resources in the histories and lives of Communities of Color... demonstrates that community cultural wealth is an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression

(Yosso, 2005: 77)

Community Cultural Wealth

- Recognition that students bring to, and draw on, forms of community cultural wealth
- These are the assets that many students acquire from ... "a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition" (Yosso 2005:79)
  - aspirational
  - linguistic
  - familial
  - social
  - navigational
  - resistance

Reflective questions

- Draws on Tara Yosso's work on Community Cultural Wealth and Angela Locke's' development of this work http://web.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/personnel/fcpd/workshops/documents/Wrk1EditedYossoCulturalWealthSummary.pdf

Decolonisation of the curriculum

- Decolonisation of HE: Rhodes Must Fall movement in South Africa; Rhodes Must Fall at Oxford & "Why is My Curriculum White" at UCL protests

- Current curriculum reflects & perpetuates colonial legacy, through white, western intellectual tradition - not just superior to other forms of knowledge but as universal 'truth'

- Postcolonial and decolonial critiques of knowledge production

- Invite and include different knowledge and thought perspectives - whose knowledge counts

- Need to recognise white privilege & male privilege

- Tackle and dismantle the hegemony of Eurocentrism

Sheffield Hallam University | Sheffield Institute of Education

How might these approaches (re)shape your practice?

Sheffield Hallam University | Sheffield Institute of Education