



Meeting moderated by
Dr. Kateřina Machovcová

SOCIAL IDENTITIES FOR LEARNING:

Student social identities and identity incompatibilities impact on how they approach learning and also how they undermine it

Abstract

The education literature incorporates many theories of “identity”, but often these assume that the educational project is to develop an individual identity, and the role of “social identities” are often restricted to the impact of sociological categories (like race, gender, ethnicity, age, class). We take a broader view of the role of the “social” in education and in our recent book (2017) we explored the role of social identity in school climate, bullying, stereotype threat in STEM disciplines, sense of exclusion for low-SES or indigenous students, student transitions, student health behaviours, approaches to learning, the marketisation of higher education, teacher identities, and some particular complexities of medical education.

The work I am going to outline in this talk is based on work done by myself and a small number of colleagues in the UK and Australia over the last 10 years. We have particularly focused on the role of academic discipline (field of study) identification, organisational (university) identification, and incompatibility between a student identity and other “home” identities on the way higher education students learn and evaluate their university experience. When we talk about how students learn, we have been looking at approaches to learning (deep and surface learning); as well as “learning undermining” behaviours like procrastination and academic self-handicapping; and student feedback use or avoidance. I will also explore the role of peer norms with some of these variables. We will see that this research has potential to impact on how we encourage students toward better learning practices, and how in the context of a widening participation agenda, we might understand some of the processes leading to attainment gaps for particular groups, and potential benefits and concerns in how to address them.

Dr. Ken Mavor

School of Psychology and Neuroscience
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The Speaker

Dr. Ken Mavor is a social psychologist in the School of Psychology and Neuroscience at the University of St Andrews. He has a broad interest in the nature of the personal and collective self, particularly drawing on Social Identity Theory and Self-categorisation Theory (SIT/SCT). He has applied this perspective in a range of areas including religious and political ideology, collective action and social change, well-being, cognitive processes underlying self-definition, and in educational contexts, particularly higher education. Dr. Mavor is a passionate educator (teaching research methods, statistics, and social psychology for nearly 30 years in Australia and the UK) and has worked in a range of settings that make educational issues particularly salient, including 7 years in a distance-education focused university, 2 years as a statistics consultant in an education faculty, 5 years as an assessment specialist in Medical Education. Dr. Mavor has 45 scholarly outputs including an edited book on Self and Social Identity in Educational Contexts (2017), and 31 refereed journal articles with a h-index of 22 and over 2000 citations. He is co-director of the St Andrews Centre for Higher Education Research (CHER).

Registration form [here](#)

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