

Engaging students in
higher education:
partnership, connection
and belonging

Dr Karen Gravett; Senior
Lecturer in HE; PFHEA;
[@k_gravett](#)

SRHE

*Society for Research
into Higher Education*

[@LLL_research](#)



**SURREY INSTITUTE
OF EDUCATION**

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY



Talk references and links available here:
<https://bit.ly/46owiuX>



PARTNERSHIP,
CONNECTION AND
BELONGING IN
HIGHER EDUCATION



So what's the
problem?



← Tweet

 **Dr Pete Olusoga** @PeteOlusoga · 29 Nov 2022

Dearest Students,

I don't want to hear a single word of complaint from you EVER, about ANYTHING.

#AcademicTwitter
#AcademicChatter



🔍 Search Twitter

What's happening

Trending in United Kingdom
France 98 ...

Trending in United Kingdom
Craig Brown
2,491 Tweets

Trending in United Kingdom
Operation Mincemeat ...

Trending in United Kingdom
#TakeltDown ...

Trending in United Kingdom
#isitok ...

[Show more](#)

Messages



[Work & Careers](#) [Education](#) [University](#)

Transactional not transformational: the rise of the mega university

In Australia, the days of big ideas and life-long friends are long gone. Now the onus is on getting a degree and getting out.

Loneliness

Young people in the UK: are you dealing with loneliness?

We want to hear from people under 30 in the UK after recent ONS figures showed they are severely affected by loneliness

**Guardian
community team**

Fri 5 May 2023 17:13 BST



What have you noticed in your practice?



What does 'student engagement' mean to you? And you? And you?


The move online compounded matters, but even before that, nobody could agree on what student engagement was – and that needs to change, says Chris Headleand

Student engagement

Course design and delivery

Feature article

Europe

 Register for free and unlock a host of features on the THE site

[Free sign up now](#)





BELONGING AND CONNECTION

discourse associated with retention

ideas of students as full time, campus based

culturally specific and normative

associated with academic achievement and 'success' (Ahn and Davis 2020, 622)

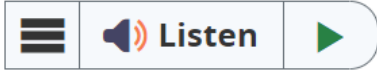
9,814 18

Views

CrossRef citations to date

155

Altmetric



Articles

Getting through the day and still having a smile on my face! How do students define success in the university learning environment?

Sarah O'Shea   & Janine Delahunty 

Pages 1062-1075 | Received 25 Jul 2017, Accepted 20 Feb 2018, Published online: 03 Jul 2018

 Download citation

 <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2018.1463973>



Articles

Belonging as situated practice

Karen Gravett   & Rola Ajjawi 

Pages 1386-1396 | Published online: 25 Feb 2021

 Download citation  <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2021.1894118>



 Full Article

 Figures & data

 References

 Citations

 Metrics

 Licensing

 Reprints & Permissions

 View PDF

 View EPUB



ABSTRACT

This article offers a rethinking of a fundamental area of higher education research and practice: the concept of

SRHE

Call Us
+44 20 7427 2350

Email Us
srhe@srhe.ac.uk

HOME EVENTS CONFERENCE PUBLICATIONS AWARDS ABOUT US

Q ☰

ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE | INFORMING POLICY | ENHANCING PRACTICE

Society for Research into Higher Education

SRHE
Let us know if you need help finding what you need, or have any questions about SRHE and our activities.

HOW DO STUDENTS EXPERIENCE THE DIGITAL UNIVERSITY?



Who can belong, how and to where?

Guyotte, Flint, and Latopolski (2019, 14)

‘what are we wanting students to belong to? Why?
When might belonging be undesirable?’

‘What does belonging do? What does it make possible?
How might it constrain?’

Troubling the boundaries of belonging:

1. Belonging as uniform
2. Belonging as inherently positive
3. Belonging as fixed



What do students' day-to-day interactions look like?

How do students create belonging?

International; vlogs and interviews with 30 students; builds on conceptual work



Engagement is mobile and multiple. Belonging is purposeful, personalised.

Today's students engage in multiple communities, in ways which trouble the boundaries of space / campus / belonging.

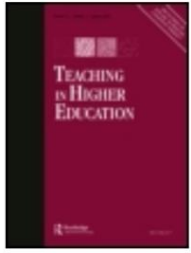


I didn't feel like I needed to belong within the whole university, but more I felt the need to belong within my course, and within a smaller group of friends

Being flexible is important in terms of belonging. I think there's no one size fits all student

Probably the biggest thing is a passion for the course. If you enjoy what you're doing, it kind of becomes a part of you, you belong to it. It belongs to you.

Good teachers make all the difference. I really like being involved with the faculty through the Students As Partners programs.



Teaching in Higher Education
Critical Perspectives



ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cthe20>

Pedagogies of mattering: re-conceptualising relational pedagogies in higher education

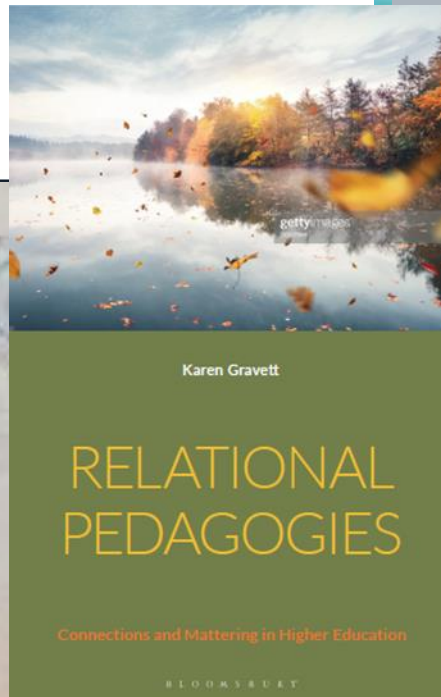
Karen Gravett, Carol A. Taylor & Nikki Fairchild

To cite this article: Karen Gravett, Carol A. Taylor & Nikki Fairchild (2021): Pedagogies of mattering: re-conceptualising relational pedagogies in higher education, Teaching in Higher Education, DOI: [10.1080/13562517.2021.1989580](https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2021.1989580)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2021.1989580>



© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Connections and mattering

Thinking about the experiences, spaces and practices of connection

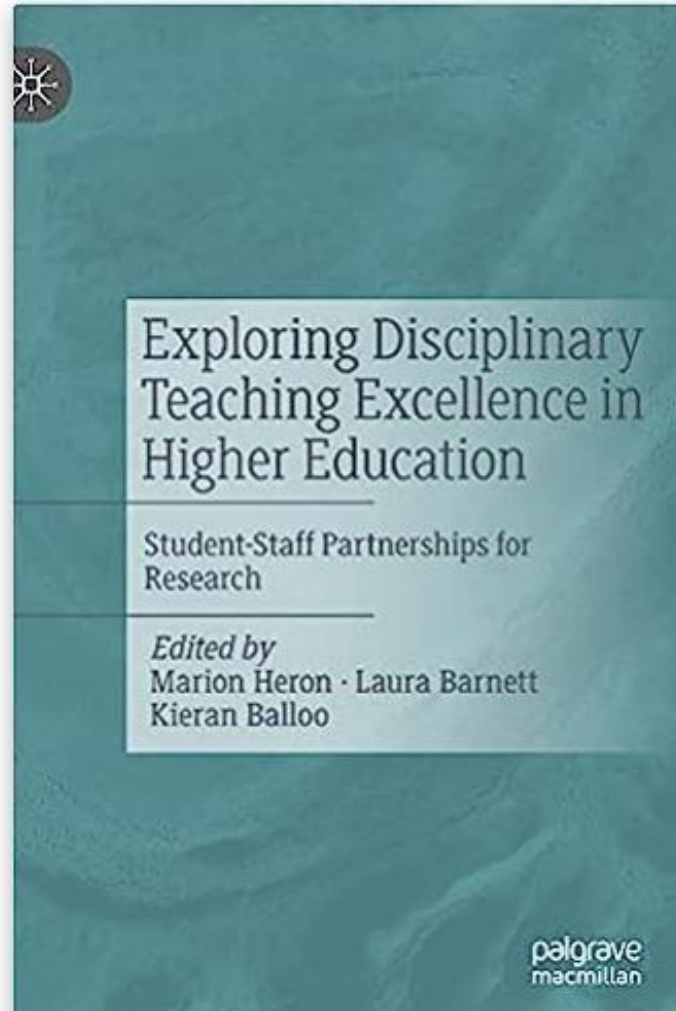
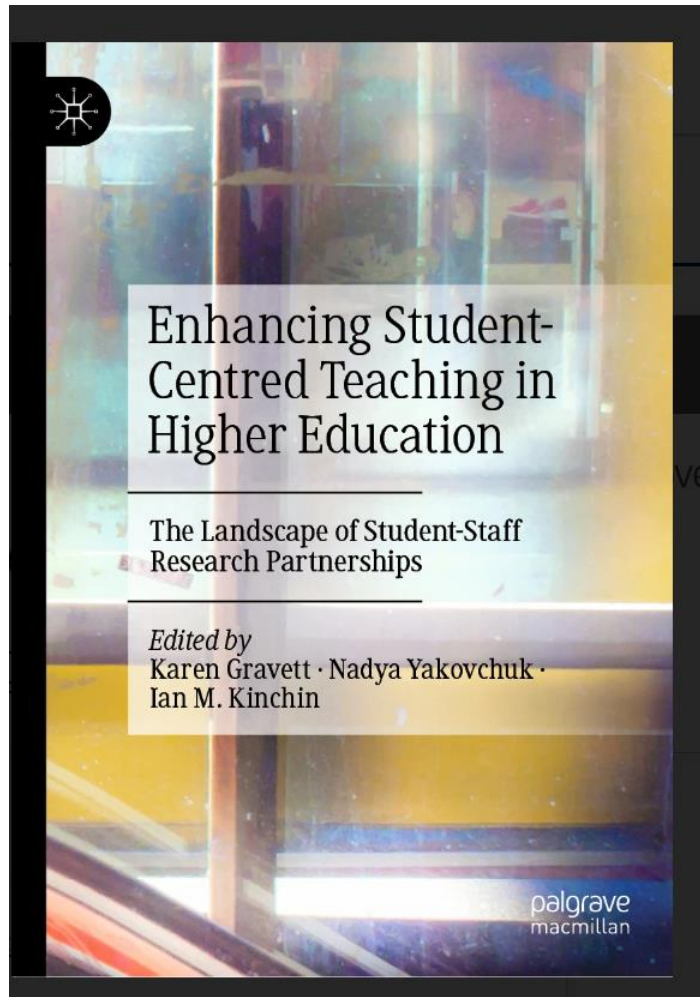
Thinking about connection as a situated practice of reciprocity and relationality



Connection situated
in the micro-
moments of learning
and teaching.



What does
connection in /
to the university
mean to you?



Partnership
for belonging
and
connection

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Partnership values: An evaluation of student-staff collaborative research

Xeina Ali, James Tatam, *Karen Gravett, and Ian M. Kinchin, Surrey Institute of Education, University of Surrey, UK.

Contact: k.gravett@surrey.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

This research study contributes to understandings of partnership approaches through an evaluation of student-staff research partnership projects that took place within a higher education institution. Drawing on data from semi-structured interviews with both the staff and students involved in the twenty research projects, our data were analysed to surface the underpinning values that informed the partnership process. As a result, this article offers an opportunity to evaluate partnership projects in context, as well as to explore how partnership may serve as force for potential disruption and innovation in higher education. We conclude with



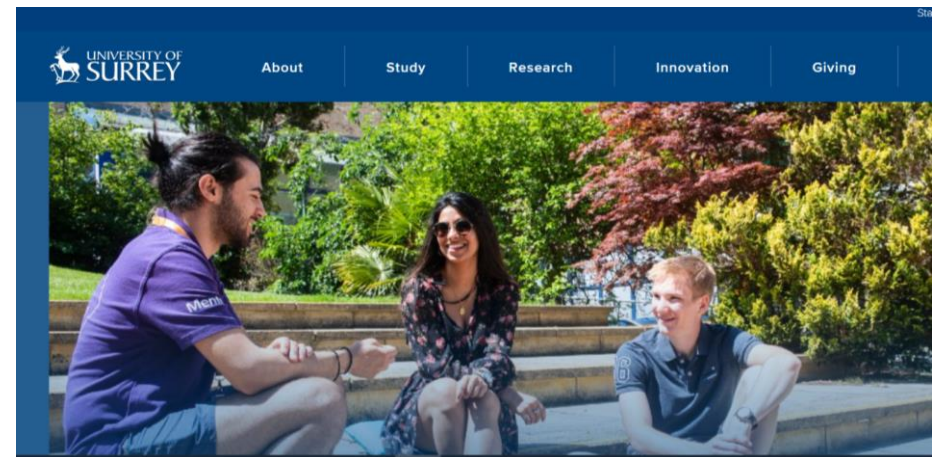
Partnership and co-creation

Belonging as a mutual feeling

‘Partnership makes the university a lot more productive, more fair and just a nicer place to learn and work’ (Ali et al. 2020).


Fostering belonging via engaging curricula, assessment and feedback practices – belonging as a mutual process

- Greater engagement and formative feedback via new structure; interactive tutorials with participant led readings
- Programmatic Assessment design
- Oral conversation
- Different voices
- Troublesome
- Working in partnership



Higher Education (2020) 79:1023–1037
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00453-w>

Co-creation in learning and teaching: the case for a whole-class approach in higher education

Catherine Bovill¹ 

Published online: 2 December 2019
© The Author(s) 2019

Abstract



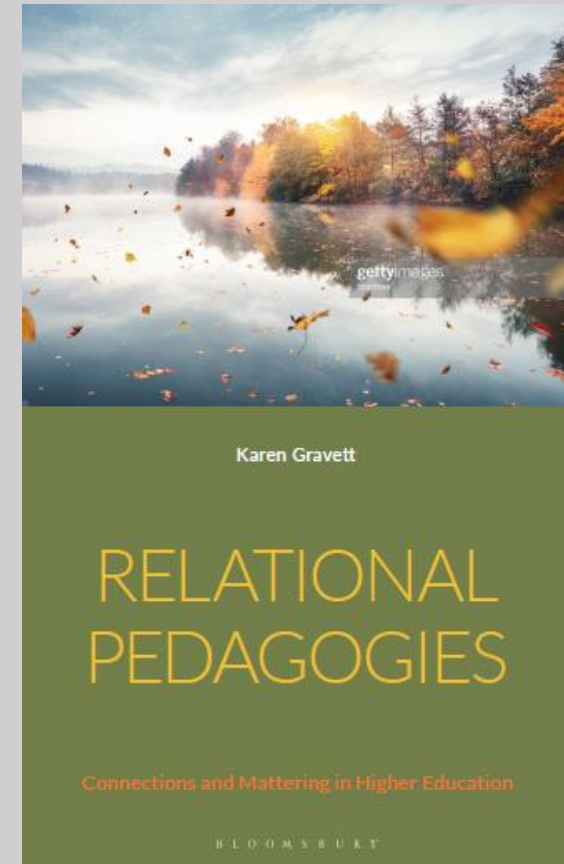
Relational pedagogies

dialogic approaches, staying in touch

understand material constraints

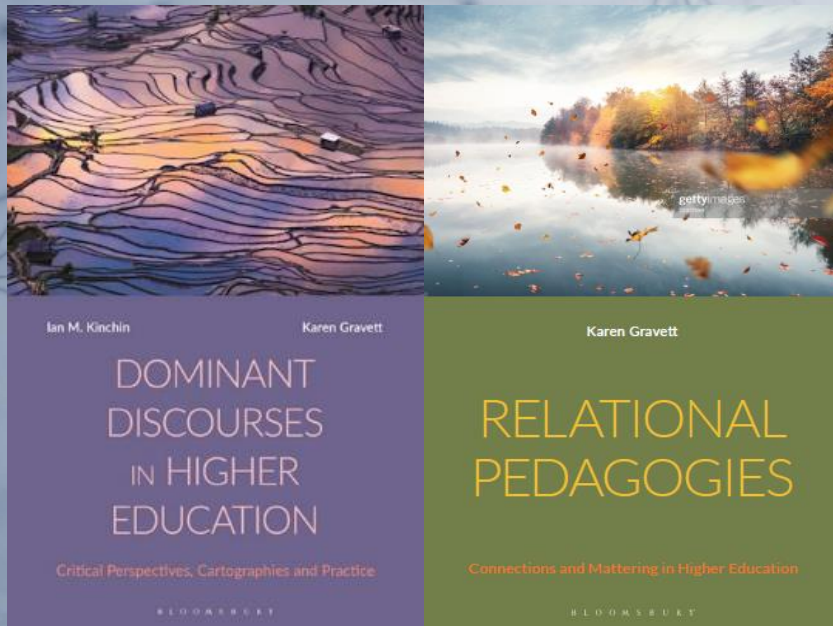
openness and presence rather than
content

noticing





How have you used partnership practices to foster connection?



Dr Karen Gravett;
k.gravett@surrey.ac.uk
@k_gravett

<https://bit.ly/46owiuX>