Storientations

Neil Buddel, PhD
Dean of Students, Centennial College
We live storied lives; these stories are conditions of our class-based existence that shape our values, dispositions, and beliefs (habitus) and can be used to support student success during key transitions.
Long ago, in someone else’s story.
Chess – the musical

RESEARCH CONTEXT
Choose your parents carefully.

Krahn, 2009

RESEARCH CONTEXT
If a child is taught to value PSE...they will attend.

Finnie, 2012
Aboriginal, disabled, and first-generation students are the most underrepresented in the PSE system.

Finnie, Childs, and Wismer, 2011

IT’S ALL ABOUT CLASS
Social class remains the most stubborn and persistent factor affecting educational attainment in Canada.

Lehmann, 2009
[(habitus)(capital)] + field = practice

Bourdieu, 1984

IT’S ALL ABOUT CLASS
Habitus: dispositions, values and beliefs.

Bourdieu, 1984

IT'S ALL ABOUT CLASS
Capital: economic, social, symbolic, and cultural capital.

Bourdieu, 1984

IT’S ALL ABOUT CLASS
Taste classifies and it classifies the classifier.
Bourdieu, 1984

IT’S ALL ABOUT CLASS
Experience as narrative composition.
Clandinin, 2013

ONTIOLOGICAL ORIENTATION
How do the stories of the first-generation students’ lives (e.g., social, cultural, family, self) shape university access and persistence?

RESEARCH QUESTION
The danger of a single story.
Chimamanda Adichie

GRAND NARRATIVES: MERITOCRATIC AND STORIED-FUTURES
We plan our lives according to a dream that came to us in our childhood, and we find that life alters our plans. And yet, at the end, from a rare height, we also see that our dream was our fate.

Ben Okri, 2011
Stories of their lives shaped a resilient-oriented habitus that valued education and social mobility, projecting a storied future as a university student.
Seifert, 2014

RESONANT NARRATIVE THREADS
The truth about stories is, that’s all we are.

Thomas King

STORIES AS CONDITIONS OF EXISTENCE
You is smart. You is kind. You is important.
The Help

STORIES AS CONDITIONS OF EXISTENCE
STORIES AS CONDITIONS OF EXISTENCE

T1: How important is it for you to BE a voter tomorrow?
T2: How important is it for you to vote tomorrow?

Bryan, Walton, Rogers, and Dweck (2011)
Eleven percentage point increase in voter turnout from the noun group compared with the verb group.

Bryan, Walton, Rogers, and Dweck (2011)
Brief psychosocial interventions: “saying is believing.”

Walton and Cohen, 2011
Incremental vs. entity theories: growth mindsets
Yeager and Walton, 2011
T: Fifth graders given logic problems: effort praise
C1: Fifth graders given logic problems: intelligence praise
C2: Fifth graders given logic problems: neutral praise
Mueller and Dweck, 1998
Children who received effort praise did better, children who received intelligence praise solved few problems, and children who received neutral praise did no better/worse.

Mueller and Dweck, 1998
T: Upper-year student stories: grades low at first.
C: Upper-year student stories: describe interests.
Wilson and Linville, 1982

STORIENTATIONS: ACADEMIC
Control group performed better on exam; a year later, higher GPA and 80% less likely to drop out.

Wilson and Linville, 1982

STORIENTATIONS: ACADEMIC
Black and White first year students received stories that students of all ethnicities worry about belonging during the transition in; then wrote essay for incoming students. 

C: Same exercise, but information was unrelated to belonging.

Walton and Cohen, 2011
T: Black students experienced adversity, but did not story it as not belonging.

C: Black students experienced similar adversity levels and storied it as not them belonging.

Walton and Cohen, 2011

STORIENTATIONS: SOCIAL
Could differential treatment perpetuate stories of marginalization (stereotype threat)?

Is the future of student affairs and services less about divisive interventions?

Could well designed storientations produce differential benefits such that those form lower-social classes begin to story adversity as normal (incremental theory) and not exclusionary (entity theory)

STORIENTATIONS
Make structures more transparent instead of offering specialized support.
Spiegler and Bednarek, 2013
Generational mobility and early-childhood education in Scandinavian countries.
Esping-Anderson, 2012
Story must matter, be adapted, be temporally placed.
Walton, 2014
It Gets Better: Mitchell, Omaha, NB
http://www.itgetsbetter.org/video/entry/10535/

RESONANT THREADS: STORIES THAT MATTER
First-Generation: “Fish out of water”
(Lehmann, 2009)

Aboriginal: Relevance, reciprocity, respect, and responsibility
(Marker, 2004)

Immigrant: Family investment and expectations
(Colombo and Rebughini, 2012)

Mature: Rusty study-skills and low self-confidence
(Kasworm, 2010)
Sociality. Temporality. Place.
Clandinin and Connelly (2000)

THREE DIMENSIONAL INQUIRY SPACE
Challenge is normal in the transition to college
   Social and academic transitions might be difficult (you might feel like you don’t belong or not smart enough or both)

You have the ability to succeed
   We all have ability to learn and grow: need to commit to goal and learning

It gets better
   Just takes time as there’s so much change

KEY MESSAGES
I learned the transition to college can be...
If I experience challenges, I will tell myself the following about my ability to succeed:
  - I have...
  - I am...
  - I can...
My overall advice to myself to be a college graduate is...
Community, capacity, and confidence
Buddel (2014)

PRINCIPLES
Students realize that transitional challenges are something that all community members experience together; it’s not an isolated experience. Students also feel that the community cares for their wellbeing as other students are invested in their success.
Students receive functional information about essential components of the transition that those with a history of postsecondary attendance may already know; in such a way, building capacity is about equalizing cultural capital.
Adversity is storied as a normal part of the transition to postsecondary life: focus is on resilience and developing a growth mindset (incremental theory) vs. signs of not belonging or lack of ability (entity theory).