

# Experiencing the Educational Interface

## Understanding Student Engagement

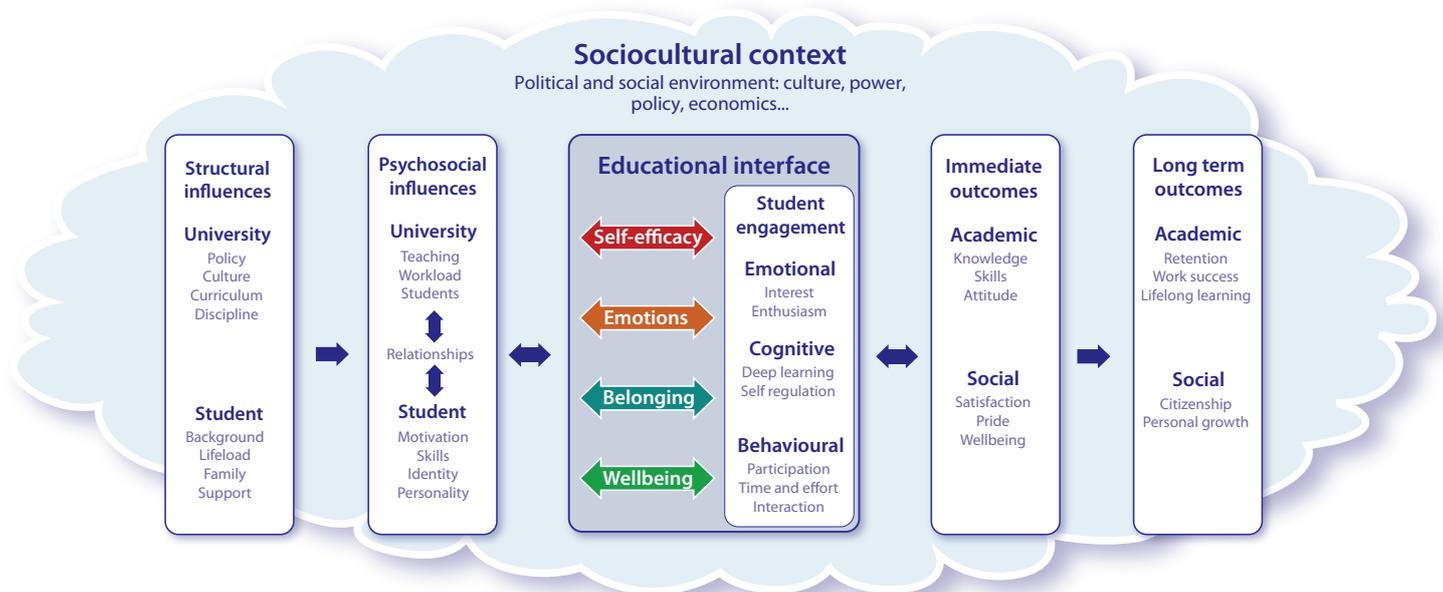
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### Conceptual Framework of Student Engagement

Student engagement is widely recognised as critical to student retention and success. We understand engagement as the individual student's psychosocial state: their emotional, cognitive, and behavioural connection to their learning. Kahu and Nelson's (in press) conceptual framework of student engagement shown below argues that the student experience occurs within an educational interface – a dynamic space at the intersection of student and institution. A complex array of factors impact student engagement directly, and also

indirectly via four pathways: self-efficacy, emotion, belonging, and wellbeing. Each of these psychosocial constructs stems from the interaction of student and institutional factors, and influences the student's engagement – positively or negatively. The quotes below illustrate those pathways; they are drawn from a study following 19 young students through their first year at an Australian regional university. The students were interviewed about their experiences before the year started and then weekly during the semesters.



### Self-efficacy

Students' belief in their capacity to perform a task, stemming from a cognitive appraisal of personal and environmental factors.

“ I just couldn't do it... absolute failure, so I thought ... you're too dumb to be here... then I thought okay... maybe there's something amusing on Facebook that is a distraction from this. (TONY) ”

### Emotions

Students' responses to their subjective experience of the situation such as anxiety, enjoyment, and frustration.

“ It's the course really. I didn't enjoy management a lot. Sometimes, like say marketing, I put a lot more effort into it because I really love it. But management I was just sort of showing up and doing what I had to do. (ISAAC) ”



## STUDENT DIS/ENGAGEMENT

### Belonging

Students' connectedness to the institution, staff, other students, and their discipline.

“ I'm starting to make friends which is great. Making friends in class helped me feel comfortable enough to sit and listen, and learn and engage in class. (FELIX) ”

### Wellbeing

Students' sense of being physically and psychologically healthy, comfortable, and happy.

“ I've just been exhausted... all this assessment and work and just everything's kind of a bit overwhelming ... either I don't sleep because I'm like stressing or I sleep a lot...I just don't do anything, don't have the motivation to do my readings. (SIENNA) ”