

OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARD (OEA) PUBLIC LECTURES 2023

Relationships in teaching and learning: What really matters

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In their book, *Relationship-rich education: How human relations drive success in college*, Lambert and Felten's (2020) central thesis is that student-faculty, student-staff, student-student relationships matter in learning, and in cultivating a sense of belonging and persistence. They also contend that significant relationships do not happen by chance but need to be nurtured.

Lambert and Felten draw reference from data they collected on narratives of such relationships and interviews with respondents across various universities in the United States. Besides Lambert and Felten, there are many other established scholars (Bass, cited in Lambert & Felten, 2020; Kezar & Maxey, 2014; McCabe, 2016; Sparks, 2019) who have been advocating the impact of relationships in higher education.

In this talk, I endeavour to unpack, contextualise, and in some instances query a few key drivers of relationship-rich education that have been suggested to have contributed to student success. Through examples of experiences in formal classroom and residential contexts, I also share reflections on issues related to sustaining relationships, how relationships transform overtime, and situations where relationships break down.

In short, while we may acknowledge that relationships matter, what of such relationships that really matters?

References

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