Sense of Belonging

Description

Sense of belonging in college settings refers to how students understand their role and their social fit in a college environment and what behaviors they exhibit in response. Students' sense of belonging can be enhanced through both social and academic interactions in their classrooms and institutions; examples of interactions include diverse peer group interactions, faculty and staff support, lack of social isolation, and a campus environment that promotes cultural integrity and engagement as well as a commitment to diversity.

Why is this important?

Traditionally underrepresented minority groups tend to report a weaker sense of belonging on their campuses than White students. A low sense of belonging, or belonging uncertainty, is argued to contribute to race-based disparities in academic achievement. Several studies have characterized sense of belonging as a key contributing factor regarding student retention.

Implementation Examples

	Achieve	iClicker
Facilitate class discussion		▷
Facilitate in-class group work		▷
Facilitate out-of-class peer learning		
Peer review*	✔	
Low-stakes practice	✔	▷
Peer mentorship pairing		

available in

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*in select courses

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Practical Applications

✔ Promote instructor-student interaction and communication

✔ Create spaces within and outside of classrooms for students to engage with diverse peers

✔ Normalize adversity and doubt by exposing students to narratives about peer adversity, and giving them opportunity to reflect

✔ Engage active learning strategies help students build confidence and grow in their academic abilities, such as peer learning groups, guided discussion, and low-stakes assignments

Sources: Ballen et al. (2017), Hurtado & Carter (1997), Oxendine & Taub (2021), Stanich et al. (2018), Strayhorn (2008), Walton & Cohen (2007), Wilton et al. (2019)

macmillan learning