NERUPI *network*

Evaluating & Researching University
Participation Interventions

Exploring Inequalities

Monday 17 October 2022

Annette Hayton
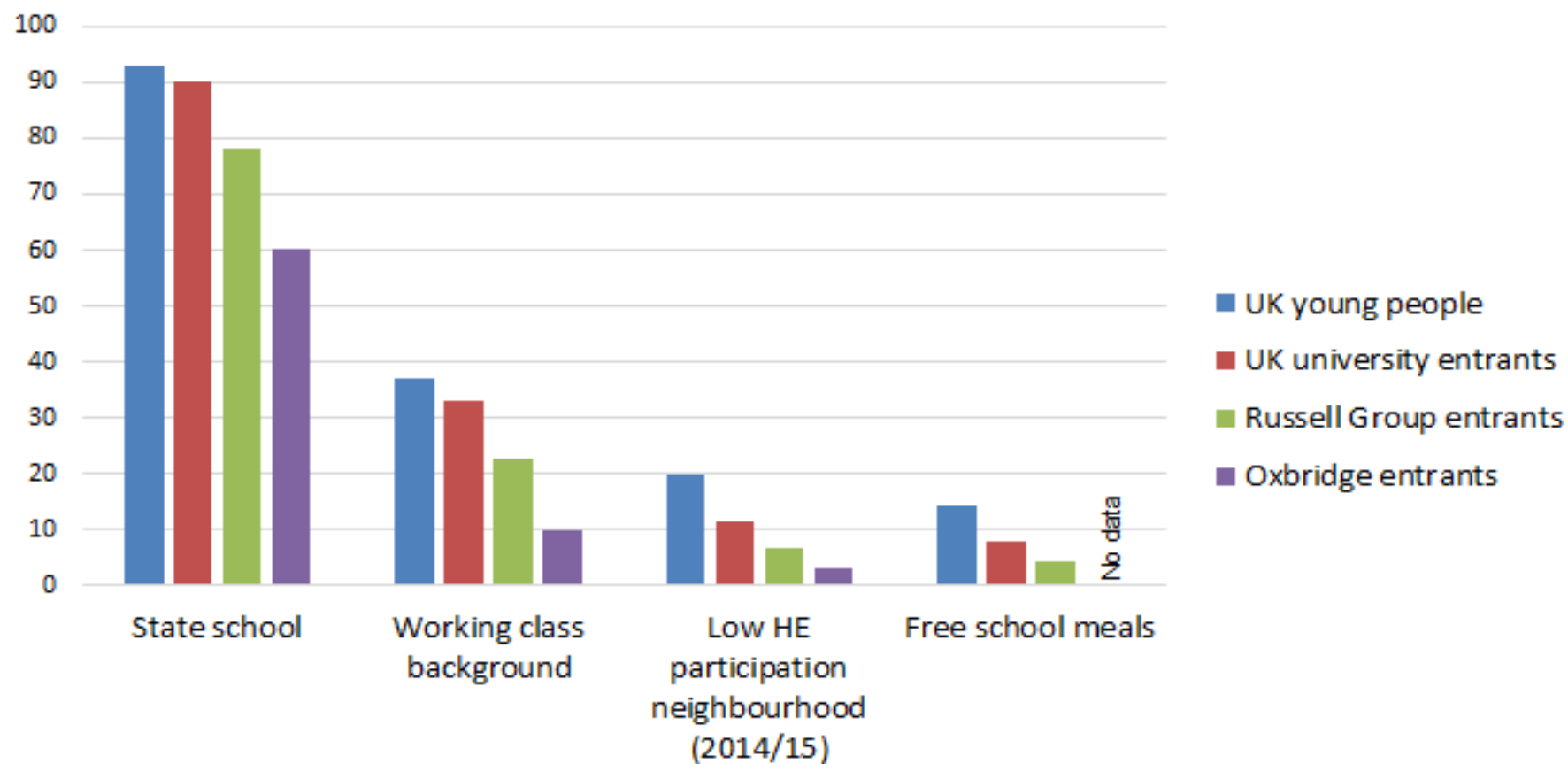Senior Research Fellow, University of Bath
NERUPI Convenor

What stops some people from accessing and succeeding in higher education?

The UK's access problem

Figure 1. Representativeness of young full-time university entrants in 2016/17

Legend:
- UK young people
- UK university entrants
- Russell Group entrants
- Oxbridge entrants

X-axis categories: State school, Working class background, Low HE participation neighbourhood (2014/15), Free school meals

Promoting fairer access to higher education: Vikki Boliver NERUPI Event 17.1.20

Sector-level continuation, attainment and progression rates (%) for white students and black students

Continuation rate: White students — 91.3
Continuation rate: Black students — 85.0
Attainment rate: White students — 82.0
Attainment rate: Black students — 58.9
Progression rate: White students — 74.0
Progression rate: Black students — 69.3

https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/guide-to-the-access-and-participation-data-resources/findings-from-the-data/

NERUPI Members' website

THE REFLEXIVE CYCLE TOOLKIT

Basics ⌄   Context ⌄   Planning ⌄   Evaluation ⌄   Action ⌄

Members area

Welcome to the NERUPI Members' Area

https://www.nerupi.co.uk/members/toolkit/basics
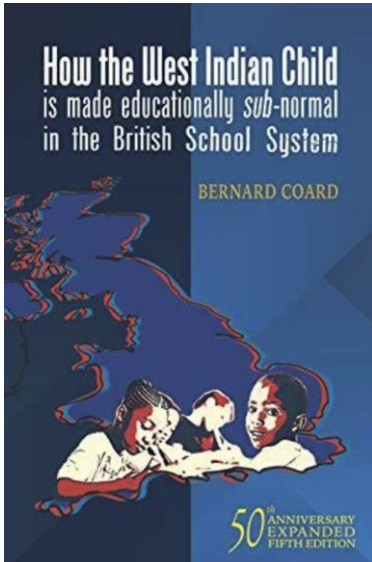
Expansion of Higher Education

At the turn of the 19th century

- there were only ten universities

- undergraduates less than 1% of population

- only a handful of women

- very few students of colour

- curriculum very limited

- sons of the ruling class and the new professional classes

Culture & curriculum of higher education designed for this group

University of London
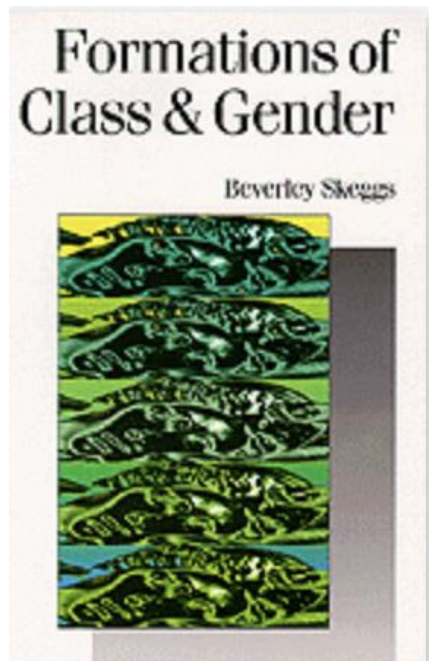
Inequalities and exclusions

For example:

- **Class** remains critically important today but led to other forms of inequality being overlooked in the past
- **Race** Bernard Coard's book in 1971 highlighted discriminatory attitudes and practices in schools towards West Indian children
- **Women** struggled for equal access to higher education

- Idea that one of these areas was more important than another problematic when **real people embody many characteristics**
- Also marginalises other aspects of identity & discrimination such as **physical disabilities, neuro-diversity, sexuality and age**

Intersectionality

The term **intersectionality** is credited to
Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in the USA
Explores complexities of inequalities

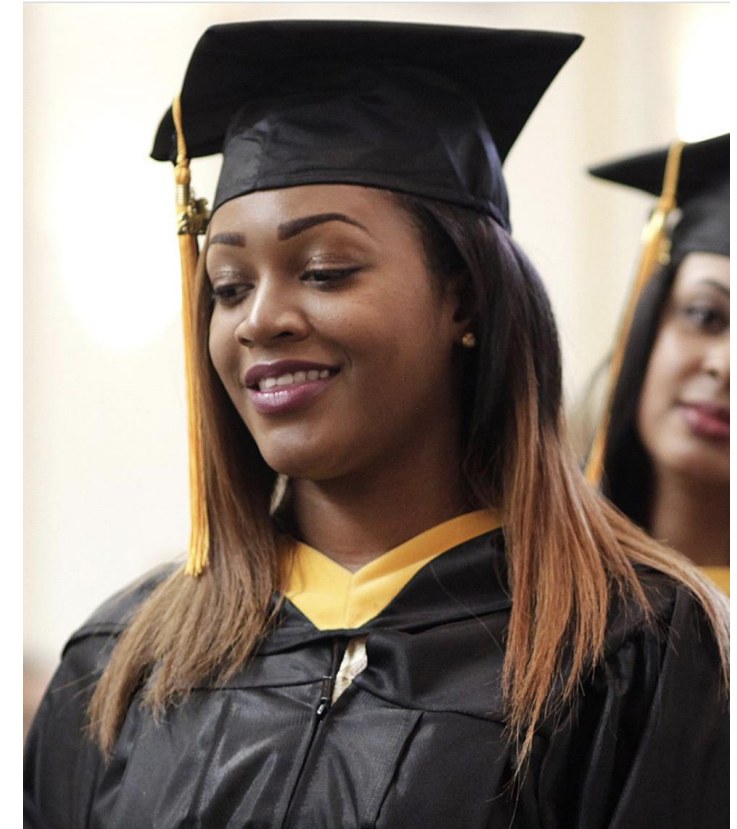**Formations of Class & Gender**

Beverley Skeggs

Professor Beverly Skeggs argued that:
- gender inequalities important,
- but a single focus that polarised the issues was ultimately unhelpful in addressing inequalities
- called for an intersectional approach

Expansion of Higher Education

- Over 150 universities and 300 HE institutions
- About 50% of 18 olds go to university
- 57.5% are women
- a wide range of subjects can be studied at HE level
- increased diversity of the student population
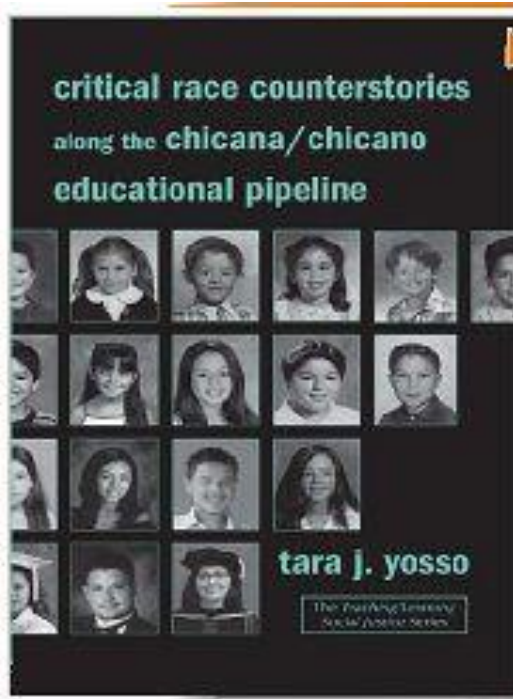
EXPLORING INEQUALITIES

The NERUPI Framework

SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC CAPITAL		HABITUS	SKILLS CAPITAL	INTELLECTUAL & SUBJECT CAPITAL
PROGRESSION CURRICULUM		STUDENT IDENTITIES	SKILLS CURRICULUM	KNOWLEDGE CURRICULUM
KNOW	CHOOSE	BECOME	PRACTISE	UNDERSTAND
Develop students' knowledge and awareness of the benefits of higher education	Develop students' capacity to navigate Higher Education sector and make informed choices	Develop students' confidence and resilience to negotiate the challenges of university life	Develop students' study skills and capacity for academic attainment	Develop students' understanding by contextualising subject knowledge

NERUPI AIMS

Key theoretical influences

Freire's notion of 'praxis'

Bourdieu's capitals, habitus and field

Sen and Walker's concepts of capability

Concepts of powerful knowledge

Yosso cultural wealths

Identities and future/possible selves

Critical pedagogies

Cultural Capital

Ofsted defines cultural capital as:

' *the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said, and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement'*

Economic capital

Cultural capital – what you know

Social capital -who you know

Pierre Bourdieu

Bourdieu's Theories

NERUPI *evaluation* **FRAMEWORK**

Bourdieu – Capitals and Habitus and **Field**

- **Capitals:** economic, cultural or social which impact on opportunities to engage with education, careers etc.

- **Habitus:** cultural identity & dispositions related to family & community

Theoretical basis for a great deal of academic research into widening participation e.g Diane Reay

Cultural model of Widening Participation that locates interventions within a context or *field* of engagement

FIELD, CAPITALS & HABITUS

**Economic capital?
Social and academic capital?
Intellectual and skills capital?**

Contingent choosers

finance a key concern, no background of HE, some forms of support not available, difficult to access information

Embedded choosers

finance not a problem, expected to go on to university, extensive support, easy access to information, ethnic mix not an issue
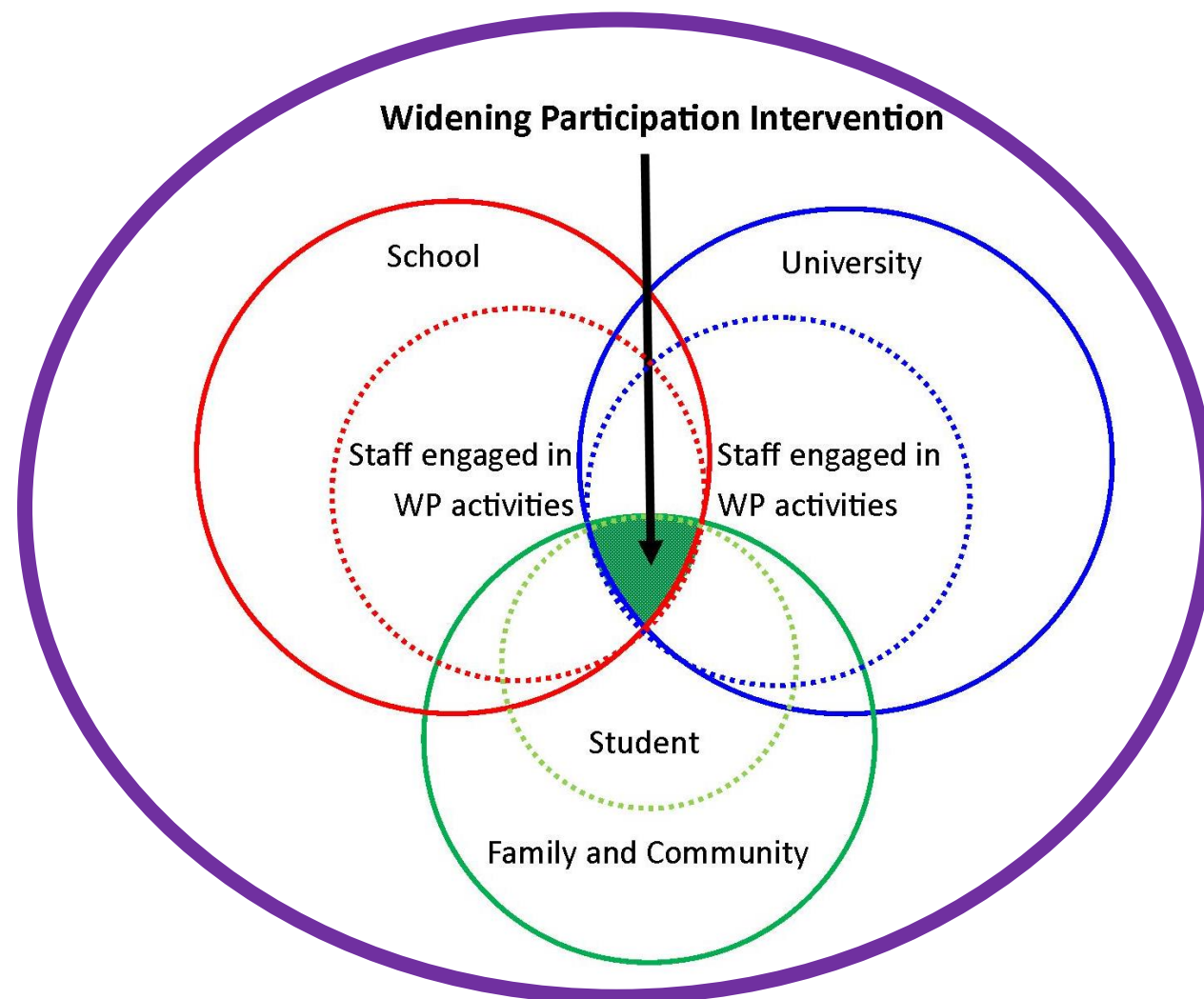
Resource differences and collective efforts and investments made or not within families become translated into individual 'ability'.......
(Ball 2010, p.162).

The field of HE progression
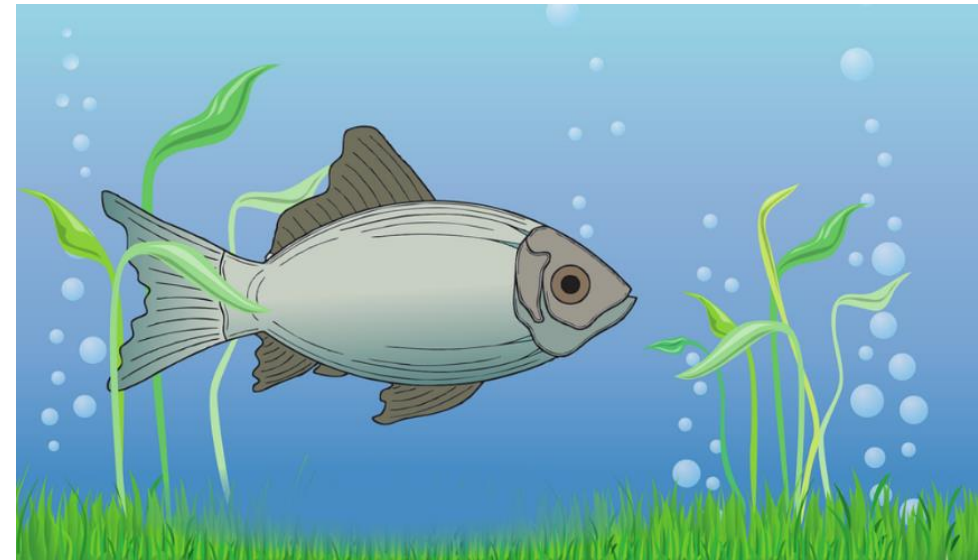

field

Rules of the game

Habitus

'Students' "attitudes towards learning and their degree of confidence and entitlement in relation to academic knowledge" have been found to be important and is shaped by their familial surroundings and the institutions they attend' (Reay et al., 2010, p. 109)

fish in water ?

habitus

Tara Yosso & Cultural Wealths

'Bourdieu's theories often used to explain differences in academic and social outcomes between People of Color and Whites.

Schools often interpret this as People of Color 'lacking' social and cultural capital and set out to help 'disadvantaged' students'

But Yosso argues that communities have their own **cultural wealths** that can support them when engaging with discriminatory systems
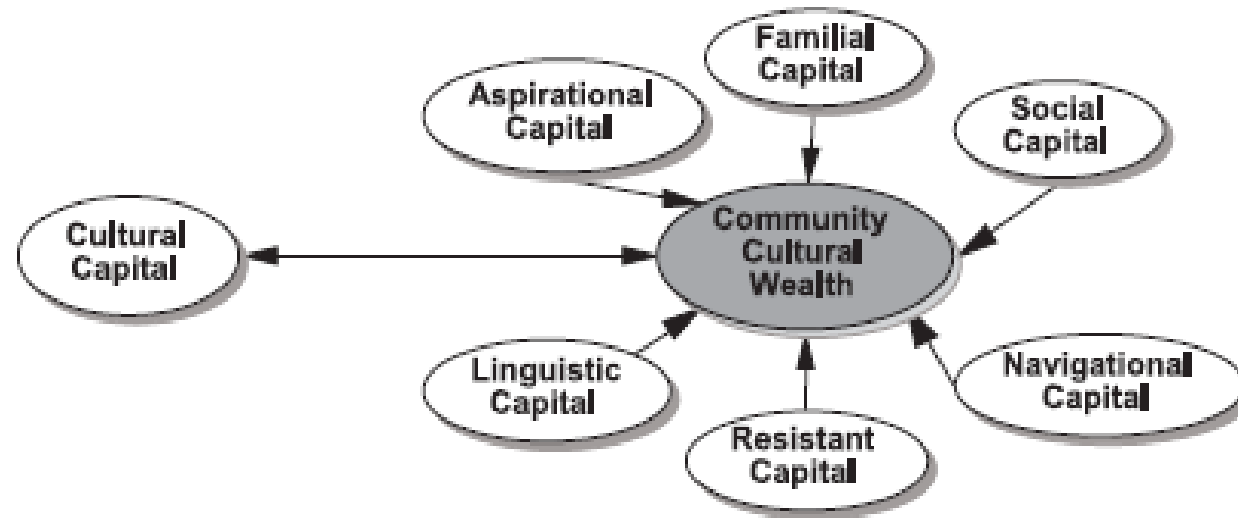

Figure 2.   A model of community cultural wealth. Adapted from: Oliver & Shapiro, 1995

NERUPI *evaluation* FRAMEWORK

Capability Approach

- welfare economics & development
- equal opportunity not enough
- capability to participate is real freedom
- agency, choice & individual well-being
- **education is a basic freedom**

'AMRYTA SEN

Possible Selves & Aspiration

Despite these theoretical and empirical challenges to aspiration-raising, it continues to permeate both national policy documents...practice and academic literature.
This may be due to its .. congruence with 'common sense' explanations …or as it deftly evades bigger questions about inequalities in society by locating responsibility with the individual. (Harrison 2018)

The Observer

Even if you're intelligent, even if you know you can get those grades, it just feels out of reach.
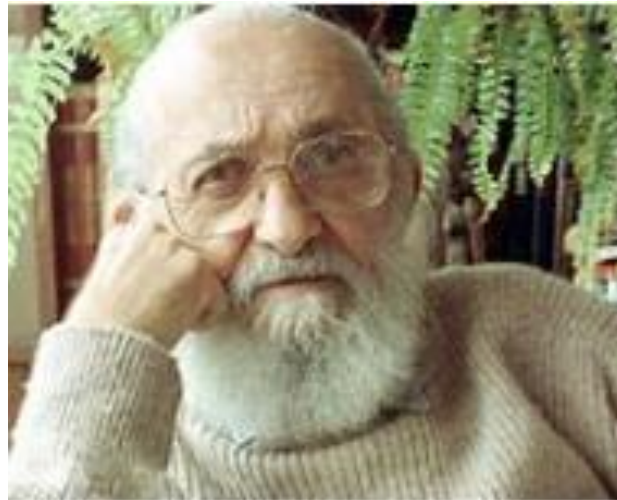
Photograph: Edmund Blok

Young people are seen through the lens of possible selves to be envisioning desired and undesired possible future selves and to be actively creating their own pathways towards their future (Markus and Nurius, 1986)

Praxis

reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed

=

praxis

Paulo Freire 1968

- **Theory** & academic research – quantitative and qualitative
- **Practice**

PRAXIS

NERUPI Framework

Enable students to:	NERUPI Framework sees it as the HEIs role to facilitate students to: - support the transformative learning process - encourage reflexivity within the HEI
Engage Discover Identify Navigate	Active learning terms are use to: - encourage critical pedagogies - develop student agency - embed these within the success measures

The **NERUPI** Framework

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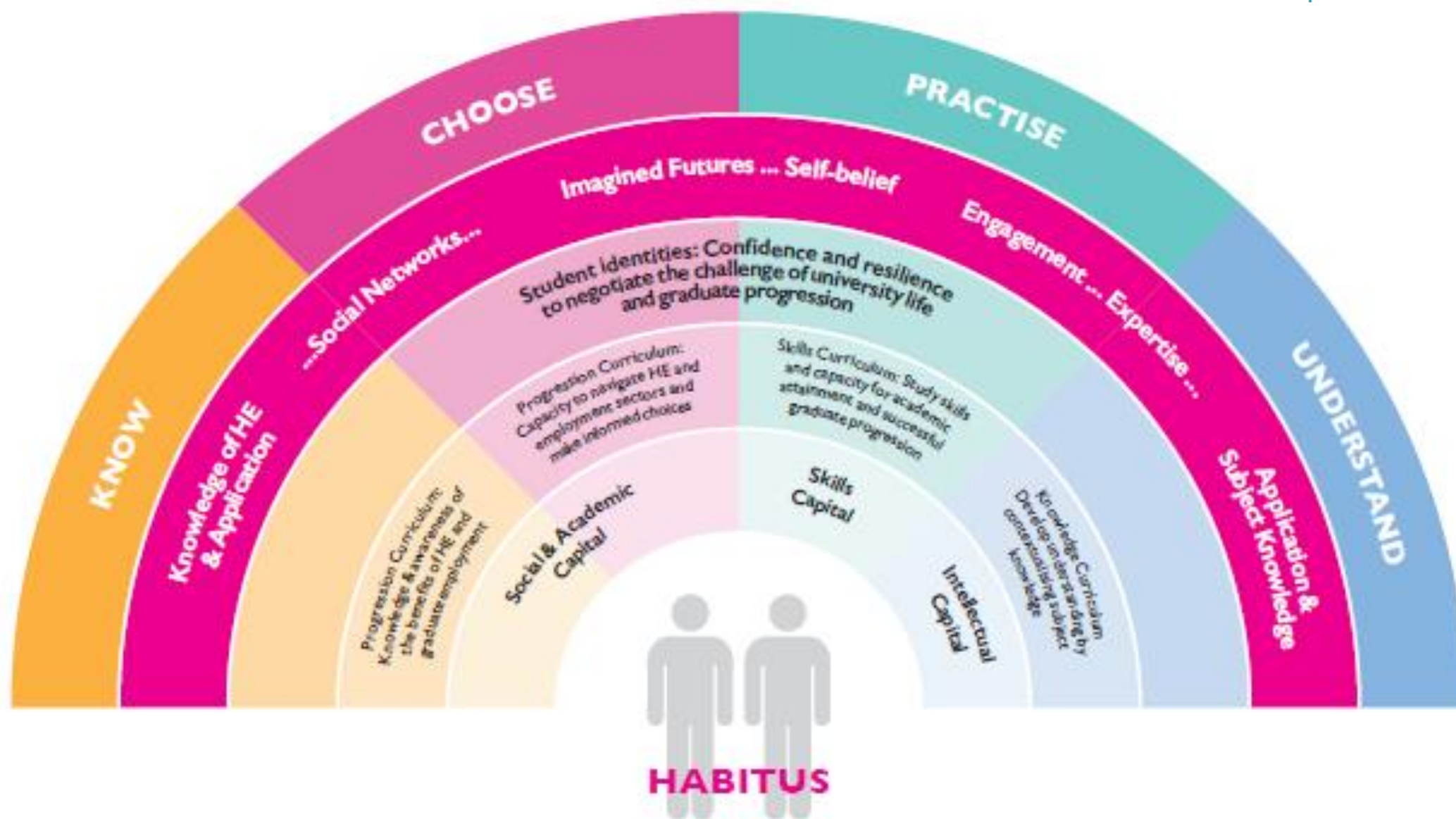| SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC CAPITAL		HABITUS	SKILLS CAPITAL	INTELLECTUAL & SUBJECT CAPITAL
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NERUPI AIMS

NERUPI Indicators

- **Imagined Futures**
    - links to concept of possible selves
- **Self Belief**
- - aims to capture concepts of self & is linked to motivation
- **Application**
    - situating & adapting new information to own context
- **Engagement**
    - participation & interest in learning
- **Expertise**
    - knowledge of a subject or proficiency in a technical skill
- **Social Networks**
    - linked to social capital of family & community

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Discussion

What are the institutional factors that stop under-represented groups accessing and succeeding in higher education?