

Environment and Affect: Toward an Emotional Geography of Student Persistence

Jamison R. Miller, Michael Donlan

Abstract

Student persistence is a perennial problem for higher education. From lost revenue for colleges and universities to lost opportunity and development for students, educational scholars have had much incentive to examine the problem. In this paper, we review some of the prominent assessments of student persistence in research from various theoretical perspectives. Further, we explore how scholars have studied environmental factors in persistence and to a lesser extent student affect, yet we find the relationship between these two to be only lightly engaged in the literature. The emerging discipline of emotional geography offers to draw out new insights at the intersection of environment and affect, bringing a sensitizing lens and opening up new research questions to engage with the problem of intolerably low student persistence.

Keywords: persistence, emotional geography, college departure, environment, affect

College and university administrators devote considerable attention to student retention and rightfully so; college graduation rates have consistently hovered around 50% for decades (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005). That only 50% of students who begin college persist to graduation is tragic when considering the costs to the university and, perhaps most importantly, what is forfeited by the student. Small private institutions are often dependent upon student tuition to operate, and public institutions receive less state funding than

they once did. Additionally, many states are now considering linking state appropriations to a number of performance indicators, with graduation percentages being one of those marks of institutional effectiveness (Barefoot, 2004).

While unrealized tuition revenue is not to be discounted, the lost intellectual investment in an individual's higher education is perhaps most compelling. To the individual student, the benefits of attending college are profound. College attendance has a meaningful positive influence on a broad range of developmental characteristics, and although individuals who do not attend college may also exhibit similar developmental changes, college students appear to show greater and more rapid development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). In a review of studies of how college affected students, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) reached a number of conclusions about the impact of college on students. College students showed tremendous gains in verbal and written communication, exhibited greater reflective judgment, developed critical thinking and intellectual flexibility, and placed a greater value on aesthetic and intellectual matters (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Individuals who attend college show a greater intellectual orientation and internal locus of control, which is not only helpful in college, but also in post-college life (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The growth and development that occurs in college affords students a greater likelihood to continue learning throughout their lives. What is developed in college increases the likelihood of living a satisfying life post-graduation. Earning a bachelor's degree is associated with long-term social, cognitive, and economic benefits that are often perpetuated by future generations (Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2008). An educated population is beneficial not only to the individual, but also to the communities of which they are members (Kuh et al., 2008). Individuals who attended college show principled reasoning in judging moral issues, demonstrate an acceptance of nontraditional gender roles, and display a more liberal social and political attitude (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Although educational scholars have adopted a number of theoretical perspectives and considerations in exploring the problems of post-secondary student attrition, we highlight another: the emerging sub-discipline in human geography of emotional geography. Emotional geography is a disciplinary field of study that arises at the intersection of environment and affect. The importance and impacts of our environments—namely space and place—in constructing our social lives have long been established in geography (Gregory & Urry, 1985; Jackson & Smith, 1984) as well as within higher education (Strange & Banning, 2001). Affect, or the experience of emotion, has been taking on heightened interest in geography over the last decade, yet its consideration in educational environments has only just begun (Kenway & Youdell, 2011). Because “clearly, our emotions matter” (Bondi, Davidson, & Smith, 2007, p. 1), we argue for a more in-depth and nuanced consideration of the emotional aspects of post-secondary environments to better understand the contingencies of individual student persistence.

To do so, we first review five prominent theoretical perspectives in the student persistence literature. We follow this overview of the existing approaches to student persistence with the introduction of the rich perspectives of emotional geography. Next, we draw upon the work of Strange and Banning (2001) that focused on how campus environments may support student success. Using a social ecological approach, Strange and Banning (2001) explored the ways in which the physical and social environment influenced human behavior. Although their work outlined the importance of space and place in student experiences, we argue that Strange and Banning (2001) over-emphasized the role of environment while simultaneously underestimating the influence of individuals' emotions in constructing their experiences. As such, we draw upon the promising findings in a few examples of emotional geographies of education. We end the paper with a discussion of implications for future research, and conclusions drawn from this re-examination of research in student persistence.

Theoretical Perspectives, Theories, and Models: Old and New

Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, and Hayek (2007), offered five prominent theoretical perspectives that have been widely utilized to examine student departure: sociological, psychological, organizational, cultural, and economic. Each of these approaches brings different components of the issues surrounding student persistence to the fore. A review of these perspectives and the theories associated with them reveals a lack of emphasis on the emotional experiences of students in post-secondary education. Thus, in addition to these five theoretical perspectives, a new approach, emotional geographies, may provide additional insight into the study of student persistence.

Although retention and persistence are often used interchangeably, there are nuanced differences between the two terms. Student persistence is recognized as an individual phenomenon (Reason, 2009). For the purposes of this manuscript, it is to be assumed that persistence is the intent of the student to remain in college and strive towards graduation. Retention, on the other hand, is the set of institutional actions that attempt to keep students enrolled (Reason, 2009). Student departure is the act wherein the student leaves college. The decision to leave college can be voluntary, such as a student who never feels connected to the college and decides to withdraw. An involuntary departure could be an academic dismissal of a student who struggles because of excessive stress or anxiety.

To embark on the study of student persistence from an emotional geographies lens, it is important to review the prominent theories of student persistence. It is also important to understand that the five perspectives proposed by Kuh et al. (2007) underpin prior work in understanding the reasons why students leave (or do not leave) college. Perhaps the most widely used approach to understand student persistence is Tinto's (1993) theory of student departure. Since students do not experience college in isolation, the impact of other individuals both in the college environment and from home is a significant consideration. Tinto's (1993) theory of student departure, which is grounded in a

sociological perspective, explores the level of academic and social integration that students experience. Tinto's (1993) model consists of three stages within the departure process: separation, transition, and incorporation. Tinto (1988) saw college students as moving from one community to another. During the separation stage, students who are more likely to persist separate from membership within past communities, often family and friends, in order to integrate fully into a new environment (Tinto, 1988). Students who are not fully able to separate from past communities often struggle during the transition to college. The second stage, the transition phase, is a time of passage from old communities to new communities. A student who comes from a community that has drastically different values and norms from the new college community often struggles in the transition phase (Tinto, 1988).

Students in the transition phase have not yet created personal bonds with members from the new college community. They also may not have any remaining connections to members from the former environment if they successfully separated from their past communities (Tinto, 1993). During the third stage, incorporation, the student is tasked with developing relationships with members of the college community (Tinto, 1988). For Tinto, it is through these relationships that the new college student may become familiar with and adopt the norms and behavioral patterns of the new. However, not every student will form the connections needed to persist and some will leave college.

The lack of an adequate familial support system is often significant to the departure decision as revealed in a later study by Elkins, Braxton, and James (2000). First-generation students often reported less encouragement to attend college than students with parents who attended college (Elkins et al., 2000). Students from a lower-level of high-school academic preparation also persisted at lower levels. First generation college students and students who achieved at lower academic levels may not have received the support from their home communities that they needed. It may be that friends and family doubted the ability of the student to be successful through graduation (Elkins et al., 2000).

Bean and Eaton (2000) offered a psychological model of student retention with the assumption that leaving college is a behavior and that behaviors are psychologically motivated. Students enter college with unique personal characteristics. These personal characteristics inform the ways in which students interact with the new college environment (Bean & Eaton, 2000). Successful students are able to draw upon past experiences in which they were able to cope effectively with stressful situations and thus adapt to the college environment. For successful students, psychological processes transpire which result in "positive self-efficacy, reduced stress, increased efficacy, and internal locus of control" (p. 58). As students develop a positive self-efficacy, they will likely take future action to maintain feelings of integration, both social and academic (Bean & Eaton, 2000). Strong feelings of integration lead to greater likelihood of remaining in college. As social beings, what is most important is how students perceive the social environment (Bean & Eaton, 2000).

As noted by Bean and Eaton (2000), social and academic integration is an

important aspect of understanding student persistence. As such, organizational perspectives examine the ways in which institutional features influence how connected the student feels to the college. A sense of belonging or “fit” is shaped by students’ interactions and experiences within an institution (Kuh et al., 2007). This sense of belonging shapes students’ attitudes, which shape behavior; and ultimately those behaviors become actions (Bean & Eaton, 2000). Berger and Milem (2000) grouped institutional characteristics into two categories: the structural-demographic features and the organizational behavior dimensions. Structural-demographic characteristics are those characteristics of an institution (e.g., size, student/faculty ratio, urban/rural, public/private) that influence students’ sense of belonging (Berger & Milem, 2000).

Although institutional structural-demographic characteristics seem to exert little influence on student persistence, there are two general exceptions (Reason, 2009). Women who attend women’s institutions and African-Americans who attend historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are more likely to persist than women attending co-educational institutions or African-Americans attending non-HBCUs (Reason, 2009). The second exception, institutional quality, is also associated with higher levels of student persistence (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Factors associated with the institution often align with the individual characteristics of the student to create a sense of belonging.

A cultural perspective of student persistence informs any understanding of the reasons for the departure of students who are historically underrepresented (Kuh et al., 2007). Tinto’s (1993) model of student departure, with stages of separation, transition, and incorporation, highlights the struggle that some students encounter when going to college. Some students may be unable or even unwilling to separate from their home culture and acquiesce to the norms, values, and traditions of a new culture (Reason, 2009). A more recent study of historically underrepresented populations revealed the importance of family, especially as a significant component of students’ pre-college life and how family influenced student persistence (Reason, 2009). It is perhaps the lack of cultural influences within Tinto’s (1993) model of student departure that has caused some to question the model’s effectiveness in explaining the departure patterns of today’s college student.

From an economic perspective, it would appear that above all else, the ability of the student to pay for college would have the most significant impact on student persistence. However, Tinto (1993) noted that researchers acknowledge that finances are a much more complex component of student persistence. Students are confronted with a financial decision in deciding to attend college. Students who decide to go to college pay tuition as well as forego income, while acknowledging that degree attainment will lead to increased future earnings (Kuh et al., 2007). Tinto explained that financial considerations not only influence the decision on whether to attend college, but also on a number of other significant decisions. The type of college to attend, the activities to engage in while in college, the choice to seek employment, and the type of living arrangement are all influenced, in part, by financial considerations.

This discussion of the prominent models of persistence attempted to show how the theoretical perspectives, as identified by Kuh et al. (2007), were utilized in developing those models. A summary evaluation of the persistence models may reveal that some models over-rely on a single perspective. For example, Tinto's (1993) model has a strong sociological foundation; however, it could be argued that other perspectives are also evident. The same holds true for subsequent persistent theories that were proposed to complement or act as a revision to Tinto's (1993) model. Certainly later theories addressed cultural considerations that were not a part of Tinto's (1993) original model. It would also appear that all of the perspectives have a psychological component, as students' way of thinking is influenced by sociological, organizational, economic, and cultural perspectives. For example, the way in which an institution is organized and structured has an impact on how the student perceives his or her locus of control. Additionally, cultural perspectives have a strong influence on student psychology. Historically underrepresented students experience challenges that often inhibit their ability to take full advantage of the resources and learning opportunities available in college (Kuh et al., 2007). Perpetuated systems of exclusion may have damaging psychological effects that are manifested in decisions to leave college.

In response to the perceived shortcomings of the existing models of student persistence, Terenzini and Reason (2005) proposed a new model that attempted to include those ubiquitous external and internal influences on the student decision to persist in college. Terenzini and Reason included organizational context, the peer environment, and individual student experiences (e.g., classroom, out-of-class, and curricular experiences) as part of the college experience. From a psychological perspective, the researchers also included student pre-college characteristics and experiences as central to understanding persistence (Terenzini & Reason, 2005).

The concept of student peer environment as it relates to persistence is addressed in this manuscript to attempt to understand the influence of the system of beliefs, values, and attitudes that characterize the students on campus (Reason, 2009). An understanding of the campus racial climate and academic climate is helpful in exploring what is accepted or rejected on campus (Reason, 2009). Essentially the peer environment signals to the student what is expected and plays a significant role in whether the student feels accepted. If the student does not feel that they belong, they are more likely to leave college.

A New Perspective: Emotional Geography

The variety of perspectives that have produced the immense body of literature surrounding the topic of student persistence offer varied and rich accounts to consider. What, then, can the emerging sub-discipline of emotional geography bring to the conversation? Let us introduce this perspective by approaching the name in its two parts, the "emotional" and the "geography." Although some notions of the emotional aspects of life in college are considered within the aforementioned theoretical perspectives, they fail to put emotional

experience front and center. This failure is understandable, as emotions are never simply surface phenomena or easy to observe, define, or demarcate (Bondi et al., 2007). The inherent difficulties in communicating the emotional elements underlying everyday life have resulted in student persistence literature that tends to avoid or downplay student emotions. Crucially, the persistence literature also understands emotions to be a separate, additional component of student experiences. This approach limits the exploration of emotion as a set of categorical conditions such as anxiety (Tinto, 1993), excitement (Strange & Banning, 2001), and belonging (Bean & Eaton, 2000). Although this is beginning to shift (O’Keeffe, 2013), a fuller consideration that “emotions are situated within, and co-constitutive of, our social lives” (Bondi et al., 2007, p. 2) reveals a promising direction for understanding student persistence. Emotions, then, are understood to be a profound force in establishing and organizing the very structures of students’ social lives.

For emotional geographers, emotions are an intractable aspect of life that permeate all experiences. Thus, there is a recursive relationship between individuals’ emotions and their experiences of place. That is, emotions shape how individuals perceive place; and they are formative elements of the spaces individuals encounter, thereby impacting how individuals behave, operate within, and respond to places (Anderson & Smith, 2001). Emotional geography, hence, brings emotions to the fore, opening up new avenues for exploring student persistence and departure by acknowledging that emotions are a profound part of individual experience.

It is also important to address that geographers analyze phenomena through the lens of spatial relations and practices. Human geographers are predominantly concerned with the differentiation and organization of human activity across physical environments. Focusing on spatial characteristics such as location, scale, and distance, geography calls for an interpretation of our world based in empirics. For geographers, the consideration of student emotions means situating them within post-secondary spaces. Thus, emotional geography can add to the student persistence literature by fully considering emotions, and doing so through understanding emotion in terms of “spatial mediation and articulation” rather than something entirely interiorized (Bondi et al., 2007, p. 3). This focus on the environmental aspects of student persistence is not new. However, as will be exposed in the following section, emotions are largely undervalued and considered a symptom of college life rather than a constitutive or formative element.

Environmental Approaches to Student Persistence

Educational scholars have recognized the important influences of environmental factors in student persistence (Astin, 1984; Wei, Ku, & Liao, 2011). Therefore, the study of persistence from an emotional geography perspective should be grounded in prior studies that examine the influence of environments on student persistence. One particularly influential text that attempted to comprehensively identify the various components of educational environments is

Educating by Design by Strange and Banning (2001). Strange and Banning (2001) identified four key components of environments that influence human behavior: the physical layout, characteristics of the people who inhabit environments, organizational structures, and the collective perceptions of the culture of the environment.

First, Strange and Banning (2001) argued that up until their study, physical environments of the college had often been neglected or misunderstood in their influences on students. Environments—through their structures, symbols, and design—communicate much about what is valued and cherished on the college campus. What is communicated by campus environments has a profound influence on students' sense of belonging. Although Strange and Banning (2001) presented the role of design and space through their discussion of physical environments as influential upon student behavior, they did not discuss how space and design elicit or interact with student emotion.

Second, the characteristics of the individuals within the environment are also significant to the human environment (Strange & Banning, 2001). The persistence models of Tinto (1993) and Terenzini and Reason (2005) emphasize the interactions between the student and individuals within his or her environment as critical to any understanding of student persistence. Students perceive the peer environment as the “sense of the place” as they develop an understanding of what is expected academically and socially (Reason, 2009). The ways in which students interact with others within the college environment help form or hinder a feeling of belonging. Students who make connections, even with only one other individual, are more likely to persist (O’Keeffe, 2013).

Third, Strange and Banning (2001) noted that the ways in which an organization is structured is also a key component to human environments. In addition to structural-demographic features of the institution, Berger and Milem (2000) noted that organizational behavior dimensions also influence student persistence. The effects of the institution are more what the institution does (or does not do) than the characteristics of the institution (Reason, 2009). Berger (2001-2002) organized institutions into five types: bureaucratic, collegial, political, symbolic, and systemic. If a student perceives that the school promotes communication, participation, fairness, and inclusion (collegial), or that the environment is steeped in developing a shared meaning through a reverence of institutional history and traditions (symbolic), students are more likely to integrate into the college environment and persist (Berger, 2001-2002). If students feel that the resources of the college are aligned to support student success and that there is a directed effort on behalf of the college to integrate services in support of the student, a greater level of student satisfaction is often noted (Reason, 2009). Consequently, students who perceive the college environment to be fraught with infighting and competition for resources (political), or who perceive that the college treats students as just another number (bureaucratic), are less likely to persist (Reason, 2009).

The fourth and final characteristic of the human environment is how the student subjectively views the culture and climate of the college environment

(Strange and Banning, 2001). The model of student persistence as proposed by Bean and Eaton (2000) highlights the importance of the psychological aspects of the student. Self-efficacy, coping strategies, and locus of control, play an important role in how students perceive the college environment (Bean & Eaton, 2000). For example, a student who has positive self-efficacy will be better able to navigate academic and social integration if he or she believes that they are able to do so. In turn, this successful integration will inform future interactions within the college environment. Student beliefs lead to intention which ultimately leads to actions; actions are seen as essentially choices (Bean & Eaton, 2000).

Emotional Geography's Emerging Contributions

Although the chapters of Strange and Banning's (2001) volume attempt to comprehensively engage with the characteristics of post-secondary environments, the impacts of emotions are not meaningfully addressed. For Strange and Banning, and in educational discourse more largely, emotions are understood through the lens of proper or improper, or those that require intervention versus those that are an asset to student persistence. These conceptions of the emotions of post-secondary experiences are limited, as they fail to consider how emotions are constructing the students' experiences. Administrators, student affairs professionals, faculty, and other staff who work from this understanding of emotion ultimately pathologize emotions and frame the apparently ugly or bad emotions as something to be treated or rectified (Kenway & Youdell, 2011). Another conception of emotions and how they interact with environments is warranted.

Some research into the emotional geographies of education that engage with a more complicated conception of emotion has begun to emerge. Researchers have begun to expose and engage how emotions and educational space can be understood as mutually constitutive (Addison, 2011; Grinberg, 2011, Nairn & Higgins, 2011, Zembylas, 2011). This re-centering of emotions as a primary concern of research, enriched by a spatial/environmental lens, can reveal new specificities of student experiences related to persistence. For instance, while Strange and Banning (2001) recognized that there are psychological components to student environments, they stopped short of explaining how those components play out for students. Most of the initial probes into the emotional geographies of education are focused on primary and secondary schools, but some research is emerging around post-secondary contexts (Huber, 2010; Pedersen, 2013). For instance, de Leeuw, Parkes, and Thien (2013) examined how the emotional contingencies of undergraduate medical programs—specifically their intensity and rigor—were experienced. Here, scholars found that factors such as a highly competitive admissions process and imposing admission guidelines that stressed the rare opportunities afforded set up a culture of anxiety and fear of failure that was experienced spatially, “through and by examples and modeling of people’s behaviors in space...often with deeply affecting emotional drivers” (de Leeuw et al., 2013, p. 5).

Further, Pedersen (2013) considered the emotionally fraught practices of

veterinary students who must learn to both empathize and distance themselves in engaging with the prospective profession. Intriguingly, this work revealed how subtly yet thoroughly emotions can be embodied in an educational context. For instance, Pedersen observed how students are taught about a cow's field of vision as it relates to driving cattle: by standing and moving their arms across their own field of vision. This functioned to distance student feelings towards the animals by understanding them through their biomechanical processes, stripping away the highly emotive processes of animal slaughter. In this way, teaching practices can be understood to manipulate emotions and reproduce certain social orders, which can impact student experiences. This research provides helpful orientations moving forward, and encourages researchers to think of what kind of practices and experiences in post secondary environments are imbued with emotions.

Implications and Conclusion: Towards an Emotional Geography of Student Persistence

After reviewing the theoretical and environmental landscape of student persistence research, the neglect of the emotional perspectives and how they are spatially mediated is apparent. We acknowledge that this is not surprising, especially if we consider emotions outside of a good versus bad dichotomy. Outside of that conception, emotions are messy, complicated and uncomfortable and therefore exceedingly difficult to research. However, the emerging inquiries of emotional geography are blazing a trail for persistence researchers to explore. Emotional geographies can function as a sensitizing, critical lens for persistence researchers. To borrow from organizational theorist Weick (1976), emotional geographies can "sensitize the observer to notice and question things that had previously been taken for granted" (p. 2). In bringing emotions to the fore, emotional geographies can reveal the subtlety and nuances of individual and particular experiences related to college persistence, providing a clearer picture of the circumstances at stake.

As mentioned above, emotional geography is based in the conception that our emotions and the spaces we inhabit are mutually constitutive and recursive (Anderson, 2009; Davidson, Bondi, & Smith, 2007). From this perspective, we can see some potentially fruitful approaches to the examination of student persistence. How might a holistic conception of college environments change when considered through an emotional geography lens? What components and characteristics of post-secondary environments hold affective-spatial attributes that have not been considered as such? Aspects of post-secondary education that at first glance would appear to have no spatial or emotional elements can be understood in entirely new ways. As de Leeuw et al. (2013) observed, disciplines and curricula unfold in particular spaces and have the capacity to constrain and impress upon students on deeply emotional levels. Revealing these aspects of student experience holds immense potential for curricula amendments as well as approaches to teaching and learning in ways that ultimately support student persistence.

Due to a complex conception of the relationships between educational

environments and affect, emotional geography brings an innovative perspective to student persistence research. The profound impacts of emotions—specifically through a spatially recursive perspective—are an under-examined yet potentially profound component of student persistence. However promising, the perspectives of emotional geographies cannot be considered holistic. Rather, considering the emotional geographies of student persistence adds another perspective, potentially revealing new avenues for supporting students' completion of post-secondary degrees. Taking emotions seriously and outside a reductive, marginalizing framework opens up new avenues for student engagement and the support of persistence through graduation.

References

- Addison, N. (2011). The dirtying of David: Transgression, affect, and the potential space of art. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 4(3), 172–179. doi:10.1016/j.emospa.2010.09.004
- Anderson, B. (2009). Emotional geography. In D. Gregory, R. Johnston, G. Pratt, M. J. Watts, & S. Whatmore (Eds.), *The dictionary of human geography* (5th ed.) (pp. 207–208). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Anderson, K., & Smith, S. J. (2001). Editorial: Emotional geographies. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 26, 7–10. doi: 10.1111/1475-5661.00002
- Astin, A. W. (1984). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Development*, 40(5), 518–529.
- Barefoot, B. O. (2004). Higher education's revolving door: Confronting the problem of student drop out in US colleges and universities. *Open Learning*, 19(1), 9–18.
- Bean, J. P., & Eaton, S. B. (2000). A psychological model of college student retention. In J. M. Braxton. (Ed.), *Reworking the student departure puzzle* (pp. 48–61). Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.
- Berger, J. B. (2001–2002). Understanding the organizational nature of student persistence: Empirically-based recommendations for practice. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research Theory & Practice* 3(1), 3–21.
- Berger, J. B., & Milem, J. F. (2000). Organizational behavior in higher education and student outcomes. In J. C. Smart (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (Vol. XV, pp. 268–338). New York, NY: Agathon.
- Bondi, L., Davidson, J., & Smith, M. (2007). Geography's "Emotional Turn". In J. Davidson, L. Bondi, & M. Smith (Eds.), *Emotional geographies* (pp. 1–16). Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Davidson, J., Bondi, L., & Smith, M. (Eds.). (2007). *Emotional geographies*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- De Leeuw, S., Parkes, M. W., & Thien, D. (2013). Questioning medicine's discipline: The arts of emotions in undergraduate medical education. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 1–9. doi:10.1016/j.emospa.2013.11.006
- Elkins, S. A., Braxton, J. M., & James, G. W. (2000). Tinto's separation stage and its influence on first-semester college student persistence. *Research in Higher Education*, 41(2), 251–268.
- Gregory, D., & Urry, J. (Eds.). (1985). *Social relations and spatial structures*. London, United Kingdom: Macmillan.
- Grinberg, S. M. (2011). Territories of schooling and schooling territories in contexts of extreme urban poverty in Argentina: Between management and abjection. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 4(3), 160–171. doi:10.1016/j.emospa.2011.01.001
- Huber, M. T. (2010). Caring for students: Pedagogy and professionalism in an age of anxiety. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 3(2), 71–79. doi:10.1016/j.emospa.2009.06.002
- Jackson, P., & Smith, S. J. (1984). *Exploring social geography*. London, United Kingdom: George Allen and Unwin.
- Kenway, J., & Youdell, D. (2011). The emotional geographies of education: Beginning a conversation. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 4(3), 131–136. doi:10.1016/j.emospa.2011.07.001
- Kuh, G. D., Cruce, T. M., Shoup, R., Kinzie, J., & Gonyea, R. M., (2008). Unmasking the effects of student engagement on first-year college grades and persistence. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 79(5), 540–563.
- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Buckley, J. A., Bridges, B. K., & Hayek, J. C. (2007). *Piecing together the student success puzzle: Research, propositions, and recommendations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J. H., Whitt, E. J., & Associates. (2005). *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Nairn, K., & Higgins, J. (2011). The emotional geographies of neoliberal school reforms: Spaces of refuge and containment. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 4(3), 180–186. doi:10.1016/j.emospa.2010.10.001

- O'Keeffe, P. (2013). A sense of belonging: Improving student retention. *College Student Journal*, 47(4), 605-614.
- Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (2005). *How college affects students: A third decade of research (Vol. 2)*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Pedersen, H. (2013). Parasitic pedagogies and materialities of affect in veterinary education. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 1-7. doi:10.1016/j.emospa.2013.10.002
- Reason, R. D. (2009). An examination of persistence research through the lens of a comprehensive conceptual framework. *Journal of College Student Development*, 50(6), 659-682. doi: 10.1353/csd.0.0098
- Strange, C. C., & Banning, J. H. (2001). *Educating by design: Creating campus learning environments that work*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Terenzini, P. T., & Reason, R. D. (2005, November). Parsing the first year of college: Rethinking the effects of college on students. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Philadelphia, PA.
- Tinto, V. (1988). Stages of student departure: Reflections on the longitudinal character of student leaving. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 59(4), 438-455.
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. London, England: The University of Chicago Press.
- Wei, M., Ku, T.-Y., & Liao, K. Y.-H. (2011). Minority stress and college persistence attitudes among African American, Asian American, and Latino students: Perception of university environment as a mediator. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 17(2), 195-203. doi:10.1037/a0023359
- Weick, K. E. (1976). Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 21(1), 1-19.
- Zembylas, M. (2011). Investigating the emotional geographies of exclusion at a multicultural school. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 4(3), 151-159. doi:10.1016/j.emospa.2010.03.003

About the Authors

Jamison Miller and Mike Donlan are PhD students in the EPPL Higher Education program at the College of William & Mary. Jamison's research interests are in community colleges, critical university studies, and digital cultures. Mike is researching student development theory and the experiences of medical students.