Understanding Higher Education

McKenna, Sioux, Bowie, Chrissie

Published by African Minds

McKenna, Sioux and Chrissie Bowie.
Understanding Higher Education: Alternative Perspectives.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/85653.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/85653

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=3001127
Understanding Higher Education: Alternative Perspectives

Chrissie Boughey & Sioux McKenna
This wonderful book will be a treasure for graduate students and scholars who seek to understand and theorise higher education in ways that support social justice. Rooted in the experiences of South Africa, the book uses social realism to argue for alternative ways of seeing higher education that can inform practice and policy in both the Global South and Global North.

Prof. Leesa Wheelahan, William G. Davis Chair in Community College Leadership, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

Professors Chrissie Boughey and Sioux McKenna have written a truly insightful, engaging and informative book on teaching and learning in higher education. Every vice-chancellor, academic and ordinary citizen must read this book.

Dr Sizwe Mabizela, Vice-Chancellor, Rhodes University, South Africa

This is an outstanding book, offering an exceptionally rich analysis of the impacts of neoliberalism on higher education in South Africa. It examines in vibrant detail the ways through which a market ideology has penetrated the education system, with devastating costs on faculty, students, and research. It also sheds light on resistances to the neoliberal transformation together with attempts to develop alternative perspectives. The book is an essential reading for anyone interested in neoliberalism, higher education, and the political economy of South Africa and beyond.

Prof. Fikret Adaman, Department of Economics, Boğaziçi University, Turkey

This important book offers a theoretically rich and engaging account of what is needed to ensure that university education is meaningfully accessible to all students. By examining these issues from the perspective of policies, students, curricula, and academic staff, it offers a systematic view of the challenges facing teaching and learning in higher education and the potential for positive change.

Prof. Paul Ashwin, Head of Department: Educational Research, Lancaster University, UK

A timely, insightful, and nuanced rendition of alternative perspectives on higher education. Boughey and McKenna have given local thinking the gravitas that will reverberate at the global level for many decades to come.

Prof. Emmanuel Mgqwashu, Director: Centre for Teaching and Learning, North West University, South Africa
This book provides an informative, illuminating and insightful critique of higher education. Its arguments change the way higher education is conceived of and conducted in African universities and beyond. This is a timely and most welcome research work that is theoretically grounded beyond the usual common-sense discourses on the subject.

Prof. Christopher Odhiambo Joseph (CJ), Dean: School of Postgraduate Studies, Moi University, Kenya

Any academic text has to strike a delicate balance between the complexity of its content and simplicity in delivery. This book nails it! The authors provide us with significant insights into the contextual dynamics that are the world of higher education. This book is a compelling read for everyone involved in academia.

Dr Lillian Omondi, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Maseno University, Kenya

If you wish to understand higher education today, especially in the Global South, this book is for you. Boughey and McKenna bring their extensive experience and astute analytical minds to bear on critical issues of teaching and learning to offer alternative perspectives that provide positive ways forward.

Prof. Karl Maton, Director of the LCT Centre for Knowledge-Building, University of Sydney, Australia

Based on their rich experience as engaged lecturers and researchers, Chrissie Boughey and Sioux McKenna have exceptional abilities to critique the very system of which they are inevitably a part. They highlight why often seemingly self-explanatory systems are not effective in practice. Boughey and McKenna have written an accessible text that makes complex global challenges and problematic local realities comprehensible, whilst also outlining a vision for real change.

Dr Henk van den Heuvel, Director of the Centre for International Cooperation, Vrije Universiteit, The Netherlands

This book offers a critical stance with which all higher education practitioners should engage given the rapid social and economic changes taking place the world over. This book is a must-read for academics across disciplines, academic developers, researchers, policymakers, students and everyone concerned about universities and their role in society.

Dr Langutani Masehela, Head of Department: Academic Development Unit, University of Venda, South Africa
This is a powerful and inspiring book sustaining the idea that for a just institution, teaching and learning is key.

*Dr Nelson Mbarushimana, Director-General: Rwanda Basic Education, Rwanda*

This book is an original and significant contribution to an important set of debates around the purposes and possibilities for contemporary higher education. Boughey and McKenna draw on an incredible breadth of expertise to tackle this analysis at a whole new level of sophistication. The core of their work is quite exceptional for its ability to take in the diversity of institutional cultures which comprise the South African higher education system, and then to develop their analysis across macro levels of funding and accreditation through to meso considerations of curriculum for students and staff development for staff through to the very micro details of lived realities of the people who find themselves in these contexts. An extraordinary contribution is their empathetic juxtaposition of the situations of both students and staff who find themselves culturally adrift in these institutions with huge hangovers of their colonial and apartheid pasts. Boughey and McKenna unsettle the common-sense arguments that tend to condition even the responses of university leaders, and they go further to debunk the misuse of educational theory. While their core contextual focus is South Africa, they offer careful comparisons of higher education systems across the continent, and internationally. This book is going to be a key resource for higher education scholars, wherever they locate themselves, and an important read for policymakers aiming to transform higher education systems to truly deliver on their promises.

*Prof. Jennifer M. Case, Head of Department: Virginia Tech, USA & Honorary Professor, University of Cape Town, South Africa*

The authors provide a fascinating reflection on the discourses that dominate our higher education system. They use Social Realism to analyse the higher education system and offer an alternative for understanding students by challenging common-sense beliefs such as the notion of the untalented and unmotivated student. The book turns on its head the idea that universities are a meritocracy.

*Dr Simpiwe Sobuwa, Head of Department: Emergency Medical Care & Rescue, Durban University of Technology, South Africa*

This book will occupy a distinct place for those grappling with research on teaching and learning. It will fill a significant gap because it enables teaching and learning practitioners to bridge the chasm between their observations and experiences on the one hand, and the lessons we can learn from scholarship.

*Dr Matete Madiba, Director: Student Affairs, University of Pretoria, South Africa*
Acknowledgements

We are grateful to a great many people who have contributed in various ways to this book. In particular we would like to acknowledge our colleagues in the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning at Rhodes University. They undertake academic development work from a wholly social perspective and have contributed to our understandings of higher education in a great many ways. We would also like to thank our students, especially those postgraduate scholars we have had the privilege of supervising, who have introduced us to new ideas and theories and whose work has greatly enriched this text.

We thank our families for their wholehearted and tireless support of us, especially when our work leads to extended absences from home.

Special thanks are also due to our editor, Susan Blair, whose eagle eye spotted many of the errors we were no longer able to ‘see’ given our own proximity to our text and to our illustrator, Theresa Gordon, for capturing complex ideas in such an accessible way.