

TRANSITIONS TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

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BACK IN SCHOOL

How Student Parents
Are Transforming
College and Family

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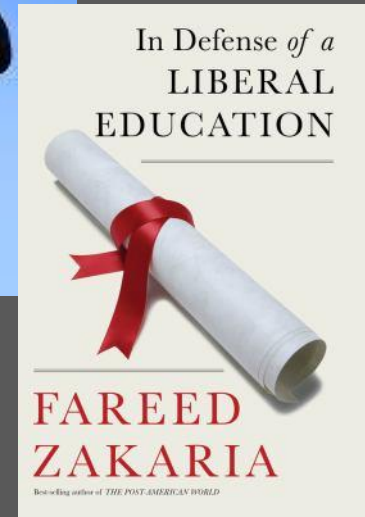


Research Questions . . .

- What do student parents expect from a college education?
 - How are these students' educational expectations, experiences & opportunities shaped by
 - public policies
 - the economy
 - institutional norms
 - **cultural beliefs**
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Cultural Logics . . .

- Instrumental & Human Capital Framings (Job & Skills Training)
- Liberal Arts & General Education Framings



Beyond the University by Michael S. Roth



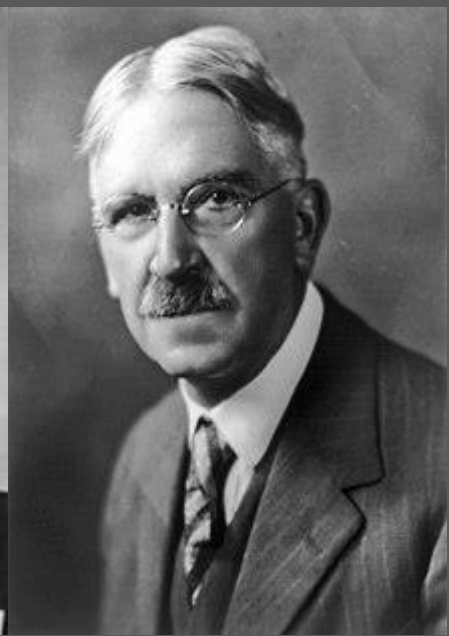
W.E.B DuBois
1868 - 1963



Booker T. Washington
1856-1915



Jane Addams
1860-1935



John Dewey
1859-1952

Strategies of Being . . .

How students make sense of their perceived needs and sense of self by embracing, modifying, or rejecting complementary or competing cultural logics, all in the context of their access to social resources.



Learning from Student Parents

- Interviews with 40 student parents
 - 29 mothers / 11 fathers
 - Parents ranged in age from 22 - 54 years
 - 86% received income-based federal or state grants or loans
 - 29 parents were caring for children under 5 years of age
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What Students Want and Why . . .

Dispositions & Strategies of Being:

- Job Seekers (14)
 - Practical Explorers (19)
 - Self Reflective Learners (7)
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Self-reflective Learners ...

- Personal Enrichment & Growth
- Emotional Empowerment



Why understanding cultural logics and strategies of being is important . . .

TABLE 4.1

Student Parents' Educational Dispositions by Household Family Structure, Age,⁺ and Income Status*

<i>Job Seekers</i>			<i>Practical Explorers</i>			<i>Self-Reflective Learners</i>		
<i>Single</i>	<i>Divorced</i>	<i>Partnered</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Divorced</i>	<i>Partnered</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Divorced</i>	<i>Partnered</i>
21*	26*	19*	25	26	20	22*	29	25
23*	27	20*		34*	23	27		29
26*	49	23			27	31*		29
28		26*			34	34		33*
31*		29*			35	38		34
		29			40	41		52
					42	44		
					45*	54		

⁺ Numbers refer to age in years.

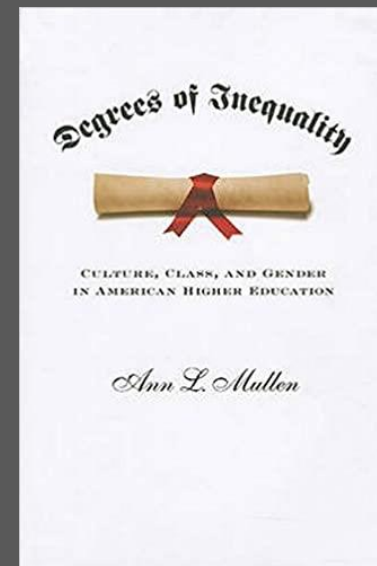
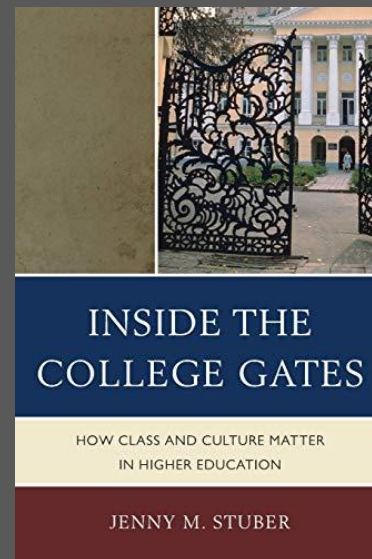
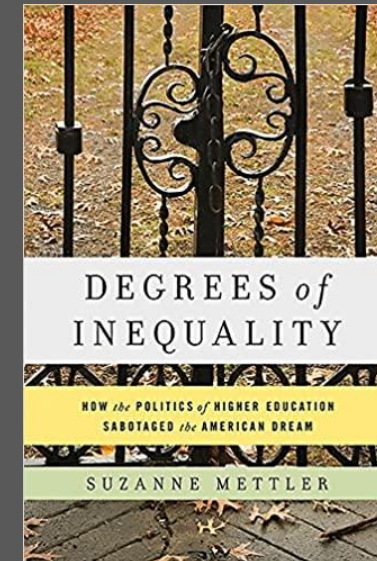
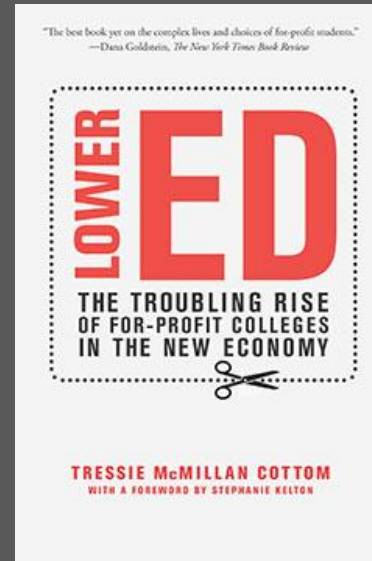
* Students who are receiving Pell Grants.

Source: Author.

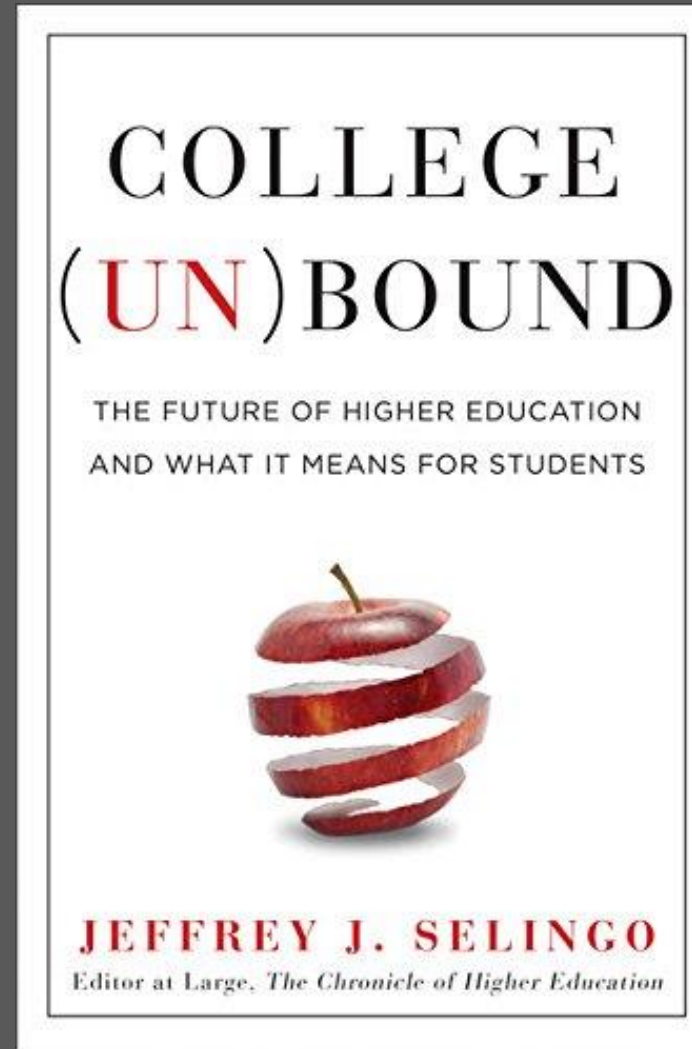
- Job Seekers are less likely to emphasize their student Identity
 - Institutional Obstacles
 - Financial Obstacles
 - Lack of Campus-based Supports
 - Age, Stigma, Academic Norms
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Final Thoughts . . .

- Higher education alone cannot be expected to solve the troubles inherent in our unequal economy.
- Higher education itself is fraught with inequalities .



College in the 21st century is “no longer a one-size-fits all experience.”



It's a Marathon Not a Sprint . . .

- Reaffirming Student Parents' Identities
 - Child Care – Drop-in Care
 - Student Parent Support Groups
 - Flexible Schedules
 - Creating Social Choices & Opportunity
 - Federal & State Investment in Public Higher Education
 - Free Community College
 - Living Wages & Health Care
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