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**Keywords:** Cultural Capital, Education Inequality, Academic Achievement, Persistence, Higher Education

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## Cultural Capital and Educational Inequality: A Study of Academic Achievement and Persistence among Higher Education Students



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### Abstract

This is a qualitative research study on the influence of cultural capital on the experience of students and their education results in higher education. Through the Bourdieu theory of cultural capital, habitus, and field, the study examines the way students with varying socioeconomic statuses act to mobilize embodied, objectified and institutionalized forms of capital in universities. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 undergraduate students, with different socioeconomic and first-generation backgrounds. Thematic analysis showed that cultural capital has significant impacts on academic confidence, classroom involvement, institutional orientation, and sense of belonging. Students with high socioeconomic status exhibited a greater adherence to the mainstream academic standards, and the first-generation and low-SES students indicated that they experienced difficulties in the beginning but had developed coping strategies throughout their lives. The results bring out the reproductive character of higher education as well as its reorganizational possibilities. The research paper highlights the importance of having inclusive institutional practices in order to minimize the inequalities in academic achievement and persistence.

**Keywords:** *Cultural Capital, Education Inequality, Academic Achievement, Persistence, Higher Education*

### Introduction

The importance of disability rights across the world became prominent with the signing of the UN The issue of educational inequality is still a thorn in the flesh of all the global settings, and the socioeconomic background of students predetermines their academic paths and results. Although the opportunities to obtain higher education have increased in numerous countries, the differences in level of academic performance, continuation, and achievement of degrees are also highly patterned along social lines (Bukodi & Goldthorpe 2013; Egalite 2016; Erola et al. 2016). There has been a growing interest by scholars in applying the theory of cultural capital created by Pierre Bourdieu as a way of understanding the impact of family background on educational success on top of material resources (Tzanakis, 2011). Cultural capital, represented by dispositions, language practices, cultural knowledge, and educational qualification is vital in generating social inequalities in the educational systems (Tramonte & Willms, 2010; Andersen & Hansen, 2012).

Evidence-based research has shown that in different national settings, cultural capital plays a major role in determining the level of educational performance and attainment (Yang et al., 2022; Yamamoto and Brinton, 2010). Exposure to books, intellectual conversations and educational expectations have also been reported to play a positive role in academic success (Evans et al., 2010). In addition, parental education and



levels of classes influence the aspirations of students, their academic confidence and such factors as access to institutional knowledge (Roksa & Potter, [2011](#); Schoon et al., [2010](#)). Much of this literature is however based on quantitative methodology and there is a need to obtain more qualitative information on the experience of mobilizing cultural capital and how students themselves experience cultural capital in higher education settings.

In the university, cultural capital is executed via embodied dispositions like communication styles, academic confidence, and knowledge of institutional norms (Gaddis, [2013](#); Stuber, [2011](#)). Students of the first generation and working-class are likely to complain about their inability to follow the academic requirements and find a sense of belonging when they lack inherited knowledge of what is expected in a university (Dumais & Ward, [2010](#); O'Shea, [2016](#)). It has also been noted by research that institutions are inclined to favor dominant middle-class type of cultural capital, thus, supporting patterns of social reproduction (Jaeger & Breen, 2016; Kalfa & Taksa, [2015](#)). Meanwhile, new types of cultural capital, such as the cosmopolitan and transnational competencies, imply that capital is both dynamic and contextual (Igarashi & Saito, [2014](#); Prieur & Savage, [2013](#)).

Cultural capital is not independent but cuts across ethnicity, migration background, and gender. As an illustration, the ethnic and transnational types of capital could impact educational goals and academic performance of immigrants and minority pupils (Shah et al., [2010](#); Ichou, [2014](#); Gerhards & Hans, [2013](#)). Likewise, the role of racial and gender in mediating the impact of social and cultural capital in higher education academic performance is also the same (Strayhorn, [2010](#)). These results indicate how challenging cultural capital is as a reproduction process and a potential asset of adaptation both in the sphere of education.

Although cultural capital and level of education have been studied extensively, little has been done in qualitative research on how university students with varied socioeconomic backgrounds experience, interpret and mobilize cultural capital in their daily academic experiences. This research will fill this gap by narrowing down to the field of higher education and considering the experience of students in the university. Based on the theoretical framework by Bourdieu, the study examines three types of cultural capital, including embodied, objectified, and institutionalized cultural capital, and how they relate to academic involvement, perseverance, and college graduation.

To this end, this study will be informed by two main goals, which include; (1) to understand how students with various levels of socioeconomic status experience and mobilize various types of cultural capital in higher education institutions, and (2) to determine how cultural capital operates to determine academic success, persistence and degree completion in higher education. In a qualitative sense, the study attempts to offer a subtle perspective on how cultural capital can work in a university setting, and how it can cause the replication -or possible change- of educational disparities.

## **Research Objectives**

1. To investigate the experiences and mobilizations of the various types of cultural capital among the students of different socioeconomic backgrounds in institutions of higher learning.
2. To examine how cultural capital impacts academic performance, persistence and educational degree completion in higher education.

## **Significance of the Study**

This research paper aims at analyzing how cultural capital influences the experience and academic performance of students in institutions of higher learning. By employing Bourdieu and his theory of cultural capital, the study focuses on how students with various socioeconomic backgrounds encounter, perceive, and put to play the various types of cultural capital within the university contexts.

The research is confined to discussing three main types of cultural capital, such as embodied (e.g., academic language proficiency, dispositions, confidence, communication styles), objectified (e.g., access to academic resources and cultural resources), and institutionalized (e.g., previous academic qualification

and schooling background) in terms of their influence on the academic engagement of students in academic activities and their participation in university life.

In support of the first goal, the study examines lived experiences of students in higher learning institutions, their sense of belonging, classroom engagement, faculty engagement, and institutional norm-navigation. Special emphasis is put on underrepresented students, including first-generation university students, students with lower socioeconomic status, and so forth.

According to the second goal, the paper analyses how cultural capital affects academic success, continuation, and degree attainment. The discussion is on the interplay between family educational background, past schooling experiences, and internalized dispositions (*habitus*) and the institutional expectations and academic culture.

The research is limited to the higher education environment and not to the primary or secondary education. Also, even though social and economic capital are considered to be the two interconnected constructs, the focal analysis is put on cultural capital and its qualitative expression in the context of university settings.

## Literature Review

The idea of cultural capital is the work of Pierre Bourdieu in his theory of social reproduction that holds that education systems are crucial to perpetuating social inequalities by justifying and valuing the cultural capital of the dominant social classes (Tzanakis, 2011). Cultural capital is found in three major types, which include embodied (dispositions, language styles, as well as competencies), objectified (cultural goods like books and educational resources), and institutionalized (educational credentials and qualifications). In such forms, families transfer benefits in line with institutional requirements, and as such, they affect educational achievements (Tramonte & Willms, 2010).

Bourdieu has subsequently been built up with dynamic accounts of cultural reproduction putting the focal point on the interplay of family origin, institutional frameworks, and individual agency (Jaeger & Breen, 2016). The scholars believe that the cultural capital is not fixed but rather changes with contexts and throughout the life, and determines educational paths in the long run. This view highlights the role of studying how students are mobilizing cultural capital in certain areas of education, especially the higher education.

## Educational Achievement and Cultural Capital

There is a significant amount of empirical evidence that cultural capital is strongly linked with educational results. Research in both European and Asian settings indicates that cultural capital has a positive impact on academic achievement and performance despite the fact that socioeconomic status has been controlled (Andersen & Hansen, 2012; Yamamoto & Brinton, 2010; Yang et al., 2022). According to Tramonte and Willms (2010), cultural capital mediates the correlation between family socioeconomic status and student achievement, which means that it is an important source of inequality.

It has also been shown that family scholarly culture featuring the availability of books and intellectual activity at home are also associated with greater educational achievement levels in several countries (Evans et al., 2010). In like manner, education level of parents and their social background influences the academic ambitions, cognitive growth, and academic performance of children (Bukodi & Goldthorpe, 2013; Erola et al., 2016; Roksa & Potter, 2011). Such results support the thesis that inequality in education is rooted in the fact that cultural transmission between generations is a process.

Nevertheless, other researchers emphasize the necessity to differentiate between various types of capital and the impact that each of them has in relation to others. Although the contribution of social capital - networks and relationships to educational outcomes can also play a role, cultural capital is at the center of the explanation of how institutions identify and compensate specific competencies (Rogosic & Baranovic, 2016; Dufur et al., 2013).

## Higher Education Cultural Capital

In the higher education context, cultural capital has proven to be instrumental in defining the sense of belonging, academic confidence, and maneuvering through institutional norms of students. The literature report that first-generation and working-class students tend to have little knowledge about the unwritten rules and expectations of the university life and this may harm their academic adaptation and retention (Dumais & Ward, 2010; O'Shea, 2016). The example of Stuber (2011) shows that middle-class students tend to be more prepared to acclimate into the campus culture because they are used to such settings.

As an embodiment of cultural capital, especially academic language skills and communication patterns, this factor contributes greatly to participation in classroom activities and the sense of competence (Gaddis, 2013). Kalfa and Taksa (2015) also state that in many cases, universities are focused on employability skills and graduate attributes that are focused on supreme cultural norms, which promote inequalities based on classes. The same aspects are highlighted by Burke (2015) who focuses on the effects of the classed types of cultural capital in the graduate future and the post-university opportunities.

Meanwhile, researchers have found new and other types of cultural capital in universities. Transnational experiences and cosmopolitan competencies are now being considered useful within the educational systems of globalization (Igarashi & Saito, 2014; Gerhards & Hans, 2013).

Cultural capital overlaps with ethnicity, migrant experiences, race, and gender in influencing education. Shah et al. (2010) also present the notion of the so-called ethnic capital, showing how minority groups can organize their joint cultural resources in order to promote educational ambitions. As demonstrated by Ichou (2014), the selectivity of immigrants more so affects the education level of children, which suggests that transnational cultural capital can also lead to academic achievements.

Strayhorn (2010) presents the interaction between race and gender and social and cultural capital in achieving academic performance of African American and Latino male students. Equally, Goldenberg (2014) highlights the need to appreciate the many types of cultural capital in learning institutions to enhance the level of inclusiveness in educational institutions. These researches demonstrate that cultural capital does not work the same way in both social groups and under institutional circumstances.

## **Gaps in the Literature**

Despite numerous quantitative studies that have demonstrated that cultural capital has a strict relation with the level of education attained, not many studies have been conducted to identify how various university students perceive and experience cultural capital in their day to day academic works. A good part of the current literature has attributed cultural capital using parental education or book home reading as a proxy, which is possibly not exhaustive in terms of its lived and embodied aspects (Tramonte & Willms, 2010). Moreover, although the research recognizes that institutional reproduction of inequality takes place, little has been done to examine the ways in which students negotiate, obtain, or invert cultural capital in their higher education environments.

Accordingly, a qualitative research study conducted on the lived experiences of the students can be used to understand the process whereby cultural capital affects academic success, continuity, and college graduation in a more profound manner. Through analyzing how students of heterogeneous socioeconomic status mobilize cultural capital in universities, this paper will add to a more intricate perspective on cultural reproduction and possible change in higher education.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The proposed research is based on the theory of cultural reproduction developed by Pierre Bourdieu, which gives a detailed concept of the manner in which social inequalities are perpetuated and reproduced within educational establishments (Tzanakis, 2011). The key component in this structure is the interconnected ideas of cultural capital, habitus, and field that will explain the influence of the social background of the students in terms of the educational experiences and results.

## **Cultural Capital**

Bourdieu theorized the cultural capital into three categories of embodied, objectified and institutionalized. Embodied cultural capital is considered to be internalized dispositions, language practices, communication styles, and academic competences that people gain by means of socialization within the community and the family. Objectified cultural capital is comprised of material cultural items like books, education resources and access to intellectually stimulating environments. The concept of institutionalized cultural capital is known as the officially approved qualifications and academic credentials (Tramonte & Willms, 2010).

These types of cultural capital within the higher education context affect how students attend classes, their belief in engaging with faculty, their academic writing capabilities and the way students understand institutional requirements. Empirical studies have shown that students with middle and upper-class backgrounds have a higher tendency of having access to forms of cultural capital that are endorsing of the dominant academic conventions (Andersen & Hansen, 2012, Dumais & Ward, 2010). This means that without the intention, universities reward the students with cultural resources that align with the standards of the institution.

### Habitus

Habitus is the mechanism of stability, internalized disciplines that are formed due to the social background of the people and it is the one that makes them perceive, act and think (Gaddis, 2013). It shows the attitude of the student to their identity in the educational sector and it affects the aspirations, sense of belonging, and academic habits of the students. Students with high-educated families can also become accustomed to having a certain habitus that fits the culture of universities so that academic participation becomes natural and effortless. First-generation or working-class students, on the other hand, can be facing a clash between their institutional expectations and their habitus, which result in feelings of alienation or self-doubt (O'Shea, 2016; Stuber, 2011).

### Field

The term field is used to define the organized social space in which people struggle to get resources and status. Higher education institutions are a unique area, which is predetermined by unspoken regulations, expectations, and existing power relationships. According to this discipline, some types of cultural capital are sanctioned and well-compensated, and some might not be well-compensated (Kalfa & Taksa, 2015). The degree to which their habitus and cultural capital is congruent with the norms of the university field is a factor that will determine whether or not students succeed.

Studies indicate that many universities tend to favor mainstream cultural practices of middle classes, which strengthen the forces of inequality (Burke, 2015). Nevertheless, new types of capital, including cosmopolitan or transnational competencies, suggest dynamic character of the fields and their changeability (Igarashi & Saito, 2014; Prieur & Savage, 2013).

Based on these theories, the present study conceptualizes the results of education in tertiary education, including academic success, retention and earning a degree as a product of the interaction between the cultural capital already possessed by students, their habitus, and the nature of the university field. The framework directs the inquiry into the experiences of exploration of embodied, objectified, and institutionalized cultural capital among students with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds in their academics.

With the application of Bourdieu theoretical view, this study will seek to elucidate the processes in which cultural capital has a bearing on student's sense of belonging, academic confidence as well as negotiating institutional norms, which in turn contribute to the reproduction or possible change of educational inequalities in higher education.

### Methodology

The proposed research has a qualitative research approach which will be used in examining how cultural capital influences the experiences and academic performance among students in higher education institutions. The study is based on the theoretical framework of Bourdieu, which is informed by the

epistemological perspective of interpretivist, which presupposes that knowledge is socially constructed by the way people live and perceive it and that to understand the issue of educational inequality, one needs to differentiate into the subjective perceptions of the participants. The ontological settings of the study lie in the constructivist paradigm where the existence or reality is acknowledged as multi-faceted, contextual and socially constructed and not singular and objective. Data were gathered by conducting in-depth and semi-structured interviews with 12 undergraduate students (6 males and 6 female) with different socioeconomic backgrounds to maintain gender balance and diverse insights of different experiences. The purposive sampling technique was applied so that participants with diversity in family educational background and the first-generation status are captured. The data were discussed through thematic analysis, after a methodical approach of coding, categorizing and finding out common patterns and themes of forms of cultural capital, habitus, academic activities and institutional expectations. The given method of analysis provided an opportunity to identify emerging themes inductively and to interpret in a deductive manner relying on the ideas of Bourdieu so that a rich and contextualized image of how students perceive and mobilize cultural capital in the university field and its impacts on their academic engagement and persistence would be offered.

## Results

Table 1: The demographic characteristics of the undergraduate participants interviewed in this study.

**Table 1**

*Demographic Profile of Respondents*

Respondent	Gender	First-Generation Status	Socioeconomic Background	Field of Study
R1	Male	Yes	Low	Social Sciences
R2	Female	Yes	Low	Business
R3	Male	Yes	Middle	Engineering
R4	Female	No	Middle	Education
R5	Male	Yes	Low	Arts
R6	Female	Yes	Low	Health Sciences
R7	Male	No	High	Business
R8	Female	Yes	Middle	Social Sciences
R9	Male	Yes	Low	Engineering
R10	Female	Yes	High	Law
R11	Male	No	Middle	Education
R12	Female	Yes	Low	Arts

Out of the 12 participants, 6 were male and 6 were female. 9 students identified as first-generation university students, primarily from low socioeconomic backgrounds

## Thematic Findings

Thematic analysis generated four major themes aligned with the study objectives: (1) Embodied Cultural Capital and Academic Confidence, (2) Family Educational Background and Academic Navigation, (3) Institutional Expectations and Sense of Belonging, and (4) Cultural Capital and Academic Persistence.

**Table 2***Themes and Illustrative Quotes*

Theme	Description	Illustrative Quotes
Embodied Cultural Capital and Academic Confidence	Students from educated families demonstrated stronger academic language proficiency and classroom confidence.	“I’m comfortable speaking in seminars because that’s how we talk at home—debates were normal for us.” (R7) “Sometimes I know the answer, but I hesitate because I’m not sure if I’m saying it the ‘right’ academic way.” (R2)
Family Educational Background and Academic Navigation	Parental education influenced students’ ability to understand university systems and expectations.	“My parents helped me choose my courses and explained how internships matter.” (R10) “I had to figure everything out myself—no one in my family has been to university before.” (R1)
Institutional Expectations and Sense of Belonging	University norms reflected middle-class cultural standards, affecting students’ belonging.	“It feels like some students already know how things work here—it’s like they belong naturally.” (R5) “Group discussions feel easy for me because I’ve been exposed to this environment before.” (R8)
Cultural Capital and Academic Persistence	Students with limited cultural capital reported greater adjustment struggles but developed adaptive strategies.	“In my first semester, I thought maybe university wasn’t for people like me.” (R12) “Over time, I learned how professors expect assignments to be written.” (R9)

The findings suggest that cultural capital has a very strong influence on the academic confidence of the students, classroom engagement and their capacity to maneuver through the institution structures in higher institutions. Middle- and high-socioeconomic students were more aligned with the norms of academic dominance, whereas the first-generation and low-SES students claimed to have issues with academic language, self-confidence, and familiarity with the institution. Nevertheless, some of the respondents proved to be adaptive in the long run, indicating that cultural capital is dynamic and to some extent, it can be obtained in the university discipline.

**Discussion**

This paper aimed to address the research question of how students with varying socioeconomic statuses utilize and mobilize cultural capital in higher education and also to examine the process whereby cultural capital affects academic performance, academic persistence, and attainment of degree. Based on Bourdieu, cultural capital, habitus, and field, the results give a qualitative understanding of the reproduction of educational inequalities, and the negotiation thereof in fact in the university setting in certain situations.

**Cultural Capital and Academic Confidence**

The report is able to establish that embodied cultural capital, especially academic language proficiency and being sure about participating in classroom activities are important to the formation of academic engagement of students. Students with middle- and high-socioeconomic status reported being more comfortable in seminars and discussions and this information can be interpreted as the correspondence between their habitus and the powerful norms of the university field. This is in line with the findings of previous studies that reveal that academic dispositions and communication styles are strongly related to educational achievements (Gaddis, 2013; Stuber, 2011).

In line with the work of Andersen and Hansen (2012) and Tramonte and Willms (2010), the research demonstrates that cultural capital is used as an intermediary factor between social origin and academic achievement. Those students whom home intellectual discourses and academic background had exposed to better interpreted academic requirements.

### **Family History and Institutional Agency**

The findings also note the influence of institutionalized and objectified types of culture capitals in determining the capacity of students to maneuver university structures. Those who had higher education parents indicated that they were given advice regarding course choice, internships and academic planning. This is in agreement with the argument by Roksa and Potter (2011) that the intergenerational communication of educational advantage is helped through parental education.

On the other side, first-generation students explained their way through the system by themselves and sometimes it required trial and error. This is in line with the observation by Dumais and Ward (2010) that students who are first-generation often have no background knowledge about institutional norms. The findings also support the overall body of research on the topic of social reproduction, which indicates that more familiarity with academic culture is likely to be rewarded in universities (Jaeger & Breen, 2016; Kalfa & Taksa, 2015).

One of the major themes that have surfaced due to the data is how cultural capital is intertwined with sense of belonging. Individual students with cultural means that matched the institutional expectations said they felt that they belonged there, whereas those with other means said they initially felt like foreigners. This observation can be correlated to the Bourdieu notion of field where success is determined by means of the correspondence between individual habitus and the institutional arrangements (Tzanakis, 2011).

The lives of the underrepresented students take the turn of Strayhorn (2010) highlighting the importance of belonging as a key component that contributes to academic achievement. In addition, the findings are echoed in studies that have taken place to underscore the tendency of universities to uphold middle-class cultural norms to enhance culture of inequality (Burke, 2015). The research, however, also indicates that belonging is not completely predetermined; some of the respondents devised measures as they went through to fit in with the academic expectations, and it appears that the concept of habitus can change in the university setting (Jaeger & Breen, 2016).

### **Academic Persistence and Cultural Capital**

As far as the second research objective is concerned, the results show that cultural capital has an impact on academic performance, persistence, and degree progression. Students who had lower initial cultural capital indicated that they had a difficult time during their first semesters such as questions on whether they belonged in the university setting or not. The events are representative of the idea of the capacity to aspire that Bok (2010) develops upon, through exposure to educational possibilities and instruction.

However, the data also show that the cultural capital can be partly obtained due to the contact with the field of the university. Others reported to know how to write the assignments as per the academic standards or have confidence due to the repetitive participation. It advances the notion that cultural capital is dynamic as opposed to being static (Prieur & Savage, 2013; Igarashi and Saito, 2014). Although the inherited capital is a privilege, institutional experiences may help to form it, which means that higher education has a reproductive, as well as a transformative, potential.

### **Procreation and Potential of Change**

On the whole, the results support the Bourdieuan theory of social reproduction by showing that the universities do reward different kinds of cultural capital that are linked to the prevailing social groups (Tzanakis, 2011). More academically integrated, more confident, and able to understand the expectations of the institution, students with higher socioeconomic statuses revealed these relationships in greater general empirical research connects cultural capital with educational achievement (Yang et al., 2022; Yamamoto & Brinton, 2010).

Nevertheless, the qualitative findings build upon the literature by demonstrating the way students are engaged in negotiations of the cultural capital that is built within the university discipline. As long as the inequalities exist, the adaptive strategies as outlined by the participants reveal that higher education can be a place of reproduction as well as possible change. This is a subtle interpretation that goes beyond the

strictly deterministic interpretations and emphasizes the significance of institutional practices that acknowledge various types of cultural capital (Goldenberg, [2014](#)).

## Conclusion

This paper has looked at the importance of cultural capital in determining the experiences and academic performance of students in higher education. The study employed Bourdieu theoretical framework to examine the experiences and mobilization of embodied, objectified and institutionalized forms of cultural capital and their impacts on academic achievement, persistence and degree completion among students with varying socioeconomic backgrounds. The qualitative approach allowed the study to gain better understanding of the lived realities of educational inequality patterns.

The results affirm the fact that cultural capital plays an important role in determining academic confidence, classroom involvement, a sense of belonging, as well as in navigating institutional structures of students. Middle- and high-socioeconomic students had a higher correspondence between their habitus and the prevailing standards of the college discipline, which reduced the flow of academic assimilation. By contrast, first-generation and low-SES students faced issues connected to academic language, familiarity to the institution, as well as personal identity. Such inequalities are indicative of the wider operations of social reproduction that has been detected in literature.

Nevertheless, the dynamic aspect of cultural capital is also brought out in the study. Although inherent forms of capital are obviously beneficial, some of the participants proved that cultural capital could be developed over time by offering the student experience of being involved in the university world. Adaptation, observation and persistence enabled students to devise methods of living up to the academic expectation implying that higher education is not only a place of reproduction but also a place of transformation.

Altogether, this study serves to the comprehension of the functioning of cultural capital in the realm of higher education through the focus on structural inequalities, as well as agency of students. The results highlight the importance of universities critically evaluating the institutional norms and practices, which possibly favor a certain cultural background. Higher education institutions can strive to alleviate disparities in academic success and academic persistence by encouraging inclusive pedagogues, clear academic expectations, and supportive mentoring frameworks.

To conclude, cultural capital is still one of the core processes that educational inequalities are reinforced within the context of higher education. However, the understanding of its dynamic and context specific character creates opportunities to reform the institution and achieve more educational equity.

## Recommendations

According to the results of this paper, it should be suggested that institutions of higher learning should implement inclusiveness and equity-based policies that are explicitly aware and responsive to the differences in cultural capital between students. Institutions of higher education ought to offer formal orientation, academic skills training and mentoring programs that target first-generation and low-socioeconomic-status students in gaining awareness about institutional demands and academic conventions. The members of the faculty are expected to use those inclusive teaching methods, specify the evaluation criteria, and provide classroom conditions that support different forms of communication and cultural orientations. The institutions are also encouraged to extend the advising systems and peer-support networks in order to assist the students in navigating academic routes, internships, and career planning. Moreover, it is being suggested that universities should critically assess policy and practice that can implicitly give more weight to dominant middle-class versions of cultural capital and, instead, encourage the acknowledgment of diverse versions of knowledge and experience. These could contribute to the reduction of structural inequalities, increase the sense of belonging of students and the academic achievements, persistence, and degree completion.

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