

Teaching ‘new generation’ students: Pedagogical signposts to show the way

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Using the metaphor of a bushwalk through relatively unexplored terrain, this paper reports on an investigation of the best way to negotiate the challenges and opportunities of teaching an increasingly diverse student cohort. The research participants were enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts, at an Australian Group of Eight university. Of particular interest to this investigation were increased numbers of new generation students, a descriptor that includes students from low socio-economic backgrounds and students whose parents did not attend university. A theoretical framework distilled from the literature was used to interpret the data collected through an online survey and focus groups. The constant comparison method was used to generate themes that could act as signposts to the best path forward through this evolving landscape. The pedagogical signposts confirmed in this study included: effective approaches to teaching, supportive learning communities, good communication, and teacher professionalism.