



From deficit to recognition: Making students' invisibilized knowledges visible in academic spaces

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Many students, particularly those who are marginalized, enter academic spaces with rich lived expertise that often falls outside institutional recognition, as prevailing deficit-oriented norms frame them as lacking. This chapter addresses the epistemic hierarchies that shape whose knowledge “belongs” within curricula and pedagogical practices, and, by extension, whose ways of knowing are legitimized within academic contexts. Drawing on theoretical and practice-oriented frameworks, including (Dark) Funds of Knowledge (Moll et al., 1992; Zipin, 2009), Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005), and principles from Asset-Based Youth Support (Stuart & Perris, 2017), it explores how educators can meaningfully engage with the often unrecognized knowledges of students. It does so by connecting and extending these approaches through three dimensions: the content dimension (what kinds of knowledge are involved), the methodological dimension (how such knowledges can be made visible), and the pedagogical dimension (how they can be valorized). Rather than proposing a rigid model, the analysis highlights the incorporation of a multiplicity of knowledges into existing educational practices alongside the questioning of dominant epistemic norms, a tension between integration and disruption that each framework engages in its own way. In doing so, the chapter aligns with decolonial and critical pedagogical traditions, underscoring the importance of learning environments in which invisibilized ways of knowing are not only acknowledged but actively inform teaching and learning.