

# The Sowder Mathematics & Science Education Research Seminar Series 2021



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Monday, 10/18/2021  
10 am - 11 am

Zoom link:  
[https://ucsd.zoom.us/  
j/95459732734](https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/95459732734)  
Meeting ID:  
954 5973 2734

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## The Potentials of the Concept of the Ideal Student for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education

**Abstract:** This seminar is based on higher education research conducted in the UK, with a focus on the potentials of the ideal student concept to alleviate misunderstandings and mismatches in expectations between students and staff. In doing so, expectations of students are made more explicit, which is important for openness and equality, since occluded expectations have long disadvantaged those who struggle to play the higher education game, especially underrepresented students.

The seminar begins with an overview of the inequalities as experienced by underrepresented students in UK higher education. Here, I share my research on the educational strategies of high-achieving students from underrepresented backgrounds, especially their negotiations of pride and fear. I will then introduce the concept of the ideal student, with the focus on what it means to be a university student, which is central to inclusive and diverse learning and teaching practices, especially for those less familiar with higher education.

Empirical data is used to discuss the challenges and potentials of the concept, and I will also discuss our mapping of eight dimensions of ideal student characteristics at university, tentatively described as 'Diligence & Engagement', 'Organisation & Discipline', 'Reflection & Innovation', 'Positive & Confident Outlook', 'Supportive of Others', 'Academic Skills', 'Employability Skills' and 'Intelligence & Strategic Approach'.