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Title

Commuting, transitions and belonging : the experiences of students living at home in their first year at university / Helen Pokorny ; Debbie Holley, Suzanne Kane

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Abstract

In this study, our cross-case analysis of students' lives challenges the conventional home–university model of transition and highlights the importance of acknowledging the influence of this complex symbiotic relationship for students who attend university and live at home. We argue that as with stay-at-home holidays, or “staycations”, which are of such crucial importance to the tourism industry, so stay-at-home students or commuter students are vital to higher education and the term utilised here is “stayeducation”. Through the narratives of “stayeducation” students, we see how family and community aspects of students' lives are far more significant than previously realised, and our study suggests that these heavily influence the development of a student sense of belonging. Drawing upon biographical narrative method, this paper introduces three first-year Business and Economics students enrolled at different universities in London and explores their journeys through their transition through home, school and early university life. Ways in which key themes play out in the transition stories of our students and the challenges and obstacles for the individual are drawn out through the

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cross-case analysis. Findings support the existing literature around gender, class and identity; however, new insights into the importance, for these students, of family, friendships and community are presented. Our work has implications for academic staff, those writing institutional policies, and argues for the creation of different spaces within which students can integrate into their new environment. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Pokorny, Helen, E-Mail: h.pokorny@westminster.ac.uk