

16.2.2026**Title**

False uniqueness : the self-perception of new entrants to higher education in the UK and its implications for access - a pilot study / Andy Thorpe ...

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Abstract

A central tenet of contemporary education policy relates to the desire to extend higher education (HE) provision to less advantaged groups ('widening participation'). Our paper contends that a key behavioural obstacle to widening participation lies in the erroneous belief that persists among potential entrants from disadvantaged backgrounds as to their capabilities of succeeding within the HE environment ? a perception that serves to deflate application/recruitment rates from such groupings. We test this 'false uniqueness' thesis using a sample of 127 new UK undergraduates, finding that students drawn from lower social class backgrounds consistently underestimated their abilities vis-à-vis the overall cohort. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)