

EAN 21st Annual Conference, University of Zagreb, Croatia

PARALLEL PAPER SESSIONS 1

Wednesday 27 June

15:55 – 16:55 (1hr)

Paper 1.1 Theme 1 Policy & Practice

Maximizing students' chances for a job by training networking skills

Mrs Joke Vrijders & Mrs Eva Booms, Artevelde University College, Belgium

This paper is about social capital. In Belgium almost 80% of job vacancies are filled through informal contacts and research has shown that graduates from migrant backgrounds often lack the networking skills. Recognising this and in line with its inclusive diversity and outflow policy Artevelde University College developed a networking training module, initially for minority groups but is now essential for ALL graduate students in transition to the labour market. The presenters will share their tips and tricks through exercises with participants.

Paper 1.2 Theme 1 Research

Promoting equal participation through identification and removal of ICT barriers in a Learning Management System

Ms Siri Kessel & Ms Weiqin Chen, Oslo & Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Norway

This paper will deal with accessibility to ICT systems and services for those with functional impairments and raise awareness of articles 9 and 24 of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. The Ministry of Education in Norway has declared that physical learning environment includes ICT and committed to dismantling the barriers and preventing new ones from being formed. The presenters will seek to identify ICT barriers in Learning Management Systems (LMS) and suggest solutions for their removal to promote equal participation.

Paper 1.3 Theme 2 Research, Policy & Practice

Growing financial barriers to higher education in the United States, 1980 to present

Mr Tom Mortenson, Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, USA

This paper examines the growing financial barriers to higher education and the consequences of the failed affordability policies in the US, evident in its domestic and international data on college completion and attainment. While high school graduation and college continuation rates from low income students have greatly improved, attainment rates for students from the bottom half of the family income distribution have been stagnant for 40 years. In this paper, the metrics of college affordability are identified, measured, and discussed.

Paper 1.4 Theme 3 Practice

Selective factors preventing access to higher education as a basic human right

Prof Lullu Tshiwula & Mr Khaya Magopeni, University of Western Cape, South Africa

This paper explores why, despite receiving the lion's share of the country's national budget, so many South African students are under-prepared for higher education and examines the continuum of early childhood development, primary and secondary schooling as building blocks towards higher education. The presenters will discuss challenges facing education systems in transition and reveal practical steps taken to address legacy of under-development. They will facilitate a focus-group discussion to gather the perspectives of participants.

Paper 1.5 Theme 4 Research

Who are the world class universities and what does this mean?

Dr Graeme Atherton, National Education Opportunities Network (NEON), UK

This paper will explore the relationship between university rankings tables and widening access and question the meaning of 'world class' universities. The presenter will share techniques to integrate access and equity into ranking discussions, and argue that although none of the major systems of international university rankings feature any measure of access or equity, if the global access community can capture data on access and then take a pro-active approach to its use, ranking tables actually have the potential to move access up the policy agenda rather than marginalise it.

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PARALLEL PAPER SESSIONS 2

Thursday 28 June

11:00 – 12:30 (1hr30min)

Paper 2.1 Theme 3 Research & Practice

Learning about post-secondary education is fun! Discussion and presentation of a didactic tool

Violeta Vidacek-Hains & Blazenka Divjak, University of Zagreb, Croatia
Adela Colhon & Dan Wise, YMCA of Greater Toronto, Canada

This unique didactic tool, which includes all the features of a fun board game: cards, dice, game pieces and the board, has, until now, been used exclusively in Canada to promote the message of post-secondary education to underrepresented groups. Presented for the first time at the EAN Stockholm 2010 conference it has resulted in the collaboration with the University of Zagreb to adapt it for Croatia. The presenters will demonstrate how this tool can be transferred to other countries and participants will have the opportunity to see, play and explore this tool.

Paper 2.2

2.2(a) Theme 1 Research

Not where or what but who you know? The role of personal networks in supporting engagement in HE

Dr Lindsay Hewitt & John Rose-Adams, the Open University, UK

This paper explores the role of social networks as a direct influence on accessing higher education, creating 'learner identities' and maintaining motivation, and reports on the findings of a Scotland-wide project that sought to pilot and test a methodology for researching engagement with higher education in rural and remote areas. It will help those looking to further their understanding of the lived experience of adult learners in remote and rural contexts, to consider how accessibility might be variously constrained and perceived, in order to inform policy and strategies.

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2.2(b) Theme 1 Policy & Practice

Life, liberty and the pursuit of a quality education: class disparity in the United States!

Ms Tracy Lyons, University of Alabama at Birmingham, USA

This paper will provide a brief historical overview on how the US has viewed the notion of education as a basic human right, from addressing the idea of racial segregation in supporting equality to education, to socio-economic status, a different kind of segregation that threatens the notion today. The presenter will discuss the systematic policies that continue to disenfranchise students, the ideals and practices of the federal TRIO programs in combating this issue. Participants will be invited to share information and strategies.

Paper 2.3

2.3(a) Theme 3 Research & Practice

Bridging the gap with Awêness: first generation students' perception and expectations of support

Dr Celeste Nel, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

To better understand first generation students who often face numerous and complex challenges, ranging from institutional constraints, systemic failures and personal circumstances, Stellenbosch University introduced an Awêness camp to equip them with the necessary tools to negotiate the social and academic expectations of higher education. This presentation will explore first generation students' perception and expectations of support and put forward suggestions on strategies for universities to bridge the gap between what they need and what is on offer.

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2.3(b) Theme 1 & 3 Research, Policy & Practice

Lessons from the Widening Access, Student Retention and Success UK national programmes archive

Dr Joan O'Mahony, Higher Education Academy, UK

The HEA has recently archived and synthesised the research from a number of UK national programmes (Aimhigher, Aimhigher Associates, Action on Access, Lifelong Learning Networks and the What Works? Student Retention and Success programme.) This session will provide an insight into the collective learning from these programmes spanning over a decade. Resources in the Archive are accessible to the international sector and lessons from the syntheses are transferable.

Paper 2.4

2.4(a) Theme 3 Research

Social background as a determinant for student transition to tertiary education in Germany

Dr Astrid Krenz, University of Goettingen, Germany

This study investigates the role of social background in determining access to higher education in Germany. The analysis is based on the German SOEP which constitutes a large household panel data set. Adequate econometric methods are used and measures for cultural and social capital are constructed using polychoric component analysis. The impact of the introduction of tuition fees in Germany is also investigated. The various relationships between social background, social and cultural capital and education for Germany shall be clarified and point to several policy implications.

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2.4(b) Theme 3 Research

Dealing with higher education exclusion in Ghana: why the secondary school factor matters!

Mr James Anyan, University of Helsinki, Finland

With increasing differentiation between 'well-endowed' urban-based institutions and rural 'resource-poor' schools, this paper questions whether the exam-centric university admissions system in Ghana is supporting the role of higher education as a tool for socio-economic mobility and poverty reduction,

or making it an instrument to deepen stratification of society and perpetuate the inter-generational poverty cycle through 'gate-keeping'. It will assess the extent to which the status quo can realistically realise the country's dream to "build a knowledge-based economy within the next generation".

Paper 2.5

2.5(a) Theme 2 Research

Whose university is it anyway? Lifelong learning in an economic recession

Dr Liz Marr & Ms Morag Harvey, the Open University, UK

This paper reports on the findings of qualitative interviews conducted with stakeholders on attitudes and beliefs about the place of Recognising Prior Learning (RPL) in higher education, and concerns about quality and standards. Analysis of responses also suggests wider issues associated with the tensions between economic drivers, access for all and affordability. The presenters will argue that the concept of lifelong learning is being wilfully misconstrued and narrowly focused, thus limiting the capacity to develop an engaged citizenry able to make a real social as well as economic contribution.

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2.5(b) Theme 1 Research

The European 2020 Strategy and the Bologna Process: education, training and the labour market

Assist. Prof. Dr. Fatma Serbest, Haliç University, Turkey

This paper will evaluate education and employment, not only as a policy target but also as a human right, with a comparative analysis of the Lisbon Treaty's 'Europe 2020' strategy and the Bologna process implementation instruments. It will focus on two important questions: "what kind of instrument for implementing the Europe 2020 strategy's targets on education and employment" and "are the ongoing implementation processes accurately identified and reflected in the European Higher Education Area"?

PARALLEL PAPER SESSIONS 3

Friday 29 June

11:00 – 12:30 (1hr30min)

Paper 3.1

3.1(a) Theme 3 Research

The International Baccalaureate and post-secondary access in Chicago

Dr Brian Spittle, DePaul University, USA

There are about 2,300 International Baccalaureate Diploma schools around the world, about a third in the US. Generally speaking, the IB program has served a primarily affluent population but that is not the case in Chicago. This presentation will review the implementation of IB programs in Chicago and summarise both city-wide and institutional case-study data from DePaul University on IB student college preparation and attainment. It will discuss the implications of the IB project in Chicago for post-secondary access policy and practice both in the US and Europe.

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3.1(b) Theme 1 Research

Sowing the seeds: the long term impact of early interventions

Mrs Margaret Evans, University of Liverpool, UK

A growing number of universities are working with primary age children but measuring the impact of early interventions, although essential, is very difficult. This paper reports on the results of focus group interviews with young people who participated in 'The Professor Fluffy Primary Project' in areas of deprivation in Greater Merseyside who are now in secondary school, their parents and school staff. The aim was to explore whether their aspirations are still raised by this time and what control they feel they have over their future lives.

Paper 3.2

3.2(a) Theme 1 Practice

"Yet another unfair advantage": how to monitor social selectivity of student exchange mobility

Mrs Hannah Leichsenring & Anne-Kathrin Kreft, CHE Consult, Germany

Internationalisation and student exchange are increasingly an integral part of higher education. The EU ERASMUS funding for 2007-2013 is €7b. But virtually no HEI knows to what extent their exchange programmes are open for disadvantaged groups and what are their experiences while abroad. CHE Consult has developed a tool, "memo" (measuring exchange and mobility outcomes) to assess socio-economic, behavioural and attitudinal aspects. The paper will present the tool and explore how the results can be used for developing an institution's international support structure.

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3.2(b) Theme 1 Practice

Distance education: opportunity for meeting skills needs for national development

Ms Lydia Anowa Nyako, University of Ghana, Africa

The University of Ghana's undergraduate distance learning level courses, initiated in 2008/9 now enrolls 7144 students, who would have otherwise been deprived of the privilege of a university education. The first batch will graduate this year. This paper will discuss meeting national social demand for higher education to the highest level through distance learning, the role of distance education for equity and diversity, improve ranking through quality output. It will discuss strategies to fully exploit e-learning resources to offer postgraduate level courses to enhance career prospects.

Paper 3.3

3.3(a) Theme 1 Practice

Higher education for social transformation: building the Access Partnership

Mr Steve Kendall, University of Bedfordshire, UK

Two important government decisions in England brought the end of 'Aimhigher' funding (2011) and the increase of tuition fee (2012), capped at £9,000. Institutions charging above the standard £6,000 were required to set out measures, in a legally binding 'Access Agreement' to redress the low participation of disadvantaged groups. This case study considers the question of how far access to higher education can be considered a right and the means by which access for disadvantaged groups can continue to be promoted by the university through collaboration, in spite of the lack of funding.

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3.3(b) Theme 1 Theory & Practice

Council of Educators of Toronto (CET): collaboration for access and outreach in higher education

Ms Helen Tewolde, Council of Educators of Toronto, & Sabra Desai, Humber College, Canada

This paper argues that issues of access to education for marginalised groups are complex and often contentious. In Canada, factors such as increase immigration, the collapse of the manufacturing sector, unemployment, income disparity, increase demand for financial aid at a time of shrinking government support, historical underrepresentation, and the misconceptions of costs v benefits, are compounded by complicated federal and provincial jurisdiction. The presenters will use CET as a case study to demonstrate the benefits of multi-stakeholder collaborative efforts and initiatives.

Paper 3.4

3.4(a) Theme 1 Policy & Practice

Addressing the educational rights of the underrepresented or disconnected youth population

Dr Sue Brown, New Mexico State University; Dr Deema de Silva & Ms Deltha Colvin, Wichita State University; Ms Paula Martin, Harlem Center for Education, USA

In the course of the history of the USA, education has not always been a basic right for all of its citizens. In spite of improvements in the last century, there are still those who are in need of assistance in taking advantage of the basic right of education. This paper examines the right to education from the standpoint of institutional, governmental and societal actions and how collectively these actions can enhance access and re-connect the disengaged. The presentation will cover solutions/policies that are in place that could be transferred onto a global stage.

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3.4(b) Theme 1 & 3 Practice

Widening participation challenges and approaches in turbulent times

Mrs Carole Nairn, University of Chichester, UK

This paper demonstrates a university's determination, in the face of the lack of government funding, to sustain its local/regional outreach work through its progressive Learner Progression Framework of activities to safeguard its core values of social mobility, equality of opportunity, community cohesion and the development of engaged citizens. Complex data sets are used to identify and target schools, colleges and cohorts, and outreach activities are complemented by customised support programmes, to ensure progression from primary to secondary to university, especially for first generation students.

Paper 3.5

3.5(a) Theme 1 & 4 Practice

Aboriginal student access to post-secondary education

Ms Adrienne Vedan & Mr Lyle Mueller, University of British Columbia Okanagan Campus, Canada

This paper is a good example of how a high ranking university with an excellent international profile has succeeded in creating an exceptional learning environment where Aboriginal engagement plays a pivotal role. The UBC strategic plan, Place and Promise, has led to significant changes to the institution as a whole whereby Indigenous perspectives and practices have become part of the institution in a meaningful way. The presenters will share ideas on how to measure institutional profiles and improve ranking criteria using diversity, quality and equity as three essential attributes.

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3.5(b) Theme 1 Theory

How 'whiteness' causes barriers for all: issues of gender, class, ethnicity and educational disadvantage

Dr Kate Hatton, University of the Arts London, UK

This paper examines the social and cultural challenges of 'whiteness' affecting education and HE's responsiveness to diversity and argues that rather than seeing diverse student groups as the 'other' an examination of 'whiteness' would be more significant. In this paper, 'whiteness' means a social identity with its own class and culturally based discursive practices, which can be both enabling and disabling to white and non-white students and staff within HE. The presenter will use the arts, literature, cultural studies, educational theory and critical race theories to explore some of the issues.