

18th EAN Annual Conference
Changing the Culture of the Campus towards an Inclusive Higher Education
– 10 Years On

PAPER ABSTRACTS

TUESDAY 23rd Parallel Paper Sessions 1 (11:00 – 12:30)

South Denmark Elite – a programme to enable students to combine sports at the highest level with university studies

Per Christian Andersen, registrar, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

South Denmark Elite is a programme specially designed for potential and enrolled students wanting to combine a life in professional or semi professional sports with a university study.

Young people engaged in sports at a level where they can earn a living for a limited period, are potential social losers, unless we provide them with the opportunity to combine a professional career in sports with access to university studies, so they can qualify academically, while living a life as professionals.

The way study programmes are constructed and conducted and the way financial incentives for educational institutions work in general do not take this segment of potential students into account. The students will not be able to participate in a study programme on a normal basis, nor earn the ECTS points needed for continuing their studies – and normally part time studies are no option.

This is the case in Denmark like in many other continental countries. While many countries offer special programmes for students attending secondary education, making it possible for them to combine sports and education, this is not the case at university level. Identifying this demand, the University of Southern Denmark established a programme in close cooperation with the players unions, the region and sponsors to encourage students to enter university and not postpone this till after their career has ended.

The programme includes guidance and counselling, special mentoring and provision of buddies and enables the students to combine a study with a career in sport, even at a distance. It also provides the university with the opportunity to attract a whole new segment of students and finally gives the university a unique opportunity to market itself by using the participants of the programme as ambassadors for the university.

The program is partly financed by private industry and professional clubs, recognizing the need for a specialised programme for this segment.

The programme has been running for 3 successful years and has been adopted by other Danish universities and university colleges. It is unique, as there has been no prior focus on this segment of potential students and differs widely from the known programmes from USA, which are linked to scholarship programmes.

Including Students in Full-Time Employment: What Do They Expect From Flexibly Delivered HE?

Susan Patrick, Southampton Solent University, UK

This paper presents a qualitative case study of a set of courses delivered by blended learning at Southampton Solent University (SSU), delivered to students in full-time employment. Part of the University's lifelong learning ethos is to encourage more flexibly delivered courses to allow access for students in full time employment, both for students wishing to continue studies or enter HE for the first time. This study focuses on student perceptions and expectations unique to the delivery method and for students balancing study with employment, and a detailed comparison is carried out within the sector.

Blended learning offers a new challenge to hearing the student voice and adapting the teaching and learning process accordingly. Learning by a blended learning method appears to be growing partly as a result of demand for e-learning, particularly for part time students. As this offers a further route into HE for students in FT employment or balancing other commitments, it is expected to grow in popularity and importance in offering student learning choices in the future.

This study took an in-depth qualitative approach, using questionnaires and focus groups with 7 student cohorts, to understand students' expectations of entering HE while in full time employment, the experience they have and the challenges faced in balancing work, study and family. This session will sketch SSU's approach in offering Masters and FDA blended learning across the Technology and Business faculties. It will

outline the challenges faced by SSU and the blended learning related issues faced by students, such as a perception of not being involved in the university 'community', problems with lack of frequent peer support, course curriculum and design. SSU have shared common themes from studies in USA and Japan such as time management, motivation and the importance of tutor contact but has differed from the USA where students feel more strongly part of a community.

The SSU experience will be put into context through a comparison with the wider sector on a variety of operational and pedagogic issues from integrating the student in full time employment into HE and within blended learning.

'Intercult' – willingness to invest

An overall strategic direction towards a multicultural and international higher educational institution

Marit Greek, Lise Gulbrandsen, Grete Hedemann, Kari Mari Jonsmoen and Jorun Nossun, Oslo University College, Norway

To change policies and practices in order to develop a higher educational institution into a modern pluralist institution requires new ways of thinking, designing, delivering and reviewing our practices. With this in mind, Oslo University College (OUC) has highlighted multiculturalism and internationalization for the current strategy period. Consequently half of all OUC's strategic funds are invested in a project called Intercult, and all employees and students are involved in this project.

This symposium addresses how Intercult has succeeded by combining research with developmental projects and pedagogical innovations in promoting change in the culture of an academic institution. Development Projects as a method for changing the Pedagogical Practice towards a more Inclusive Higher Education will here be discussed. The key questions are:

- What is the role of leadership for sustainable organizational change?
- Will multicultural and international perspectives ever become a natural part of our policies, planning and practices, or continue to depend on extra budget, individual dedication, or political pressure?
- Why are comprehensive developmental projects an answer to these challenges?

Based on the ongoing Intercult-project *Pedagogical approaches in a diverse learning environment*, we will share our experiences and illustrate how one may implement a comprehensive development project and succeed with extended, permanent effects in a specific faculty and in the institution itself. The project will be shed light on different levels and from different angles, such as policy development, practice and research.

Implementing Intercult-projects at OUC has entailed great challenges and problems such as:

- Priorities and status when it comes to research versus development, research versus teaching, teaching versus learning.
- Resistance to transfer resources from the faculties and the specific discipline matters and earmark these resources to work with multicultural and international dimensions for the benefit of the institution as a whole.
- Resistance to interdisciplinary cooperation.
- Translating the rhetoric of diversity into the daily life and practices of the institution and into pedagogical approaches.
- Resistance to discuss the institutional frames, the pedagogical and personal approaches and the subject matters within the institution.

Data gained from the case studies at the Faculty of Nursing, "The Nursing Theory School" and "Communication in Practical Studies", will illustrate implementation of a concrete Intercult-project in the daily life of OUC. The pedagogical model used in "The Nursing Theory School" and "Communication in Practical Studies", is an example of how one may succeed in promoting student progression with a potential transfer value to other faculties as well as other institutions.

Individual approach to students in process of higher education according to their specific needs

Professor Blaženka Divjak, Dr Violeta Vidaček-Hainš, Ms Renata Horvatek, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Organization and Informatics Varaždin, Croatia

Teachers in higher education institutions often face issues regarding how to objectively define and assess learning outcomes and their relevance to the job market. There are additional requirements to ensure a

broader participation in higher education by the provision of individual support for under-represented groups of students, particularly those suffering a disability.

This broadening of the participation in higher education implies a requirement for individual treatment of specific needs of students whilst, at the same time, ensuring the development of the prescribed competences. This paper shows several methods of a general approach to individual work with students through psychological counselling, consultations, mentoring, tutoring and peer counselling. Statistical data on the most common questions and problems students shared during psychological counselling are given, as are the evaluation of counselling results. The most common problems faced by students are identified as: adjusting to the new environment, being away from home, choosing the most effective learning techniques and fighting the jitters before exams or colloquium.

Further, this paper shows several examples of good practice regarding working with students with disabilities. At the faculty, we have introduced a new framework to support those students with disabilities in the form of education assistants. In this paper, their obligations and roles are described. Further, several examples of good practice are presented which indicate how ICT can assist students with disabilities to reach defined learning outcomes.

Higher education is vital in order to create future academically adept citizens who are well prepared for the competitive job market. The important task for HE institutions is to ensure that all students have the same conditions, rights and obligations to gain the same knowledge, skills and competences during the study period and to become equally competitive after graduation. This can be done only if we consider individual needs of all students, with special attention on students with disabilities.

Is your institution really accessible?

Darko Grabar, Željko Šmaguc, Renata Horvatek, University of Zagreb, Croatia

In recent years, use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has eased the access to information that resulted in rising numbers of students with disabilities in higher education. Today all important information about study process can be found on University/Faculty Web pages. During their study, through the use of e-learning and Learning Management Systems (LMS) students can access their learning materials in digital form. Communication with their colleagues and teachers can be performed online and in time that suits student needs. In general, universities through usage of ICT can become more accessible and open to students with disabilities. Despite all the advantages, technology if misused can have opposite effect and lead to rising barriers in accessing information, turning all potential advantages to disadvantages. These disadvantages become more apparent when usage of ICT completely replaces traditional processes. If Web pages aren't made with accessibility in mind and they aren't in compliance with accessibility standards, students with disabilities will not be able to access needed information about their study process. If learning materials given in digital formats are not created according defined standards, they are not useful for disabled people.

ICT can help students with different types of disabilities – visually impaired student, deaf students, students with physical disabilities, students with dyslexia, etc. but it must be implemented with careful planning since thinking about disability at the present time is not just moral issue but also legal one. In this paper we will present our analysis of current state of ICT usage in higher education institutions in relation to conformance with accessibility standards. Also we will discuss new Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG2) and will present practical solutions to most common problems related to usage of Web resources by disabled students.

Ceiliúradh Deich mBliana – Celebrating 10 Years 1999 – 2009 of the NUI Galway Ireland Access Programme

Imelda Byrne, National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland

NUI Galway is committed to developing the intellectual and creative potential of all citizens, through facilitating the widest possible access to the University's resources of knowledge and through applying its resources of knowledge to the responsible development of society in its region, nationally and internationally.

'I left school at fourteen without any formal qualification. I returned twenty-five years later. To date my academic résumé reads: BA Hons, MA Hons. I am presently pursuing a career in psychotherapy/counselling where I hope to integrate my knowledge, academic skills and life experiences.' Irene, B.A. M.A.

Through the University's Access model of inclusive and responsive measures people like Irene have accessed academic programmes delivered by NUI Galway in the past decade.

This paper focuses on one of the Access measures – Access courses which provide opportunity for university study to people whose previous grades and performance did not reflect their academic potential and who are traditionally under-represented in higher education for reasons of low socio-economic status, age, family background, geographical location and earlier educational disadvantage.

The Access Course prepares this targeted population to succeed in NUI Galway by fostering their self-confidence, equipping them with tools and skills to use in the academic environment, providing a grounding in academic options, ensuring they make appropriate course choices and facilitating them in seeing if NUI Galway is the right place for them. The data presented in this paper will illustrate that this developmental approach, which combines both learning and pastoral aspects has been crucial in enabling the programme in NUI Galway to move beyond rudimentary equality of opportunity measures to achieve meaningful equality of participation and equality of outcome. This has been vital to not only building students' own education and personal capital but also in instilling the necessary confidence in the University in accepting many students whose chances of attending University were otherwise considered to be infinitesimal. The paper will also illustrate how, through this Access measure, that NUI Galway is committed to the European Universities' Charter on Lifelong Learning.

Support services for international students preparing for access to university studies

Mariken Blom, Aleid Knoote-Aalders, Kees Smit, VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Many universities are offering regular student services like counselling (related to study, application procedures or finances), advice on personal matters, assisting students with disabilities, psychological services, a student Ombudsman and the study advisors in the faculties. And for international students, an International Office is offering specific services. But is this sufficient?

Access to research-oriented bachelor or pre-master programs in the Netherlands is strict and international students are required to have at least the equivalent of a Dutch secondary school diploma with proficiency in Dutch and English Language while individual studies may set further requirements.

Almost 30 years ago, a foundation year was created: the VASVU. This should enhance access to VU University for international students, living in the Netherlands and entitled to a regular stay like refugees, partners, or children of immigrants.

International talents are most welcome, but, as we experience, they often need special support concerning the bureaucracy, adaptation to new cultures, dealing with traumatic war experiences and valorisation of earlier acquired competencies.

The VASVU is providing not only the necessary language studies, but also subjects like mathematics, history or biology. Moreover, there is ample time for orientation on study, computer skills, administrative assistance and personal growth. The VASVU is offering a lenient intake procedure, works with small groups of students and has experienced staff. The VASVU offers an intensive mentoring system and support by a student counselor. It is the only foundation year for university entrance working from this concept in the Netherlands.

The presentation will show some cases and results of this approach: do the students benefit from this method? And how do they survive after starting their studies? The focus will not only be on assessing highlights such as the cooperation between teaching staff and support staff or easy access to mentoring and counseling but also on obstacles like administrative procedures. We will reflect on lessons learnt and would like to share results and experiences.

TUESDAY 23rd Parallel Paper Sessions 2 (14:00 – 15:00)

A National Audit for Diversity Management in Higher Education Institutions

Hannah Leichsenring (M.A.) & Dr Daniela de Ridder, CHE Consult GmbH, Germany

There are several methods of quality management in the German Higher Education system – accreditation, peer review, ratings etc., but there is only little experience with auditing. And curiously, these experiences are mostly focused on specific questions like the gender or family policies of HEIs. Auditing processes are not only helpful in realising obvious aims, i.e. the identification of successful measures and extend activities in the respective fields; auditing processes moreover seem to be especially helpful in communicating a common objective: Existing activities, institutions and projects stir interest in the course of auditing processes and help to involve more persons.

CHE Consult wants to use these effects for the development of an auditing process for diversity policies and management in HEIs. The development of a diversity management, which includes policies related to gender and family (covering both staff and students), is understood to be important when the university wants to increase its ability to deal with diversity as well as productively increasing its diversity. For German universities, and not only for them, diversity management will become more and more important, as the group of traditional students will become smaller due to demographic changes and due to an increasing need for academically trained staff.

In cooperation with several universities, a pilot project for the development of an auditing and certifying process for a diversity management label for HEIs will commence. We will outline methodology and contents of our project before inviting the participants to contribute their experiences:

- Aspects of auditing processes: What is helpful, what is a waste of time in auditing processes from the participants' points of view?
- "The loneliness of the good": What helps to promote "good" causes like equity, access equality, work-life-balance etc.? What connects best with the logic of academic organisation?
- Inclusion: How to include as many people as possible in efforts of diversity management?
- External support and internal development: How to increase the effects of external support in order to reach continuous internal development?
- Institutional and systemical development: How important is exchange with other institutions, what kind of exchange (benchmarking, expert groups...) is possible and helpful?

Collaborative research into the student experience

Professor Mantz Yorke, Mr Nick Hooper, Lancaster University / Yorkshire and Humber East Lifelong Learning Network, England, UK

There is a lot of research undertaken within institutions as practitioners seek to enhance their practice, including an increasing body of studies into the student experience. However, this is often undertaken in isolation, and the opportunity to make strong connections with the work of others is therefore often missed. Collaboration may also provide advantages in introducing research into providers and broadening the existing research base.

This paper argues that collaboration in enhancement-oriented research offers synergies that would otherwise not be achieved (and, by extension, value for money). These synergies may be particularly important for the increasing body of research being undertaken within Further Education institutions to support institutional policies on diversity and inclusion among HE in FE students.

The argument will be supported by three examples:

1. A survey of 'the part-time student experience' that was undertaken in 2008 by 11 post-1992 universities in the UK, with analyses focusing on widening participation aspects of the undergraduate experience (the gross number of respondents is approximately 1500);
2. A survey, currently being undertaken by the Yorkshire and Humber East Lifelong Learning Network of students who completed Higher National Certificate or Foundation Degree programmes up to three years ago; and
3. A survey, currently being undertaken, of the experience of current part-time students on Foundation Degree programmes in institutions drawn from six Lifelong Learning Networks.

The focus of the paper is on methodology and the associated political, ethical and practical issues that need to be taken into account. The paper also highlights the benefits from collaborative research as demonstrated by the experience of Lifelong Learning Networks.

Higher Education Inclusion via Competence Evaluation and Work Experience?

Professor Dr. Matthias Klumpp, FOM University of Applied Sciences Essen, Germany

Tertiary and continuing education of *migrants* has for a long time been a neglected subject: Literature and political activities are focused on primary and secondary education. Whereas the new National Integration Plan (NIP) in Germany still skips on tertiary and continuing education German as well as European universities face the task of *making integration work in campus activities*. The situation has changed with rising fear about a serious *shortage of qualified workers*. Whereas immigration policy in the past was directed

towards a reduction of migration, nowadays the concept of attracting and selecting especially *highly qualified* immigrants has taken hold. The EU, with 1.72% third-country highly qualified workers of the total of the employed population, lags behind all other main immigration countries, such as Australia (9.9%), Canada (7.3%), US (3.2%) and Switzerland (5.3%). The EU is engaged in this discussion, having presented its blue-card initiative in 2007. In most countries family reunion accounts for the main reason of migration - in this special case there is up to now *no selection* regarding migrant's *qualifications* and *further education readiness*.

The proposed conference contribution will provide

- an *overview* of the development in the past 10 years about *migrants* in higher education in the EU as well as
- an *analytical comparison* of possible solutions and concepts as e.g. (a) the *European Qualification Framework* (EQF) enabling institutions to basically evaluate also competences obtained outside the EU; (b) the concept of a *testing office* as opened recently by the German Academic Exchange Service in China, providing for most foreign students in Germany; (c) the concept of "*Berufswertigkeit*" describing the practical competence levels of academic as well as non-academic persons - accepting this competence measurement provides for the automatic and lawful inclusion of non-academics and also academic migrants based on their real-world competences.

Developing students as critical thinkers through the global dimension using enquiry-based learning (EBL) pedagogic principles

Chrissie Dell and Dr Margaret Wood, York St John University, UK

In this presentation we develop and extend some of the ideas from a previous paper we presented at the British Educational Studies Association (BESA) Conference in 2008. In the BESA conference presentation and the article which accompanied this, we explored the global dimension in the higher education curriculum in the context of internationalisation. In this presentation we analyse the important contribution which study of the global dimension can make to the development of higher education students as critical thinkers and global citizens. Through study of the global dimension students are challenged to engage critically with issues and questions about the future, sustainability, global citizenship, inequalities, power and powerlessness, prejudice and discrimination, and social justice. Our approach seeks to develop inclusive practice. The student body in higher education is enriched by its diversity and the range of experience which students bring to their learning. Our inclusive practice ensures that this diversity and experience are fully utilised. Diversity is also celebrated through the global dimension and drawn on as an opportunity to learn from and with each other.

An important aim for us in higher education is to provide opportunities for students to develop as independent critical thinkers who are able to question and think for themselves, to examine the weight of evidence for claims made, to challenge and to reflect. These skills of questioning, challenging, research, enquiry and reflection we see as the foundations for learning in global education and as such, it has an important place in the higher education curriculum.

Our role as educators involves facilitating this and helping to foster a community of enquiry within the classroom in which such learning can take place. We examine enquiry-based learning (EBL) as a pedagogic approach and provide a rationale to support our view that EBL is well suited to the global dimension in the higher education curriculum. We therefore offer some analysis of EBL together with practical examples of activities based on EBL principles, to engage students in study of the global dimension. The activities encourage students to work together in pairs and groups to engage in critical examination of global issues.

The State's role in improving access to higher education and graduate rates in South Africa

Prof Prakash Naidoo, Vaal University of Technology, South Africa

South Africa has seen a reasonable economic growth of around 5% in 2007 and the South African Government has provided more funds for higher education. The Minister of Education hopes to increase the participation rate of school leavers in higher education to 20% by 2015 with substantial financial support to public higher education institutions. The findings by the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa that on average only 15% of students finish their degrees in the allotted time is reflective of both the schooling system and the lack of sufficient resources for higher education. This is a serious matter receiving attention by the Ministry of Education. Most higher education institutions have introduced academic support programmes but this is limited within the boundaries of affordability of institutions. Universities also are

reluctant to force substantial tuition fee increases especially in an environment where over 70% of university drop-outs are because of financial reasons.

The importance of higher education needs to be matched by adequate public and private investment to enable institutions to be producing what the public and private sector require, without interfering with the autonomy of institutions. Although fifteen years into the new democracy, the level of public investment into Higher Education can only be as strong as the economic climate within South Africa. The flip side of this is that investment in Higher Education can only enhance the growth of a stronger economy.

The new funding framework in South Africa introduced in 2004 has way moved away from the old formula to create a better system for the planning of institutions. The results of the implementation of the new funding framework, and the related provisions to address access of poor students into higher education via the National Students Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), improving graduate rates in institutions with low graduate output with strong support via a teaching development grant from the state and improving research output with direct state support with a research development grant will be discussed in the paper.

TUESDAY 23rd Parallel Paper Sessions 3 (15:10 – 16:10)

Improving the success of students at risk of dropping out: changing practices and policies

Dr. Andrew Parkin, Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, Canada

A quality post-secondary education is one that provides students from all backgrounds with the opportunity to succeed. As access to higher education expands, institutions must adapt to the needs of a more diverse student body, one in which a greater proportion of students may be at risk, for academic, financial or cultural reasons, of abandoning their studies before graduation. If the quality of the education provided is not to be reduced, and if students are not to be set up for failure, institutions must begin to put more appropriate student support programmes in place. Given the constant pressure on funding, however, it is important that programme spending be effective. This requires evidence about which types of programmes are most likely to benefit specific student populations. Unfortunately, according to the most recent OECD overview of tertiary education, there is presently “little evidence about the effects of institutional support programmes on student outcomes.” This statement notwithstanding, several ground-breaking research experiments are underway that offer examples of how different approaches can be shown to produce results for students. Two of these experiments involve the provision of a mix of financial aid, academic support, peer mentorship, career counselling, and cultural support for students deemed at risk of dropping out (including first-generation and Aboriginal students). Another involves the provision of additional financial aid to students from low-income families.

This paper will review the research on barriers to access and success that underpinned the development of the support services being offered to students in the context of these research projects. It will then describe the support services and the ways in which they are being delivered to students. Following an outline of the hypotheses about the effectiveness of these services, the paper will report on the latest interim findings from the experimental research. This will lead to conclusions about the types of programmes that can benefit under-represented groups in higher education. The paper will also demonstrate how institutions and governments can use experimental research to inform the development of practices and policies that will ultimately enhance the equality of the educational outcomes.

Who Owns The Curriculum? Towards a new paradigm of personalised lifetime learning

Nick Hooper, Jenny Shaw, Yorkshire and Humber East Lifelong Learning Network, UK

The access and widening participation movement has taken great strides in opening up opportunities for a broader range of learners to access and succeed in higher education. However, we argue that its influence is necessarily limited by its focus on adapting the current system of higher education rather than taking a step back and considering the need for a more radical change. In line with the European Universities' Charter on Lifelong Learning, we recognise the social and economic challenges that affect member states and propose new ways of thinking which will help Universities in realising the vision set out in the Charter.

Drawing on a cluster of action research projects undertaken in Yorkshire, England and on a range of researchers and commentators on higher education from the UK, the US and Australia we set out a new vision for higher education. We contend that in a post-modern age in which information systems, services and even employment are becoming personalised, an individual and lifetime approach to learning makes sense. Such an approach would provide the flexibility which is essential to meet the varying learning needs over an individual's life, especially in the workplace. Personalised learning may also facilitate the transfer of

learning experiences, credits, professional certification and qualifications between member states of the EU. It also has the advantage of being fully inclusive, in that a wide range of individual requirements, interests and cultural backgrounds can be accommodated. However this poses challenges to the current system of higher education and raises some fundamental questions which the workshop will explore in an interactive way:

- If the curriculum was entirely learner-led, how would quality be managed?
- Is learner ownership consistent with extending the boundaries of knowledge?
- How can higher education institutions accommodate a personalised curriculum? What would need to change?

In exploring the answers to these questions, the workshop will illuminate practices within the current system and institutions that may represent embedded cultural hegemony and provide some practical recommendations for change within the existing system.

How social is your system? Exploring social aspects of public funding systems for higher education

Christoph Gwosć, HIS Hochschul-Informations-System (Higher Education Information System), Germany

The paper will feature an empirical analysis of the public funding systems for higher education of six specially selected European countries (the Czech Republic, England, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Spain). On macroeconomic level, the project explored the financial settings of sharing the costs of higher education between the public and the private side with a special emphasis on the structure of public expenditure. The study takes an in-depth look at public support by taking all support items into account which could be calculated (also the 'hidden' public support items). In this respect the study outruns comparable studies (like, e.g. OECD 2008, Education at a glance). According to the different core concepts of state activity, the overall share of public funding of higher education varies greatly between the countries (high vs. low public spending ratio in education). Also within the public budget, the shares of allocations to higher education institutions and to private households differ considerably in comparison.

On microeconomic level, the shares of private and public costs were attributed to groups of students with different socio-economic background to give a better insight into the scope of public assistance and to allow reflecting upon social disparity and social exclusion. For the six countries differences could be observed concerning, e.g. the recipients of public support (focus on student support vs. focus on parental support), the types of public support (cash vs. non-cash support and targeted vs. flat rate support) and the share of public subsidies in a student's income. The observed differences are often due to different underlying core concepts as illustrated by the following table.

Recipients of public support

Type of public support		Students	Students and their parents
	Cash	Norway, Spain	
	Cash and non-cash	England, Netherlands	Czech Republic, Germany

One important finding is that in some of the countries observed, different modes of support are at work at the same time, partially contradicting each other. Especially with respect to compensating for social disparities those public funding systems fail to reach clear steering effects. Against this background it is rather difficult for such countries to successfully achieve funding priorities in access.

Developing a positive orientation towards higher education: social and cultural influences on self-efficacy

Prof Heather Eggins, Kim Slack, Staffordshire University, UK

Issues of access to higher education are of international interest, both as a response to government policies to expand the graduate labour force, and also to implement policies leading to social equity. This paper

presents research examining the way in which young people from low socio-economic backgrounds make decisions about whether or not to participate in education post-16. Although the literature on the effect of socio-economic background on young people's decision-making at 16 is well developed, it does not account well for variation in decision-making amongst those from similar backgrounds, which is frequently attributed to sudden changes in circumstance, to serendipity.

The paper draws on research conducted with 29 young people in an above-average deprived urban area in England. It focuses on the stories of three participants who shared very similar working class backgrounds. While all three achieved at a high enough level to enable them to progress into further learning post-16, they each decided to follow different pathways: entering higher education; work-based learning; and employment with no formal training. Drawing on in-depth interviews with the participants who have provided retrospective accounts of their educational decision-making, the paper focuses on the relationship between communities of practice, dispositions to learning and self-efficacy. This framework is then used to develop an understanding of the critical factors in the development of a positive orientation towards higher education. The findings contribute new knowledge in relation to the attitudes of this group towards higher education, which is of value to policy makers in an international context who need to consider how best to frame widening participation policies and strategies for their own countries.

Bridging the Divide: supporting people who use mental health services to enter higher education

Dr Nick Rowe, York St John University, UK

People with mental health problems can find it difficult to access good quality educational opportunities. The stigma that surrounds mental health and the social challenges that face a new student can seem daunting. As a means of creating a bridge into education that is both supportive and of good quality, the Faculty of Arts at York St John University offer theatre courses for users of mental health services. These courses are taught by tutors and third year students. At the moment we offer two sequential courses: 'An Introduction to Theatre' and 'Working toward Performance'. 19 people who use mental health services are participating in the courses and 6 theatre students are involved in the teaching.

The project is a collaboration between the university and local mental health service providers. It is an innovation in line with current agendas with regard to widening participation and lifelong learning in the Higher Education sector and to social inclusion in the mental health field. It offers valuable ways for students to develop the attitudes and insights needed to work with people who use mental health services and it inevitably challenges the cultural attitudes that surround mental illness.

Many of the participants on the courses are entering university premises for the first time or are returning to study after a long period of illness. The project is providing a supportive opportunity to build up confidence and to consider possible futures in higher education. For this to happen there needs to be support and flexibility of provision. We are working closely with the university disability unit to achieve the former and are developing an accredited flexible pathway of study to ensure the latter.

In this paper Nick will describe the development of the project and will discuss the lessons learned so far based on participant and student evaluations. It will be suggested that this project could be adopted by other academic institutions and there will be an opportunity to discuss what considerations would need to be taken into account for this to happen.

TUESDAY 23rd Special Interest Group 1 (16:30 – 17:30)

Special Interest Group 1: *Retention and Student Success – Institutional/environmental factors*

Pierre Chenard, Sylvie Cartier, Hélèn Trifiro, Prof Jake Murdoch, Université du Québec à Montréal; Janet Mark, Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue; Isabelle Lamarre, CEGEP André-Laurendeau, Québec; Canada

In the province of Quebec (Canada), access to higher education and equal opportunity are issues of public concern. Indeed, by the end of the 1960s, Quebec had undertaken a vast reform of its education system with the aim of maximizing access to higher education. As a result, 48 college-level institutions were created (the network of Cégeps), along with 10 public university institutions (the network of the University of Quebec). Through the establishment of these institutions in each of Quebec's regions the issue of geographical inequality to access was largely resolved. Moreover, it greatly increased the number of college and university spots available to potential students.

By the beginning of the 1990s, impressive results in access to higher education could be observed in quantitative terms. Consequently, new strategies were devised to act on a more qualitative level. The challenge at this point was work within institutions to provide the best possible quality of education and, most importantly, to facilitate student success and degree completion.

Within the framework of this SIG on the institutional and environmental factors of student retention, you will be presented with three initiatives. These initiatives will be discussed with the aim of illustrating the above-mentioned efforts and of proposing examples of institutional actions and adjustments that support greater student access and success.

The first case will be that of a state organisational structure (Cégeps), which are, in fact, unique in the world. Cégeps facilitate a functional and efficient passage from high school to university and/or the job market.

The second case will illustrate the feasibility of integrating the values of access and university success into the culture of a traditionally elitist and selective institution.

The third, finally, will describe how the functional marriage of two institutional services was undertaken in order to support student success. The institutional services in question developed knowledge and expertise through a number of interventions with professors and students who, too often, act independently of each other in this regard.

These three short case studies should speak to your own experiences or knowledge and thus to allow an exchange which will bring us further along and enrich us mutually.

WEDNESDAY 24th Parallel Paper Sessions 4 (11:35 – 12:35)

Males and higher education: can the Olympic Charter help?

Dr Neil Speirs, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

This workshop will expand and develop the theme of boys and higher education. The workshop will allow participants the opportunity to look deeper at one of the main themes of the conference.

The initial focus will be on selected journal articles where authors have looked to either chart, describe or theoretically model the underachievement of boys in secondary schools. This underachievement has resulted in fewer boys presenting themselves to partake in higher education. Workshop participants' discussions will move from the journal articles to the social and cultural attitudes that appear to underpin this phenomenon of underachieving males, particularly those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Having mapped these attitudes the group members will be invited to discuss if an understanding of these attitudes can help to increase the male population in higher education.

At this stage participants are charged with considering the idea that it is possible to increase the male population in higher education by re-engaging males at the secondary school level. In order to illustrate this, an example of an initiative run by the University of Edinburgh will be briefly presented as a case study. The initiative draws its inspiration from diverse sources such as: The Olympic Charter and EU Parliamentary reports characterising sport as an aid to social integration.

The group will now assess whether intervening at the secondary level is a potentially successful way to increase male participation in higher education. However, the group may find it more appropriate to consider whether the curriculum of a typical degree programme needs to be modified due to changing male attitudes. Is curriculum change alone the vehicle to increased male participation? The attributes that a graduate departs with are delivered to the individual as a result of the curriculum that was read. If these attributes are in fact appropriate for successful transition to employment then are we already delivering quality higher education?

Looking at Retention 'from Both Sides Now': Local support AND strategic practice

Dr Diane Nutt, University of Teesside, England, UK

The University of Teesside, in the UK, has an ongoing commitment to providing HE opportunities for non-traditional students; part of its mission statement is 'providing opportunities, pursuing excellence'. As a result, the University's student intake includes a high percentage of students from non-traditional backgrounds; but, recruiting non-traditional students is only the beginning of the story.

Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are also first generation students, and as a result are often unsure about how University 'works'. (McGivney, 2003) As a result of this and other factors, widening participation is often linked with poor retention. On an international basis, countries with more open access to tertiary education also tend to have higher drop-out rates (National Audit Office [NAO], 2007; Rand, 2007). However, at Teesside, alongside an ongoing increase in non-traditional participation, over the last few years we have also seen improvements in our retention statistics. This 'bucks' the trend, as institutions with higher numbers of non-traditional students also tend to have higher numbers of withdrawals (NAO, 2007; Thomas, 2005, Yorke, Longden, 2004).

A major European Social Fund research project undertaken at Teesside (completed 2005) considered why students leave and why they stay. The findings led to a range of initiatives, both local and central, to better support student success. Retention at Teesside has improved markedly since this project was undertaken. However it can be difficult to understand which initiatives and approaches have made the most impact. What is perhaps most interesting is the way in which supporting student retention and success have become part of everyday practice within the University. A cultural and social change (Tinto, 1987) has occurred, which puts supporting student learning and engaging non-traditional students at the fore front of people's agendas.

Recent opportunities to reflect on practice at Teesside have led to a better understanding of what makes a difference. This presentation will consider how working strategically from the centre as well as providing support locally (i.e. in the faculties) has made change possible.

While the focus of this presentation is retention, the principles considered are transferable to other areas of strategic development within HE across Europe.

The practice of practice based learning in higher education. Aiming for inclusion

Stephen Manson, Senior Disability Adviser, Learning & Teaching Unit Campus Leader, University of South Australia, Australia

Practice Based Learning (PBL) provides students experiential learning opportunities in which they can apply theoretical knowledge. Many universities world wide have increased the use of PBL in an effort to cater to a greater diversity of student learning styles, increase student engagement and to increase employability of their graduates. There has been little practical or theoretical exploration of the implications of increasing PBL on participation of marginalised student groups such as students with disabilities.

Whilst there are a number of factors which contribute to under-employment of graduates with disabilities, a key factor is that graduating students with disabilities have lower levels of work experience and preparation than their non-disabled peers. They often leave Higher Education without experience in effectively dealing with disclosure, or managing their rights and accommodations in the workplace. Australian data indicates reduced graduate workforce participation of only 75.2% for students with disabilities compared with 82.4% for other graduates Lower graduate employment outcomes for students with disabilities are also reported in research from the United Kingdom

It is clear that many students with disabilities face additional barriers in PBL contexts such as clinical nurse learning and teacher education. While PBL has the potential to improve student engagement and employment outcomes, it also carries some risks if disadvantage these students often experience in the workplace is transferred into University courses. Consequently there is a need to develop pedagogy for PBL which embraces inclusion. Inclusive PBL assessment practices and teaching arrangements are critical in ensuring that increasing PBL does not lead to increasing marginalisation for students with disabilities and other disadvantaged student groups within higher education.

The University of South Australia has engaged in projects aimed at improving PBL practice in the Health Sciences and is currently collaborating nationally to develop a project aimed at developing an inclusive PBL framework. This session will highlight the work that has been carried out in this arena at UniSA and engage with international colleagues in identifying the direction of future work and potential international collaboration.

Developing a Socially Inclusive University

Dr Liz Thomas, Edge Hill University, England, UK

'Higher education must accept that the implications of offering access to non-traditional students do not end, but rather begin, at the point of entry' (Bamber and Tett 2001, p.15) .

The English policy agenda is advocating that widening participation (WP) is integrated into institutional policies, practices and cultures to create more socially inclusive universities. Many universities and colleges in the UK and internationally have a stated commitment to increased social inclusion and student diversity. This is often manifested in a strong focus on outreach work seeking to change the perceptions of suitably qualified students to apply to and enter higher education. Comparatively little attention is paid to in-reach activity intended to transform institutions from traditional, to contemporary, sites of learning. All too often responsibility for the success of new learners falls upon committed individuals, rather than embedded into institutional processes, structures and systems which share obligations across the institution.

Drawing on materials generated by the Action on Access programme "*Mainstreaming and sustaining WP in institutions*", this paper explores the types of changes that institutions need to make to become more socially inclusive. These are likely to be relevant to institutions in many countries, and participants will be encouraged to reflect upon their applicability within their own context.

WEDNESDAY 24th Parallel Paper Sessions 5 (14:00 – 15:15)

Contrasting disabled and non-disabled student learning experience

Dr Manuel Madriaga, Katie Hanson, Caroline Heaton, Helen Kay, Sarah Newitt, Ann Walker, Sheffield Hallam University, UK

This paper presents preliminary evidence from a systematic survey of disabled students and non-disabled students (N=484) regarding their teaching, learning and assessment experiences within one UK university. This study builds upon previous work in the sector, utilising a research instrument employed by Healey, Bradley, Fuller and Hall (2006). Pursuing this study was not only about compliance to recent changes in UK disability discrimination legislation to promote equality and diversity. The main aim was to gather evidence to inform the institution's inclusive policy and practice for the benefit of *all* students, whether disabled or non-disabled.

The evidence from the survey, particularly qualitative data taken from individual student interviews, has not only given the institution information about disabled and non-disabled student views on their teaching, learning and assessment experiences. It has also given the institution insight into disabled student levels of attainment, which, as of yet, has drawn little, if any, attention in the area of disability and higher education.

The initial findings from this project have been feedback to the institution's Disabled Student Learner Forum, which comprises managers from the Disabled Student Support Team and academic members of staff. This is currently causing a rethink in institutional practice, particularly in seeking a way to address the gap in attainment levels between disabled students without learning support and non-disabled students.

While we believe that the findings will contribute knowledge to the sector, we are confident that it provides the institution with an evidence-base to inform inclusive policy and change for *all* students at the institution.

COST: "The Netherlands Research Consortium on Urban Talent" – a recently founded consortium

Sabine Severiens, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands

COST is a recently founded research consortium inspired by the Chicago Public Schools and their Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR). COST implements the characteristic method of CCSR, but differs in terms of its specific research questions.

The main goal of COST is to offer support to educational institutions and related actors in their contribution to successful school- and study careers of diverse groups of students in four large cities in the Netherlands. COST operates from four starting points: integration of research and policy; thinking in terms of the educational pipeline; urban talent; and secondary analyses.

COST intends to develop expertise in six different areas: awareness of talent and potential of individual students; preparation for the next level; transitions between different school levels; study success; and the involvement of teachers as well as peers and parents.

COST is founded to address concerns of school practitioners and policymakers that most scientific educational research seems to be of little use in the problems they encounter. COST chose the Chicago model for its integrated method of doing research and developing policy to solve this very issue. Linking research and policy development COST aims to "support the search for solutions". For example, in the

research process ample feedback moments are organized in order to confront preliminary results with practice.

Another reason to found COST is the observation that most educational research and policy measures focus on one educational level, and on deficiencies and problems of urban talent. COST thinks in terms of the educational pipeline and answers research questions about how to support talent while students move through the educational continuum. The route to higher education will be examined, starting in primary education, and the role of different urban areas or neighborhoods and institutions surrounding schools will be related to this route.

Using existing databases in the Netherlands, there will be a huge amount of available data for COST to uncover school careers of urban talent in innovative ways and to answer new research questions. COST could be a model for those wanting to bring change through closer connection between research and policy development.

Special Interest Group 2: *Retention and Student Success – Individual/student Factors*

Pierre Chenard, Sylvie Cartier, Hélène Trifiro, Prof Jake Murdoch, Université du Québec à Montréal; Janet Mark, Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue; Isabelle Lamarre, CEGEP André-Laurendeau, Québec; Canada

Despite the setting up of institutional structures to encourage a wide access to higher education, there are still at present inequalities of access in Québec (Canada). Indeed, the intake of universities and colleges continues to be made up largely of students from higher socio-economic backgrounds and certain communities remain significantly underrepresented. As a result of the substantial increase in enrolment in Cégeps (Québec's colleges) and universities over the last forty years, the discussion about the necessity of widening access has weakened.

Researchers and local actors have made efforts to document these questions and to demonstrate that there remains still much to do in order to render universities and colleges in Québec completely accessible. For example, the « Transitions » research team has analysed cross-national Canadian data sources to identify the socio-demographic factors linked to access to higher education. At a different level, local actors at the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue have developed strategies aimed towards offering services that are more in tune with the specific cultural reality of the native (aboriginal) populations.

Such situations are not unique to Québec, although they may appear in different forms elsewhere in the world. This SIG offers the possibility to exchange your knowledge and experience on the subject.