

Fair Access: A History of Failure and Future of Success?

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Registered Charity No. 225930
Access to Higher Education Conference
Raising levels of attainment; widening participation
15 September 2011

Fair Access

What's the problem?
What isn't the solution?
What is the way forward?

What's the problem? A large proportion of the most able young people significantly underachieve



Only one third of the children aged 11 in 1999 who scored in the top 5% in KS2 Maths and English tests achieved 3 A grades in A2 examinations seven years later in 2006 at age 18.

30,000 able children substantially failed to realise their potential.
Identifying Gifted and Talented pupils – issues for all schools,
Professor David Jesson, University of York, 2007

This is a threat to the life chances of the individual students and a waste of much potential talent that could benefit the nation

What's the problem? The vast majority of the underachievers are from less advantaged backgrounds



In 2008 9% of students at universities requiring 3 B grades at A level came from the wealthiest 2% of homes and 3% came from the poorest 22%

40 out of the 6,000 students gaining a place at Oxbridge in 2009 were eligible for free school meals (0.66%). Nationally 80,000 or 13.33% of each year's 600,000 pupil intake is eligible.

Universities don't like common people, do they?', Guardian, 3 Feb 2009
The Schools White Paper, Department for Education November 2010

What isn't the solution? Part 1: More of the same

Re-enactment of the First World War?



Officer 1: Crikey that didn't work. I think the barbed wire, the mud we had to wade through and the enemy machine guns didn't help.

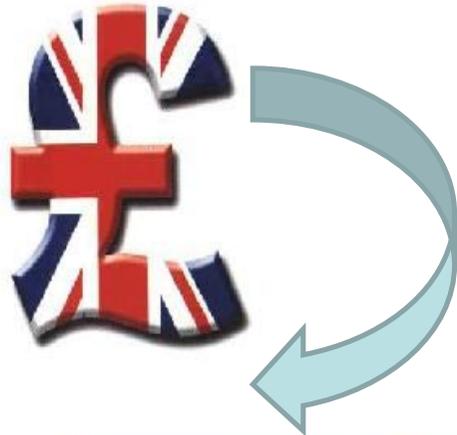


Officer 2: Right then, we need more men going over the top to deal with this.

What isn't the solution?

Part 1: More of the same (I appreciate this is a bit harsh!)

Re-enactment of widening participation expenditure



WP Coordinator 1: Crikey that didn't work, I think that low aspirations, schools not supportive enough of students taking part in outreach, and lack of school focus on fair access didn't help.



WP Coordinator 2: Right then, we need to spend more money to deal with this.

What isn't the solution?

Part 1: More of the same

**£211,500 SPENT TO GET EACH POOR STUDENT
A PLACE AT UNIVERSITY**
Daily Mail 5 February 2008

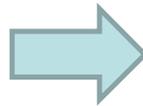
Ministers have applied pressure to elite institutions to increase their number of working-class students. More than £1 billion has been spent recruiting just 5,300 students from disadvantaged homes to university, it emerged yesterday. Spending on schemes to boost numbers of poorer students has doubled in five years to more than £2.3 billion, figures obtained by the Tories show. But universities' intake of students classed as having working-class backgrounds has crept up only fractionally. Astonishingly, it means £211,500 has been spent recruiting every additional working class student to university.

What isn't the solution?

Part 2: Generating interest



The promise of significantly higher future earnings



Setting up one-off visits hosted by lecturers



Running volume-driven events at football stadiums

What isn't the solution?

Part 3: Gaining undergraduates



Bursary schemes

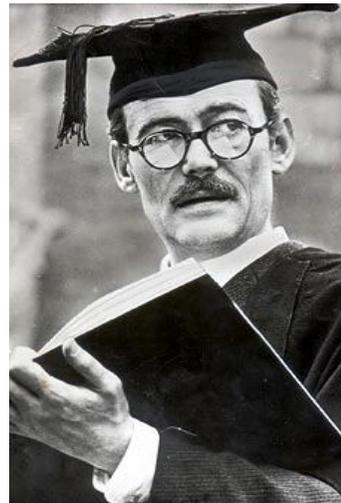
Tackling widening participation through bursaries and fee waivers



Lowering the A2 grades offer for widening participation students



Providing catch up and key skills programmes for undergraduates



Is the government helping?

Commitment to Fair Access ✓

Government lack of joined up thinking in not supporting post-16 with Pupil Premium, Education Endowment Fund, Education Maintenance Allowance, increased tuition fees ✗

National Scholarship Programme bursaries only provide one-off fixes ✗

No matching of objectives/targets between schools and universities ✗

Ending the Gifted & Talented initiative: Fair Access *is* Gifted & Talented ✗

What's the way forward?

**Develop a passion for learning
and
develop a passion for the subject**

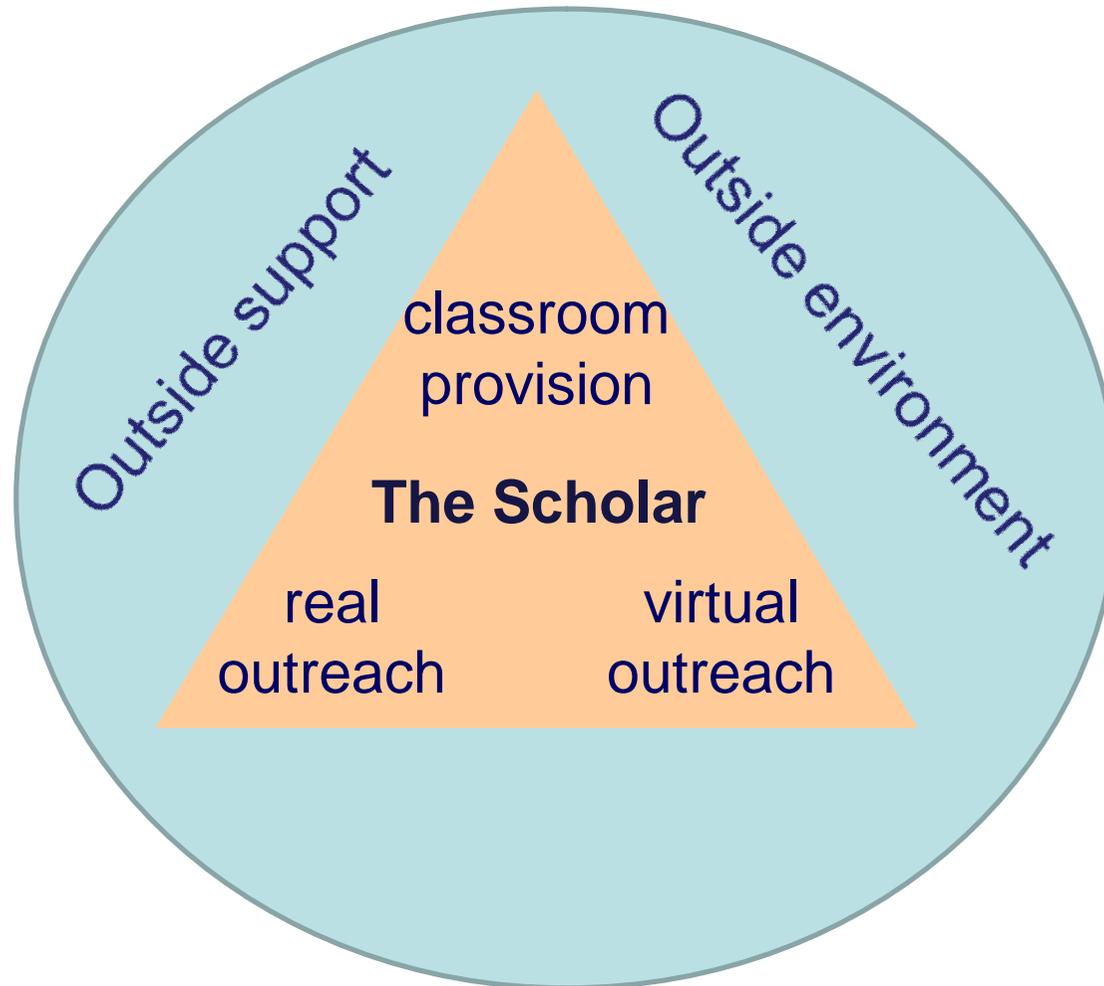




A programme to support able 14-19 students from less advantaged backgrounds through partnership work with schools, colleges, universities, other third sector organisations, families and the students themselves



The Scholars Programme addresses all factors influencing a student's success





Virtual outreach

- Dedicated Scholars Programme webpages
- Online extension activities
- E-mentoring with current undergraduates (subject and interest match)

Real outreach

- Stepping Stones to Excellence* key skills residential courses at Villiers Park
- Masterclasses at local universities
- Local single day workshops
- Subject residenceals at Villiers Park in Year 12



Classroom Provision

- Villiers Park Advisory Service team work in their schools and colleges to develop the quality of everyday provision through action research, CPD and resources

Outside support

- Regular one-to-one and group meetings with a Learning Mentor
- Establish and monitor a *Stepping Stones to Excellence* Action Plan

Outside environment

- Workshops, helpline and consultancy for families



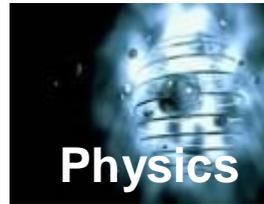
Villiers Park Educational Trust

Virtual Outreach made easy

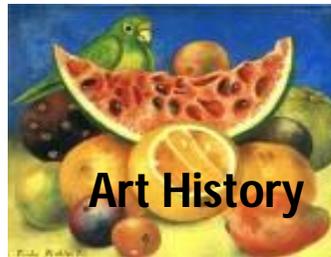
Visit www.villierspark.org.uk for free online extension activities for able A-level students



Classics



Physics



Art History



Spanish



English Language



Biology



German



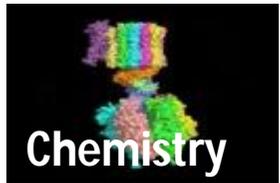
Law



French



History



Chemistry



Economics



Media



Philosophy



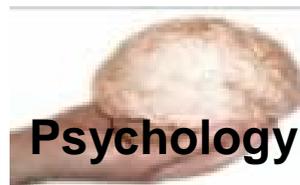
Theatre studies



English Literature



Maths



Psychology



Geography



Religion



Real Outreach made easy

Development of expertise: exposing students to how tutors think and work

- Acquire some knowledge, skills and concepts (broadening/enrichment and deepening/extension)
- Establish domain valued behaviours, rules, norms
- Develop intellectual playfulness – breaking domain rules
- Discuss key issues – move from black and white to grey areas
- Reach tentative conclusions

Don't confuse fun with challenge

Don't give long overviews of degree options

Don't talk at participants for hours

Do get undergrads from similar backgrounds involved

End with a soft sell and follow up a visit



Will our *Scholars Programme* work?

- Positive evaluation by School of Education, University of Sussex ✓
- Track record of fair access success for Villiers Park Educational Trust ✓
- Government and partner interest in this programme ✓
- Schools on board and willing to participate ✓
- Schools have no target relating to excellence or disadvantage ✗
- High cost per student - £7,500 over four years ✗
- Low cost compared to other schemes - £211,500 per student according to Daily Mail ✓
- Insufficient Trust funds to roll out the programme ✗