

Collaboration to support access and retention

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Collaboration – Why and what?

- Collaboration in access – AccessHE, Aimhigher Birmingham etc.
- 20+ 'new collaborative vehicles' in 2012 after Aimhigher/Lifelong Learning Networks
- Retention and success
- Extending collaboration
- Why does it matter?

A disjuncture in the journey

- Outreach work built on defining the cohort – in particular those from lower socio-economic groups and then targeting work at them
- Retention and success work – does this targeting continue?
- Practice appears to favour mainstreaming of additional support
- Is this enough?

What does the disjuncture mean?

- Why will very few people come to my disability action forum?
- Why do the two groups who arrive not seem to be in contact with each other?
- Why do learners from lower socio-economic groups not apparently do so well in the labour market?
- (Greenway et al: http://www.hecsu.ac.uk/assets/assets/documents/Working_class.pdf)
- (Naylor et al: <http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/1418/>)

Class doesn't stop at 18...

- *'It was really hard especially in the first term. Until I did well in the first year, I just didn't know whether I was clever enough to be here. I didn't feel like I was supposed to be here, and it was difficult. I felt because I came from a comprehensive I couldn't be as clever as them and that they'd look down on me. I think it took me the first year to appreciate that people weren't really bothered. In some ways they think you must be cleverer if you've come in from a comprehensive but I just thought they'd think I was stupid and it took a year to get over it and feel I was their equal'.*
- Reay et al (2009) *'Strangers in Paradise'? Working-class Students in Elite Universities'*.

What does the disjuncture mean?

- The inherent marginalisation of 'widening participation'
- Less effective retention work in HE
- Reduced likelihood of addressing the roots of retention issues located pre-HE
- Fragility of the 'WP' allocation
- A reduction in the likelihood of mainstreaming anyway...?

'Pro-fairness' and collaboration

- Mainstreaming and targeted work exist alongside each other in schools – why not in HE?
- **The 'Pro-fairness' community:** collaboration between those within and outside HE committed to greater fairness including:

Widening Participation

Equality and Diversity

Retention and Success

- Connecting and collaborating a set of shared values

NEON, Pro-Fairness & Collaboration

- NEON (National Education Opportunities Network) founded 2012.
- Over 100 members from HE, schools, colleges, private and third sector
- Events portfolio & national working groups – community owning and defining itself
- Pro-fairness, sharing values, multi-level collaboration
- New working group 2013: Access and Success?

- Thank you
- To work with AccessHE or NEON contact me at graeme.atherton@londonhigher.ac.uk