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Collaborating across institutions to improve access and retention

Neil Stewart Associates

Retention and Progression in Higher Education

19th April 2012

When does student experience begin?

- 90% of 11 year olds thought about whether to go to university or not

- Atherton et al (2009) '*How Young People formulate their views about the future*' https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/RSG/SchoolsSO/Page10/DCSF-RR152
- The Sutton Trust (2010) '*Young People's Omnibus 2010*' London: The Sutton Trust

When does student experience begin?

- Future decision making is a process for young people that begins at primary level
- It is marked by key statutory and individual staging posts e.g. options at 14
- Shaped by interactions of parents, families, schools, peers
- Perceptions of HE: shaped by whom….?
- How much is HE involved here?

When does student experience begin?

- Young people from groups under-represented in HE have experience a different future choice process from those who are not under-represented
- Less knowledge rich
- More bounded by attainment restrictions
- More ambivalent to higher education

Atherton, G (2012) *How to make Higher Education Fair* Trentham (forthcoming)

How is student experience interpreted?

- At enrolment – some good practice in transition for retention & success work evident
- In some cases at enquiry
- Less frequently at points earlier
- BUT student experience begins earlier

Why collaboration?

- Best way of improving the student experience
- Requires systematic engagement of schools and colleges and strategic level
- Both inter and intra sector needed
- Efficient way of ‘sharing services’

Regional collaboration

- Picture patchy after Aimhigher and LLNs
- No systematic overview yet
- Contrasting models responding to local circumstances and where the funding is
- ‘Hard’ to ‘soft’ collaboration

AccessHE: Pan London Collaboration

- 30 HEIs inside/outside London
- 250 schools/colleges with '**AccessHE Advocates**'
- '**Enabling**' access work in the capital
- Sustainability in 2012-13 depends on investment from partners
- www.accesshe.ac.uk

AccessHE & the Student Experience

Core Activities

- ‘One stop’ for school/college/learner information on access opportunities
- Pan London forums on key issues

Looked after children

Working with those with disabilities

Transition and Retention

- London Access Data Service
- Pan-London learner cohorts/multi HEI events

The Transition Standard

- Set of knowledge/skills students from Level 3 looking to enter HE should have before they enter HE
- Delivered via short session(s) and online by HEIs and schools/colleges
- Developed by cross-sector group
- Signed up to by as many of the network as possible

National Collaboration

- National Education Opportunities Network (NEON) launched early 2012

- New professional organisation supporting those involved in widening access to higher education (HE)

- www.educationopportunities.co.uk

Widening Access at crossroads

- End of Aimhigher & LLNs
- Rising importance of Access Agreements
- Lack of statutory driver on schools and colleges
- Access work weakly professionalised

‘Professionalisation’

- CPD activities face-to-face & online for access community
- Accreditation for access professionals
- Sector specific quality standards for organisations
- Access practitioner advocacy at every level

Open, inclusive & independent

- Open to all who wish to be involved
- Not owned by/part of any other organisation
- No money to back it
- Membership offer for 2012-13

Including all sectors

- Cross sector approach including:
- HEIs
- schools
- student unions
- colleges
- third sector
- professional organizations
- private sector

2011-12

- Supporting Practice Event Series Spring 2012
- Working Groups in key access areas
- Accreditation planning group with European Access Network
- Policy & research seminars with Hobsons PlC
- Constructing Membership offer 2012-13

2011-12

Supporting Practice Events

- University of Manchester
- University of Leicester
- Leeds Metropolitan University
- University of Plymouth
- 140 attendees across 4 events
- From across sectors 55% HE & 45% non HE

The New Collaboration

- Bottom up not top down
- Bigger range of contrasting models
- More strategic
- But more needed

To work with us

- To learn more about AccessHE
www.accessHE.ac.uk

- To work with AccessHE or become involved in NEON contact me on

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