Widening Access to Higher Education for Young People in Schools

'A Socially Mobile Scotland?'

Social Mobility and Widening Access to Higher Education in Scotland: Policy, Practice and Research

A national summit conference for Scotland, supported by:

FACE · FOCUS west · CR&DALL · University of Glasgow

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Aim to

- show range and breadth of activity

- quantity and quality of interventions

- format and level of support

- results and impact

Widening Access (WA)
- UoG WA opportunities for 96 partner / target schools across 12 Local Authorities in 13/14

Widening Participation (WP)
- over 4,000 S4 – S6 school pupils taking part in UoG WP activity during 13/14

A WP or "non-traditional" student:
- reside in an MD20 or MD40 postcode
- attend a school with low progression to HE
- entrant from further education
- time spent in care
- in receipt of EMA
- an adult returning to education
- minority ethnic background
- first in family to enter HE
- refugee / asylum seeker status

WP at UoG aims to:

- raise aspiration
- aid preparation
- support application   realise aspiration
- prepare for entry
- improve retention and success

Programme approach:

- <u>general</u> entry (Top Up, Summer School, Taster Weeks)

- <u>subject</u> specific entry (Access to Primary Education)

- <u>professions</u> entry (Reach)

Comprising:

- promotional talks and events
- in-school activity
- on-campus experiences
- dedicated admissions process
- contextual data insight
- adjusted entry requirements
- targeted support

Programme participation also considered by other Scottish universities

Result summary:
- Proportion of U/g entrants from MD0-40 increasing YoY
- Increasing numbers entering professional programmes

Intergenerational Mentoring Project (IGMP)

- Background to mentoring project

- Why mentoring?

- Short film introducing the project

- Key issues emerging

- Further development

Some useful indicators...

	Springburn Academy	Glasgow City	Scotland
Higher Education	21%	28%	36%

	St Ninian's High School	East Renfrewshire	Scotland
Higher Education	74%	61%	36%

- In 2011 one East Renfrewshire school sent 44 students to Strathclyde University. Six of Glasgow's schools in poorest areas sent 10 between them.

- Major problem for Scottish education and particularly acute in Glasgow.

Background to project

- Interested in why some young people were successful. Particularly their friendship groups, family situations and school relationships (*Springburn Academy*)

- Of 150 pupils in a 5th year group, 31 were identified by the school as '*having the potential to enter higher education*'

- Each pupil was given a modern smart phone (Google Nexus One – pupils enjoyed!) with added software capable of recording their text message traffic, (numbers sent to and received from, not content), phone calls (numbers called and received) and proximity to other (within group) phones

Project response to situation:

- Developed one to one mentoring/tutoring for S5/S6 pupils – Springburn Academy

- Included all those borderline and above in terms of being likely to achieve five highers and therefore entry to university

- Pupils were identified and recruited by the school. Mentors recruited from variety of sources, primarily within University – emphasis on retired professionals

- The research nature of this project has involved an ongoing process of reflection and evaluation of the project which has shaped its development

- Commenced December 2010 and is ongoing – now in three Glasgow schools approx. 80 mentoring relationships… film
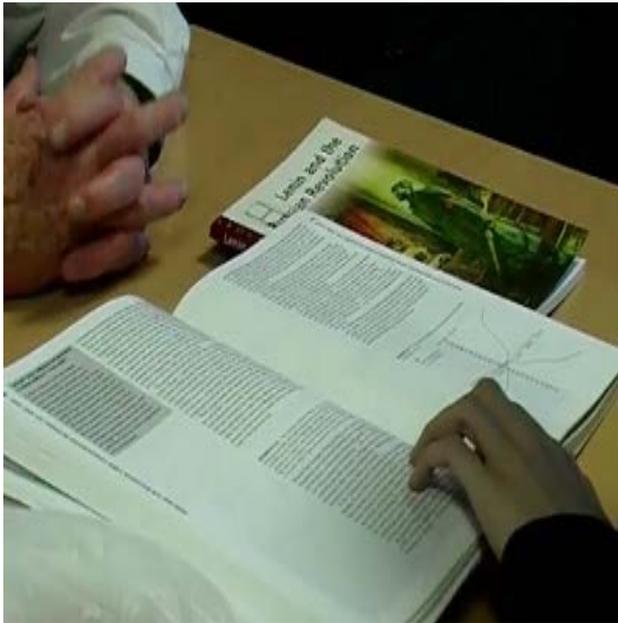
Keep aspects of mentoring:

- Video captures essence of project

- Mentor input was crucial in providing support (emotional, practical, academic).

- Offers personal extensive support on planning for and entering higher education.

- Intergenerational aspect holds significant advantages – flexibility and time for mentors different perspective and experience for students.

- Students were very positive about the experience - cited numerous specific examples of learning from their mentors.

- Mentoring opened up the chance to get to know each other on a personal basis – different from a formal tutoring relationship.

Key issues emerging:

- Preparation for university crucial – application, personal statements and interview process

- Process is a focal point for understanding role of social/cultural capital in access to HE

- Scale of the problem – no familiarity with world about to enter - insecurity and self esteem (shorthand) are aware of their 'stranger' status.

- Lack of experience – e.g. school visits and trips limited

Understanding why it works

- Academically able young people – school(s) capable of delivering highers

- Attention needs to be diverted from schools

- Expands social networks of young people – grows social capital

- Young people alien/strangers to valued cultural norms

- Mentor as conduit/brokerage - in absence of planning cultural 'exposure' may be alienating

What's next at UoG?

A wide ranging review identified development opportunities:

- earlier intervention and engagement
- wider subject coverage
- need for online provision
- build capacity and refine delivery
- improve programme promotion, coordination and collaboration
- introduce systematic identification and tracking
- develop support to improve retention
- continued outcome and effectiveness research

As a result, team capacity and resource increased 2013-2015.

2013/14:
- WP Development Officer roles introduced
- programme recognition formalised as basis for adjusted entry requirements
- dedicated admissions process, officer and system introduced
- use of contextual data refined
- S1-S3 in-school session pilot
- online "Access Academy" first phase
- new retention-supporting communications & events
- Talent Scholarship and Care Leaver Bursary expansion

2014/15:
- S1–S3 expansion and "Access Academy" development
- more professional subjects added

But long term!

Initial investment up to 2015 to develop, test and establish new initiatives.

Once large scale developments up and running, we aim to:
- continuously evaluate and refine
- track and measure impact and outcomes
- increase focus on key groups within the large and disparate "WP" cohort, for example:
  - part timers
  - care leavers
  - asylum seekers
  - disabled
  - ethnic groups
  - males ..?

What's next at Strathclyde?

- Further research/development of the mentoring project

- Already have a new development project looking at mentoring for young people that are looked after

- Formation of consortium to take this forward

- Urgent need for research/development in this area

- Challenge to HEIs to change – not only young people and schools!

- Project film is available here: https://www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/mentoring

Success will be:

- an increase in aspiration, knowledge and preparedness for University
- a larger number of candidates making informed choices by accessing accurate and timely information
- improved ability to understand pathways, access support and establish networks
- a wider range of subject specific provision
- integrated online support available to all, not just those in partner / target schools
- efficient and effective admissions processes, understood and valued by all
- improved retention, completion and success rates
- a sustainable model for on-going, long term delivery

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