

Title: **Exploring change management in collaborative approaches to widening participation in HE**

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Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Identify key stakeholders for effective Area Based Initiative (ABI) working in a widening participation context supporting the transition to HE
- Explore the barriers and benefits of collaboration and partnership with multiple stakeholders in widening participation to HE
- Recognise the potential for ABI collaboration to impact student progression and experience

Session Outline

The session will explore the role of localism and representation as well as institutional and individual motivations in generating aims and objectives to support widening participation to higher education. The session will begin with the presenters reflections of establishing an ABI and a summary of ethnographic research data collected over a three year period. This will be contextualised with relevant literature on collaboration and partnership working in a widening participation context, highlighting the influence of ABI collaboration on student progression and experience.

In the session a scenario will be presented, attendees will be provided with a short case study describing a fictional place which details key issues such as social mobility, transitions and employment statistics for young people. Attendees will then be put into groups and provided with individual profiles of fictional stakeholders, and the aims and objectives of the ABI. They will then be tasked with choosing the representation of the ABI based on the information they have been given. As the groups are deciding on which stakeholders to include, new criteria about the individual and the institution they represent will be introduced.

The aims of the session are to explore the barriers and benefits of collaboration and partnership with multiple stakeholders in widening participation to HE. Following the session, the attendees are expected to have a deeper understanding of the importance of representation in stakeholder working, the advantages and disadvantages of multi-agency

approaches in supporting transitions to HE and the potential impact of this on change management practices in HE contexts.

Background

Young people in transition must navigate a range of complex socio-cultural contexts, structures and situations (Furlong, 2009). This is not always a linear process and they are often faced with a number of barriers and competing perspectives, which can lead to their transitions becoming an incomplete and paradoxical experience.

Area based initiatives (ABI) are local partnerships established to respond to local needs. ABI have been used to tackle disadvantage and inequality and were traditionally 'government-led initiatives that have offered additional resources and flexibilities to professionals and community leaders in disadvantaged places' (Kerr et al, 2014: 2) supporting the transition to HE.

Policies created to address participation have encapsulated an approach that facilitates the needs of a changing labour market. The catalyst for participation policy under a 'third way' ideology was the Dearing report (1997) which acknowledged "The purpose of education is life-enhancing: it contributes to the whole quality of life" (Dearing, 1997). The ethos of this report was to pledge a commitment to widening participation for all learners that accounted for the needs of individuals and the labour market. The report also stressed the importance of the links between higher education, further education and the training sector.

Over twenty years later, the outcomes of the Dearing report continue to resonate. This paper reports on the impact of one ABI and examines research from a wide range of respondents representing Schools, Colleges, Universities, Training providers, Local Authorities, Councils, Chamber of commerce and Business to explore the role of localism, collaboration and partnership in supporting progression and widening participation to HE. The research outcomes have been adapted to develop a session to enable individuals to explore the importance of representation in stakeholder working, the advantages and disadvantages of multi-agency approaches in widening participation to HE and the potential impact of this, on progression and the overall student experience.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

Time (mins)	Content	Participant Activity	Resources
0-10	Presentation of research findings, key literature and project overview.	Listening/asking questions	Power-point
10 - 15	Putting attendees into groups and introducing the case study.	Listening/getting into groups	Power-point
15-25	Individuals reading the case study, stakeholder profiles and aims and objectives of ABI	Reading	Laminated profiles/case studies/terms of reference
25-35	Groups deciding who should be included in the ABI (with some additional criteria added)	Discussion with group	Laminated profiles/case studies/terms of reference
35-45	Plenary and discussion including the time for groups to present their rationale for choice.	Discussion	Power-point.

References

Kerr, K, Dyson, A, Raffo, C 2014 'Education, disadvantage and place'. Bristol: Policy Press, 2014.

Gale, T. & Parker, S. (2014) Navigating change: a typology of student transition in higher education, *Studies in Higher Education*, 39:5, 734-753, DOI:10.1080/03075079.2012.721351