

Session Title:	Building Futures and Empowering Learners
Speaker(s):	<i>Charlotte Thwaites Lead Partnership Officer University of East London</i> <i>Ellie Downing Lead Partnership Officer University of East London</i>
Chair:	
Reporter:	Sophie Flieshman

Speaker/Institution Bio/Information:	<p>Charlotte Thwaites, completed BA photography at UEL. WP background - first in family to attend uni - IMD Q1. Worked at UEL since 2011, In WP since 2015.</p> <p>Ellie, studied Psychology. First in family to go to uni. Gained various experience in outreach while studying; Student ambassador, volunteering with young people. On graduation, wanted to work with young people but didn't want to teach.</p> <p>Worked in various roles Including as a mentor for educational charity and a role at a social mobility charity for 3 years before joining UEL.</p> <p>We watched a short video into to UEL: Education for career, courage and better futures.</p> <p>Docklands campus, Stratford campus, USS - formerly shared with Birkbeck.</p> <p>International uni, 40k students, 160 nationalities, 57% first in fam students.</p>
Overview/Aim of session:	<p>This session will explore some of UEL's award-winning pre-16 outreach activities, highlighting the longitudinal science-based attainment programme 'Phenomenal Physiology'. During the session, we will discuss how this targeted initiative engages Year 10 students, particularly those from under-represented backgrounds, to support their academic development and boost future aspirations. We will also delve into the importance of relationship building and collaborative partnerships, demonstrating how working together creates pathways that showcase higher education as an attainable, accessible, and exciting opportunity for all learners.</p>

<p>Workshop Content</p>	<p>How UEL work with Pre-16 learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach team is split into pre and post 16 • Partnership with 22 secondary schools. • Ad hoc work with non-partners who can access a more limited offer. • Partner schools must commit to 3 interventions per year. These can be simple IAG sessions, assemblies etc or more in depth sessions. • Currently only working with years 10-11 but would like to broaden this. • Engagement criteria: above average number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), above average pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and below average progress 8 attainment. • Participating pupils need to be on track to achieve suitable entry grades at post-16. <p>The following questions were asked via Mentimeter: What do partnerships mean to you? Who are your key partners and stakeholders?</p> <p>Mentimeter answer broadly aligned with UEL's partners and reasons for partnership working that were explored throughout the rest of the session.</p> <p>UEL's partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambassadors UEL have two types of ambassadors. Curriculum deliver subject content. Outreach support event delivery and deliver general Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) • Careers team and student funding • Disability and dyslexia team to ensure events are inclusive • Academics • Schools • Third party orgs • Parents • UniConnect <p>UEL partner schools get access to menu of activities. These can be provided in a variety of formats. Non partners only get access to some specific things.</p> <p>Partner schools can pick and mix the offer. UEL also offer some bespoke sessions, but the menu provides some boundaries around this which manages expectations.</p>
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<p>Case Studies/Examples:</p>	<p>Phenomenal Physiology (the following information is taken directly from the presenters slides)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Phenomenal Physiology Project, a flagship initiative of the University of East London (UEL) supported by the Physiological Society. It has been a driving force in inspiring and educating students from under-represented groups since its inception in 2017. • It is a six-week programme targeting Year 10 students to participate in hands-on science-based workshops led by trained university student ambassadors and exposure to professional level equipment. In 2024, 43 students took part from two schools. • These sessions held during lessons or after school, aim to ignite interest in higher education and science degrees. • The programme concludes with students presenting their experiment findings to a panel of academics, fostering confidence and empowering diverse young learners to pursue academic and professional success in science. • The project is designed and run in collaboration with UELs outreach team, UELs Medical Physiology Team (Academics and current students), The Physiological Society as well as participation from our partner external schools
<p>Scenarios/Roundtable discussions:</p>	<p>Activity: Each table was given a particular stakeholder group and asked 'How do you approach partnership with this group and why is this important?'</p> <p>Factors to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dos and Donts Best practice Pitfalls to avoid Challenges and Solutions Building Trust Defining Success Improving relationships. <p>Summary of points discussed</p> <p>Charities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding the right partner • Ensuring your missions and values align -

	<p>considering long term goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Grounded in place' - are they working with same communities or target audiences? • Being reflective and open to change. Are you able to have tough conversations if needed? Are they not Afraid to rock the boat and switch things up if needed? <p>Academics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting them to find time to go out to schools • Lack of experience working with young people. Knowing how to adapt content and engage different age groups. • Finding the right academic to work with up. This is where curriculum ambassadors come in at UEL. • Health and safety, risk assessments and safeguarding. Burden of admin. • Keeping track of who's doing what with who. Both in large and smaller institutions it's really difficult to keep tabs on all the activity with schools. <p>Parents/Carers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a range of engagement options virtual and in person • Being non judgemental • Help them to understand the scale of their influence • Accessibility - language support • Respectfully challenge misconceptions • Challenges: gatekeepers – it can be hard to get to parents going through schools. Try to get round this by including them in sessions with their young people. • Challenging myths • Engagement – parents/carers finding the time to come to sessions. • "Catching dust" - sitting on a stand at parents evening but getting no interest. UEL noted they get better engagement at Y11 parents evenings. Having a good connection with teachers and getting them to prime the parents on why you're there really helps. One participant had had success with joining on to teacher appointments rather than having a separate stand <p>Ambassadors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training is really important. Set clear expectations. • Highlight the benefits that they're getting from being involved in the work • Give recognition and celebrate good work (e.g. certificates) • Be honest about strengths and supportively push them to do things they might be less comfortable with.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UEL hold mixers and an end of year celebration event for ambassadors. <p>Internal Uni Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focussed on faculty. • Beneficial to have one person in the WP team who is the link for different areas. This means that colleagues know who to come to and also prevents other areas getting bombarded with requests for different staff members. • Providing clarity on what can and can't be done. • Finding balance between them being the subject matter expert but you being the expert on working with young people. <p>Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give incentives to try to open doors to deliver your activity. Both a great tool but can be a barrier/burden. • Building relationships by updating mailing lists. Reaching out to old contacts and asking to be redirected to the person now responsible for that area of work if there has been a change. • Changing up comms - not only communicating via email. East Anglia have a facebook group for Art teachers. Sometimes just turn up on the door step and see if you can speak to them works. • Sharing feedback • Make it as easy as possible for teachers to engage. <p>UELS Dos and Don'ts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration is key • Manage expectations • Have in person meetings with schools at the start of year wherever possible • Give feedback • Be personable and friendly
Questions and Answers:	<p>Q - how do UEL manage ambassadors mixers over multiple campus's?</p> <p>A - most things happen on the biggest campus - Docklands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambassador get campus tour training on all three campus and provided with resources to help them be familiar with the areas they don't generally circulate in <p>Q - How does Curriculum Ambassadors Work?</p> <p>A - they mainly stick to speaking about their own course/subject area. They do fun interactive activities such as coding and quiz's. They're mainly talking through what they're physically doing so not veering into subject matter that they're not familiar with.</p>

	<p>Q What are the common themes/requests from schools? A - it really varies from school to school. Some want everything going some only want 3 sessions a year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assemblies • Mock interviews • Some schools will have a full cohort session and then bring the pupils that it most resonated with to an on campus session to explore things in greater depth. <p>Q - Are curriculum ambassadors just PG? A - No, anyone can do it. Even first year UG</p> <p>Q – Any advice on how to help PG students to create engage in sessions? A - UEL outreach team share their resources with curriculum ambassadors as an example of what is expected. They go back and forth with academics/ambassadors to review and refine sessions. Ambassadors are paid 3 hours of prep max. They are paid for attending events.</p>
Summary/Key takeaways:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of relationship building with schools and partners. • Have a clearly defined offer for schools with some flexibility to accommodate their priorities. • The value of leveraging subject expertise and enthusiasm from ambassadors and academic staff. • Consensus on success factors and challenges from the workshop group.