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**Session 3.2 Making Schools & Colleges Your Best Friend**

The London to Leicester partnership project looked at 17 schools and colleges to work with across London and the following then took place:

* A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by Leicester University and the school/college involved (this was originally for a 3-year period, but it is now on a rolling basis)
* The school/college involved signs up to working with the University of Leicester
* There are tangible benefits for students and staff involved, including:
  + A travel grant for £500 for open days and taster days
  + Firm offer holders have access to a £2000 scholarship, where the school chooses who is the most beneficial recipient
  + Opportunity to share best practice

The main success stories are as follows:

* A 54% increase in applications in the first 3 years of the project
* A 114% increase in registrations in the first 3 years of the project
* £100k in scholarships awarded to WP students (some scholarships have been re-badged ‘Great London bursary’)
* More than a 1000 interactions since 2015 (including summer schools, meetings, working groups, HE events and workshops)

There are several similar models across the UK now, the way it works in Leicester is as follows:

* One person has responsibility for the project, but other members of staff feed into delivery
* Schools and colleges involved have priority access to:
  + Academic colleagues
  + Teacher conferences
  + Subject taster days
  + Admissions working groups
* The initial contact is a tailored email including data about the school showing they haven’t worked together before
* One to one meetings are offered in the email
* What works for one school/college doesn’t necessarily work for all
* It is a recognised partnership – 2-way process
* Recognition of support facilities (e.g. school facilities have been used for teachers’ conferences)

**Group discussion**

**Scenario 1**

* Large FE college
* Poor conversion from applications
* Good transport links to your university
* Similar course portfolio
* Mix of qualifications

A discussion took place about Scenario 1 and the following ideas came out:

* Showcase our facilities through taster days
* Phone rather than email
* Remover barriers about accepting BTECS
* Use Gatsby benchmarks to encourage interaction
* Use data to inform the college
* Turn up at the college for a meeting or if you know there’s an open evening taking place

**Group discussion**

**Scenario 2**

* High achieving girls’ school
* Low applications, good conversion
* Offers only A Levels
* History of Russell Group applications
* Located in slightly inaccessible area

A discussion took place about Scenario 2 and the following ideas came out:

* Look at data
* Focus on STEM day
* Look at careers insights and vocational courses
* Get them onto campus, use travel grants

**Group discussion**

**Scenario 3**

* Multi-site sixth form college
* Mix of qualifications – one site delivers A Levels, one site delivers BTEC, another delivers a mix
* Location of university is attractive to college
* Steady number of applications and enrolments

A discussion took place about Scenario 3 and the following ideas came out:

* Important to get your foot in the door
* Offer different things according to each site’s requirements

Our top takeaways

* Take time to listen – partnerships are two-way
* Not everything will work, perfection is rare!
* Celebrate and appreciate success
* Say thank you!

Your top takeaways

* Turn up to schools/colleges unannounced!
* Take advantage of and take time to analyse data
* Be frank, honest and upfront
* Show how easy it is to get to campus
* Use travel grants
* Signpost to local HELOA group If you are unavailable