

<b>Session Title:</b>	<b>How to build a widening access curriculum</b>
<b>Speaker(s):</b>	<i>Jon Coe &amp; Megan Rostern-Thomson   University of Sheffield</i>
<b>Chair:</b>	<b>Sarah Parkins</b>
<b>Reporter:</b>	<b>Reena Littlehales</b>

<b>Speaker/Institution Bio/Information:</b>	<p>Megan Rostern-Thomson – Head of Access Programmes and Engagement Been at UoS since early 2021</p> <p>Jon Coe – Head of Student Recruitment Been at UoS since 2017 in various role</p> <p>Access team at UoS – team members that had been in post for a long period of time and there was a rinse and repeat attitude to work/activity so team were keen to ask: what is widening access? (particularly looking with fresh eyes)</p>
<b>Overview/Aim of session:</b>	<p>Access Service at Sheffield has just finished our 'Access Development Project. Having utilised Theory of Change methodology in our programme and evaluation design, we have created a service delivery model that covers students from primary age through to first term of undergraduate study, with a local focus in early years, expanding to local and national interventions from post-16 onwards. This session should give you the tools needed to build a skills based, evidence led widening access curriculum.</p>
<b>Workshop Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● QR Code to an introduction Mentimeter which got a gauge of the room and their interpretations of widening participation</li> <li>● This was a big change project and much was a focus on challenging the culture in the team</li> <li>● Take stock by taking a step back</li> <li>● The wider project was split into strands but this session focused specifically on the ACTIVITY element</li> <li>● Define the student journey; what does awareness, consideration, conversion and validation mean to a WP/Access student? From primary to university</li> <li>● Team had previously put most of their focus on post-16</li> <li>● Need to define the target groups – what are Sheffield problems?</li> <li>● Understanding the barriers – how to build a curriculum from scratch             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Times of the barriers at the stage</li> </ul> </li> <li>● General core offer of interventions and bespoke</li> <li>● QR code – back to the mentimeter with a question about the common barriers</li> <li>● Delegates asked why they were making that choice and note on their</li> </ul>

thoughts

- Belonging in different subjects – role modelling
- “What are you gonna do with that?” – arts and social sciences courses
- Perceptions and everyone being different – anecdotes and assumptive practice
- How do we know what works? Evaluation
- Team were set the task of horizon scanning – going out and exploring the sector
- Creating an evidence bank and research templates for each group (deemed as widening access)
- Monthly team away days – spotlight on findings (encouraging the team to have ownership)
- Then team could create problem statements – essentially a round-up
- Give your team the tools to access the information
- People were protective of historical programmes
- So this approach was built up over time and there was a need to put in time to gather evidence weekly
- RAG rating – when do the interventions occur in the journey and which barriers to address when
- Clear that we can’t do activities for them all so the need to focus efforts
- Question about whether it should be individuals, groups or schools as the focus?
- Access is s shared responsibility so the team also focused on embedding the vision across the university
  - Created a mission statement and Jon works on getting institutional buy-in
- Concerns about faculties going rogue – why is this? What’s the core offer and helping them to understand where they can truly add value – putting them at the top of the pyramid
- Service delivery model – look at screenshot on slide for further information
- Team are now expanding the pre-16 offer to avoid students falling through the gaps
- Access now want to look at UG to PGT as their next steps
- Grouped problem statements – some are the same across the journey but others are specific
- What are you already doing? Do these meet?
- Coding and quality assured – this is a time intensive effort
- Team operate on a 70:30 model (delivery:research) – allows dedicated time to develop
- Encourage the team to challenge each other as they need to be brave with evidence and research
- With the coding, activities have their own code and then team can identify gaps to build into
- Do projects or activities need to go, redesigned or be started from scratch to readdress the problem statement
- Utilised logic chains and toolkits from The Brilliant Club as it fits well with the theories of change
- They have embedded in Skills Builder – looking at upskilling and linking to attainment
  - 8 essential skills for careers/personal life
- Look to slides for outcomes of Sutton Trust summer school

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Team are doing an ongoing Quality Assurance process so that activities remain fit for purpose (refer to slide)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Set things introduced and yearly updates</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Having the team conduct the process in cycle and not doing it alone</li> <li>● Where is access embedded? Recruitment/admissions etc.</li> <li>● Engaging with the journey – transition, progression, success: not acceptable to forget once students are on programmes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Case Studies/Examples:</b></p>	<p>Great examples in the slide deck that outline the project plan, outcomes of interventions and the service delivery model that the team have created and now use</p>
<p><b>Scenarios/Roundtable discussions:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● QR Code to an introduction Mentimeter which got a gauge of the room and their interpretations of widening participation</li> <li>● QR code – back to the mentimeter with a question about the common barriers</li> <li>● Delegates asked why they were making that choice and note on their thoughts</li> <li>● Belonging in different subjects – role modelling</li> <li>● “What are you gonna do with that?” – arts and social sciences courses</li> </ul>
<p><b>Questions and Answers:</b></p>	<p>Separate teams at UoS?          25 members of staff in the access team          How were strands decided?          Project plan, analysis of risk to do improvements and skills expertise of management to drive change          Any problems that couldn't be solved because of uni systems/processes?          Niche thing for certain groups but focused on general</p>
<p><b>SummaryKey takeaways:</b></p>	<p>Session focused on one area that makes up the team but key for the student need with the activities delivered.          As practitioners, we need to constantly challenge our perceptions and understanding of access/WP as it is always changing over time          We should aim to challenge ourselves and try to make time for research which can inform evidence based practice as well as our delivery          This takes time – it won't be a quick development and will likely face some resistance so plan out ahead where possible          Utilise your teams skillsets and aim for consistency when coming together for coding, problem statements as this will provide most useful outputs          We can't solve all of the problems so work on what we can          Engaging with the journey – transition, progression, success: not acceptable to forget once students are on programmes</p>