



MAKING SENSE OF DIVERSITY

Of the eight values that underpin the University's Strategy 2015, it is that of Accessibility that I want to highlight. This value demonstrates how important we consider it, as a community, to enable access to Warwick for students from diverse backgrounds. Such a value also provides us with a duty to ensure that, once admitted and whatever their background, all students experience the superior quality of learning we aspire to deliver.

My role as Pro-Vice-Chancellor includes a primary responsibility for this work. Working with colleagues from academic departments, the Students' Union and central services, last year we developed the University's Widening Participation Strategy *Working Together to Realise*

Potential. This strategy is now bearing fruit as we refresh our access programmes, enhance and create new partnerships with schools and colleges and explore different ways of working together. As the IATL event Making Sense of Diversity in a University Education demonstrates, we are also sharing the good practices that exist at Warwick as well as gathering the empirical evidence and research that will help us to identify and further develop supportive and inclusive approaches to teaching and learning.

In saying this, I believe it is important to stress that this cannot be achieved in any uni-directional way; for example, by only looking to what we should do for, or indeed be doing to, students. We have to include our students as collaborators (or,

in IATL's terms, co-producers) in designing meaningful practices. Students bring a variety of views and perspectives. They challenge us to think differently. And, in doing so, there are real and substantial gains that we can achieve together.

So, there is a lot we are doing but still much to do. For me, this is summed up in a statement on diversity from the University of Chicago. This notes how important it is to raise aspirations, monitor improvements and confront shortcomings. More importantly, though: 'Our higher aspirations will be met only with the focused effort of the whole campus community'. Making sense of diversity, then, is not just the work of the few. It is work for us all.

Professor Christina Hughes
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)

MAKING SENSE OF DIVERSITY IN A UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

On 6 November 2013 IATL hosted an event entitled 'Making Sense of Diversity in a University Education'. The event drew together around 60 colleagues from a wide range of departments to discuss the lifecycle of Widening Participation from outreach through retention to progression. The event had a particular focus on retention; that is, what we do at Warwick to ensure that our teaching practices are open to and beneficial to all students from all backgrounds. The event was introduced by Professor Christina Hughes, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) and this newsletter reflects some of the discussions which took place during what was a stimulating and thought-provoking afternoon.

Given that this was an event focusing on inclusivity it was interesting that gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity and religion were little mentioned. An optimistic interpretation of this would be that exclusion for these reasons is not a major issue for Warwick students. The discussion on these pages concerns the inclusion of students regardless of age, disability or socio-economic background. Importantly, our experience suggests that initiatives aimed at ensuring students from these groups "fit in" will in fact benefit all our students: a classic win-win situation. We hope that sharing our colleagues' ideas will stimulate further debate and inspire new and inclusive teaching practice.

Dr Paul Taylor, IATL Director

During the last 18 months, three major reports have revealed much about the experiences of adult learners and part time degree students in higher education: NUS/ Million+'s Never too Late to Learn (2012), HEA's Flexible Pedagogies (September 2013) and, most importantly, UUK's The Power of Part Time (October 2013).

Nationally, we have learned that:

- More than a quarter of the current undergraduate population study part time;
- Since 2010, adult recruitment has declined by 40% (undergraduate) and 27% on (postgraduate);
- Reducing part-time recruitment has had a disproportionate impact on 'non-traditional' learners;
- Approximately a third of part-time students leave their courses before the end of their second year (well beyond the 10% for the full-time equivalent);
- Adult learners have full lives beyond their studies, with 80% in employment and half in families with dependent children.

We have been warned that universities should 'avoid making uncritical assumptions that part-time students can simply be accommodated on programmes designed for their full-time counterparts' (Yorke & Longdon, 2008; cited in HEA, 2013). Institutional disincentives include declining demand and reduced funding,

alongside the perception that part-time students are more difficult and expensive to support and impact negatively on league table performance. We have also learned that part-time and adult learners benefit from the adoption of high-quality pre-course information and induction, credit accumulation and transfer schemes, flexible approaches to teaching and timetabling and the provision of 'child-friendly campus' facilities.

Warwick does lots of great things to support adult learners and part-time students; over the years, many thousands have enjoyed fantastic learning experiences and achieved tremendous successes. But barriers remain – most notably, a lack of flexibility in provision, a reducing number of evening modules and very late confirmation of module choices. With our partner departments and colleges, CLL is doing much to enhance students' experiences. We have developed new pre-degree courses, like our Warwick Gateway to HE: Social Studies which recruited a first cohort this year. We continue to improve course selection, enrolment, induction, content, support and employability. We are developing new progression pathways and new part-time specific courses. We look to develop new partnerships and collaborations across the university to widen and enrich part-time provision.

**Dr Will Curtis
Senior Tutor, Centre for Lifelong Learning**

STUDENT-LED RESEARCH



I am a final-year 2+2 Social Studies student. This year, I was fortunate enough to be able to formulate and devise a research project looking at why some non-traditional students think about leaving university and how the transitional period from college to university may have affected that decision. With the assistance of the URSS and the Centre for Lifelong Learning, I interviewed current final-year students about their experiences and found that they had many issues while they were at college which affected their first few months at Warwick.

Many of the students felt privileged to be in a position where they had the opportunity to study at Warwick University. Their overriding concern was with how 'non-traditional students' are perceived and the impact of this on their confidence and feelings of 'fitting in'. Many identified clear mechanisms which could make the transition from college to university more positive; most of these have now been enacted by the Centre for Lifelong Learning, such as the development of a student-led society, student engagement officer and the use of a distinctive physical space.

Clearly, this student-led research identified issues already being considered and addressed by the Centre for Lifelong Learning. It could be deemed that the findings from this research culminated in the development of positive strategies being put in place to ensure the experience of students to the 2+2 programme is much improved. Furthermore, 2+2 students will feel that they have been instrumental in this developmental process.

**Clare Allington
Final-year 2+2 student, Centre for Lifelong Learning**

CONTINUING TO SUPPORT DIVERSITY



Widening Participation (WP) does not stop when a student arrives at university. Not only does WP describe the full range of activities that raise students' aspirations for further and higher education, it also refers to all that we do to enhance the ability of all students to undertake higher education successfully. For example, it is vital that students from all backgrounds are given equal opportunity to participate in study-abroad and internship programmes. It is certainly not about 'labelling' any of our students. However, it is about ensuring all students, regardless of background, receive advice, support and guidance at university, tailored to their needs.

It is also about ensuring that we are friendly, approachable and accessible in all that we do. For example, in PAIS we have renamed our office hours 'Advice and Feedback Hours', giving students the opportunity to receive verbal feedback from academic staff. We also provide individual exam feedback as we know how important it is to our students. We have taken part in a very successful trial with the SU in running online elections to our Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC). One reason for doing so was an appreciation that it can be very daunting for a first-year student to stand up at the front of a lecture hall at the start of their university career, as often happens with the more traditional way of running such elections.

We are also working hard to enhance the support and provision provided by personal tutors, embedding study skills into the curriculum, and recruiting PAIS Student Ambassadors as part of our personal development (and WP) strategy. We also put on social events to enable students to get to know academic staff in a more informal setting, and we work closely with the Politics Society and its mentoring scheme. In short, WP and Diversity should run through everything that we do.

Justin Greaves, Director of Student Experience and Progression, PAIS and Shannon Holland-Houghton, second-year PAIS student

WIDENING PARTICIPATION THROUGH MOBILE VIDEO CONFERENCING

Disability matters, whether it is visible or invisible, and we need to make higher education more accessible. Five million working-age people in Britain are disabled enough to have significant difficulties with day-to-day activities, so this will include learning activities. Only 15% of working-age adults with disabilities have degree-level qualifications, compared to 28% of those who are non-disabled. How can we tackle this sizable challenge?

This project started by making a difference to one student unable to attend teaching sessions on campus. I piloted mobile videoconferencing technology provided by audio-visual services, creating an interactive learning environment. The remote student was in a videoconferencing facility near their location (though home-based computer equipment can be used) and was connected straight into the classroom. In the classroom they 'sat' among the other learners with their head and shoulders appearing life-size on a monitor. The classroom screen was fed to their laptop. We heard and saw each other. We interacted successfully.

Now, in phase 2, IATL has purchased a second set of equipment which is even more mobile. The stand is wheeled to classrooms and the built-in camera enables the remote participant to zoom in and choose where to look.

What are your ideas about uses for this equipment? To find out more and get support to use this mobile videoconferencing effectively, please contact IATL.

Without access we only offer exclusion.

Claire Raistrick, Senior Teaching Fellow, Warwick Medical School



CAREERS SUPPORT FOR WP STUDENTS

Student Careers and Skills currently offers the following targeted support to WP students:



- Additional financial support to those in need to enable access to short unpaid work experience opportunities;
- Careers support to CLL through their new 'Researching Placements' module for 2 + 2 students;
- 1 day of Senior Careers Consultant time to work with SARO to support the WP agenda which includes production of the 'What can I do with a Degree in..?' series of leaflets, attendance at School Careers days/presentations and through contributions at some school events;
- We will undertake a DLHE analysis to compare the destinations of WP students against the main undergraduate cohort to see whether there are differences in outcome;
- Last year our Placement Learning Unit identified that 44.8% of applicants to our graduate paid internship programme (WGI) were from a WP background. Interestingly of those placed, 62% were WP graduates;
- Enhanced support for Lloyds Scholars through Warwick Volunteers.

Our current interests are in gathering more precise information about WP students and graduates in order to identify individual and more general needs and to find a way of being able to provide support to those who may wish to access this.

In relation to retention it would be helpful to know about students who may be unhappy with their choice of course at an earlier stage. We generally see students at crisis points when they need to make a decision about their course on that day or by the end of the week.

Anne Wilson, Student Careers and Skills and WP

IATL FUNDING DEADLINES

DEADLINE (YYYY/MM/DD)	FUNDING STREAM	AVAILABLE TO
2013/10/18	Pedagogic Interventions, Academic Fellowships, Strategic Funding	Staff
2013/12/04	Student as Producer (Research), Student as Producer (Collaboration), Student as Producer (Performance)	Undergraduates and PGTs (research and collaboration); undergraduates and all postgraduates (performance)
2014/03/12	Student as Producer (Research), Student as Producer (Collaboration), Student as Producer (Performance), Performance Festival Bursaries	Undergraduates and PGTs (research and collaboration); undergraduates and all postgraduates (performance and festival bursaries)
2014/05/09	Pedagogic Interventions, Academic Fellowships, Strategic Funding	Staff
2014/06/25	Student as Producer (Performance), Performance Festival Bursaries	Undergraduates and postgraduates

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- **Making Sense of Enterprise Education**
6 February 2014
(15:00-18:00), Venue TBC
- **British Conference of Undergraduate Research**
14-15 April 2014
University of Nottingham
- **Teaching and Learning Showcase**
24 June 2014
- **International Conference of Undergraduate Research**
23 September 2014

For more information about these events and how to register your attendance please check News and Events on the IATL website www.warwick.ac.uk/iatl/newsandevents

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