

Diversity & Widening Participation to Higher Education:

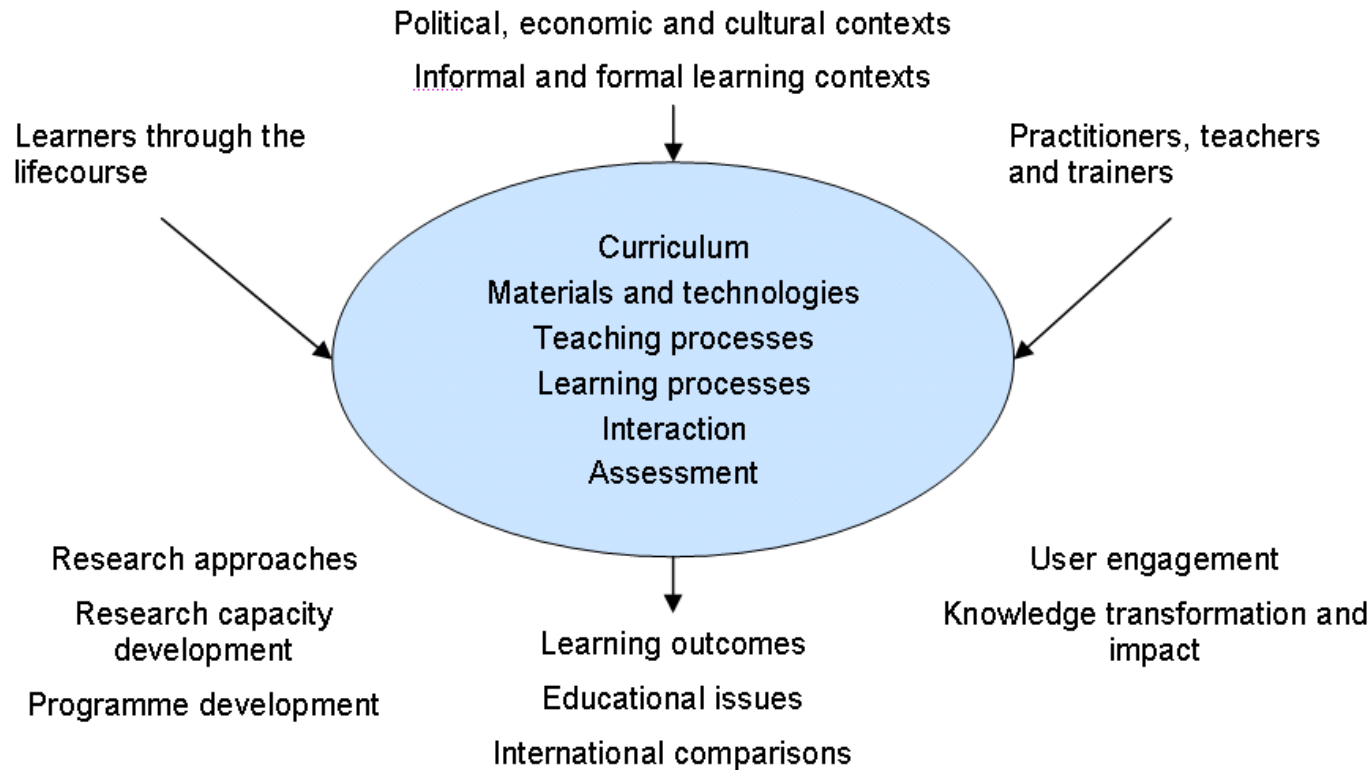
**Policy Implications &
Dissemination Event
June 17th 2008**



Introduction by Professor Miriam David Associate Director (Higher Education)

- to synthesize research on social diversity and equality,
- working with all the funded projects questions of 'fair' access to and participation within higher education, namely the 7 projects funded by HEFCE via ESRC on Widening Participation to Higher Education.

Overall TLRP Approach



Changing UK **concepts** on access & participation in 21st century

- Concepts about *undergraduate* students in HE:
 - studying for their first degrees
 - in various forms of higher education/universities
 - their student identities
 - their [prior] educational experiences or pathways
- Troubling and contested concepts of:
 - Participation versus Access to Higher Education
 - Diversity including social class or disadvantage, disabilities, ethnicities or race, gender, maturity or age, poverty or socio-economic backgrounds

Changing global and governmental contexts

- In the late 20th century, with changes in the UK and global economy the question of expanding post-compulsory education, particularly HE, to meet the needs of the transforming economy became a major pre-occupation of the Government.
- In March 2008 the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities & Skills – John Denham - proposed the setting up of 20 new universities or HE centres in towns that at present only have further education.
- On April 14th 2008 Denham announced the need to ensure not only adequate *access criteria* but practices to ensure that universities encouraged a broad and diverse range of students:
- ‘We are going to have to bring lots of people back into university education from the existing workforce...so the most profound changes over the next 15 years will be how the university system responds to the need to draw in a much more diverse group of older students whose demands for study will be very different (*The Guardian* Monday April 14th 2008 p.12 column 5).

Introduction to the suite of 7 WP in HE projects

- In 2005 HEFCE committed £2 million to the ESRC for TLRP research on widening participation in higher education.
- Seven projects were commissioned during 2005 to conduct this research.
- Today we are delighted to be telling you what they found and what we think the policy implications are.

The 7 WPinHE projects

1. Universal Access & Dual Regimes of Further & Higher Education: policy, organisation & progression (Parry)
2. Degrees of Success: VET pathways to HE (Hayward)
3. Socio-cultural & learning experiences of working class students in HE (Crozier)
4. Keeping Open the Door to Mathematically Demanding Programmes in FE & HE (Williams)
5. Learning & teaching for diversity & difference in HE (Hockings)
6. Widening Participation in HE: A Quantitative analysis (Vignoles)
7. Non-participation in HE: decision-making as an embedded social practice (Fuller)

Project perspectives on WP: individuals &/or institutions

1. What is meant by wider or fair access and participation,
 - from an individual's perspective and
 - decisions about when and whether to participate in increasing levels of education, especially beyond compulsory education.
2. The diverse types of HE according to
 - subjects/disciplines,
 - academic versus more vocational,
 - the criticality of mathematics for some HE eg STEM.
3. Types of teaching or pedagogy
 - to meet the needs of the diversity of students or learners
 - within different types of higher education and subjects.

English definitions of WP

- Definitions of WP focused upon socio-economic disadvantage and diversity
 - because all the projects were funded by HEFCE and based within England,
- Not on more multi-cultural questions about ethnicity, race
- Nor the newly emerging issues about *international students*, such as from Africa, Asia, including China and India, or from Europe or the other nations of UK.
- I recognize that this is an important area in which we need a stronger research base.

All 7 projects examine *equity and diversity*

- How cultural, economic and social questions, such as *equity and diversity*,
 - impinge upon teaching and learning
 - and influence learning outcomes.
- There are no simple definitions of either diversity or university education
- We have developed complex and rich notions about diversity
- We do not think only in terms of working versus middle class, ethnicity or gender but also of age, type of course and type of university.

Overall conclusions

Together we have revealed:

1. the complex *concepts and contexts* that influence
2. *processes, pedagogies and practices* in post-compulsory education, and
3. how diverse people's lives are,
4. over a lifetime of learning.

How the conclusions will be presented:

We now move into a more detailed consideration of

1. Policy contexts and regimes (introduced by Gareth Parry with David Smith)
2. Access issues (Geoff Hayward & Gill Crozier)
3. Issues of pedagogy (Chris Hockings & Julian Williams)
4. Outcomes in terms of
 - Educational achievements (Anna Vignoles) and
 - Participation over the life course (Alison Fuller).

Policy contexts and policy regimes

- led by Professor Gareth Parry with Dr David Smith
- with responses by Professor Geoff Layer, University of Bradford

Policy Regimes and Organisational Contexts

Gareth Parry
David Smith



Three policy moments

Corresponding to elite-mass-universal transitions:

Robbins/Crosland and ‘places for all’

- qualified by attainment
- in a binary system, with ‘an alternative route’

Baker/Clarke and ‘widening access’

- ability to benefit
- in a post-binary system, with ‘recognised routes’

Dearing/New Labour and ‘widening participation’

- potential to succeed
- in a differentiated and distributed system

Widening participation: ten years of high policy

Specific:

- recruitment + retention
- outreach + partnership
- progression into + through
- admission + fair access
- sector + institution

General:

- expanding and changing supply
- stimulating and shaping demand

Widening participation: a research-policy territory

‘Widening participation is taken to mean extending and enhancing access to and experience of HE, and achievement within HE, of people from so-called under-represented and diverse social backgrounds, families and groups and positively enabling such people to participate in and benefit from various types of HE.’ (ESRC 2005)

Widening participation: a research-policy territory

‘also ... diversity in terms of ethnicity, gender, disability, and social background in particular disciplines, modes and institutions. In addition ... access and participation across the ages, extending conceptions of learning across the lifecourse, and in relation to family responsibilities, particularly by gender and maturity.’ (ESRC 2005)

Widening participation: seven projects (2006-08)

‘Access to’: *VET pathways* (Oxford)

‘Experience of’: *working class* (Sunderland & Cambridge)

‘Achievement within’: *mathematics* (Manchester)

‘Diversity in’: *dual sectors* (Sheffield)

‘Benefit from’: *inclusive pedagogy* (Wolverhampton)

‘Across the’: *lifecourse* (Southampton) and *11 to 18* (IoE, IFS & LSE)

Furtherhigher education

Significance of sectors for combining further and higher education:

- policy formation
- organisational development
- student transition

Findings and implications (1)

Separate regimes for further and higher education have evolved despite the lack of a developed rationale for a two-sector system



Further and higher education need to be regarded as parts of a common enterprise, with mechanisms to recognise and support this

Findings and implications (2)

Policy development for dual-sector education is unstable and led by the sector bodies for higher education



Further education colleges have still to be widely accepted as normal and necessary locations for higher education

Findings and implications (3)

The primary attachment of an institution is to a sector, and relationships with another sector differ in kind and intensity



Dual-sector organisations do not have a specific mission and a dual-sector identity is less evident than in some other systems

Findings and implications (4)

Decisions to combine further and higher education are only partially informed by widening participation strategies



Equity and skills agendas are not easily aligned, but require strong and strategic coordination

Findings and implications (5)

The interfaces between further and higher education are configured in different ways and do not necessarily enhance internal progression



An expansion of work-focused higher education will place new demands on the access and transfer functions of dual-sector institutions

Questions of access

- jointly led by Professor Gill Crozier and Dr Geoff Hayward
- with responses by Professor Lynn Raphael Reed, UWE and Professor Patricia Broadfoot, University of Gloucestershire

Issues of Access

Geoff Hayward
Gill Crozier
Diane Reay

University of Oxford
University of Sunderland
University of Cambridge



Three Questions

- 1. What type of access do different pre HE learning pathways afford and constrain? What are the implications of these findings for widening participation amongst those following a VET pathway to Higher Education?*
- 2. Why do learners choose where and what to study?*
- 3. How do learners from different backgrounds and in different types of university/HEI experience learning ? What are the reasons for this/influences on this? What is the impact on their learner identities?*

Pathways to Higher Education

Qualification pathways (in %)

	1995	2003	2004
only general academic	63.4	50.8	51.3
only vocational	13.6	10.1	9.5
only Foundation/Access	6.2	3.9	4.2
only other	3.5	5.9	6.0
academic and vocational	4.2	14.1	13.7
academic and Foundation/Access	1.5	3.2	3.1
any other combination	1.6	8.5	8.9
no qualification given	6.0	3.5	3.2
Total	100	100	100

Major Findings and Implications (1)

Of those coming from a VET background the primary target groups of widening participation are clearly over-represented.



Increasing the share of those from a VET background within the student body would contribute to widening access to HE.

Major Findings and Implications (2)

Combinations of vocational and academic qualifications significantly increase the probability of access to HE compared to VET qualifications alone.

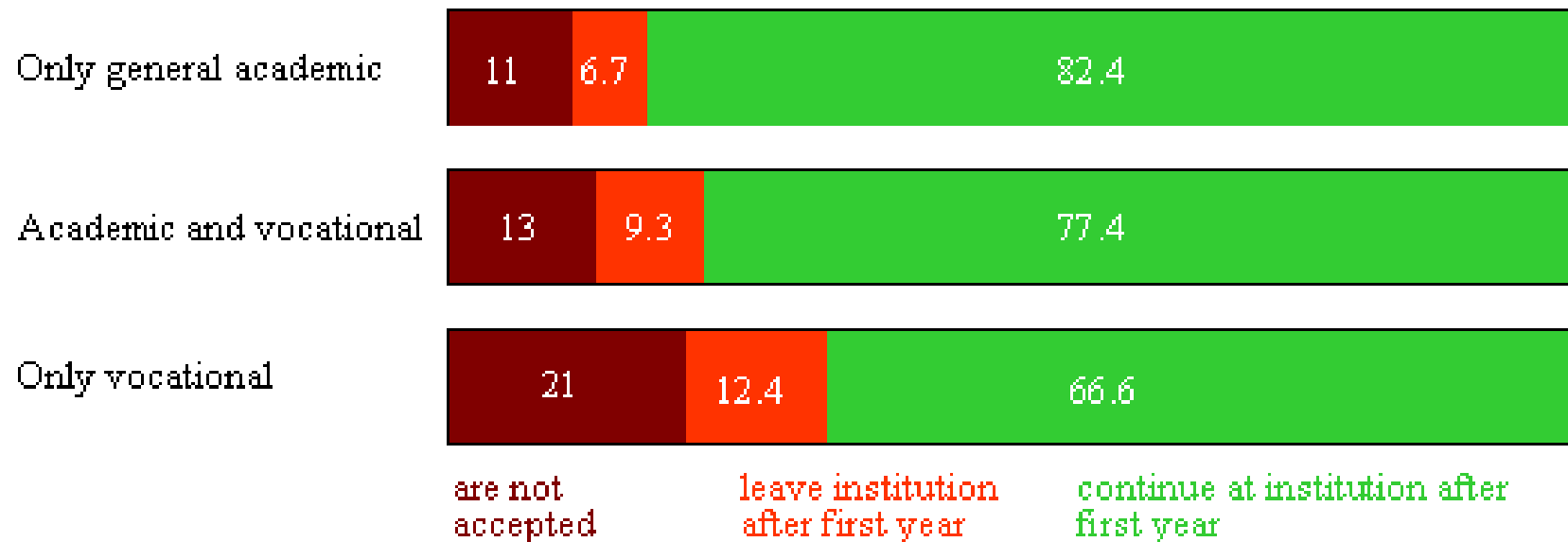


Processes which support combining academic and vocational qualifications need to be strengthened and further developed.

Major Findings and Implications (2)

Attrition rates are higher for VET students:

Of 100 English students applying for a full-time degree programme in HE from one of the following educational pathways ...



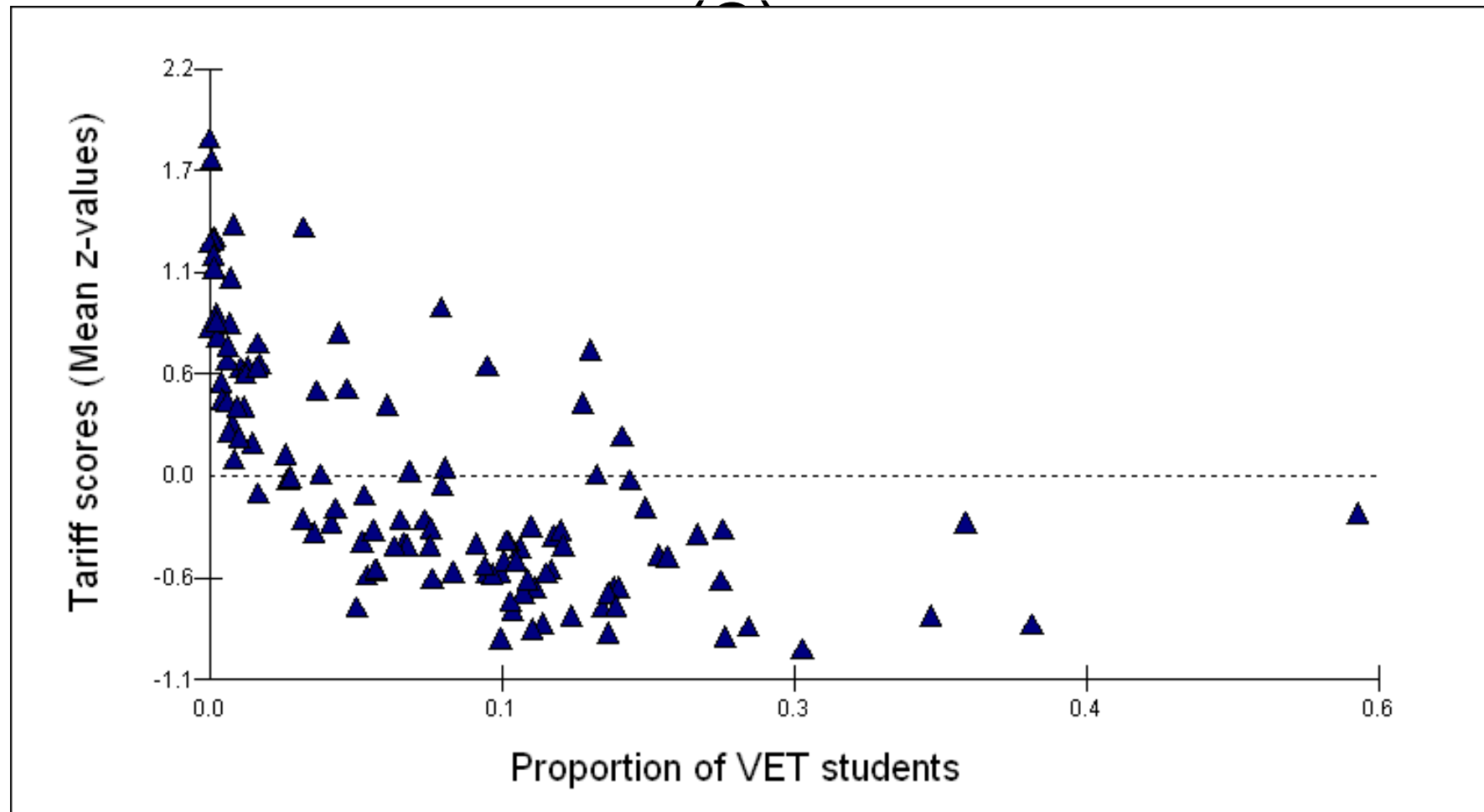
Major Findings and Implications (3)

Transition into HE is skewed by educational background; VET students are overrepresented in less selective institutions.



Parity of esteem between vocational and academic qualifications remains a myth; this has potentially serious implications for the introduction of Diplomas.

Major Findings and Implications



Major Findings and Implications (3)

Transition into HE is skewed by educational background; VET students are overrepresented in less selective institutions.



Parity of esteem between vocational and academic qualifications remains a myth; this has potentially serious implications for the introduction of Diplomas.

Decision making

- Theorising decision making processes - beyond Human Capital Theory?
- Motivation for those with a VET background is a combination of interest in a subject and the desire to improve career prospects
- Self-limitation may explain some under representation of VET background students in some HEIs.

How do students from working class backgrounds and in different types of HEI experience/access learning?

- Students' learner identities are influenced by previous school/college experiences, their current university experience and their social circumstances.

How do students from working class backgrounds and in different types of HEI experience/access learning?

- In the FurtherHigher project case study institutions (AMB&GP) and the SEHE project students tended to 'story' their HE experience as something that was 'hard' and required considerable effort. Some students admitted that they had not put in the effort that they believed they should have done, with their motivation rising and falling over the duration of their studies.

Influences on the Learner Experiences

- Structural and material differences between institutions can enhance or undermine students' learner identities and their dispositions towards learning at university

Influences on the Learner Experiences

- Working class student experiences are frequently disjunctive and marked by tension and competing demands

What is the impact on their learner identities?

- Belonging and fitting-in involves students' identities both as learners and socially

What is the impact on their learner identities?

- Students value teaching that recognises their individual academic and social identities and that addresses their particular learning needs. (CH et al Wolverhampton)

What is the impact on their learner identities?

- The working class students in our study demonstrated great resilience and commitment to their studies, often in the face of adverse structural discrimination and oppression

Implications (1)

- More work needs to be done in primary schools to enable children to understand how to realise their aspirations
- Policy makers need to address the unequal funding streams and the drift back towards a binary division between the different universities.
- Students need more financial support so that they do not have to take paid employment whilst studying.

Implications (2)

- Universities need to be mindful of the diversity of needs, cultures and ways of being amongst their students, maintain high expectations of their students, and enable them to maximise as broadening an experience as possible.
- The students deconstruct and reconstruct their social and class identities creating hybrid identities.

Implications (3)

- Working class students should not be seen as high risk and problematic

Plenary panel discussion and question and answer session

- Chaired by Rob Cuthbert
- Patricia Broadfoot
- Gill Crozier
- Miriam David
- Geoff Hayward,
- Geoff Layer
- Gareth Parry
- Lynn Raphael Reed
- David Smith

Pedagogies

- jointly led by Dr Chris Hockings and Professor Julian Williams
- with response by Dr Monica Maclean, University of Nottingham

'Pedagogy'

Christine Hockings - University of Wolverhampton

Julian Williams - University of Manchester



Pedagogy and widening participation – widening to what?

'Learning and teaching are at the heart of HE. They are core activities for all universities and colleges, and feature strongly in public perceptions of the sector's role and achievements. As learners become more diverse and stakeholders demand more and varied outcomes, the challenges faced by HEIs and FECs in regard to learning and teaching are becoming increasingly complex' (HEFCE strategic plan 2006-2011)

- What goes on in classrooms of students from a wide range of social, cultural and educational backgrounds?
- What are the consequences for teacher development, learning and teaching, and for student choice, participation, retention and progression?

Key questions

- How can programme influence learning outcomes, retention and progression of students?
- How do teaching practices influence students' academic engagement, depth of understanding and disposition to learn in the context of increasing student diversity ?
- How can teachers develop their practice and create inclusive learning environments within the context and culture of performativity within FE and HE?
- Implications for policy

How can programme influence learning outcomes, retention and progression of students?

'We are particularly seeking to increase demand from groups who are under-represented in these subjects' (eg STEM).
(HEFCE strategic plan 2006-11)

The Traditional AS Programme leads to high drop out and failure in mathematics – especially for those who do not have Higher Tier GCSE grades

Prog/ tier-grade	A* and A	BHigh	BInter	CHigh	CInter
AS Trad	9 % (16%)	18 (50)	31 (61)	26 (65)	46 (80)
UoM	12 % (13%)	18 (26)	9 (24)	27 (54)	18 (45)

- A Programme that offers a ‘uses’ or ‘modelling’ approach, with coursework and relevant technology, can help keep students in maths

M: After use of maths? It's the way use of maths...but it goes into greater detail sometimes and a lot more understanding goes into it with the coursework right now. And then in use of maths in particular you get more help because I think, because it's coursework based, you have to have a lot more understanding of actually what's going on...

- It provides structured opportunities for communicating as well as using – and hence ‘understanding’.
- It also impacts on the students’ view of the ‘use’ value of maths

*A: A lot more than before. Before [AS maths], for instance we were just asked to do basic working out things, and “today we are going to learn algebra”, whereas there [in UoM –modelling approach] they are going to say **we are going to learn algebra to solve this and it will be a real life thing. I think its better to take in because you can relate it to something then can't you? You've got something to relate it to.***

How do teaching practices influence students' academic engagement in the context of increasing student diversity ?

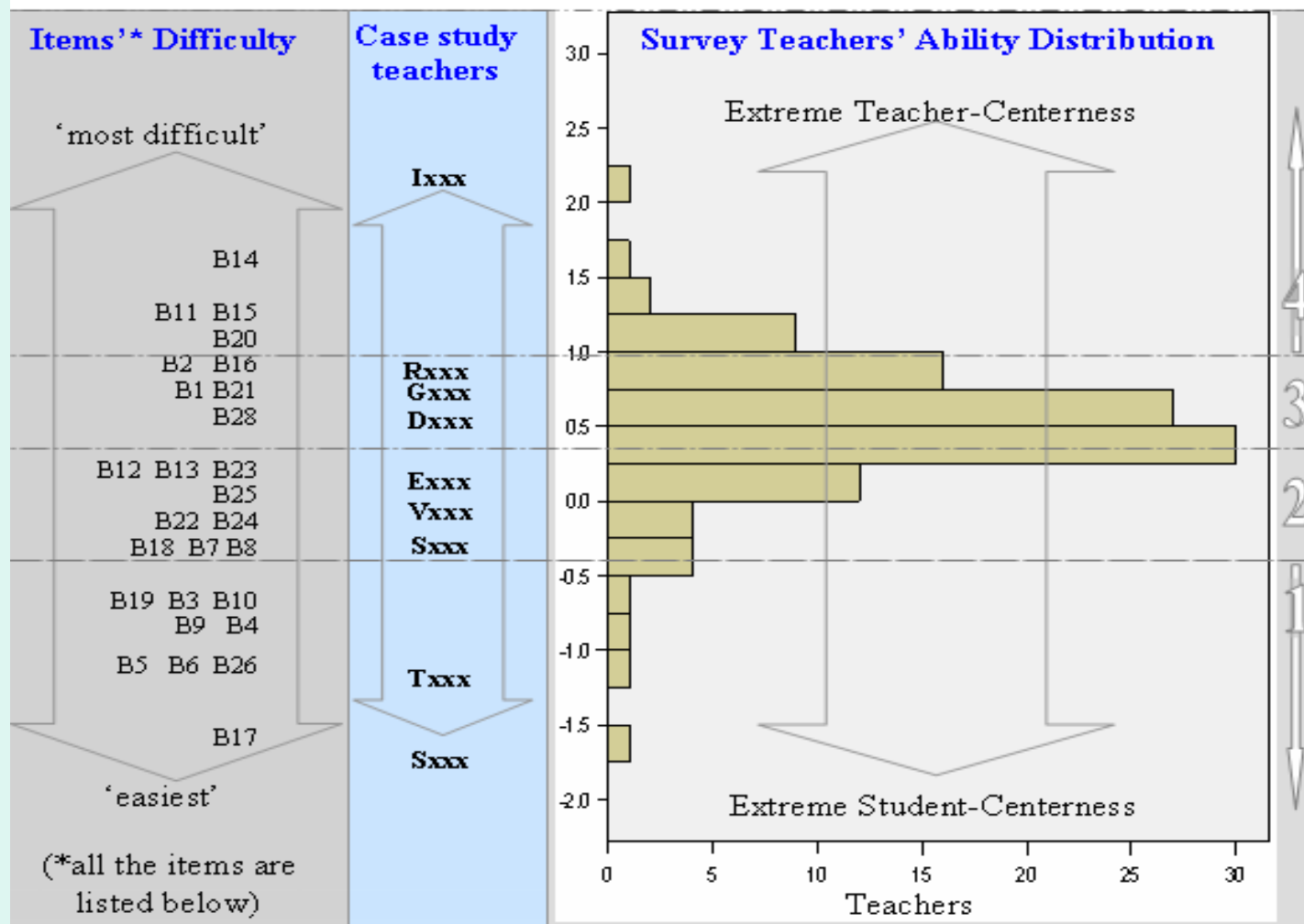
Transmission approaches to teaching focus on 'delivering content', encourages 'surface' learning, is uninspiring and does not cater for differences in knowledge, skills, experience

...give them masses and masses of exercises to do so we push the ones that are getting ahead quickly to do those exercises.

'Connectionist' approaches take account of and embrace diversity and difference and used it to engage a wider range

I think for me that's been a key to managing the diversity in that module ... creating those study groups where the more experienced people could talk at their level and the less experienced people could talk at their level and people didn't feel intimidated.

Transmissionist vs connectionist 6fFE teaching



I tend to follow the textbook closely

Students (don't) discuss their ideas

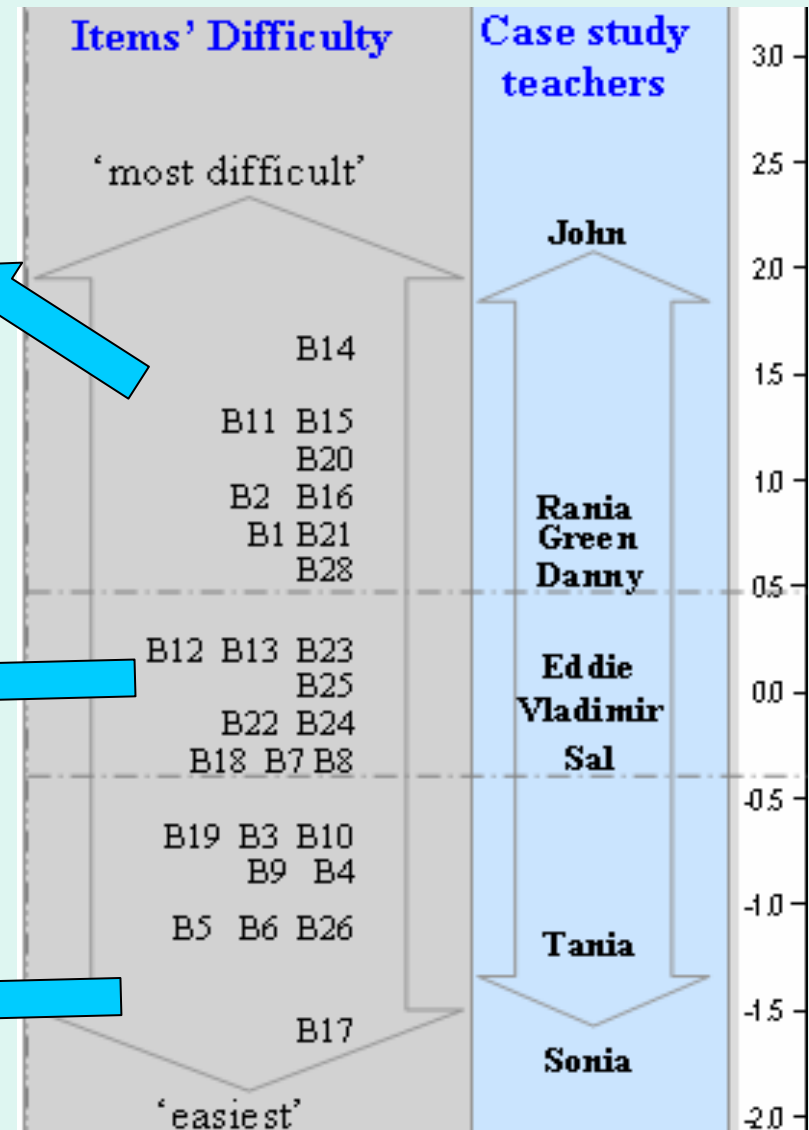
I encourage students to work more quickly

I teach each topic separately

I tell students which questions to tackle

I know exactly what maths the lesson will contain

Students (don't) invent their own methods



Not just *how*, but knowing *who* we teach

Students become and stay engaged when their individual academic and social identities are recognised¹ and their particular learning needs are addressed

BUT

Teaching based on assumptions of 'non-traditional' students as deficient or problematic²...

I... you could say that there is a politically incorrect view point that [diversity] means inviting people on to courses that aren't prepared for HE... So, assume no real world knowledge about anything ... You have to do things from a very, very basic level, assuming nothing always.

limits engagement of all students and stifles the development of rich and inclusive learning environments.

¹ (see also FE/HE project) ² (see also Crozier et al)

How can teachers create inclusive learning environments within the context and culture of performativity within FE and HE?

- Systems and procedures designed to assure 'quality' and maximise the economic efficiency of teaching, also constrain teachers' capacity to create inclusive pedagogies.

Sometimes we are numbers driven and just need to get in the room and 'throw' the content at the students and hope they understand. There is pressure sometimes to deliver the syllabus/learning outcomes etc. and not much time is given to the depth of the student learning experience...

We have work load allocations discussed every year (quantity) but little ever is said about how much the students learn (quality) or how they are taught... or the importance of individuals' needs and learning differences, and how teaching can impact this...

- Exchange value (in mathematics) dominates student (and teacher) practice and talk

M: I would say maths is hard to get hold of but it's worth the struggle, but it will get you into high paid, high ranking jobs ...

A: I just chose maths because I thought it would look good on my cv.....

- Emphasises 'performance' in the short term at the expense of understanding and dispositions

DW: The purpose of the logarithms is so that I can pass maths

- Is held in place by institutional culture and funding policy
- Can lead to unethical professional practice

Implications for Policy

FE/HE policy needs to encourage:

- Better designs of Programmes
- R&D curriculum, teaching and assessment 'systems'
- Measure/give value to what is important (breadth of ILOs)
- Development of knowledge of students and more sophisticated understandings of student diversity
- Support for teachers in developing inclusive pedagogies and curricula that take account of the diverse interests and needs of students within each class.
- Action on systems and policies that have a limiting effect on the learning and teaching of students from diverse backgrounds

Outcomes

- Led by Dr Anna Vignoles on ***Education Achievements*** and
- Led by Professor Alison Fuller on ***Participation through the Life course.***
- With response by Professor Claire Callender, Birkbeck College, University of London

Participation across the life- course

Alison Fuller and Anna Vignoles



Leading education
and social research
Institute of Education
University of London

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton



Presentation Overview

- Focus on adult (non-) participation
- Focus on young people's educational attainment and progression

WP in HE across the life-course?

- After Leitch: 2020 target of 40%+ of 19 to 65s with L4 qualifications (currently 31%); 20% currently L3 highest
- The problem of participants as proxies for non-participants
- Decision-making is often theorised as an embedded social practice, yet is often based on individual accounts
- Little known about adults with L3 as highest qualification: many have vocational L3s (see also Hayward et al)

Findings and Implications (1)

- Adults with L3 qualification are living comfortable, stable lives and usually see little need to participate in HE, but
- They mostly have positive attitudes to LLL and are LL learners

Findings and Implications (2)

- No agency has the widening of participation in HE across the life-course as its core mission -need for professional IAG for adults
- Mature applicants often lack support in applications process (FHE project)

Findings and Implications (3)

- HE experiences within social networks critically shape the perceptions of 'potentially recruitable' adults across and within generations
- Multi-directionality of influences – trickle down, up and across generations

Findings and Implications (4)

- Mature student experiences: (Crozier et al; Bathmaker et al)
- Older participants engagement characterised by PT, 'other Under-graduate', often whilst in FT employment; equal (lower) qualifications
- Given same starting point as younger peers, mature students less likely to drop out and obtain higher degree classification (Vignoles et al.)

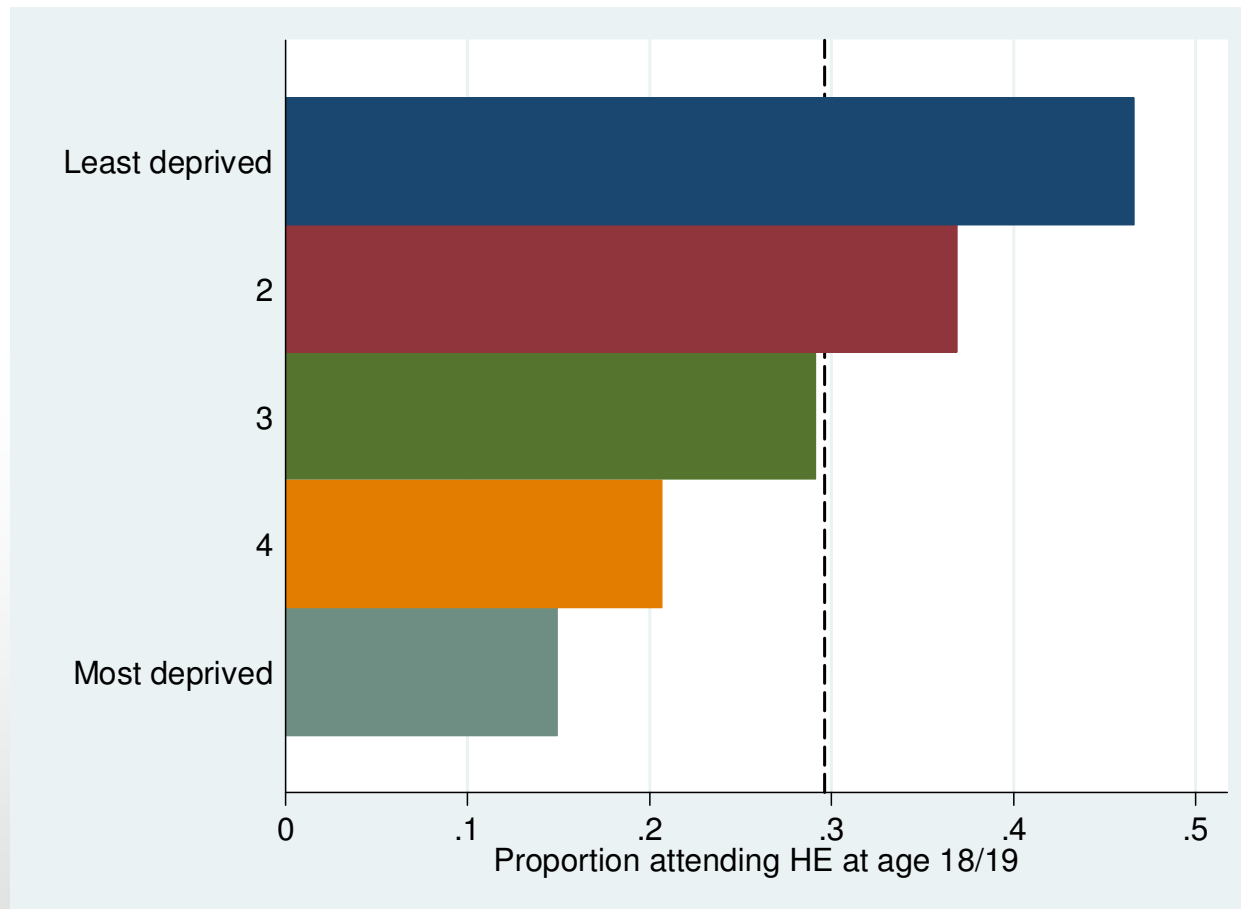
Policy Implications

- Institutions are needed that can provide readily accessible and ‘trusted’ ‘linking social capital’ (eg colleges, HEIs, employers, family learning centres, union learn, adult IAG service)
- Benefits need to be made more apparent; adults sceptical about qualifications for their own sake: quality and relevance of the provision is crucial
- Currency of vocational L3 qualifications as acceptable to HE needs to be recognised by adults as well as young people and their advisors
- Availability and accessibility of, and support for part-time modes of HE study (ELQ, costs)
- The network approach indicates that the work of WP practitioners would benefit from a deeper understanding of the embedded nature of decision-making

New longitudinal admin data

- Linked individual-level school administrative records, FE records and HE data
- Data on participants AND non-participants
- Data for one cohort:
 - In Year 11 in 2001/02
 - Potential age 18 HE entry in 2004/05 or age 19 HE entry in 2005/06

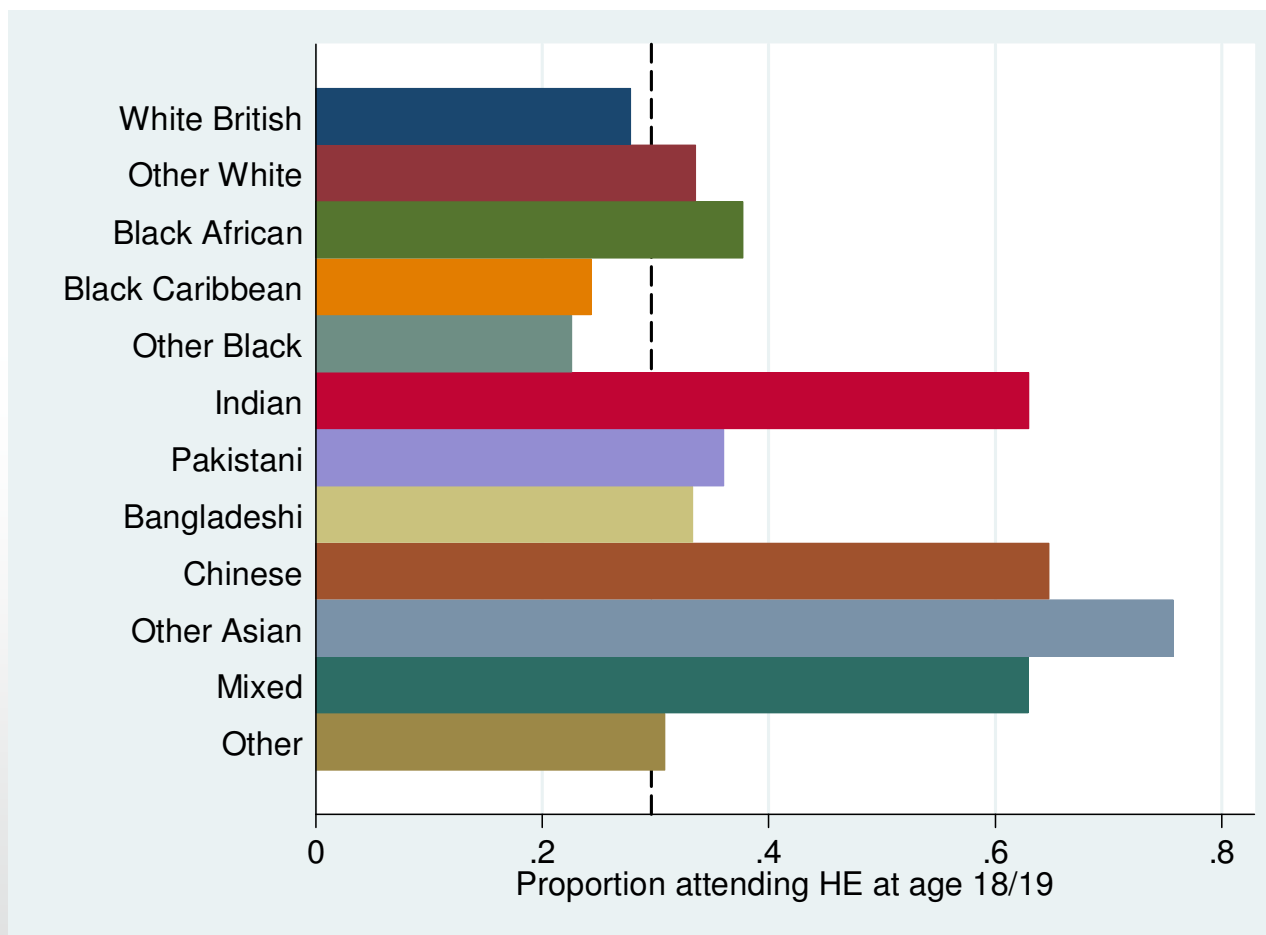
Participation by deprivation status



Participation by deprivation status

- Very large raw differences in HE participation rates by deprivation status
- Controlling for individual characteristics approximately halves the gap
- Disparity all but disappears once we add in controls for prior attainment
 - 1ppt for males
 - 2.1ppts for females

Participation by ethnicity



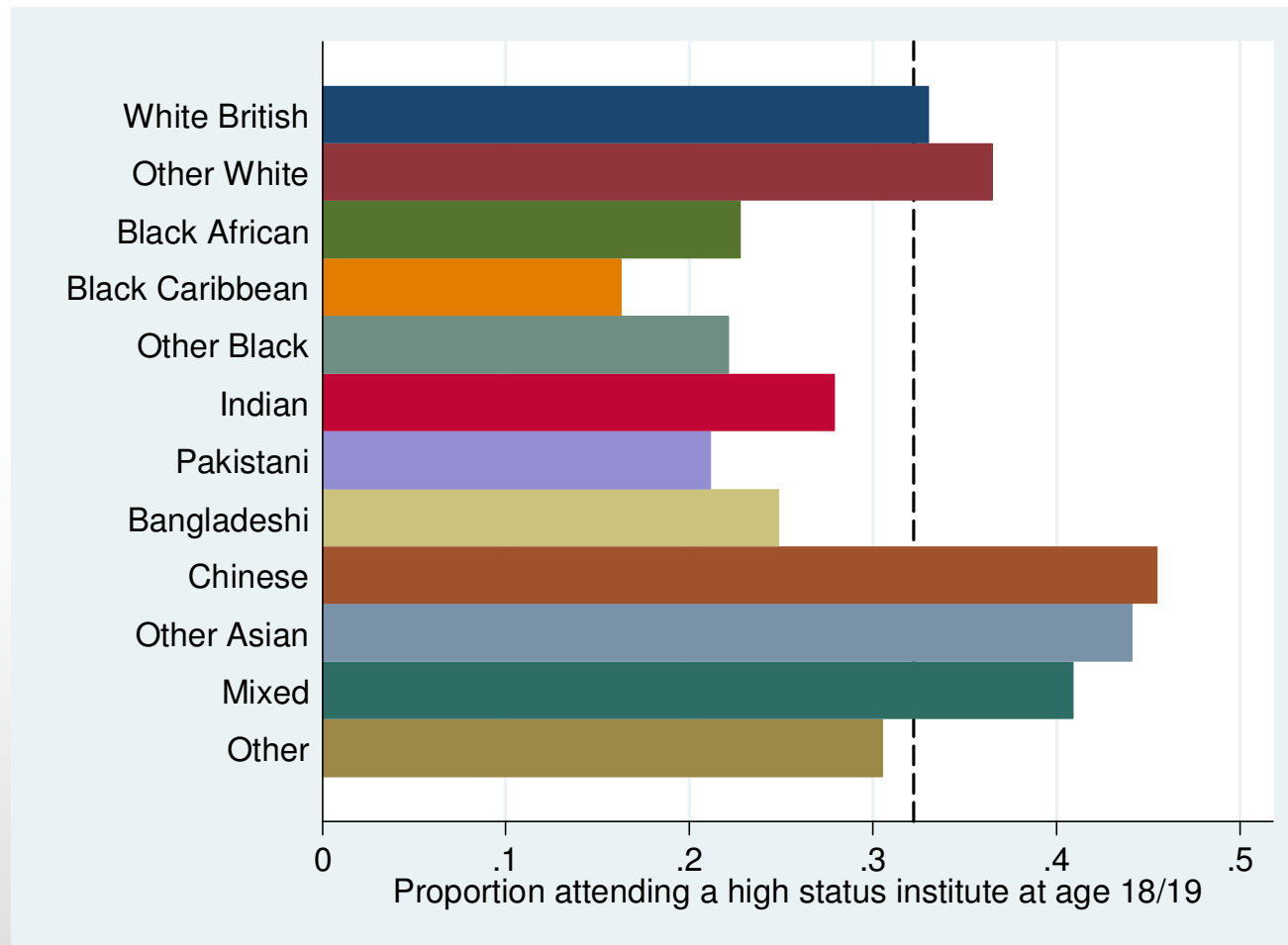
Participation by ethnicity

- Most ethnic minority groups are more likely to participate in HE than White British students
 - Except Black Caribbean and Other Black students
- Allowing for prior achievement, all ethnic minority groups are more likely to participate than White British

“High status” participation by deprivation status

- Students from deprived backgrounds are less likely to attend a high status university than less deprived students
 - Although gap smaller than for participation
- Prior attainment is key to widening participation in “high status” institutions amongst more deprived students
 - Gap disappears amongst students with same Key Stage 4 results

“High status” participation by ethnicity



“High status” participation by ethnicity

- Many ethnic minority groups are less likely to attend a “high status” institution than White British participants
- Once we add controls for prior attainment, all ethnic minority groups are at least as likely to attend a “high status” institution as White British students

Policy

- Intervention needs to be early and needs to tackle low achievement in schools
- Interventions at point of entry to HE by themselves not likely to be as effective
- Routes into HE vary by SES and ethnicity so we need to consider pathways as well as achievement
- Does not mean no role for universities

Plenary discussion and policy and practice panel to include:

- Emeritus Professor Frank Coffield, Institute of Education, London
- Professor Miriam David, Institute of Education, London
- Lee Elliot Major, Research Director, Sutton Trust
- Sean Mackney Deputy Director of HEA
- Bev Thomas, Widening Participation and Better Teaching, DIUS
- Kevin Whitston, HEFCE

Concluding comments

- John Selby, Director (Education and Participation), HEFCE

- www.tlrp.org