

Thursday 4 February 2016

St George's Centre, Leeds

Programme

9.30 Registration

10.15 Welcome: Tony Ellis, Director of Lifelong Learning, University of Leeds

10.20 Keynote speaker: Jackie Dunne, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Access and Lifelong Learning), University of Wolverhampton

The crisis in part-time higher education: why it matters and what can be done

National higher education policy in recent years appears to have contributed to a massive decline in part-time recruitment (over 50% since 2010/11), apparently leaving large numbers of potential learners 'out in the cold'. The role of universities in providing lifelong learning opportunities for part-time and mature students is crucial in raising skills and qualifications levels and supporting economic and social development locally and nationally.

It would appear that that the popularity of full time study and apparent market resilience to fee increases has taken front stage and hidden this crisis in part time recruitment. This presentation will explore some of the policy context. It will then look at how universities have adopted different strategies, in particular looking at how the University of Wolverhampton, in its role as an anchor for local social and economic development, is approaching recruitment and support for part-time and mature students.

11.00 Keynote speaker: Kate Thomas, Research Fellow & Project Manager (Athena SWAN), Birmingham City University

Part-time spaces: dimensions of belonging in higher education

Dominant ideas of 'belonging in higher education' are problematic in the context of a diverse undergraduate population, including part-time, mature undergraduates whose multiple identities, cross-cut by age, gender, race and class, position them on the periphery. Thinking 'spatially' invites attention to the way institutional spaces are occupied and by whom, and makes visible dominant and marginal practices of belonging. This presentation draws on the findings of a multiple case study investigating dimensions of 'belonging' for mature part-time undergraduates in English HE. It explores how thinking spatially can uncover power relationships and practices of belonging in HE and may usefully inform our institutional practice. The presentation includes outcomes of a 'mapping belonging' exercise, utilised as a means of disrupting campus spaces, making multiple experiences of common spaces visible and exploring alternative dimensions of belonging.

11.50 Choice of workshops:

- **The 3R's of part-time student support - Recruitment, Retention and Retrieval**
Ormond Simpson, Visiting Fellow, Centre for Distance Education, University of London
International Programmes

This workshop will explore the issues around the concept of 'enhancing the student experience', with time for colleagues to discuss their own responses to it.

- **Wellbeing of students**
Pauline McManus, University of Warwick
Mature and part-time students participating in higher education are engaged in what is potentially a life-changing experience. It is therefore important to pay attention to the 'student experience', ensuring that students are able to study effectively and maintain a lifestyle which promotes their physical and psychological wellbeing
- **Part-time learners and learning in higher education: Guiding the student learning journey**
Professor Mike McLinden, School of Education, University of Birmingham
This interactive workshop will present select findings and outputs from a 2013 Higher Education Academy (HEA) project structured around the theme of 'Flexible Pedagogies'. An important finding to emerge from the project was that developing greater flexibility for part-time learners needs to be contextualised within a broader consideration of the overall pedagogical environment in which learning takes place. The session will showcase an Audit Tool that is structured around the *Student Learning Pathway*. This Audit Tool is intended to serve as a reference point for tutors when seeking to review their own practice, with a view to developing and promoting greater flexibility in the learning opportunities provided for learners in the future HE landscape.

12.30 Lunch

1.15 The student journey - discussion groups on:

- Pre-arrival support
- On-arrival support and induction
- Learning and teaching support
- Non-academic support
- Student life
- Careers and employability

2.30 Refreshment break

2.45 Discussion groups continued

3.45 Plenary: identifying and sharing good practice

4.30 Close

Conference fee/booking

Fee: **£105.00** for delegates from institutions which are members of UALL, **£135.00** for non-members

Please book online at:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/part-time-and-mature-students-in-higher-education-exploring-and-enhancing-the-student-experience-tickets-19945376157>

Please send enquiries to the conference secretary, Nargis Ayub: n.ayub@leeds.ac.uk

Information about the speakers

Jackie Dunne

Jackie is Deputy Vice- Chancellor (Access and Lifelong Learning) at the University of Wolverhampton. She graduated in Hispanic Studies from Liverpool University in 1987 and in 1995 completed an MA in Education and Industry from Warwick University. She has 25 years' experience in higher education, and has held a number of senior management positions.

Jackie began her career at Coventry University as a Lecturer in Spanish, working her way up to Principal Lecturer. She moved to the University of Leicester in 2001, as Director of Continuing Professional Development, and later went on to become Director of Lifelong Learning. While at Leicester, she was responsible for a number of university wide initiatives, including part-time higher education, community and regional engagement, FE partnerships (including Colleges-University of Leicester Network and the Skills for Sustainable Development regional Lifelong Learning Network) and Employer Engagement. She was also Academic Director in the College of Social Science. From 2013 she was Dean of Distance Education at the University of Leicester, with institution-wide responsibility for distance and online learning, including the development of FutureLearn MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses).

At national level, Jackie has been active in the field of lifelong learning and part-time higher education and was Honorary Secretary of the Universities Association for Lifelong Learning (UALL) from 2008 to 2014. She has been involved in a number of national initiatives in part-time higher education and lifelong learning. She was a Board member of the Universities Vocational Awards Council (UVAC) between 2008 and 2010. She has also held a number of regional roles and has been active in the local economic development and skills arena. Her research interests include higher education and lifelong learning policy and practice, and distance and online learning, and she has written and published in these areas.

Kate Thomas

Kate Thomas is Research Fellow and Project Manager (Athena SWAN) at Birmingham City University. She has recently submitted a doctoral thesis (Birkbeck, University of London), entitled *Dimensions of belonging: rethinking retention for part-time, mature undergraduates in English higher education*. Her research builds on a decade of professional expertise in high education, including widening participation, teaching mature learners and project management.

Ormond Simpson

Ormond Simpson is currently Visiting Fellow at the London University International Programmes. Previously he was Visiting Professor at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand and Senior Lecturer in Institutional Research at the Open University. He is particularly interested in student retention, cost-benefits of support activities, ethical issues, learning motivation, e-teaching and staff development. Ormond has written 'far too much' (his words!) on these topics including books, chapters, presentations and articles, most of which are freely available from his website www.ormondsimpson.com.

Pauline McManus

Pauline has a background in social work, teaching and counselling, and for many years has been involved in academic and personal support for students at the University of Warwick.

Mike McLinden

With over 25 years' experience of teaching in schools and higher education, Mike has extensive experience of curriculum design, delivery and evaluation as a teacher, lecturer, Director of Education and a researcher. Mike's main area of professional interest is concerned with developing and promoting equality of opportunity for learners in education. He is the Deputy Head of School of Education and co-Director of the [Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research](#) (VICTAR) at the University of Birmingham as well as programme lead for a national government accredited distance education course for teachers. Mike's broader research interests include promoting 'research-informed' pedagogical practice within HE with a particular focus on the development of student-centred approaches (including problem/enquiry-based learning). With colleagues in the University he has led a number of funded projects that link to strategic developments within the institution. Mike is involved in a wide range of research and knowledge exchange activities within and beyond the academic sphere (e.g. policy makers and practitioners in the field). He was conferred the status of '[Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy](#)' (PFHEA) in June 2013.

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/education/staff/profile.aspx?ReferenceId=5614>