



This is the **April 2008** E-Bulletin from FACE (Forum for Access and Continuing Education), offered to practitioners, policy-makers, researchers and others with an interest in access, widening participation and lifelong learning. This message is sent to colleagues in the sector, members and non-members alike. This FACE e-bulletin will be sent to you each month. If you would prefer not to receive it please contact Jim Tate at James.Tate@uwe.ac.uk and your details will be removed immediately.

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FACE

on the Internet

www.f-a-c-e.org.uk

Previous issues of the E-bulletin are available from the FACE website

A FACE response to the Education (IUSS) Committee Enquiry on OFFA

FACE will shortly be sending a written submission to the Education (IUSS) Committee enquiry to offer a FACE perspective on the performance of OFFA in promoting and safeguarding fair access to higher education for under-represented groups, and on how the effects of OFFA's work are measured. The May Ebulletin will report further on this.

FACE regularly responds to the issues of the day in UK education and welcomes contributions and initiatives from members. (see FACE Comments <http://www.f-a-c-e.org.uk/comment.html>)

Countdown to Conference . . . FACE 2008

Did you know that the FACE conference has only once been hosted outside the UK, in a city whose name actually rhymes with York?

Did you know that this years conference hotel is right next to the river and just a historical ten minute walk to the conference site at York St John University?

Did you know that one of this years keynote speakers was a keynote at a previous conference? (She was so good we just had to ask her back.) But which speaker and which conference?

Prize question - How many FACE conferences have there been? (and if you want to be really smart, name them!)

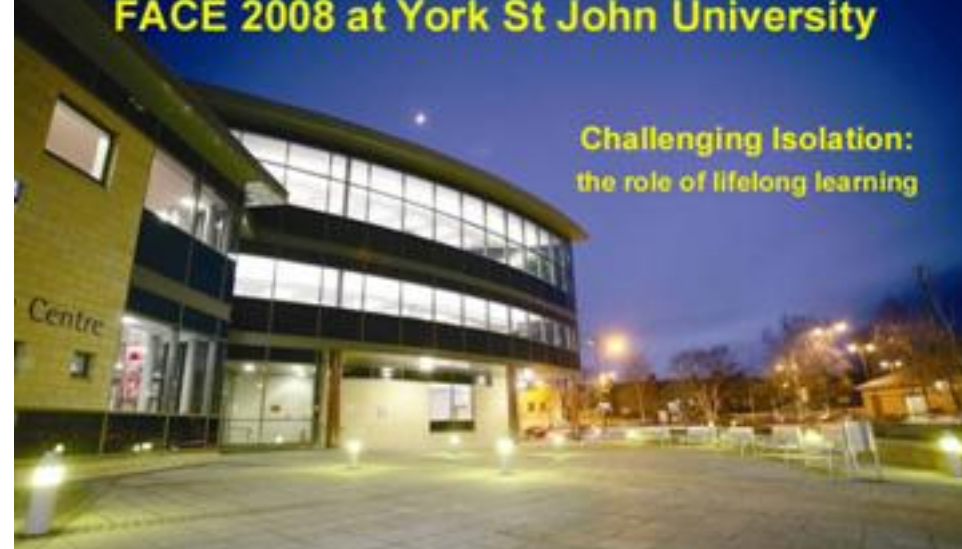
The prize will be a bottle of something at conference

Book Online Now

Download the Conference Programme and the Programme of Workshops from the [FACE Conferences page](#)

FACE 2008 - what's happening?

In addition to the ghost walk and the gala dinner, the AGM and the keynote speakers, what else is happening at this year's conference? To whet your appetite, this month's bulletin will begin an advance sneaky-peek at a few of the workshops that will be included in the FACE 2008 programme.



Building bridges between the university and local mental health services: a theatre course for users of mental health services

In this presentation at the FACE conference in July, we will discuss a theatre course held at York St John University for users of mental health services. The course was taught by tutors and a third year student at the University. It introduced participants to staging, lighting, working with text, characterization and street performing. In consultation with staff working in local mental health services, we made a very deliberate decision to frame what we were offering as an educational opportunity. We were careful to avoid language that would suggest therapeutic or personal development outcomes. We did this as part of an attempt to 'normalize' the experience of attending a university and to draw a very clear distinction between the kind of drama groups held in mental health settings and those offered in a university environment. We considered that this clear distinction was a key element in the successful recruitment for the course.

York St John University is situated near the centre of the city and is within walking distance of the local psychiatric and general medical hospital. This course is one of a number of initiatives by the University aimed at building bridges between these institutions in order to offer learning opportunities for both hospital patients and for students. When The Social Exclusion Unit published its report 'Mental Health and Social Exclusion' in June 2004 it was concerned with developing strategies to improve the lives of people with mental health problems by reducing or eliminating barriers to employment and wider social participation. This course is designed to respond to this agenda. Participants of the course have recently been invited to devise a performance on the theme of 'stigma' for the local MIND AGM in York in November 2008.

For further information, contact Dr Nick Rowe York St John University N.ROWE@yorks.ac.uk

Maximising Options: the perceived meaning and value of vocational learning.

If education professionals feel that they have conceptual clarity about vocational learning, how is it that in this study learners taking a vocational BTEC route and learners taking a traditional A-Level route both thought of their progression route as being vocational and both believed that their choice of route maximised their vocational options and both were right?

In the multi-layered contemporary pedagogic world of the vocational, the work-based, the work-related, and the education-as-commodity instrumental-credentialist, what are the learners themselves to make of all this? In this presentation we will address some ways in which the learners' understanding of the vocational may differ not only from that of practitioners but also differ between groups of learners, and how the students opinion of the value of their qualification relates to their definition of "vocational".

This workshop is based primarily on a study conducted with learners during a health and social care summer school in 2007. The purpose of the study was to compare students who were taking BTEC National diplomas with students who were taking A-Levels. Three themes emerged: (1) How the term 'vocational' may be understood differently by BTEC students and A-Level students; (2) How students respond differently to the perceived values of vocational learning; (3) That whilst there were differences between the BTEC students and the A-Level students the similarities may be more significant than the differences and these HE-oriented BTEC students may have more in common with A-Level students than with other BTEC students who are not HE-oriented.

For further information, contact Dr Jim Tate, University of the West of England James.Tate@uwe.ac.uk

Targeting Isolation: Using national datasets to build and develop an electronic targeting tool and to monitor its accuracy

Ed Bickle and Olivier Cognard from the LIFE partnership (covering Bournemouth, Dorset, Poole, South Somerset and South Wiltshire) will be presenting a paper entitled 'Targeting Isolation: Using national datasets to build and develop an electronic targeting tool and to monitor its accuracy'.

The partnership has developed the 'LIFE Ladder' as a learner progression framework. We will be discussing how vital the targeting process is in correctly identifying the correct cohort of learners for the framework. We will provide information on how target cohorts are identified by using an electronic tool linking postcodes to national datasets. We will emphasise the importance of working closely with target schools to assist in the selection process. Finally, we will go on to discuss how the partnership is monitoring the success of the model with the use of data gathered from parents and pupils.

For further information, contact Ed Bickle, Bournemouth University EBickle@bournemouth.ac.uk

Speakers Corner



SPEAKERS' CORNER

As a member-oriented organisation FACE would like to invite individual colleagues to have their say on any issue of concern in UK education policy and practice. This is a purely personal point of view and should not be thought to represent any institution, organisation, or official body. To have your say, email James.Tate@uwe.ac.uk

This month's contribution is from **Jeff Braham**, who asks: **how will Aimhigher infrastructures and decision making processes dovetail with the WP infrastructure of institutions?**



"So now that the ground for the next three years' Aimhigher strategic planning has been absorbed, and funding allocations are clear, Aimhigher areas are getting down to making decisions about the maintenance or otherwise of regional services, and trying to second guess the exact nature of the monitoring and evaluation that they are going to be required to do, as they put together plans through to 2011.

So too HE institutions are looking more interested in the endgame for Aimhigher, when the initial stance of areas having been, in some cases fiercely, independent of any particular HEI may be overtaken by notions of embedding and mainstreaming, for which institutional commitment will be needed.

Thus, the relationship between Aimhigher with its existing infrastructures and decision making processes about who is targeted and supported will over the next three years be sat alongside the WP infrastructure of institutions. It will be interesting to see how the two will be dovetailed in areas where there is only one HEI (like Derbyshire), and perhaps more interesting to see how WP strategy evolves across those areas where there are several HEIs.

It would appear from premium HEFCE conversations, that there is a strong steer for HEIs to be able to detail the activity that they support through WP recent funding, and perhaps to collect data to the same level of detail as Aimhigher in order to be able to assess and report back to HEFCE on the effectiveness of this activity. It also seems likely that the OFFA Access Agreement will need to be supplemented with a reinstated institutional WP strategy.

All this begs the question as to whether the levers which are currently attached to Aimhigher will be strong enough to pull together WP activity across areas where there is one institutional lead for Aimhigher but other HEI WP players, or whether explicit new levers will be pulled by HEFCE to require an Aimhigher approach to monitoring and evaluation to be introduced by all HEIs. If the latter is about to happen, how will that affect the decisions that Aimhigher Area Steering Groups have just been taking about whether to continue to buy into regional activities? Will those who eschew the opportunity to retain a regional approach to for example data collection and evaluation live to regret it?"

Jeff Braham
Head of UK Academic Partnerships, University of Derby
Chair, Aimhigher Derbyshire Area Steering Group

A Brief Round-up of other news

FACE Chair joins NAO Panel

FACE Chair John Storan has been invited to be a member of the National Audit Office's expert panel to consider and advise on its report 'Closing the Gap: Widening Participation in HE'. The report examines the progress made by DIUS, HEFCE and the HE sector in Widening Participation in HE since its previous report in 2002.

John was very pleased indeed to have this opportunity recognising that the report will be crucial to the further development and direction of national WP policy and funding arrangements.

The NAO report is expected to be published at the end of May or beginning of June so watch out for more on this important report in future bulletins.

ESCalate First Year Peer Support and Mentoring Staff Survey 2008

FACE's sister organisation ESCalate (The Education Subject Centre for the Continuing Education Academy) is undertaking a research project to explore first year undergraduate student peer support and/or mentoring within Education, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning departments in UK Higher Education. The project seeks to scope or "landscape" the use of peer support and mentoring, with a view to identifying potential benefits, barriers and effective practice to inform future developments in this area.

As part of this research ESCalate would like to elicit information directly from practitioners on their experiences of, and views on, peer support and/or mentoring. We would be grateful for your assistance in contributing to this project by completing one of the following two short surveys below.

If you **HAVE** had involvement with, or experience of, peer support and/or mentoring for first year students, please complete the survey at <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/survey/peersupport>

If you **HAVE NOT** had any involvement with, or experience of, peer support or mentoring for first year students please complete the survey at <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/survey/nopeersupport>

The survey can be completed anonymously, however anyone providing their contact details will be entered into a random prize draw for £100 in book tokens. All responses are treated in the strictest confidence.

Escalate members might also be interested in the event being organised by ESCalate to promote the **Teacher Education Group (TEG)** which is engaged in mapping UK research on teacher education published between 2000 and 2006. For more details please visit: <http://escalate.ac.uk/4546>

Event: Teacher Education Group: a new resource for researchers
Date(s): Thursday 15th May 2008
Venue: Liverpool John Moores University



Have you heard of Google Alerts?

Google Alerts are email updates of the latest relevant Google results (search results for news online) based on your choice of query or topic. So you could arrange for an alert on whatever subject(s) matter to you. Each time your keyword appears in a news item put online it is included in a list that is then emailed to you. Your keyword might be "Aimhigher" or "Lifelong learning" or "Curriculum Building" or whatever. It only takes a few seconds to set up an alert and its free. You can receive alerts daily, weekly, or as-it-happens. <http://www.google.com/alerts?hl=en&gl=>

The Open University speaks out against government policy on ELQ learners

Following the publication of the Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills (IUSS) Committee Report on the withdrawal of funding for the majority of students in England studying for a qualification that was equivalent to, or lower than, a qualification that they had already achieved (<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cm/ius/187/18702.htm>) the Open University has stated its views on the issue at <http://www.open.ac.uk/alumni/news-events/elq-update.php>.

Aimhigher Associates

The new £21 Million mentoring scheme has been announced under which university students will provide mentoring to school and college pupils as a part of the Aimhigher programme. See <http://www.dius.gov.uk/press/04-04-08.html>

What's in the News?

The Guardian <http://education.guardian.co.uk>

The Independent <http://news.independent.co.uk/education>

The BBC http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/default.stm

The Times http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/education

The Times Higher Education <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk>

DCSF News Centre <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/pns/newslist.cgi>

DIUS Press Releases <http://www.dius.gov.uk/pressreleases.html>

LSC News <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/News>

If you wish to respond to anything in this E-bulletin or contribute to the May issue, please email Jim Tate at James.Tate@uwe.ac.uk