

How can higher education outreach in schools raise attainment?

There is a stark divide in educational outcomes for different socio-economic groups. KS4 data for 2022 shows that only 47% of pupils eligible for FSM achieved a standard pass in both English and Maths GCSE compared to 75% of their peers.

It is in this context that the OfS announced that one of its priorities for higher education is 'to partner with schools and other local organisations to raise the attainment of young people'. While there is experience of attainment-raising outreach in higher education the OfS priority has resulted in the sector reviewing its offer and developing new provision. To be successful in supporting schools and their students we need a clear understanding of the factors that affect attainment to underpin the development of engaging and deliverable activities.

In this session we will hear from Professor Paul Ashwin from Lancaster University, who will explore approaches to teaching and learning. There will be practice examples from NERUPI members and a practical session to identify the elements of an effective intervention strategy for raising-attainment outreach.

09.45 Virtual coffee and registration

10.00 Welcome and introductions

10.05 Some educational principles for supporting schools in raising attainment

Professor Paul Ashwin, Lancaster University: The OfS requirement for HE providers to support schools in raising attainment can feel challenging and overwhelming. In this contribution, I will suggest some educational principles that might inform a way of working with schools in a realistic and inclusive manner.

10.30 Questions to Paul

10.45 Break

11.00 Raising attainment and higher education outreach

Annette Hayton, NERUPI & David Dobraszczyk, University of Reading

11.25 Questions and discussion

11.45 Practice examples

12.45 Lunch

1.30 Panel: Planning and evaluating attainment-raising outreach

Chair: Sheree Palmer, Head of Access & Student Success, University of Manchester

Panel members: Marta-Almeida Hill, Deputy Head of Outreach and WP, University of Kent

Steph Copsey, Pre-16 Outreach Manager, University of East Anglia

Naomi Prendergast, Humber Outreach Programme Manager, HOP

Joanne Moore, Development Officer, NERUPI

2.00 Developing an intervention strategy for raising attainment

2.30 Report back from groups

3.00 Close

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Practice Examples

Session 1:

Unlocking Success: Our approach to supporting attainment at KS4

Marta Almeida Hill, University of Kent

The team from the University of Kent will take you through the process they used to develop and build an attainment raising strategy to support their Wave 1 APP submission. They will share their context, research, insights from teachers, and evaluation approach. They will also give a window into the challenges they have faced so far in 2023/24 as they begin to upscale and implement their new strategy.

The Power and Change attainment-raising programme

Rebecca Harland, University of Law

The Power and Change attainment-raising programme is a key intervention within The University of Law's recently approved 2024-28 Access and Participation Plan. The two-year programme, aimed at Year 10 and 11 students, sits within a broader intervention strategy addressing the risk of replication of sector-wide inequalities in higher education recruitment. Colleagues from the Widening Participation Team will share their experiences in developing the University's first attainment-raising outreach programme, touching on both theoretical and practical perspectives. They will give an overview of their theory of change development and will outline their plans for evaluation.

Session 2:

The mA*ths and Further mA*ths Online Programmes - lessons learnt from running hybrid programmes with an attainment raising focus

Jenny Cooke, Imperial College London

The mA*ths and Further mA*ths Online programmes were established in 2019 and currently support over 500 Year 12 and 13 students each year. They are co-ordinated by the Imperial College London Outreach team in partnership with the Department of Mathematics and MEI (Mathematics in Education and Industry), who support with content development and delivery. The programmes use a mixed delivery model, combining online courses and mentoring with in person workshops. They were established with the aim of supporting students to develop the skills and knowledge needed to gain an A* in their A level. This workshop will discuss the advantages and challenges of running hybrid programmes that aim to reach a national audience, quantitative and qualitative approaches to evaluation and working collaboratively to create academic content.

Creative Practice in Teaching

Ben Worsfold, University of Reading

Teachers are crucial to the academic success of their students, as is the educational setting they work in. This talk explores a programme of teacher CPD designed in collaboration with the Reading and Berkshire teaching community that will foster creative practice, alongside a teacher research grant designed to promote new innovations in teaching and learning.

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Session 3:

Attainment-raising intervention plan: A long-termism approach

Jamie Taylor & Jacob Flannery, HeppSY UniConnect

Raising pre-16 students' attainment is urgent and challenging for HeppSY, the Uni Connect Programme partnership in South Yorkshire. Almost half of the South Yorkshire schools' GCSE Progress 8 scores are lower than England's average and the Education Policy Institute reported larger than average attainment gaps between pupils from disadvantaged and advantaged backgrounds in South Yorkshire. Needs analyses and school feedback show many students need extra support leading HeppSY to adopt a 'long-termism' approach focusing on three projects to develop different academic-related skills and self-efficacy for the full spectrum of 11-16 students; revision and study skills project for Y11 humanities students; a metacognition project for Y10/11 students; a Breakfast Club project for Y7, 8 and 9 students.

The Challenge of Raising Attainment

Session 4:

Make it Count

Julie Smith, University of East Anglia

Make It Count is a metacognition project that helps young people explore the ways in which we learn. Designed for Year 7s, delivery of the project is spread over 8 x 1 hourly workshops delivered by Outreach Officers and HECs. It provides young people with opportunities to develop a set of tools (strategies) to empower them to tackle school tasks and activities with greater confidence and resilience. Make It Count aims to offer strategic support to schools in raising attainment by equipping their young people with a toolkit of lifelong skills to become more independent and self-regulating learners. The project uses climate change as its context which aims to increase awareness of this matter but within a local context in the hope of inspiring young people to take action in their local communities. Make It Count has been created in partnership with Structural Learning, experts in the metacognition arena, and is based on EEF evidence.

Future Thinking

Naomi Prendergast, Fiona Berry, Anne Kildunne, Rachael Holland, Sarah Dirrane, HOP, UniConnect

The aim of the Future Thinking Programme is to give learners an opportunity to learn and develop metacognition through self-regulated learning, using a focus of careers, pathways and Labour Market Information (LMI) content. Developed in partnership with schools and local authorities the programme is designed for the skills learnt to be transferred across curriculum subjects. Carefully designed guided practice, with support gradually withdrawn as the pupil becomes proficient, can allow pupils to develop skills and strategies before applying them in independent practice. This is a new approach to metacognition and the sessions have been developed using the EEF Metacognition Guidance Report for explicitly teaching metacognitive strategies which can be applied to different subject content at different phases of learning.