

Getting the Grades: Working together to raise attainment

School and college students consistently report that ‘getting the grades’ is one of their main concerns about progressing to university – and they are not wrong. Research has shown that GCSE grades are a key predictor for accessing higher education. Although this might seem like straightforward common sense, the reasons for differences in attainment between certain groups of students are not straightforward at all.

For example the attainment gap for those eligible for free school meals grows wider at every stage of education; from 9.5 months at the end of primary school, to 19.3 months, by the end of secondary school., indicating that that socio-economic factors are a key predictor of educational success. Despite these wider trends ‘natural ability’ is often seen as the reason for lower attainment but, while individual subject interest and aptitude is certainly a factor in getting the grades it is only one element.

The NERUPI aims, grounded in educational theory, are designed to address a range of factors shown to affect an individual’s success within the educational system, some directly linked to subject knowledge and others related to wider social and cultural factors.

At our in-person annual convention at the Friends House Euston we will explore the issues related to differences in attainment between socio-economic groups; share our raising-attainment activities and approaches to evaluation and develop practical strategies for strengthening our evaluation strategies

Programme

- ♦ **9:00** **Coffee, registration and poster viewing**
- ♦ **9.45** **Welcome and introduction**
Annette Hayton, NERUPI Convenor
- ♦ **10.00** **Raising attainment in schools and colleges: exploring the issues**
John Blake, Director of Access and Participation. Office for Students
Professor Nicola Ingram, Director of the Education and Social Research Institute, Manchester Metropolitan University
- ♦ **11.00** **Coffee break and poster viewing**
- ♦ **11.30** **Practice examples from NERUPI Members**
- ♦ **12.15** **Panel Discussion: What works in raising attainment?**
Professor Mary Stuart, Leadership Development Consultant
Dr Anna Anthony, Senior Analyst, HEAT
Sheree Palmer, Head of Access & Student Success, Manchester University
- ♦ **13:00** **Lunch and poster viewing**
- ♦ **14:00** **Practical workshop: Exploring evaluation for raising attainment activities:**
Introduction from Annette Hayton and expert support from the NERUPI Team and Anna Anthony, HEAT
- ♦ **15:15** **Plenary session; Evaluation strategies for raising attainment activities**
- ♦ **16.00** **Networking and working group meetings**
- ♦ **17.00** **Close**