

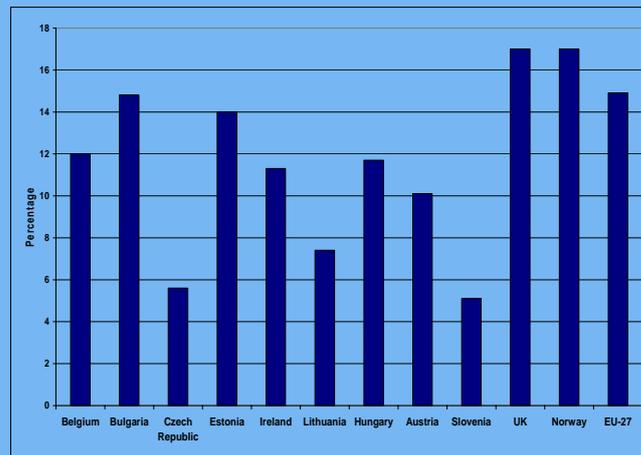
Improving the research-practice
dialogue to promote access and
progression of non-traditional students
in higher education

Lyn Tett

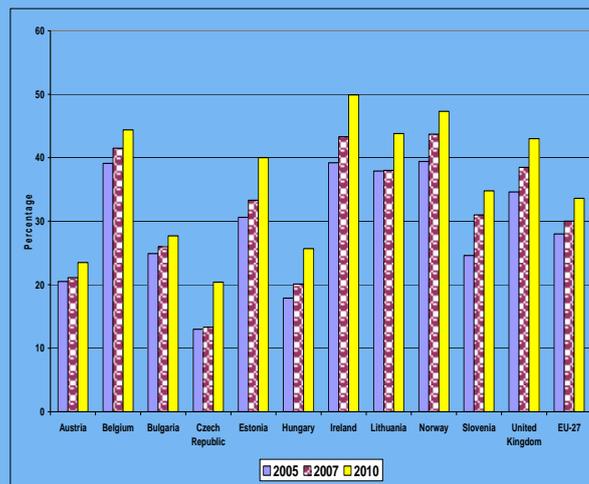
Presentation

- Some facts and figures
- What is meant by access and retention
- Three ways of encouraging access and retention
- Practical links between research and practice
- A dialogue

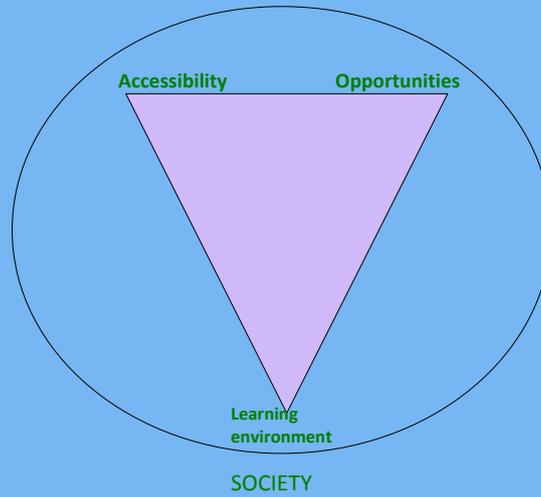
Proportion of 18-24 year olds with lower secondary level (ISCED 1, 2, 3c) qualifications (2008)



Proportion of 30-34 year olds with tertiary education, 2005 - 2010

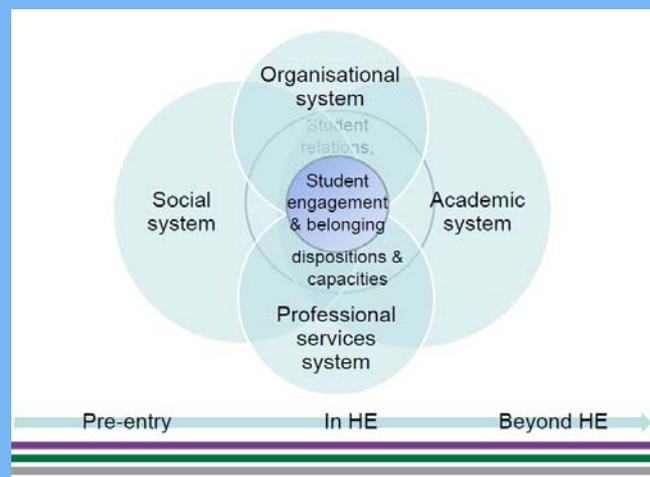


Factors promoting access



From Yusuf Sayed (2010) EFA Global Monitoring Team, UNESCO

A model of access and progression (from Liz Thomas, 2010)



Outreach and pre-entry development

- People who have found school a negative experience and live in communities where few have participated in post-compulsory education are unlikely to see participation in HE as a possibility for them.
- This means that universities need to engage with people in their communities and demonstrate that university can be for them through working closely with particular communities or groups to encourage them to participate.
- Another aspect of pre-entry development involves preparing people with the study skills that they will require that will enable them to engage fully with university level study. This early preparation has been shown to promote later progression once people are in the university.

Special Entry qualifications

- Inequalities in entry to higher education can be explained by differences in achievement of entry qualifications gained in school. The lower an individual's socio-economic status the more likely they are to leave school with few or no academic qualifications.
- Special entry qualifications are a good way of addressing this issue and can include waiving entry qualifications altogether and instead accrediting experience from life or work.
- Once people have entered the university additional support is often necessary to enable them to manage the new environment.

Recognizing prior learning (RPL)

- The RPL process enables the recognition of previous learning that has taken place in informal, formal or non-formal contexts in order to gain credit or exemption for qualifications. This encourages a wider concept of learning that enables people to go beyond formal learning and rewards wider experience.
- RPL can help universities create more flexible learning paths, ranging from offering partial exemptions through to individual learning routes and so can break down barriers and expand the horizons of learners and institutions alike.
- This involves supporting learners through the formative stages of demonstrating their prior learning as they grow in confidence, recognise the skills and knowledge they have and develop capacity to think and write reflectively.
- It also requires training and support for academic staff as a key means of ensuring consistency and high standards.

Practical links between Research and Practice

- Many of us have acted to bridge the gaps between research, policy and practice in access and progression through a commitment to addressing the unfairness of the unequal access to universities currently experienced by many adults.
- We are often aware of problems raised by adults and work hard to find ways in which they might be addressed.
- Many of us are also in touch with employers to identify how work-based experience can be made to count.
- In general practical links between research and practice are made by: identifying the issue; researching possible solutions; then implementing contextually appropriate practical solutions.

Conclusion

- I have shown the importance of developing access to higher education for people that have experienced socio-economic disadvantage and ensuring progression whilst they are there and suggested some ways in which developing access and progression can promote fairer access for adults.
- What do you think are the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of the suggested approaches from your perspective?
- How can we develop more links between research and practice in this area?