

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Non-Technical Summary

A 1000 word (maximum) summary of the main research results, in non-technical language, should be provided below. The summary might be used by ESRC to publicise the research. It should cover the aims and objectives of the project, main research results and significant academic achievements, dissemination activities and potential or actual impacts on policy and practice.

After 1992, England acquired a two-sector system of further and higher education. Institutions engaged predominantly with further education were allocated to a new further education sector. Establishments mainly concerned with higher education were brought together in a single higher education sector. The two sectors were administered, funded and regulated by parallel public bodies, each with different remits and methods.

Such arrangements assumed that further education and higher education stood for different levels of learning and, for this reason, should be provided by separate types of tertiary organisation. However, government policy in recent years has looked to expand higher education in the further education sector and make it easier for institutions to work with the funding and quality agencies of another sector.

One of the declared aims of this policy is widening participation in undergraduate education. Further education colleges that offer higher education, along with higher education establishments that offer further education, are sometimes styled 'mixed-economy' or 'dual-sector' organisations. We use further-higher as a shorthand for all colleges and universities that combine further and higher education.

Our project investigated the impact of this two-sector division on strategies to broaden participation in further-higher education. We employed a three-level design and methodology. At the system level, we undertook policy interviews and documentary analyses to comprehend the nature and significance of this division and its rationale. We commissioned international and contextual papers from leading scholars to help us identify distinctive features in the English situation, especially the role accorded to further education colleges in expanding participation and promoting progression and transfer.

At the level of institutions, we employed case studies to inform and illustrate a typology of further-higher organisational forms. In-depth interviews were conducted with institutional leaders and senior managers responsible for strategy and partnerships. The interview data was supplemented by the analysis of corporate documentation. At the level of students and tutors, detailed fieldwork was carried out in four partner further-higher establishments. Our fieldwork interviews focused on two sets of student transitions: those moving from further education to higher education levels of study; and those moving from short-cycle higher education to the bachelor degree. At the same time, we reviewed an array of materials relating to students, staff, programmes,

partnerships and strategies on teaching, learning and widening participation.

At each of these levels we undertook statistical studies of students moving within and between colleges and universities. This involved the assembly and analysis of administrative datasets for the two sectors, each different in their data collection methods and categories. Another novel feature of the study was the secondment of institution-based researchers to the project team. Our collaboration with four partner institutions was designed to build practitioner-based research capability as well as to serve as primary sites for fieldwork.

Empirically, our aim was to produce reliable quantitative and qualitative evidence to inform policy and practice in a little researched area of education. In terms of theory, our work was addressed to debates about the role of lower-tier institutions in differentiated and stratified systems of higher education, especially in relation to the experience of working class and non-traditional students. Internationally, the project drew on comparative and country studies to identify commonalities and divergences in the English case.

At the macro level, our findings demonstrate that sector separation is a central and continuing influence on policy for widening participation. Separate funding and quality regimes have evolved despite the lack of a developed rationale for a two-sector system. As a consequence, further and higher education are not viewed as parts of a common enterprise and there is ambivalence about their combination in a single institution.

Nor has there been consistent and coherent policy development for further-higher education. This is largely because (a) leadership and responsibility for higher education in the further education sector is exercised by the sector bodies in higher education and (b) because no central authority has sought to develop policy for further education in the higher education sector. Sectors not only contain and control the movement of institutions between these territories, they also set its direction. Moreover, in recent years the funding and regulatory bodies have moved further apart.

At the meso and micro levels, our findings indicate wide variation in the forms and directions taken by further-higher institutions and their relationships with students. The primary attachment of an institution is to a sector, and relationships with another sector differ in kind and intensity. Further and higher education remain powerful but distinct brands. Furthermore, decisions to combine further and higher education are only partially informed by widening participation strategies, or by the scope for student progression. Market-related considerations are often the most powerful drivers, with institutions searching for competitive edge and survival in a complex market.

Decisions by students to move to another institution or to remain in the same establishment are shaped by the cultures of individual learning sites and the reputational standing of further-higher institutions. For students who make an internal transition, the pursuit of higher education is often more about deciding to continue with their studies, rather than engaging in a process of selecting and applying to different institutions.

Finally, we found evidence to suggest that the location of higher education in further education colleges has contributed to a democratisation of access and a diversion of demand away from high-cost and high-status parts of the system. On the one hand, general further education colleges make a distinctive contribution to widening participation by qualifying a larger proportion of students from low participation neighbourhoods and less affluent areas. On the other, the interfaces between further and higher education are configured in ways that do not necessarily secure smooth or seamless internal progression.

We have brought our findings in front of policymakers, managers of colleges and universities, and tutors and other practitioners. In particular, we advance arguments for a steered and staged approach to build quality, ownership and sustainability in the higher education mission of the further education sector. Our publications, papers and presentations are listed on the project website: www.sheffield.ac.uk/furtherhigher/

2. Dissemination

A. Please outline any specific plans you have for further publication and/or other means of dissemination of the outcomes and results of the research.

We have already undertaken a wide range of dissemination events (each listed at Appendix II):

- Presenting papers at six international conferences and workshops, including an invitation seminar convened by the American Association of Community Colleges and the Council for Industry and Higher Education in New York
- Delivering six papers at national conferences (including symposia at BERA, SRHE and HEA) and five papers at external institutions and special interest groups
- Making presentations at four international conferences (including ASHE), five national conferences and twelve regional and local events for managers and practitioners in further and higher education
- Presenting our preliminary findings direct to officials in government and the sector bodies, including an invitation-only event for policy-makers convened by the TLRP
- Reporting our methods and results to the four partner institutions in our project, at all stages of the work and in association with the institution-based research associate seconded to the project team

- Securing coverage in the national press, including *Times Higher Education*

These have led to published outputs during the course of the research and papers accepted or commissioned for publication in 2008-09 (each are listed in our main report):

- A jointly authored book drawing on conceptual and contextual studies undertaken in the early part of the project (Continuum)
- Two articles published in refereed academic journals and one article in a professional journal
- A briefing paper commissioned and published by the Council for Industry and Higher Education
- A TLRP Research Briefing widely distributed to education providers, policy communities and national organisations in further and higher education
- A special issue of the journal *Higher Education Quarterly* in 2009 dedicated to international and country papers from the project
- Two articles in refereed academic journals in 2009, one accepted and one commissioned
- Two chapters commissioned for an edited volume on widening participation in higher education (Routledge)
- Two chapters in a book proposal for an international handbook of teaching and learning in higher education and beyond (Sage)

Our other dissemination plans and activities are targeted at the three main audiences for our work: international scholars on higher and post-secondary education; policymakers in government and national bodies; and managers and tutors in further and higher education:

- Maintaining our project website to maximise access to our methods, findings and outputs, including the project working papers that report our findings
- Offering our project working papers to the Higher Education Academy for hosting on their website
- Preparing a book proposal for submission to an international publisher
- Submitting proposals for papers and symposia to international conferences, including ASHE, CSCC and AERA

- Presenting papers accepted for national conferences (SRHE, TLRP, CETL) and research seminars at the Universities of Cambridge and Glasgow
- Making project presentations to sector organisations (AoC, HEA, LSC) and further education colleges (Chesterfield, Dearne Valley, Sheffield)

Universal Access and Dual Regimes of Further and Higher Education

Background

Following legislative reform in 1992, England acquired a two-sector system of further and higher education. Institutions engaged predominantly with further education were allocated to a new further education sector. Establishments mainly concerned with higher education were brought together in a single higher education sector. The sectors were administered, funded and regulated by parallel public bodies, each with different remits and methods.

Such arrangements assumed that further education and higher education stood for different levels of learning and, for this reason, should be provided by separate types of tertiary organisation. However, government policy in recent years has looked to expand higher education in the further education sector and make it easier for institutions to work with the funding and quality agencies of another sector. Furthermore, these measures form part of a larger policy project – which we style ‘the English experiment’ – to change the pattern of future demand for, and supply of, higher level education and training in England.

Widening participation in undergraduate education is one of the declared aims of this policy enterprise, with colleges and universities that provide both further and higher education expected to expand access and enhance progression for a diverse range of students. In England, there is no agreed or official nomenclature for these establishments, although the terms ‘mixed-economy’ and ‘dual-sector’ are sometimes used. Furthermore, the unqualified description of English higher education as a unified system has often displaced or disguised the further education contribution (Clancy, 2006).

Whereas most establishments in the English higher education sector are single-sector institutions with no further education students, the bulk of colleges in the further education sector (now the learning and skills sector) are mixed-economy institutions with a small numbers and proportions of higher education students. In both sectors, there is a minority of dual-sector establishments where the volume of further and higher education is more balanced. In this report, we use further-higher as a shorthand for all colleges and universities that combine further and higher education.

The nature of the overlap between the two sectors and the contribution of further-higher organisations to widening participation are among the least understood parts of

the tertiary landscape (Parry and Thompson, 2002). Accordingly, our research set out to increase knowledge about:

- the relationships between sectors and the effects of separation;
- the forms and directions taken by further-higher institutions;
- the patterns and experiences of students moving between further and higher education.

Empirically, our aim was produce reliable quantitative and qualitative evidence to inform policy and practice on participation in further-higher settings. More directly, our collaboration with four partner institutions was designed to build practitioner-based research capability in each establishment as well as to serve as primary sites for fieldwork.

Theoretically, our work was addressed to debates about the role of lower-tier institutions in differentiated and stratified systems of higher education, especially in relation to the experience of working class and non-traditional students (Shavit et al, 2007; Moodie, 2008b). Internationally, the project drew on comparative and country studies to identify commonalities and divergences in the English case (Gallacher and Osborne, 2005; Layer, 2005; Garrod and Macfarlane, 2008).

Objectives

The overall aim of the study was to examine the impact of the division between further and higher education on strategies to widen participation in undergraduate education. We asked:

1. What was the nature and significance of this division and its rationale?
2. What was the impact of this separation on policy formation, organisational development and student participation within and between further and higher education?
3. What kinds of students used what types of further education as a basis for enrolment and study in what forms of higher education, and how was this changing?

4. How important or distinctive has been the contribution of further education colleges to expansion, differentiation and equity in higher education?
5. What meanings and experiences were associated with boundary transitions and transfers between further and higher education?
6. What were the features of an effective cross-sector system of further and higher education?
7. How might policy intelligence, research capacity and practitioner-based research capability be improved across further and higher education?

The relevance and timeliness of these questions was reinforced by three policy developments during the period of the research. First, a review was requested by government of the arrangements for higher education in further education colleges. Two members of the project team were invited to participate in this review and analyse the responses to its consultation (Parry and Thompson, 2007). Access to the data from this exercise, together with a linked evaluation study conducted for the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), led to adjustments in our design and approach.

In a second policy intervention, the government announced its intention to enable further education colleges to apply for the power to award the foundation degree. This was an unexpected and controversial decision. It was followed in 2007 by a major change to the machinery of government involving the creation of two new departments with responsibility for education. This third episode involved options for the reform of sector structures and systems, including the proposal for a single body responsible for the funding of higher education and the training and education of adults. Where appropriate, we accommodated these new and shifting agendas into the content and sequence of our work.

Methods

We employed a three-level design and analytical framework to study how policies and practices on widening participation were created, managed, mediated and enacted in a two-sector system. Our methods and the findings of the study are reported in a set of working papers located on the project website: www.sheffield.ac.uk/furtherhigher/

Commissioned commentaries

To address research questions 1 and 2, we commissioned four country papers from leading scholars in the USA (Dougherty), Canada (Jones), Australia (Moodie) and Scotland (Gallacher). In addition, we commissioned two contextual papers, one from Scott on higher education and the other from Stanton on further education.

Authors of the international papers were asked to take a country perspective on contemporary English policies, patterns and directions, employing a blend of comparison and commentary. Authors of the domestic papers were invited to reflect critically on English developments, ambitions and assumptions and offer additional interpretations and insights to that provided in a long source paper distributed to all six scholars. To assist their understanding of the project, authors were also sent a copy of the project research bulletin (TLRP, 2008) and a refereed journal article by the project co-directors (Bathmaker, Brooks, Parry and Smith, 2008) based on preliminary findings from the study. The source paper and journal article are the two nominated outputs enclosed with this report.

The 20,000-word source paper was authored by Parry (2008) and addressed to three aspects of the role and operation of sectors in English tertiary education: the contemporary history of two-sector arrangements; the role of institutions that combine further and higher education in the English policy experiment; and the paradoxes and problems posed by these developments, including their implications for differentiation, diversity and broader participation.

The source paper was based on an analysis of more than 400 policy documents and statistical sources spanning the period 1988-2008 (including unpublished papers), together with the findings from policy interviews conducted with members of sector bodies and government officials (see next section).

Policy interviews

Research questions 1, 2 and 4 were investigated using eighteen face-to-face interviews with former and current officials in government and the sector bodies over the period 1988 to 2008. The number of interviews completed was nearly double that originally planned. This was in response to new policy measures announced by the government and its agencies. The costs of the additional interviews were covered by funds originally allocated for an international seminar attended by the authors of commissioned papers. It was not possible to find a seminar date that suited all contributors and we have sought alternative funds to host this event in 2009 when

each of the commissioned papers will be published in a special issue of the journal *Higher Education Quarterly*.

The interviews – all conducted by Parry – were undertaken with two groups of policy officials. The first were responsible for drafting and implementing the 1988 and 1992 legislation which established a two-sector system in England. The second were chief executives of the Further Education Funding Council, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the HEFCE in office since 1992. In addition, interviews were undertaken with officers of the LSC and HEFCE with responsibility for widening participation and cross-sector strategy.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were read and analysed using a framework of themes developed from the review of documentary sources undertaken for the source paper produced for the authors of commissioned papers.

Creation of a statistical database

To address research questions 3 and 4, we assembled and analysed a national dataset on individuals studying in further education establishments and higher education institutions in England. Using data for the most recent years available, our aim was to describe the movement of students completing one or more learning aims at the level normally required for entry to undergraduate education (Level 3) and then beginning a higher education qualification in the following year or the year after. Little is known in quantitative terms about the nature of this progression, although a similar approach using probability matching had been applied to the study transitions between further education and higher education in Scotland (Osborne and McLaurin, 2006).

In order to analyse the contributions of colleges and universities to participation within and between further and higher education we brought together the LSC Individual Learner Records for 2003/04, 2004/05 and 2005/06 with those from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) for the same years. Under a collaborative agreement with HEFCE, we not only obtained data from HESA but were provided with a file created by HEFCE of Unique Student Identifiers.

This enabled us to track individuals completing (or due to complete) a Level 3 learning aim in further education colleges and higher education institutions in 2003/04 and beginning a higher education course in either of these types of institution in 2004/05 and 2005/06. This gave us eight possible progression routes or pathways between further and higher education for analysis.

The novel features of this combined dataset are that it included ‘non-prescribed’ courses of higher education (higher level vocational and professional qualifications) and it distinguished between institutions where students were registered and establishments where they were taught (under franchise and collaborative arrangements). Both rarely feature together in published official statistics.

All the ILR data on higher level education required extensive cleaning, including a line by line allocation of qualification aims to standard categories. In the case of franchised provision, there has been a long-standing difficulty in the transfer of data between the LSC and HESA. We took into account franchised provision in both sectors, including where the teaching was undertaken wholly or partially in another institution.

Alongside mapping the movements of individuals and the relationships between the characteristics of students and their courses and institutions, we investigated a central claim made for expanding higher education in further education settings: namely, that colleges make an important contribution to widening participation in undergraduate education, especially for working class students; and that progression between further and higher education in the same establishment is a key element in this activity. Since neither the ILR nor HESA datasets contained a reliable indicator of social class, we used and compared proxy measures based on postcode and census data, one referenced to levels of deprivation and the other to high and low areas of participation in higher education. Work on the statistical studies was led by Brooks in association with Rashid.

Organisational case studies

To illuminate research questions 2 and 4, we undertook case studies of eleven further-higher institutions, ten in England and one in Australia. These were selected in two stages to inform a typology of organisational forms. Those selected in the first phase were our four partner institutions in the project, each reflecting different configurations and trajectories taken by further-higher organisations.

In the second phase, we used quantitative and qualitative data made available from our involvement in the HEFCE review of higher education in further education colleges to select an additional six case studies. These were chosen to capture a range of characteristics found across the population of further-higher providers in England and so develop and illustrate the emerging typology. These included considerations of institutional type and scale, the pattern of funding and number of partnerships, organisational shape and structure, and regional and sub-regional contexts.

Originally, we envisaged using a questionnaire survey to collect data on the character of these providers. In the event, much of this information came to us from the HEFCE review and from a review of further education provision within higher education institutions undertaken for the LSC (LSC, 2007). The opportunity to include an Australian dual-sector institution arose from a study visit by Smith in 2007 and was used to shed comparative light on English arrangements.

The institutional case studies centred on in-depth interviews with the chief and second tier executives. Where establishments had complex operating structures, interviews were also sought from senior colleagues responsible for separate or associated sites. The focus on the senior leadership was justified on the basis of their formal responsibilities for developing and implementing institutional strategies. Participants were invited to present their own accounts of why their institution engaged in both further and higher education, how these domains were organised and managed, and with what consequences. A total of 32 face-to-face interviews were completed, four by Thompson, one by Parry and the remainder by Smith.

Particular attention was paid to the place and importance of widening participation in each institution. However, the intention was to locate this phenomenon within a broader understanding of institutional position-taking, identity and image, and to tease out the significance of being dual-sector or mixed-economy in orientation and disposition. The interview data were supplemented by analysis of institutional documentation, including a combination of publicly available materials and unpublished corporate planning documents.

Fieldwork in four partner institutions

Our four partner institutions were the sites of detailed fieldwork studies addressed to research questions 2, 3 and 4. These focused on interviews with samples of students, tutors and managers in each establishment, the collection and analysis of documentary materials, and the recording of fieldwork observations.

At each institution, a research associate was identified from among the staff and seconded for one day a week to the project. The role of the institution-based researchers was to facilitate access to students, staff and materials by the project team as well as to participate in the fieldwork and meetings of the research team. A partnership agreement with each establishment was concluded at the time of our application and funding for each secondment included in the project budget.

The fieldwork focused on two sets of student transitions: first, the move from further education at Level 3 to higher education at the undergraduate levels; and, second, the move from short-cycle higher education to studies leading to the bachelor degree. Our interest in this part of the study was on how transitions were encountered, experienced and understood by students crossing these boundaries and by staff involved in mediating and managing these transitions.

Our original intention was to conduct four cycles of interviews with longitudinal samples of students at four points of transition or transfer. As a result of the reduction in our project budget, we undertook three cycles of interviews and reduced the overall number of interviews (see Section 6).

Eleven learning sites across the four partner institutions were chosen to generate our student samples. Managers were asked to identify individual programmes where students were likely to move externally and internally to the next stage of study. In practice, this proved more difficult than anticipated, partly because the numbers on individual courses were sometimes small and partly because decisions about higher education were not always known.

In the case of students moving from Level 3 to higher education, three types of qualification pathway were included: those studying for general vocational qualifications (AVCE and BTEC National), those undertaking occupationally specific qualifications (NVQ) and those enrolled on Access courses. In the case of individuals moving from short-cycle undergraduate education to the bachelor degree, our sample included HND and foundation degree programmes.

A total of 82 students were interviewed in the first sweep, 53 at the point of transition from Level 3 to higher education and 29 at the point of transition from short-cycle undergraduate education to the bachelor degree. In the second sweep, undertaken shortly after they had made these transitions, 68 students were interviewed. In the third and final sweep, towards the end of the year after making a transition, 58 students were interviewed.

As planned, most students in our samples were able to be interviewed three times. All interviews were conducted face-to-face by members of the fieldwork team (led by Bathmaker), using interview schedules designed for each sweep. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed using Atlas Ti, a qualitative data analysis software package.

Alongside the interviews with senior managers conducted by Smith and colleagues, we interviewed managers responsible for (or working at) the interface between further

and higher education and course lecturers involved in teaching at both the further and higher education levels. A total of 69 face-to-face interviews were completed, each recorded and transcribed.

In addition to the documents collected by Smith, we reviewed and analysed an array of materials relating to students, staff, programmes, partnerships and strategies on teaching, learning and widening participation. However, we experienced great difficulty in obtaining statistical data on students at the level of individual courses and on their progression between further and higher education. This was a matter for specific investigation, here and elsewhere in the project.

Results

System and policy

At the macro level, our findings demonstrate that sector separation is a central and continuing influence on policy for widening participation in undergraduate education. In particular:

- Separate funding and quality regimes for further and higher education have evolved despite the lack of a developed rationale for a two-sector system. As a consequence, further and higher education are not viewed as parts of a common enterprise and there is ambivalence about their combination in a single institution. Further education colleges have yet to be regarded as normal or necessary locations for higher education.
- No coherent and consistent policy development has emerged for further-higher education. This is largely because leadership and responsibility for higher education in the learning and skills sector is exercised by the sector bodies in higher education and because no central authority has sought to develop policy for further education in the higher education sector.
- Sectors not only contain and control the movement of institutions between their territories, they also set its direction. The redesignation of a further education establishment as a higher education institution is regarded as an elevation. A reverse movement is rarely countenanced and would be considered a demotion and a sign of failure.

- The funding and regulatory regimes in each sector have moved further apart at the same time that government has sought to promote cross-sector provision and progression. The removal of the funding council for further education and the shift from a planning function to a demand-led system under the LSC has increased this separation (Coffield et al, 2008).

Organisation and culture

At the meso and micro levels, our findings indicate wide variation in the forms and directions taken by further-higher institutions and their relationships with students. Specifically:

- The primary attachment of an institution is to a sector, and relationships with another sector differ in kind and intensity. Further education and higher education remain powerful but distinct brands. Institutional leaders recognise that the delivery of brand values is closely linked with sector identity as well as the ability to respond with agility to competitive market opportunities.
- Four basic models of further-higher organisation have emerged: those arising from one or more mergers; those involving a change of sector; those based on transactions and alliances with institutions in another sector; and those leading to organisational separation or decoupling.
- Decisions to combine further and higher education are only partially informed by widening participation strategies, or by the scope for student progression. At the corporate level, market-related considerations are often the most powerful drivers, with institutions searching for competitive edge and survival in a complex market. In these circumstances, equity and skills agendas are not easily aligned.
- Decisions by students to move to another institution for their undergraduate education or to remain in the same establishment are shaped by the cultures of individual learning sites and the reputational standing of further-higher institutions in the organisational field (James and Biesta, 2007). For students who make an internal transition, the pursuit of higher education is often more about deciding to continue with their studies, rather than engaging in a process of selecting and applying to different institutions.

Participation and progression

At each of our levels of analysis, there is evidence to suggest that the location of higher education in further education colleges has contributed to a democratisation of access and a steering and diversion of demand away from high-cost and high-status parts of the system (Dougherty, 2001):

- General further education colleges make a distinctive contribution to widening participation, both in qualifying individuals for entry to undergraduate education and in providing programmes of higher education. Compared to those transferring to higher education institutions, a larger proportion of students staying in further education colleges for their undergraduate education come from low participation neighbourhoods and areas of deprivation. The same is the case for the one in nine of all higher education students taught in further education colleges, compared to those studying in higher education establishments.
- Nevertheless, the interfaces between further and higher education are configured in different ways and do not necessarily secure smooth or seamless internal progression. Rates and patterns of progression vary considerably within and between institutions, with students who completed their further education in a higher education establishment more likely to remain in the same institution.
- Only a minority of higher education students in further education colleges enter with qualifications gained from the same establishment, at the least in the previous year. Most are adults in employment who study part-time, but around half those completing foundation degrees will move internally or externally to a bachelor degree. An expansion of work-focused higher education will place new demands on the access and transfer functions of further-higher institutions.
- Asymmetries of power and status define the relationship between further and higher education, with dual regimes associated with dependence and subordination (Brint and Karabel, 1989). In other respects, the boundary between the two sectors is permissive and permeable. On its own, the concept of duality – our original core construct – is a limited tool of analysis, especially when applied to organisational fields, learning cultures and student identities.

Effectiveness and improvement

Our synthesis of the international, quantitative and qualitative findings led us to address issues surrounding the effectiveness of current arrangements (research question 6) and the improvement of policy and practice (research question 7). These are reported below and in Sections 2 and 8.

Activities

We have actively participated in the networks of the TLRP and presented our research at its annual conferences, specialist seminars and showcase events (detailed in Section 8). The production of our TLRP Research Briefing involved sharing of drafts with the other six projects on widening participation and a TLRP policy commentary based on these briefings is forthcoming. Our project advisory group included present and former grant holders of related TLRP projects. A former principal of a further education college helped to guide the research from a user perspective.

Within the UK, we have used the academic networks of the SRHE and BERA to communicate our work, especially their national conferences, special interest groups (on post-compulsory and higher education) and thematic networks (on further and higher education). Our access to user communities has benefited greatly from invitations to participate in meetings of the Mixed Economy Group of colleges, the AoC HE in FE Group, the HEA Reference Group on HE in FE, and Foundation Degree Forward.

Outside the UK, we have presented our research at the annual conferences of ASHE and engaged in a dialogue with senior members of the American Association of Community Colleges. The international component of our research will be reported in a special edition of an academic journal as well as in two planned edited volumes and a symposium at AERA.

Our specific plans for dissemination are outlined in Section 2. A full list of previous and future dissemination activities is given in Appendices II and III.

Outputs

Published works 2006-08

Bathmaker, A-M., Brooks, G., Parry, G. and Smith, D. (2008) Dual-sector further and higher education: policies, organisations and students in transition, *Research Papers in Education*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 125-137.

Parry, G. (2008) *Further Education Colleges and Higher Level Skills and Qualifications*. London: Council for Industry and Higher Education, 22 pp.

Parry, G. (2007) The English Experiment, *Journal of University Studies*, 35, pp.95-110.

Parry, G. (2007) Policy as Chaos, Order and Experiment, *Forward: The Foundation Degree Forward Journal*, 12, pp. 16-18.

Parry, G., Thompson, A. and Blackie, P. (2006) *Managing Higher Education in Colleges*. London: Continuum, 166 pp.

Teaching and Learning Research Programme (2008) *Combining Further and Higher Education: Policy, Organisation and Progression*, Research Bulletin, Volume 40, 4 pp.

Papers accepted for publication and commissioned works 2008-09

Parry, G. (2009) Further education, higher education and the English experiment, *Higher Education Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (special issue edited by Parry, with papers from Dougherty, Gallacher, Jones, Moodie, Scott, Stanton and Parry)

Bathmaker, A. M. and Thomas, W. (2009) Positioning themselves: an exploration of the nature and meaning of transitions in the context of dual sector FE/HE institutions in England, *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, Vol. 33, No.3

Parry, G. (2009) Student demand and institutional diversification: the case of England, *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, Vol. 15, No. 2

Parry, G. (2009) Differentiation, competition and policies for widening participation. In David, M. (ed.) *Improving Learning by Widening Participation to Higher Education*, Routledge

Bathmaker, A-M. (2009) Seamlessness and separation: student progress and progression through further and higher education. In David, M. (ed.) *Improving Learning by Widening Participation to Higher Education*, Routledge

Impacts

As a result of a wide-ranging dissemination strategy, we have brought the findings of our research in front of policymakers, managers of colleges and universities, and tutors and other practitioners. Our media impacts include a feature article in *Times Higher Education* as well as coverage in professional journals. We also communicated with students and tutors by way of a newsletter.

Through our involvement in the HEFCE review of higher education in further education colleges we advanced arguments for a steered and staged approach to build quality, ownership and sustainability in the higher education mission of the further education sector. At the same time, we identified shortcomings in the way data are collected, exchanged and reported between sector bodies, with evidence to doubt the reliability of student numbers published for at least one further-higher institution. Equally, we noted how little use was made by institutions of the statistical information they reported to sector agencies, especially data on patterns of student progression.

Apart from our close working with four partner establishments, the impact of our project on teaching and learning was evident in the examples and contributions we made to the new edition of the good practice guide *Supporting Higher Education in Further Education Colleges* to be published by HEFCE in 2009. Parry and Thompson were members of the group commissioned to update the guide and a range of ideas and materials from the project were represented in the revised publication.

We have positioned our work to influence long-term thinking about the function and future of sectors in the English post-secondary system, especially if participation should be increased and widened to near-universal levels. We identified five features of a more open and effective system of colleges and universities, one marked by diversity and a broad division of labour, and with a central authority with strategic responsibility for higher education and the education and training of adults. Central in this model is a more independent role for further education colleges in undergraduate education based on direct funding and awarding powers.

Future research priorities

Future lines of research arising from this project include:

1. Investigating the concept of tipping point in further-higher institutions

Recent work by Moodie (2008a) in Australia has posited a tripartite classification of tertiary institutions based on the balance of student load between higher and vocational education. His concern is with the point at which further-higher institutions (a) establish separate systems to handle their higher education and vocational education, and (b) no longer consider vocational education as exceptional. Accordingly, 'single sector' institutions are those that have more than 97% of their student load in one sector, 'mixed sector' establishments have at least 3% but no more than 20%, and 'dual sector' organisations have at least 20% but less than 80%.

Using data on institutional profiles (see below) and an extended range of case studies would enable us to test these markers and, in addition, investigate the influence of different distributions of student load on aspects of teaching and learning.

2. Analysing student movements in relation to institutional profiles

Having created a national database on further and higher education we now have the capacity to (a) analyse the movement of students over a longer period by the addition of HESA and LSC data for earlier and later years, and (b) construct profiles of institutions based on student and course characteristics.

The construction of detailed profiles would enable us to examine student movements within and between institutions with more sophistication as well as understand how and to what extent institutional profiles are changing. An application has been made for external funding to support this work.

Word count: 4999

Appendix I

References

Bathmaker, A.-M., Brooks, G., Parry, G. and Smith, D. (2008) Dual-sector further and higher education: policies, organisations and students in transition, *Research Papers in Education*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 125-137.

Brint, S. and Karabel, J. (1989) *The Diverted Dream. Community Colleges and the Promise of Educational Opportunity in America, 1900-1985*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Clancy, P. (2006) *Structural Features of Higher Education and Second Level Systems and their Relationship to Levels of Participation and Equity*. Working Paper, Fulbright New Century Scholar Programme.

Coffield, F., Edward, S., Finlay, I., Hodgson, A., Spours, K. and Steer, R. (2008) *Improving Learning, Skills and Inclusion. The impact of policy on post-compulsory education*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Dougherty, K. J. (2001) *The Contradictory College. The Conflicting Origins, Impacts and Futures of the Community College*. Albany: State University of New York University Press.

Gallacher, J. and Osborne, M. (eds.) (2005) *A contested landscape. International perspectives on diversity in mass higher education*. Leicester: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.

Garrod, N. and Macfarlane, B. (eds.) (2008, forthcoming) *Challenging Boundaries. Managing the integration of post-secondary education*. Abingdon: Routledge.

James, D. and Biesta, G. (eds.) (2007) *Improving Learning Cultures in Further Education*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Layer, G. (ed.) (2005) *Closing the equity gap. The impact of widening participation strategies in the UK and the USA*. Leicester: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.

Learning and Skills Council [LSC] (2007) *Review of Further Education Provision within HE Institutions: Report*. Coventry: LSC.

Moodie, G. (2008a, forthcoming) Australia: the emergence of dual sector universities. In N. Garrod and B. Macfarlane (eds.) *Challenging Boundaries: Managing the integration of post-secondary education*. New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis.

Moodie, G. (2008b, forthcoming) *From vocational to higher education. An international perspective*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill and Society for Research into Higher Education.

Osborne, M. and McLaurin, I. (2006) A Probability Matching Approach to Further Education/Higher Education Transition in Scotland, *Higher Education*, Vol. 52, pp. 149-183.

Parry, G. (2008) *Higher and Further Education: the Significance of Sectors for Expansion, Differentiation and Participation in Undergraduate Education in England*. A source paper prepared for authors of international and contextual commentaries. Sheffield: University of Sheffield School of Education.

Parry, G. and Thompson, A. (2002) *Closer by degrees: the past, present and future of higher education in further education colleges*. London: Learning and Skills Development Agency.

Parry, G. and Thompson, A. (2007) *Higher education in further education colleges. Outcomes of the consultation*. Bristol: HEFCE. www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rdreports/2007/rd17_07/

Teaching and Learning Research Programme {TLRP} (2008) *Combining Further and Higher Education: Policy, Organisation and Progression*, Research Briefing, Number 40.

Shavit, Y., Arum, R. and Gamoran, A. (2007) *Stratification in Higher Education. A Comparative Study*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Appendix II

Papers and presentations 2006-08

Downloads of papers and presentations can be found on the project website:
www.sheffield.ac.uk/furtherhigher/

2008

Presentation on American and English Versions of the Contradictory College, Annual Research Conference, Bournemouth and Poole College, Bournemouth, 4 July 2008 (Parry)

Presentation on Policy Regimes and Organisational Contexts, Invitation Event on Diversity and Widening Participation in Higher Education: Policy Implications, ESRC TLRP and HEFCE, Regent's College, London, 17 June 2008 (Parry and Smith)

Presentation on Dual-Sector Institutions and Higher Education Transitions: Findings from a Study of Four Dual-Sector Institutions, HEFCE Staff Briefing, HEFCE, Bristol, 9 June 2008 (Bathmaker)

Paper on Wicked Problems, Hybrid Organisations and Clumsy Institutions at the Further Education and Higher Education Interface, FurtherHigher Study Day, University College Suffolk, Ipswich, 20 May 2008 (Gourley)

Paper on Statistical Studies: Preliminary Findings, FurtherHigher Study Day, University College Suffolk, Ipswich, 20 May 2008 (Rashid)

Presentation on Constructing Identities in New Forms of Higher Education: Student Transitions and Transformations in the Context of 'Dual-Sector' Institutions, SRHE HE-FE Network Seminar, London, 13 May 2008 (Bathmaker)

Presentation on Developing FurtherHigher Education, UWE Federation First Annual Conference, Bristol, 1 May 2008 (Bathmaker)

Presentation on The FurtherHigher Project: Introduction and Overview, Seminar on Researching Widening Participation in Dual Sector Institutions: Trajectories, Transitions and Transformations, Lifelong Learning Institute, University of Leeds, Leeds, 16 April 2008 (Bathmaker)

Paper on Going with the Flow: the Interview as Confession and the Use of Water Logic, Seminar on Researching Widening Participation in Dual Sector Institutions: Trajectories, Transitions and Transformations, Lifelong Learning Institute, University of Leeds, Leeds, 16 April 2008 (Goodlad)

Presentation on Comparing the Profiles of Two Dual-Sector Institutions, Seminar on Researching Widening Participation: Trajectories, Transitions and Transformations, Lifelong Learning Institute, University of Leeds, Leeds, 16 April 2008 (Dale)

Paper on Pure Turkish Delight: Exploring the Place of Poetry in Research Writing, Seminar on Researching Widening Participation, Lifelong Learning Institute, University of Leeds, Leeds, 16 April 2008 (Thompson)

Paper on Further Education Colleges and Higher Level Skills and Qualifications, US-UK Invitation Seminar on High Level Skills, American Association of Community Colleges and Council for Industry and Higher Education, New York, 20 February 2008 (Parry)

2007

Paper on Regional Imperatives: Remodelling the Relationship between Two Competitor Universities, SRHE Annual Conference, Brighton, 13 December 2007 (Thomas and Funnell)

Paper on Dual-Sector Further and Higher Education: Policies, Organisations and Students in Transition, SRHE Annual Conference, Brighton, 12 December 2007, (Bathmaker, Brooks, Parry and Smith)

Symposium on Widening Participation in Dual-Sector Settings, SRHE Annual Conference, Brighton, 12 December 2007 (Bathmaker, Brooks, Parry and Smith)

Symposium on International Perspectives on Dual Sector Education, SRHE Annual Conference, 12 December 2007 (Garrod, Macfarlane, Parry, Stumpf, Triplett)

Paper on Managing the Comprehensive University: Boundaries, Identities and Transitions, SRHE Annual Conference, Brighton, 11 December 2007 (Macfarlane, Filippakou, Halford and Saraswat)

Presentation on The Synergy of Policy, Practice and Research in a Collaborative Project, Learning and Skills Research Network Annual Conference, London, 6 December 2007 (Thompson, Halford and Thomas)

Presentation on English Versions of Democratisation and Diversion, ASHE Annual Conference, Louisville, USA, 7 November 2007 (Parry)

Presentation on FurtherHigher Education: The Next Phase, HEFCE Quality, Learning and Teaching Committee, London, 10 October 2007 (Parry)

Presentation on Statistical Studies: Sources, Methods and Approach, FurtherHigher Study Day, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, 26 September 2007 (Rashid)

Paper on Imagined Futures: the Construction of Identities in the 'New' Higher Education, BERA Annual Conference, London, 7 September 2007 (Bathmaker)

Presentation on Subordination, Inclusion and Diversion in English Higher Education, Fourth International Workshop on Higher Education Reforms, Dublin City University, Dublin, 1 September 2007 (Parry)

Conference Podcast, Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies, Birmingham, 12 July 2007 (Bathmaker)

Paper on Managing Duality: the Role of Manager-Academics Working in Dual-Sector Institution, HEA Annual Conference on Engaging Students in Higher Education, Harrogate, 4 July 2007 (Macfarlane, Filippakou, Halford and Saraswat)

Presentation on FurtherHigher Education to 2020, Staffordshire University Regional Federation, Stoke, 28 June 2007 (Parry)

Keynote Address, Conference on Widening Participation in Higher Education Across the Lifecourse, University of Southampton, Southampton, 28 June 2007 (Bathmaker)

Paper on Conceptualising and Interpreting Organisational Boundaries Between Further and Higher Education in 'Dual Sector' Institutions: Where are they and what do they do? International Conference on Researching Transitions in Lifelong Learning, University of Stirling, Stirling, 24 June 2007 (Burns)

Paper on Dream Weavers and Dream Catchers: Exploring the Aspirations and Imagined Futures of Students in Transition from Further Education to Higher Education, International Conference on Researching Transitions in Lifelong Learning, University of Stirling, Stirling, 24 June 2007 (Goodlad and Thompson)

Paper on Positioning Themselves: An Exploration of the Nature and Meaning of Transitions in the Context of Dual Sector FE/HE Institutions in England, International Conference on Researching Transitions in Lifelong Learning, University of Stirling, Stirling, 23 June 2007 (Bathmaker and Thomas)

Presentation on Size, Shape and Widening Participation, Invitation Seminar on Mass Higher Education in UK and International Contexts, Foxhills, 29 May 2007 (Parry)

Keynote address on Policy as Chaos, Order and Experiment, AoC and HEFCE Annual Conference on Higher Education in Further Education, London, 18 May 2007 (Parry)

Paper on Classifying Higher Education in Further Education at the Interface: Boundary Work, Boundary Objects and Boundary Spanning, FurtherHigher Study Day, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, 16 May 2007 (Gourley)

Paper on An Exploration of FE/HE transitions in the context of 'dual sector' institutions in England, BERA Special Interest Group on Post-Compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, 23 January 2007 (Bathmaker and Burns)

2006

Paper on Positioning Themselves: Higher Education Transitions and 'Dual-Sector' Institutions, SRHE Annual Conference, Brighton, 13 December 2006 (Bathmaker)

Presentation on American Models and European Policies: the Career of the Foundation Career, ASHE Annual Conference, Los Angeles, USA, 2 November 2006 (Parry)

Paper on The English Experiment, Third International Workshop on Reforms of Higher Education, University of Tsukuba, Tokyo, 28 September 2006 (Parry)

Chair and Discussant, Symposium on TLRP Projects on Widening Participation in Higher Education: Some Methodological Work in Progress, BERA Annual Conference, University of Warwick, Coventry, 8 September 2006 (Brooks and Parry)

Presentation on Researching the FurtherHigher Complex, Aimhigher Conference, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, 4 July 2006 (Parry)

Presentation on Dual-Sector Policies, Partnerships and Networks, International Study Group on Higher Education, Thames Valley University, Ealing, 28 June 2006 (Parry)

Keynote Lecture on Further, Higher, Better? Teaching Conference on Further and Higher Education, 26 June 2006 (Parry)

Presentation on Lifelong Learning Networks: the Policy Career, National Seminar on Lifelong Learning Networks, Leamington, 22 June 2006 (Parry)

Presentation on the The English Experiment, Aimhigher Conference, University of Teeside, 16 June 2006 (Parry)

Presentation on Fieldwork Design and Methodology, TLRP Seminar on Widening Participation in Higher Education, Institute of Education University of London, London, 25 May 2006 (Bathmaker)

Paper on Why the English are Different, Staff Development Seminar, Thames Valley University, Reading 11 May 2006 (Parry)

Presentation on Policy-Participation Trajectories in English Higher Education, Conference on Widening Access to Higher Education in the UK and Ireland, Belfast, 3 April 2006 (Parry)

Presentation on Dual Regimes and Further and Higher Education, Grimsby College, Grimsby, 15 February 2006 (Parry)

Appendix III

Further Dissemination Activities 2008-09

- 7 November 2008 Presentation to Mixed Economy Group, London
- 12 November 2008 Presentation to Sheffield College, Principal and Senior Management Team, Sheffield
- 25 November 2008 Presentation to TLRP National Conference on Improving Teaching, Enhancing Learning: Higher Education, Workplace and Lifelong Learning
- 27 November 2008 Presentation to Higher Education Academy, Reference Group on Higher Education in Further Education Colleges, York
- 1 December 2008 Presentation to Learning and Skills Council, (Qualifications and Framework Developments Division), Coventry
- 2 December 2008 Presentation to Association of Colleges, Higher Education Group, London
- 10 December 2008 Paper to SRHE Annual Conference on Valuing Higher Education, Liverpool
- 4 March 2009 Paper to Research Seminar Series, Institute of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge, Cambridge
- 10 March 2009 Presentation to Post-14 Network Conference on Progression to Higher Education, Institute of Education, University of London, London
- 30 March 2009 Keynote Address to National Conference on Higher Education in Further Education Culture and Experience: A Partnership Perspective, University of Warwick, Coventry
- 1 April 2009 Keynote address to Annual Research Conference, Chesterfield College and Dearne Valley College, Chesterfield