### Outreach Initiatives for Equity Groups in Higher Education

Literature Review

In terms of initiatives and activities designed to build aspirations or observed as supporting aspiration-formation, much of the literature examines university outreach into secondary schools. Fleming & Grace (2015a, 2015b) explore the efficacy and impact of the University of Canberra’s outreach program *Aspire UC* in the two papers included in this part of the review (see also Fleming & Grace, 2014a, 2014b). In their 2015a paper, Fleming & Grace focus of their evaluation of this outreach program is on the experiences of rural and remote students with the ‘ACT Experience Camp’ (a collaborative enterprise with the Country Education Foundation). Analysis of their evaluations with participating students suggests that the camp had little impact on the aspirations of the group—70% of whom had already expressed intention to consider higher education, and presumably was a factor in their decision to attend the camp – but they reported learning a lot about university from their experience. Most of the students had not seen a university before and the experience of visiting a campus changed many students’ views of university, and meant they created ‘imagined selves’ as university students based on their expectations about workloads, work, friends, classes and going home at weekends. In their second 2015 paper, Fleming & Grace (2015b) examine the impact of on-campus experience days for low SES (or ‘financially disadvantaged’) students. The findings reported were similar to their previous paper on regional students, finding that students generally have high aspirations for further study, with no significant differences in terms of age (also evident in Gore et al., 2015), Indigeneity, or previous experience with *Aspire AC.* Fleming & Grace argue that provision of information is paramount for building aspirations (p.92), with tangible experiences (physical experiences) important for facilitating the development of imagination of self as a university student.

Similarly, Harwood et al. (2015) examine the impact of a nationwide mentoring program for indigenous students, called Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME). This program operates both on university campuses (18 universities across 5 states and the ACT), and in secondary schools within a two-hour drive of a university campus, and connects indigenous university students as mentors and role models for indigenous school students. The authors report that AIME “significantly and positively impacts Australian Indigenous high school students’ aspirations to finish school and continue to further study, training or employment” (2015: 217). This is achieved through a specific focus on aspiration-building, working from Appadurai’s theory of navigational capacity, and Yosso’s (2005) Community Cultural Wealth framework, both of which privilege the knowledges students have, actively working against educational/aspirational deficit framings of indigenous students. Harwood et al.’s (2015) findings suggest that the majority of mentees aspire to complete Year 12 (89%), 44% aspire to go to university, and 74% have clear post-school aspirations. The authors claim that AIME celebrates the aspiration capital of indigenous students by “perpetually link[ing] the past, present and future in aspirational terms, and in so doing, recognise the navigational capacity that the young people already possess” (p.230).

In contrast, to this literature that reports overwhelmingly positive effects of outreach, Lynch, Walker-Gibbs & Herbert (2015) report on a HEPPP-funded mentoring initiative that indicated that rather than raising the aspirations of its participants, they were less clear about their futures following engagement in the program. Lynch and colleagues argue that not only could a ‘don’t know’ response to a question about future aspirations be a more mature answer for the participants (rather than a ‘I’m going to be a…’ response), their findings also point to issues that emerge from short-term funding cycles that privilege numbers as measurements of success and tracking positive change. Such ontological impositions limit the view of what activities such as the mentoring program described can achieve. Moreover, the authors argue that such number-led funding/reporting imperatives are “likely to underestimate the significance of smaller qualitative changes” (2015: 156), and instead they argue for recognition of the power of small changes, rather than ‘education revolutions’.

Trevor Gale and colleagues (2010) have extensively examined university outreach work, exploring ‘what works’ in terms of building capacity and developing aspirations. They argue that three equity perspectives inform high quality university outreach programs: 1) they unsettle deficit views of disadvantaged students and communities; 2) they research local knowledges and negotiate local interventions; 3) they build capacity in communities, schools and universities. As part of this federally funded work, Gale et al. (2010) created the Design and Evaluation Matrix for Outreach (DEMO) following a review of 59 outreach programs from 26 universities in Australia. They found that:

* Most initiatives are aimed at Year 10;
* The most common type of outreach is for aspiration-raising; financial assistance is the least common;
* Many are one-off events (tasters/campus visits);
* Equity Units in universities drive/fund a large amount of the activities surveyed (40%);
* Universities receive between $10,001 and $50,000 per program (most funded for 5 years+);
* 39% include 20+ schools; 27% involve 6-10 schools;
* 31% of programs include 201-500 students;
* Low SES students are the most common target group, then indigenous, then rural/remote;
* Most programs were evaluated on basis of participant feedback; and
* Most common outcome reported is a rise in student aspirations, then better familiarity with admissions/ enrolments/ procedures (2010 part B, p.6)

Gale et al.’s analysis of the data collected suggests that there is no simple formula for designing successful outreach activities, but that activities should involve consultation/partnership with range of stakeholders, secure funding, and articulate a “sophisticated equity orientation” (p.5). The DEMO designed on the back of this research was created for evaluating and designing outreach activities, and is based on 10 characteristics based around four strategic themes: assembling resources, engaging learners, working together, building confidence. The authors suggest that for optimum results, an outreach program should demonstrate/ deliver five or more of the characteristics from all four of the strategies.

The work put forward in Gale et al. (2010) is a rare example in the literature of a systematic and theoretically informed evaluation model for equity-related activities. Much of the literature that offers a view of outreach activities is broadly a-theoretical, offering little in the way of conceptual underpinnings or methodological/ evaluative frameworks. There are examples in this literature of what could be considered ‘academic marketing’, offering descriptive accounts of programs and their impacts. The roots of this may be explained by Gale et al.’s (2010) analysis of the 59 outreach programs they examined: 36% of the programs were the direct responsibility of an Equity Unit and 12% were the responsibility of the Marketing Department. The ‘good practice’ report by Skeyne (2010) is a clear example of this form of literature (also see Christensen & Evamy, 2011): offering a descriptive overview of the ‘UWA-Aspire’ program and suggesting strategies for developing productive relationships with partner school that are both generalised and arguably commonsensical. It is difficult to know what the reader can take from such literature, other than a sense of relational positionality in terms of comparing how one institution’s program sits or jostles alongside another. There is relatively little in the way of contribution to knowledge in a traditional sense; this paper does not engage with theoretical literature, nor does it position itself within a methodological paradigm or within a knowledge tradition. However, it would be wrong to take an academically moral stance on this; there are many reasons for the publication of such accounts, not least the ‘publish or perish’ culture that has permeated higher education and the neoliberal imperative to ‘sell’ the institution and gain positional advantage.

References

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Gale, T.; Sellar, S;. Parker, S.; Hattam, R.; Comber, B.; Tranter, D.; & Bills, D. (2010). *Interventions early in school as a means to improve higher education outcomes for disadvantaged (particularly low SES) students*, National Centre Student Equity in Higher Education, Underdale, S. Aust. (A-D).

Harwood, V.; McMahon, S.; O’Shea, S.; Bodkin-Andrews, G.; & Priestly, A. (2015). Recognising aspiration: the AIME program’s effectiveness in inspiring Indigenous young people’s participation in schooling and opportunities for further education and employment, *The Australian Educational Researcher,* 42: 217-236

Lynch, J.; Walker-Gibbs, B.; & Herbert, S. (2015). Moving beyond a ‘bums-on-seats’ analysis of progress towards widening participation: reflections on the context, design and evaluation of an Australian government-funded mentoring programme, *Journal of Education Policy and Management,* 37(2): 144-158.

Skeyne, J. (2010). Developing productive relationships with partner schools to widen participation. A Practice Report, *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education,* 1(1): 77-83.

**Related literature**

Christensen, L. & Evamy, S. (2011). MAPs to Success: Improving the First Year Experience of alternative entry mature age students, *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education,* 2(2): 35-48.

**Equity and Higher Education Annotated Bibliography Series**

**Outreach and Equity in Higher Education**

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| **Citation** | **Annotation** |
| Allen, M. (2010). [In defence of targeting? The Open University’s Community Partnership Programme](mailto:https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/openu/jwpll/2010/00000012/a00201s2/art00014), *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning,* 12(SI), 138–153.  UK  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Key terms: *outreach, partnerships, community, targeting* | **Context:** Post-Dearing/ New Labour expansion targets in UK (late 1990s) and WP agenda in UK. Examines targeted community-based outreach for widening participation to the Open University (distance university in the UK) – focused on part-time distance learners and in poorest areas. Notes literature that comments on WP not impacting the gap between rich and poor, and the argument that WP = recruitment to expand student numbers. Author comments on role/ engagement of middle class parents “in a range of activities geared to ensure the transmission of educational privilege” (p.139; see Devine, 2004). Targeting = government response to middle class parents gaming the system (SB’s words). Targeting = problematic: perceived as top-down, bureaucratic. Definitions of what/who should be targeted = most difficult because of slippage with terms like ‘class’ and the inherent issues with using postcodes to identify SES, which can increase deficit notions and push responsibility (failure) onto individuals and communities. Short time frames and insufficient funding contributes to the lack of efficacy of targeting. On the other hand, without targeting, the wealth gap is not addressed. Scopes literature and arguments about outreach: notes debates that outreach is narrowly focused on individual rather than system: outreach “implicitly perceives the problem as the potential learner, who lacks motivation and aspiration, rather than the structural barriers that prevent access” (p.141)  **Aim:** To describe how the Community Partnerships Programme (CPP) at the OU offers targeted outreach with community partners, “to recruit students who live in areas of high deprivation and have no previous HE experience” (p.141)  **Theoretical frame:** None  **Methodology:** Critical description of CPP, drawing on data from students via telephone interviews (n=24) and telephone feedback from OU staff. CPP took place in 5 regions and Northern Ireland; data presented = collected 2007-2009. 236 students were supported by CPP over the period; just over half had no prior HE experience (compared with 15% of OU students nationally). These 128 students = ‘WP’ students. Findings compared with national OU student data. CPP offered local, face-to-face ‘study skills’ sessions that brought CPP students together  **Findings:**  WP students = more likely to be female (but could be reflective of partnerships with childcare centres)  Half of the WP students = non-white (CPP in Yorkshire = large Asian communities)  WP students = more likely to be unemployed, home worker, part time worker (but see large number of women looking after children)  WP students = more likely to have no educational qualifications on entry (14.1% compared to 9% national sample).  ‘Less ready’ WP students = reflected in achievement rates. CPP students = less likely to complete studies.  23/24 students interviewed had no prior HE qualification (one had degree from home country and = ESL). All = FinF; 10 =unemployed; 4 = homeworkers; 4 = part-time. 23/24 = female; 7 did not complete but one moved into other OU course; 6 of students who completed moved on to other courses with OU. Most had not previously considered HE. 20/24 = had concerns relating to doing study after a period out of education. First academic writing (assessed) = ‘crunch point’ (p.147). Face-to-face ‘study support’ = crucial for these students. Most valued opportunity to meet others in same situation. One student who dropped out = too many commitments; another = dropped out because of writing load of course (see p.148). Overall, most students = positive about their engagement and were either in or planning to progress to further studies and had developed increased confidence and learnt new skills. Challenges = experienced at level of costs (e.g. course fees and childcare) and expectations about home technology **Core argument:** Students need good advice before enrolling (about expectations like academic writing). For successful uni-community partnership, commitment to time and resources on both sides = fundamental; “‘short-termism’” = challenging for both (p.150) |
| Armstrong, D. & Cairnduff, A. (2012). [Inclusion in higher education: issues in university-school partnership](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13603116.2011.636235?journalCode=tied20), *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 16(9), 917–928.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords: *social inclusion; higher education; partnerships* | **Context:** Low SES students and their underrepresentation and policy on social inclusion in Australia. Sets the scene by arguing that Sydney University broke the norm by admitting students on merit rather than background when it opened in 1852 (but did not extend to women/adult learners). Notes that ‘inclusive education’ is an opaque/ under-defined term that needs to be understood in particular social context/ particular assumptions = there are particular social/policy contexts where inclusive teaching/ social inclusion sit; there are particular practices that advance inclusion. Authors discuss opportunities/challenges of engaging with policy/practice in USYD = long-term outreach program: ‘Compass – find your way to higher education’ (started 2008) – focus on social capital building in low SES communities/schools. Argues that WP initiatives are usually one-off events (including USYD pre-2008) and that much WP work fails because it is atheoretical (Archer, Hutchings & Leathwood, 2001). Maintain that education will always be socially selective: “In workforce planning, it is assumed that there is a part of the population that does not need higher education” (p.921) – assumed to be 60% if HE participation target is 40%  **Aim:** Poses these questions: “What does it really mean to have an education system that is ‘inclusive’? Who is thought to be in need of inclusion and why? If education should be inclusive, then what practices is it contesting, what common values is it advocating, and by what criteria should its successes be judged?” (p.918)  **Theoretical frame:** Draws on reproduction theory (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977)  **Methodology:**  **Findings:**  Language of social inclusion/ equity = superficial, thus fuelling ‘the problem’ – who can be against social inclusion?: “The language of social equity obfuscates assumptions about economic productivity and wealth creation (for whom?)” (p.921). Argues that ‘social inclusion’ cannot improve until universities engage with it beyond the notions of access and participation; as it is, the language = “a parody of itself”… it “becomes the language of a new form of exclusion dressed up in a rhetoric that allows us to be blissfully disengaged from the genuinely transformative power of education” (p.922) – thus, how can a research-intensive (or any) university contribute to building capacity without engaging in introspection and reflexive exercise?  Outreach: cannot be undertaken with idea that engagement/participation might improve league table results/ or hero-mentality of ‘saving’ disadvantaged communities (be careful of patronizing/ deficit assumptions)  Compass (as an example of a university=community partnership) = built on 4 principles generated from research: 1) engagement early in schooling; 2) parents are influential on career choices/ post-school education or training; 3) teacher/school capacity makes a big differences; 4) need to increase awareness/understanding of educational pathways.  **Core argument:** Engaging in outreach that does not reproduce dominant hegemonic systems: “To be inclusive, we need to learn from working with others and adopt strategies that are owned within schools and communities, not imposed on them from outside” (p.926). Necessitates a “self-critical” approach from all stakeholders (especially universities)  “it is reasonable for universities to be asked whether in doing so they are producing leaders in their own image (and in the image of social groups who have traditionally benefited from and reproduced their advantages  through these networks) and if not then to be asked how they understand their relationship to the wider communities and what implications this relationship has for their practice” (p.926) |
| Fleming, M. & Grace, D. (2014). [Increasing participation of rural and regional students in higher education](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1360080X.2014.936089), *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 36(5), 483–495.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords: *low socioeconomic status; regional and rural; school outreach programs; widening participation* | **Context:** Describeshow University of Canberra’s *Aspire UC* program seeks to inspire aspiration in rural and remote (R&R) high schools/ communities in the Canberra area. Sets out an argument for focusing on R&R because of cost and distance associated with attending university - R&R and likely to also be low SES. R&R = have lower educational attainment and thus parents have limiting aspirations/expectations for their children (with a gender divide evident = girls more likely to aspire to university – perhaps to escape macho rural lifestyle/less opportunities for women).  *Aspire UC*  is a school outreach program that works with Years 7-10. Program is “age-appropriate, interactive and engaging” – working with each year level three times a year.  **Methodology:** Reports on survey of almost 3000 students from Year 7-10 from 23 schools relating to post-school aspirations and plans. Pre and post-program responses collected and analysed: 2890 pre-program and 2605 post-program responses collected. Data from 2012. Pre-program Q = ‘After I finish school, I plan to…’ and students chose from list of options (including ‘don’t know’); same Q repeated in post-program survey. Four areas on primary interest: going to uni/ going to TAFE/ apprenticeship/ FT work – these ascribed ‘yes’ or ‘no’ category and % calculated on that basis. Not just one option per person. Acknowledges that mean change could be acquiescence (limitation).  **Findings:** Broad analysis (collapsing age and gender) showed that positive mean **change** of 7.5% to attend uni, 8,25% to attend TAFE, 2.1% to attend apprenticeship, 7.88% to find FT work. Negative values found in TAFE (females, Year 8), apprenticeship (Year 7 females, Year 8 males, Year 9 males) = *Aspire UC* contributed to students being more likely to consider all (but slightly less for apprenticeship) after attending the program. Females more likely on average to change their minds post-program. Year level also appears significant: pre-program Year 7 average % for aspiring for 4 options = 65.25%; Year 10 = 48.5%. All Year groups experienced positive mean change in post-program surveys (Year 10 change % = highest). Main findings:   * Decreased interest in apprenticeships is significant for R&R students * Pre-program results were highest in university category * Girls more likely to want to go to university (all Year levels) and more likely to want to go to TAFE (except Yr 10) * Both genders inspired to consider further education after attending *Aspire UC.*   **Core argument:** Year 10 is a critical time for outreach engagement |
| Fleming, M. & Grace, D. (2014). [Widening the lens: Utilizing teacher perspectives to assess widening participation efforts in Australian higher education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/274762285_Widening_the_lens_Utilizing_teacher_perspectives_to_assess_widening_participation_efforts_in_Australian_higher_education), *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning,* 16(2), 46–62.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Key terms: *widening participation, school outreach programs, low socioeconomic status, teacher roles* | **Context:** Examines WP imitative at UniCan (Aspire UC - outreach) from perspectives of teachers of their own roles at school (site of intervention). Argues that teachers are rarely drawn on to help evaluate programs (critique of CIF p.1). Argues that “At the very least, teachers should be seen as a necessary adjunct to any attempt to broaden the scope of post-secondary options for non-traditional students” (p.47). Aspire UC includes a Professional Learning Forum (2-day retreat) where teachers and other school educators are invited to attend in order to become familiar with Aspire UC, give information about pathways and ‘build capacity’ and uses UniCan education lecturers to deliver specific professional development sessions. Discusses literature related to aspirations – draws on Gale et al. (2011)/ Sellar & Gale (2011) about imaginaries/ capacity to imagine futures  **Aim:** “to examine the teachers’ views of their own roles, given the importance afforded them in assisting students with post-secondary choices” (p.49)  **Theoretical frame:**  **Methodology:** Mixed methods: survey (based on ‘What Works’ Thomas 2012 and Gale et al. DEMO) and focus group interviews. Participants = 27 teachers from 19 schools at Professional Learning Forum, all involved in and familiar with (albeit to different extents/ lengths of time) Aspire UC. Teachers broadly mix of females/males.  **Findings:**  Teachers ranked most important parts of roles as: (i) academic achievement; (ii) motivation/aspiration; and  (iii) nurture/caring (p.52). Teachers ranked what they considered the biggest barriers to participation in HE for their students: (i) Availability/Distance; (ii) Accessibility/Cost; (iii) Achievement/ Academic Ability; and (iv) Aspirations/Motivations (p.53). Teachers ranked items considered to increase participation in HE; top 3 = early engagement (Year 7); continued contact with tertiary institutions; providing up-to-date information to schools. Least important item = nurture ‘sense of belonging’ with university. In FGs, teachers discussed what they considered/ what their students considered best aspects of Aspire UC: “Contact/Familiarization the highest (30  weighted/ 13 unweighted) followed by Information provided (20/ 11), Early engagement (14/6) and Role models (9/15). However, two additional categories emerged: ‘Opening possibilities’ (21/8) and importantly, ‘Working relationship with Aspire UC’ (45/24)” (p.56) **Core argument:** “The current study clearly demonstrated the importance teachers place on caring for and nurturing their students” (p.57). Teachers foregrounded availability and accessibility factors (drawing on knowledge of local communities). Informal discussion suggested that many students do not have family support – lack of family experience with HE and desire for children not to leave community. “No attempt to expand access to higher education could possibly occur without the involvement and support of educational professionals, yet their role is often overlooked and undervalued” (p.59). |
| Fleming, M. & Grace, D. (2017). [Beyond aspirations: addressing the unique barriers faced by rural Australian students contemplating university](mailto:https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0004944114567689), *Journal of Further and Higher Education,* 41(3), 351–363.  AUS  Annotated by Sally Baker  Keywords: *Widening participation; rural students; university access; barriers; higher education* | **Context:** Discusses rural and remote students’ transitions through ACT Experience camp (a joint venture with Country Education Foundation ((CEF)) Australia, Uni of Canberra and ANU) providing “academically able” (abstract) rural students with taster of urban/university life. CEF’s mission is in part to support rural and regional communities/ young people to participate in post-school education and training. ACT Experience = HEPPP funded. Every year, 50 students (Years 9-11) travel to Canberra – students chosen on basis of ‘academic ability’. Purpose of camps “to provide a unique experience relevant to rural youth who, despite performing well academically and perhaps already considering university, have difficulty envisioning themselves at university” (p.3). Camps also offer information about finances and scholarships. Discusses: adolescents’ post-school decisions, rural students’ views on university  **Theoretical frame:** Draws on discussion of ‘imagined futures’  **Methodology:** Mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative). Pilot study: 41 (31f: 10m; 35 = Yr10, 6 = Yr9; 3 = Indigenous) from 5 high schools in 2012; students asked about views of university at start/end of camp (survey = demographic data, questions about future plans; students asked write down 3 words that come to mind). Words rated as positive, negative, neutral. Main study: 48 (24f; 24m; 39 = Yr10; 9 =Yr11; 3 x Indigenous) from 5 high schools. Pre/post-course surveys + focus groups 7 weeks after.  **Findings:** Pilot study: 82% interested in uni before camp; 17% undecided. Students = positive words about university got more positive  Main study: went into 2014 camp with “the intention of more accurately ascertaining students’ attitudes toward university, and addressing potential barriers” (p.356), particularly knowledge of university, confidence to transition and successfully live in city. Also included parents’ and friend’s plans for future. Students were surveyed and had to complete reflection (various formats) of what the camp meant to them (small groups).  Findings (main study): prior, 70% intended to go to university. Little change post camp. Focus group data themes: positive expectations/ learning something interesting; concerns about university (financial cost, accommodation/ moving away from home; students’ impressions of university: most students had not seen a university before; students’ changed views of university: after visiting two campuses, students were more positive; imagined selves as university students (expectations about workloads, work, friends, classes + going home at weekends); imagined selves beyond university.  **Core argument:** Rural students are generally “less confident about their ability to succeed at university given their self-perceptions as being different to urban/metropolitan young people” (p.361). “[S]tudents reported (1) greater understanding of university, of their post-school options and of living in a city; and (2) increased confidence in their decision-making and in their ability to move away from home” (p.359); latter point= particularly relevant for rural/remote students. However, rural/remote students still need “assistance to believe that they can make the transition to university and (albeit temporarily) city life” (p.361). |
| Fleming, M. & Grace, D. (2015). [Eyes on the future: The impact of a university campus experience day on students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0004944114567689), *Australian Journal of Education,* 59(1), 82–96.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords: *Disadvantaged, socioeconomic status, aspiration, university attendance, Secondary school students, gender differences* | **Context:** Describes impact of *UC 4 Yourself* university experience day (part of HEPPP-funded *Aspire UC* outreach) for students from low SES (‘financially disadvantaged backgrounds’). Navigates literature on SES and aspirations (lower rates of Yr 12 completion/ lower levels of parental education/ lack of support networks/ stratification of school system =reproduces inequity. Barriers to study = distance, cost, low academic achievement, and low otivations/ aspirations (Gale et al. 2010). Imagined futures (draws heavily on Sellar/Gale et al.)  **Methodology:** 2 x surveys (n=525 students; 231 m/ 294 f from 29 high schools – most Yr 9. 31 = indigenous) administered before/after visit. Survey 1: students rated 3 statements 1) ‘I have often considered going to university’; (2) ‘I like the idea of going to university’; and (3) ‘My plans for after high school don’t include university’. Survey 2= (i) ‘I like the idea of going to university’; (ii) ‘I feel more comfortable on a university campus’; (iii) ‘I can imagine myself as a uni student’; (iv) ‘I feel more confident that I could attend uni’; (v) ‘I want to find out more about uni’; and (vi) ‘I want to go to university’.  **Findings:** Attendees = more likely to attend university and better able to imagine themselves as university students  Survey 1= no differences found between students on basis of year level, indigineity, previous experience with Aspire UC. Revealed ‘high levels’ of interest in HE. Females reported more interest than males but scores for both genders =high  Survey 2 = difference found between students who had experienced Aspire UC before (“additional visits further enhance the capacity to picture oneself in the situation, that is, to conceive of oneself as a student of the university” (p.91). No gender effects with regards to barriers. Students reported uni = less expensive than expected **Core argument:** Provision of information = paramount (p.92); tangible experience (physical experience) = important and facilitates imagination of self as uni student. |
| Gale, T.; Sellar, S;. Parker, S.; Hattam, R.; Comber, B.; Tranter, D.; & Bills, D. (2010). [*Interventions early in school as a means to improve higher education outcomes for disadvantaged (particularly low SES) students*](mailto:https://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv%3A43702), National Centre Student Equity in Higher Education, Adelaide.  **Component A**  AUS/UK/CAN/US/NZ  Annotation written by Sally Baker | **Context:** DEEWR-funded project: *Interventions early in school as a means to improve higher education outcomes for disadvantaged (particularly low SES) students*. Based on CSHE (2008) report that claims educational disadvantage = result of patterns that begin in the earliest years of schooling.  International context: UK = high SES are 5-6 times more likely to enter HE, and is even more pronounced in Oxbridge/ Russell Group universities. Canada = experience of indigenous Canadians is similar to that of indigenous Australians (only 65% of ind.Can. graduate from high school, compared with 80% of non-ind. Youth), especially for those living on reservations. USA = low SES students more likely to attend community college (shorter courses, no RHD)  **Aim:** To identify early interventions in schools, where early means before Year 11, primarily in Australia but also in other OECD countries. Asks these questions:   1. In what ways might higher education institutions and schools collaborate on sustainable equity initiatives? 2. How might a program of longitudinal research studies be designed to provide evidence of impact of various strategies and initiatives? 3. How might the best practices of specific interventions be implemented in ongoing infrastructure and policy? (p.5)   **Theoretical frame:** Uses Anderson & Vervoon (1983): 4 As (conditions of entry) – availability, accessibility, achievement, aspiration as organizing heuristic to explore and discuss key examples of early equity interventions.  **Methodology:** Literature review  **Findings:**  The review identifies four major barriers to student participation in higher education:  (i) the restrictions of distance and time;  (ii) the cost of higher education;  (iii) non‐completion of schooling and low academic achievement; and  (iv) student expectations, motivations and aspirations (all p.5)  *Availability*   * The bond/ guaranteeing availability (scholarships/ guaranteed [early offer] places [ p.18 * The pledge [dangling a carrot – e.g. reduced fees/ free places – on successful completion of academic course/ demonstrating particular behaviours/standards – p.19 * The sponsored: reserving availability (sponsorship programs) – p.20   *Accessibility*   * Access via philanphropy (e.g. Smith Family/ World Vision) – p.24 * Access via example (expose/taster/ ‘warm’ information) – p.26 * Question of cost — p.27   *Achievement*   * Targeting the talented – p.30 * Targeting the academic middle – p.30 * Targeting national priority areas – p.33 * Targeting particular under-represented groups (holistic schooling/ targeted approach/ staff training/ holistic student support/ parental engagement/ intensive learning support/ school-based VET/ scholarships) – p.36 * Targeting the middle years – p.39   *Aspiration*   * Aspiration inspired by knowledge – p.43 * The taster: aspiration by experience – p.44 * The combo: aspiration inspired by collaborative networks – p.46   Discussion of Canada’s national interventions (p.52-56)  Discussion of the USA’s national interventions (p.56-59)  Discussion of the UK’s national interventions (p.59-63)  Discussion of NZ’s national interventions (p.63-69)  **Core argument:**  “Interventions which foster higher participation are characteristically: (i) collaborative; (ii) early, long‐term and sustained; (iii) people‐rich; (iv) cohort‐based; (v) communicative and informative; (vi) experiential (familiarising students with university sites and how they operate); (vii) cognisant of difference; (viii) academically challenging; and (ix) financially supportive” (p.5). Little systematic evaluation conducted of initiatives. |
| Gale, T.; Sellar, S;. Parker, S.; Hattam, R.; Comber, B.; Tranter, D.; & Bills, D. (2010). [*Interventions early in school as a means to improve higher education outcomes for disadvantaged (particularly low SES) students*](mailto:https://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv%3A43702), National Centre Student Equity in Higher Education, Adelaide.  **Component B**  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker | **Context:** DEEWR-funded project: *Interventions early in school as a means to improve higher education outcomes for disadvantaged (particularly low SES) students*.  **Aim:** Presents analysis of survey data (26 universities responded = 70% of all Table A universities, reporting on 59 programs) – survey conducted 2008. No responses from TAS/NT  **Methodology:** Online survey/ additional comments emailed directly to research team  **Findings:**   * Most initiatives aimed at Year 10 * Most common type = aspiration-raising; financial assistance = least common * Many = one-off events (tasters/campus visits) * Equity Units in universities = drive/fund large amount of activity (40%) * Universities receive between $10,001 and $50,000 per program (most funded for 5 years +) * 39% include 20+ schools; 27% involve 6-10 schools * 31% of programs include 201-500 students * Low SES = most common target group, then indigenous, then rural/remote * Most programs were evaluated on basis of participant feedback * Most common outcome = rise in student aspirations, then better familiarity with admissions/ enrolments/ procedures (all p.6)   Institutional Issues  26 unis, 59 programs. Half of universities reported on one activity; 2 SA unis reported on 6 programs each. 36% direct responsibility of Equity Unit; some indicated collaborative activity with faculty/academics; 5% responsibility of Indigenous Unit. 12% = responsibility of Marketing Dept.  70% of programs started after 2003; 20% started after 2008; 12% = anticipated (2009) start date; 5% started pre-2000  65% = university-initiated; 10% came from school/ 8% from federal gov’t dept./4% from community organisation. In-house, Equity Units = major funding source  34% of programs = state-wide; 21% in particular area/region/ 35% in particular group of schools; 5% in particular school  Programmatic issues  Most common aim = build aspirations (19%) followed by familiarise students with university (17%), career planning (13%), subject-specific intervention (10%), finances/accommodation (12%). 25% focus on improving student achievement.  Most common approach/strategy = school visit by uni staff or students or campus visits. Common approaches = mentoring/ working with parents/ uni students tutoring school students/ scholarships/ holiday programs.  83% of programs are evaluated; 71% rely on participant perceptions. Very few programs have publicly-available evaluation reports (often scant in content and narrow in scope). Most evaluations (58%) undertaken by university staff, 33% by program partners, 22% of which by school partners. 9% = undertaken by external evaluators. Figure 15 (p.28 = overview of program outcomes)  Qualitative data  Analysis of program titles reveals many different themes, activities and relationships. Qualitative data suggests respondents have a strong commitment to equity work/outreach. Also provide overview of barriers/challenges.  **Core argument:**  Future research agenda could include: investigation of how equity policies are developed; best practices (initiatives and implementation); investigation into extent equity policy is marginalised/mainstreamed in unis; exploration of effect of equity policy on HE ‘market’; research into collaboration between schools and universities; more research into relationship between aspirations and attainment; exploration of long-term effects of outreach (longitudinal research); research-driven interventions to improve equity policies/practices (p.7)  One more characteristic for successful outreach: research-driven interventions |
| Gale, T.; Sellar, S;. Parker, S.; Hattam, R.; Comber, B.; Tranter, D.; & Bills, D. (2010). [*Interventions early in school as a means to improve higher education outcomes for disadvantaged (particularly low SES) students*,](mailto:https://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv%3A43702) National Centre Student Equity in Higher Education, Adelaide.  **Component C**  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker | **Context:**  **Aim:** To offer case studies of leading practice in early intervention/outreach in Australia:   * Access and Success (Victoria University): Sam Sellar and Trevor Gale * Uni‐Reach (Griffith University): Deborah Tranter * Uni Connections (University of Wollongong, Shoalhaven Campus): Dianne Bills * Koori Express (RMIT University): Robert Hattam * Make it Reel (Sydney Summer School Program, University of Technology Sydney): Barbara Comber * YuMi Deadly Maths (Queensland University of Technology): Sam Sellar and Trevor Gale * Regional Schools Outreach Program (University of Ballarat): Dianne Bills   **Findings:**  ‘Equity orientation’ evident in each of case studies is based on 3 characteristics: “researching ‘local knowledge’ and negotiating local interventions; unsettling deficit views; and building capacity in communities, schools and universities” (p.4) **Core argument:** There is no simple formula for designing successful outreach activities. Activities should involve consultation/partnership with range of stakeholders, secure funding, and “sophisticated equity orientation” (p.5) |
| Gale, T.; Sellar, S;. Parker, S.; Hattam, R.; Comber, B.; Tranter, D.; & Bills, D. (2010). [*Interventions early in school as a means to improve higher education outcomes for disadvantaged (particularly low SES) students. A design and evaluation matrix for university outreach in schools*,](mailto:https://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv%3A43702) National Centre Student Equity in Higher Education, Adelaide.  **Component D**  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker | **Context:** Presentation on behalf of National VET Equity Advisory Council  **Overview:**  Design and Evaluation Matrix for Outreach (DEMO): summarised in Figure 1 (p.12)    Groups 10 characteristics into four strategies (see Fig.1); program composition = “assessed in terms of a balance between the total number of program characteristics (depth) and the number of program strategies from which they are drawn (breadth)” (p.13) – see Fig.2 (p.14). Both axes measure the number of characteristics (1-10) rather than particular characteristics or strategies. “The strength of a program’s composition increases from Weak, through Moderate and Strong to Very Strong as its depth and breadth increases” (p.14). Weak = 3 or fewer characteristics from just one strategy; Moderate = 3 or more characteristics from at least 2 strategies; Strong = 4 or more characteristics from at least 3 strategies; Very Strong = 5 or more characteristics from all 4 strategies. Program effectiveness connected to ‘comprehensive equity orientation’: unsettling deficit views, researching ‘local’ knowledge, building capacity in communities, schools, universities.  **Core argument:** Although research = unable to answer the question ‘how early is too early?’, long term appears to be important (typically beginning in middle school) |
| Gartland, C. (2015). [Student ambassadors: ‘role-models’, learning practices and identities](mailto:https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01425692.2014.886940), *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 36(8), 1192–1211.  UK  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords: *student ambassadors; higher education; widening participation; science, technology, engineering and mathematics including medicine; role-models; informal learning* | **Context:** Discusses the use of student ambassadors in marketing HE in context of widening participation in STEM outreach in UK in two contrasting universities. Critiques discourses of aspiration as individual improvement project (quotes Burke, 2012). Student ambassadors positioned as aspirational role-models for school pupils. While the research literature suggests that there are benefits to ambassadors, there is less information/research on benefits to/ voice of pupils. Ambassadors can be source of hot or warm knowledge  **Aim:** To trace and analyse discourses around ambassadors and positioning within learning contexts, relationships with pupils and learning that takes place (abstract)  **Methodology:** Ethnography: 2-year engagement in two London universities (one ‘new’, one ‘old’) in field of WP outreach in STEM in 2008-9 (programs funded by different sources – see p.1197). Interviews conducted with 41 pupils/16 ambassadors in old uni/ 71 pupils and 16 ambassadors in new uni. Pupils all Year 8-11 and most students from low SES schools in ‘deprived’ areas of south-east London.  **Findings:** Identifies 4 groups of main learning attributes: process/ location and setting/ purposes/ content. Discourse analysis  With teachers, Gartland identifies discourse of credentialism as a regime of truth (ambassadors requested to help raise C/D borderline (p.9) – gives examples of ambassadors supporting Year 11 pupils with GCSE Maths exam papers: didactic and formal assessment in school classroom – in this context, ambassadors were viewed as “inadequate substitutes for real teachers” (p.10). Teachers also wary of ambassadors’ ability to ‘teach’ on basis of undergraduate discipline “Positioning ambassadors as teachers simply because of their mathematical expertise is problematic” (p.1201) when aim of them being there was to drive up grades. Ambiguity noted in teachers/ organisers’ understandings of ambassador role to manage behaviour. Activities described could be placed on continuum of formal – informal attributes. Example of ‘Train Tracks’ day = informal because no curriculum learning (instead mostly subject learning) with ambivalent purposes (aspiration raising/ subject knowledge/ promoting key messages) – experiential learning. Contrast with Maths Workshops. **Core argument:** Generalised discourses about ambassadors as aspiration raisers/ role-models = commonplace but no shared understanding of how it works in practice. Stakeholders have vested interests in ambassador work which influences how they are constructed through discourse and positioned in institutional spaces. Positioning of WP in marketing spaces positions pupils as consumers. Dominant discourses of credentialism/ school cultures position ambassadors and pupils in particular ways. “The current government focus on pupils as rational choosers of HE who need access to better information (Department for Business Innovation and Skills [BIS] 2011) entrenches further individualised discourses of pupils as consumers in the HE marketplace” (p.1209) |
| Harris, P. & Ridealgh, K. (2016). [Academic involvement in Outreach: Best practice case studies from health and languages](https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/openu/jwpll/2016/00000018/00000003/art00006), *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning,* 18(3), 74–83.  UK  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords: *Widening Participation, Academic-led Outreach, Health Sciences, Languages* | **Context:** Widening participation in UK; University of East Anglia, which has unique structure that includes an academic position in each Faculty to support WP students (four in total), who “have a workload allocation to  focus solely on the development, coordination and delivery of outreach activities and establishment of strategy within their faculty” (p.74)  **Aim:** To “examine the role academic colleagues can play in the Widening Participation process (predominately outreach)”… “to demonstrate how academics can help raise aspirations and support long-term intervention projects”; to examine motivations behind creation of WP-focused academic positions (abstract)  **Methodology:** Description; offers to case studies (Health Science and Modern Foreign Languages)  **Findings:** Case studies outline how the academic involvement helped to target outreach to disciplinary areas, working with teachers in key learning areas to target activities to their needs **Core argument:** Article outlines benefits of academic involvement in outreach planning and delivery, resulting in “specialised information, support in specific subject areas, and a long-term commitment to WP in the faculties” (p.66–7) |
| Harrison, N. & Waller, R. (2017). [Evaluating outreach activities: overcoming challenges through a realist ‘small steps’ approach](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13603108.2016.1256353?journalCode=tpsp20), *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education,* 21(2–3), 81–87.  UK  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords: *Outreach; evaluation; social realism; epistemology* | **Context:** Pressure to evaluation WP (due to “reductionist doctrine of ‘evidence-based practice’”; abstract) to demonstrate value for money, which is made more complex by lack of common agreement about what ‘effectiveness’ looks like/ is. Authors point to work (e.g. McCaig, 2015) that has critiqued institutional approaches to WP that are more rhetorical than practical/ transformative: “The tension here is obvious: a university can meet its targets (and ostensibly be effective) for recruiting disadvantaged students without impacting at all on the  national targets if it is simply capturing a greater share of the existing applicant pool; a ‘ zero sum game’ where outreach is conflated with recruitment and universities seek easy wins, leading to few additional students being encouraged into higher education” (p.1). ‘Effectiveness’ used in this article to “‘Effectiveness ’ is used to “judg[e] the amount of change which can be ascribed to an activity” (p.2).  **Aim:** To ask questions of how evaluation practices can assess whether outreach activities lead to change  **Methodology:** “Methodologically agnostic” (p.2) within realist tradition; essay  **Findings:** Authors note two main trends in WP evaluation work:  1) tracking “with respect to (a) their involvement in activities, (b) their changing attitudes and choices and (c) school outcomes including qualifications” (p.2)  2) trials (e.g. RCTs)  Five challenges for evaluating outreach:  1) *Selection/ self-selection biases* (because of opt-out potentially omitting ‘hard-to-reach’ students, leaving participants likely to be from families who are already disposed to education  2) *Priming/ social desirability effects* (students quickly “become attuned to the idea that there are a ‘ correct’ collection of attitudes to express to practitioners, teachers and parents”, p.3)  3) *Deadweight/ leakage* (leaking = when people outside of target group —e.g. relatively advantaged students — are captured within activity, skewing the results; deadweight = targeting students who would have followed that path without engaging in the outreach)  4) *Complexity/ bounded rationality* (easy to reduce complexity in evaluation tools which cannot recognise messiness of social life, and that humans cannot make totally rational decisions, meaning that predictable, causal relationships are impossible [and undesirable])  5) *Confounding factors/ non-linearity* (generally understood that outreach = process, but WP is only part of the school experience/ educational journey, meaning it is impossible to ascribe changes to a particular activity without contextualization). **Core argument:** Authors propose a ‘small steps’ approach based on five ideas:   1. Articulation of clear theory of change and mechanisms expected to bring change at individual level 2. Criticality about causality, using a trial/ RCT approach 3. Criticality about measurability, basing evaluation on knowledge and behaviours rather than attitudinal data 4. Using appropriate timescales — avoid longitudinal tracking for evaluation and focus on individual activities (“confidence in each intervention in its own terms”, p.6)   Focus on educational disadvantage: evaluation needs to recognize the difference between compound educational disadvantage and recruitment). |
| Harrison, N., & Waller, R. (2017). [Success and impact in widening participation policy: what works and how do we know?](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s41307-016-0020-x), *Higher Education Policy*, 30(2), 141–160.  UK  Annotation written by Katie Osborne-Crowley  Keywords: *participation; access; England; partnerships; aspirations; attainment; targeting* | **Context:** The original manifestation of the WP policy agenda in the UK was the Aimhigher program, (2004-2011) and brought together a wide range of partners including universities, colleges, schools and training providers. With the reduction (2008) and subsequent termination (2011) of Aimhigher, there is now a more atomised approach with institutional WP activities forming the mainstay. Despite 15 years of WP policy in the UK, there is mixed evidence that progress is being made towards the original aims. While there has been steady growth in the proportion of young people receiving free school meals participating in HE, this can be largely accounted for by an overall increase in participation rate reflecting both a growing supply of HE places and an expansion in the pool of young people qualified to apply for those places.  **Aim:** To explore why there has not been stronger progress made towards WP goals, through the eyes of two generations of practitioner-managers.  **Theoretical frame:** none  **Methodology:** The underpinning methodology was mixed methods approach, with two strands:  *Strand 1:* Semi-structured telephone interviews with former directors from all nine regions of Aimhigher.  *Strand 2:* Online questionnaire involving quantitative and qualitative questions distributed to senior individuals responsible for WP policy and practice within English institutions in late 2014 (57 of 151 invited institutions participated).  **Findings:** *What works in WP?* Strand 1 respondents revealed that the Aimhigher period was marked by activities designed to raise aspirations. There was disagreement, however, about the purposes of raising aspirations, which some respondents seeing it as an end in itself, while others saw aspiration-raising in a reciprocal relationship with attainment. Strand 2 participants were confident in their programs’ ability to increase knowledge, raise aspiration and challenge stereotypes about higher education, but they were much less confident about their programs’ ability to raise attainment. A common pre-requisite for success identified in Strand 1 was the need to engage with young (primary school aged) participants, given the pervasive nature of educational disadvantage.  Activities described as successful by Strand 2 participants tended to have strong overlap with more traditional marketing and recruitment activities. These sorts of activities, however, may fail to influence to overall pool of students coming to university and instead simply re-allocate students already en route to university. 48% of Strand 2 participants felt that applications to their own institutions were more important to their institutions than applications to HE in general.  *Who gets access to WP activities?* Participants in both strands had concerns about deadweight and leakage (the ability or willingness of schools to identify the ‘right’ students). There was also concern expressed by Strand 2 participants about a move to using location-based indicators of low socioeconomic status (such as POLAR). 60% of respondents felt that increasing applications from a disadvantaged school or area would be considered a success by their institutions, regardless of the individual applicant’s situation (i.e. leakage).  *Evaluation.* Overall, there was a lack of confidence about evaluation practices in the field, with 91% of Strand 2 respondents looking to improve their evaluation practices and only 10% reporting feeling confident in the evidence underpinning their activities. The most widely used forms of evaluation were pupil questionnaires, followed by time series analyses, teacher questionnaires and longitudinal tracking, interviews/focus groups were used on ‘occasional’ or ‘rare’ basis. Some participants were seeking to develop qualitative and case study techniques in order to answer questions about *why* particular activities were or were not effective. Strand 1 participants tended to report a shift over time towards a reduced array of activities that were easy to evaluate. Participants also identified that the closer they worked with schools, the more difficult it was to tease apart WP influences, particularly relating to attainment.  **Core argument:** One the one hand, evidence shows that a key determinant of HE participation is school attainment and that disadvantaged young people do not suffer from low aspirations. Despite this, the majority of institutions in this study reported focusing on aspiration-raising, with many seeing attainment-raising as explicitly outside of their remit. Further, the very modest progress towards WP aims may reflect an over-emphasis on securing applications from already high-attaining young people to the detriment of activities to increase the pool of those attaining highly, and this is particularly the case in elite institutions. Issues with targeting the ‘right’ students in WP programs have persisted for many years, possibly worsened by a move towards recruiting from particular areas rather than from lower socio-economic individuals specifically. In terms of evaluating the success of WP programs, there is generally an absence of a clear epistemology. This is partly because it is a complex undertaking (identifying what works in complex environments amid myriad confounding factors), and partly due to misalignments of epistemology (e.g. conflating monitoring with evaluation). |
| Harwood, V.; McMahon, S.; O’Shea, S.; Bodkin-Andrews, G.; & Priestly, A. (2015). [Recognising aspiration: the AIME program’s effectiveness in inspiring Indigenous young people’s participation in schooling and opportunities for further education and employment](https://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2827&context=sspapers), *The Australian Educational Researcher,* 42, 217–236.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Indigenous, Education* | **Context:** Seeks to showcase successful mentoring program which takes a different approach [from individualist-neoliberal, deficit-based programs] – takes a cultural wealth approach so as to inspire participants (resisting deficit approaches/ views) and recognise aspiration. AIME connects indigenous school students (Yr 7-12) with university students in 5 Australian states (18 universities in NSW, VIC, SA, WA, QLD and ACT). Program works from idea ‘indigenous = success’ and recognition of aspiration = foundational. Dominance of western cultural knowledge = imposes white middle class norms. Has produced series of materials; in university, mentors sit with mentees to help complete tasks (uni based); school based = AIME curriculum delivered in schools 2 hours from uni campus. In 2013, 1066 mentors & 2789 mentees = effective for improving school retention and engagement  **Aim:**  **Theoretical frame:** Engages with Appadurai’s theory of the capacity to aspire/ Yosso’s Community Cultural Wealth framework, especially ‘aspirational capital’ ( building on Bourdieu, 1986): “an individual’s ability to maintain hope and dreams for the future despite real and perceived obstacles” (p.220)  **Methodology:** Ethnographic observations of 150 AIME sessions (over 56 days/ in 15 uni campuses) = repeat visits. 6 unis = single visit. Semi-structured interviews with 86 mentees and 79 mentors. Also, 91 mentees completed surveys (indigenous/culturally-sensitive)  **Findings:**  AIME “significantly and positively impacts Australian Indigenous high school students’ aspirations to finish school and continue to further study, training or employment” (abstract)  Majority of mentees aspire to complete year 12 (89%)  44% aspire to go to university  74% have clear post-school aspirations  AIME= developing strong(er) sense of self-perception [but notes: no control group; difficult to make substantiated claims]  Qualitative data: macro level= all mentees sign contract: “The philosophy behind the practice is not one of compulsion, but rather, communicating a belief in the young people’s capacity and right to completing their education and exploring further opportunities with employment, training and university” (p.277)  Mirco level = program sets high expectations in every AIME day: “At AIME, Stepping up is communicated as a means for developing confidence and skills that underpin success both at school and in future careers” (p.228). **Core argument:** AIME celebrates aspiration capital of indigenous students by “perpetually link[ing] the past, present and future in aspirational terms, and in so doing, recognise the navigational capacity that the young people already possess” (p.230) |
| Kilpatrick, S., Barnes, R. B., Heath, J., Lovat, A., Wee-Ching, K., Flittner, N. & Avitaia, S. (2019). [Disruptions and bridges in rural Australia: High education aspiration to expectation of participation](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07294360.2018.1556619?journalCode=cher20), *Higher Education Research & Development*, 38(3), 550–564.  AUS  Annotation written by Katie Osborne-Crowley  Keywords: *outreach, rural, aspiration* | **Context:** Rural areas in Australia have traditionally had lower HE access and participation rates compared with metropolitan areas. Social capital influences university access, and may explain low access rates among rural students who have the academic credentials. Social capital includes knowing how things are done in HE contexts, knowing how to seek advice and the navigational capacity to allow smooth transitions to HE. Intervening to raise university access rates among rural school students involves both ‘disruptions’, critical events which change a young person’s perspective on their future life options, and ‘bridges’, information or support to overcome barriers associated with rurality.  **Aim:** To evaluate the effectiveness of a partnership of outreach activities between the Universities of Tasmania (UTAS), Wollongong (UOW) and Adelaide (UA). The trialled initiative including three distinct programs; a Children’s University (CU) for 7-14-year-olds aimed at fostering lifelong learning and introducing children to university, a Rural University Preparation Program (RUPP) aimed at increasing high-school students academic capacity, and UTAS’s Warm Connections (WC) program targeting rural adults aimed at embedding a HE presence in eight rural Tasmanian communities through partnerships with local libraries and neighbourhood houses.  **Theoretical frame:** Disruptions and bridges  **Method:** Qualitative, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers, community organisation employees and outreach facilitators.  **Findings:** Students aspirations and expectations were limited by factors of rurality (e.g. geographical distance and isolation, financial capacity, attachment to place and country, employment opportunities etc.). Two key purposes for rural outreach were identified: 1) informing education aspiration (*disruptions*) and 2) translating aspiration to expectation of university participation, or perception of participation being attainable (*bridges*).  *Disruptions:* A key strength of CU was in creating disruptions for children by opening their eyes to the possibility of university, and making them feel excited about it. WC was also found to open people’s eyes to previously unknown study options. Disruptions did occur in RUPP, but were less of a focus. The evaluation confirmed that such disruptions were necessary in this context because many rural people don’t have access to people who have experienced, HE and aren’t aware of employment opportunities available for HE graduates.  *Bridges:* WC and RUPP provided bridges in the form of information, skills and support to address factors of rurality. Family attitudes were found to often limit aspirations turning into expectations. ‘People rich’ bridges were acknowledged as particularly successful in rural cohorts. For instance, RUPP incorporated rich interactions with student mentors while WC trained locals as ‘translators’ of university language and culture. The evaluation also identified that some activities can act as a disruption for some people and as a bridge for others.  **Core argument:** Effective rural outreach needs to not only incorporate generic good practice but specifically address factors of rurality. This means drawing on resources available in rural communities, particularly social capital resources. Outreach should provide disruptions when aspirations are limited, and bridges when aspirations are higher, but expectation of participation is low. A combination of disruptions and bridges is expected to be effective when there is some aspiration towards HE, but expectation is not sufficiently high to achieve participation. |
| Lynch, J.; Walker-Gibbs, B.; & Herbert, S. (2015). [Moving beyond a ‘bums-on-seats’ analysis of progress towards widening participation: reflections on the context, design and evaluation of an Australian government-funded mentoring programme](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1360080X.2015.1019122), *Journal of Education Policy and Management,* 37(2), 144–158.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords: *academic performativity; academic practice; de Certeau; equity and access; evidence-based approaches; higher education participation* | **Context:** Explores equity of access and aspirations of low SES students from perspective of mentoring program. They note the focus can be skewed by research and practitioners so that focusing “on the funding and development of programmes, and the construction of evidences of impact, rather than speaking back to the deficit discourses that often underpin these agendas “(p.144). Paper situated in 3 levels of context: performative, policy and local. Works from policy moves that have framed outreach in context of raising aspirations  **Aim:** To explore issues in design, implementation and evaluation of mentoring program designed to address low SES representation in HE – working at nexus of aspirations, problems and solutions; to “relays a particular account of the origins of a mentoring programme, the types of impacts that were observed and the efficacy of the data in terms of documenting change” (p.145). Authors note conflict between aspirations agendas and a desire ‘to give voice’ to educationally disadvantaged students and teachers. Locates funding bid as part of ‘new managerialism’, which privileges evidence-based, quantitative research (see Oriel, 2011)  **Theoretical frame:** Take a pragmatic approach to presenting research [basically they reflexively acknowledge the dynamics at stake and selections made to represent the world/ their research/ the mentoring program in particular ways]. Authors explicitly position themselves as locals – low SES/ FiF/ regional students themselves – who interact with school in question on multiple levels (alumni, school council members) and interact with students in local area  **Methodology:** Draws on gov’t policy docs, university funding guidelines, questionnaire responses and interview data. Participants = university staff, school students, school teachers (all partners in mentoring program) 12 Yr 9 students (4 m, 8 f) in pilot chosen on basis of unlikelihood to go to university without intervention but who were seen as ‘on track’ academically (authors note influence of funding criteria as driving these selection criteria). Participants completed pre/post-program questionnaires to measure change (to meet quantitative data requirements of HEPPP funding). 10 completed pre and post questionnaires (8 = matched)  **Findings:** Mentoring program described = HEPPP-funded (partnership component) between university and large local regional secondary school (40% of students = low SES, receiving family payment). Program = Yr 9 “to experience, and gain confidence with, a range of spaces and information” (p.150) = 12 activities over 2 terms done alongside university mentors (but constrained by HEPPP 12-month funding cycle).  Questionnaire data: rather than suggesting an increase in students’ desires to go on to HE, the post-program questionnaire shows that from the 4 students who chose uni pre-program, 0 chose it post-program, with a 4-point increase in ‘don’t know’ category. However, qualitative data tells stories of increased confidence and aspirations. Authors argue that ‘don’t know’ could be a more mature response that ‘I’m going to be…’  Offers case study of two students (Aden and Charlie) – both from 4-children, single parent families.  **Core argument:** Quantiative funding frame and reliance on numerical data as indicative of tracking and change= “is likely to underestimate the significance of smaller qualitative changes” (p.156). Authors argue for power of small changes, rather than ‘education revolutions’. |
| Naylor, R.; Baik, C.; & James, R. (2013). [*Developing a Critical Interventions Framework for advancing equity in Australian higher education*](https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Critical-Interventions-Framework-20-August-2013.pdf)*.* Melbourne: Centre for the Study of Higher Education.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker | **Aim:** To add to the evidence base – to help build a stronger platform for research and evaluation  **Context:** Critical Interventions Framework (CIF) was designed “to assist in advancing equity in higher education” (p.5). Report includes – summary of patterns of access and participation post-Bradley Review, literature review, typology of equity initiatives (CIF), summary of plausibility and evidence base for initiatives in CIF, broad summary of national patterns of equity initiatives (analysis of HEPPP reports) against CIF.  Access/Participation since Bradley Review: uncapping system (demand-driven system) “may have been the single most significant factor in the rising numbers of students from equity target groups who have been admitted to higher education” (p.5), but rise in numbers = “across the board”, meaning that proportional representation has not changed. **HEPPP** funding has allowed “institutions, often working in partnerships, to influence particular key points in the student ‘life cycle’ to encourage more students from equity target groups to, among other things, consider higher education to be a possibility for them, to build academic attainment and to be more fully conversant with the opportunities available to them” (p.6).  *Key issues*  Student share (1.0 = parity):   * low SES = 0.62 * indigenous = 0.55 * remote = 0.39   CIF typology (Fig. 1.1): 1) plausibility or theoretical case for types of equity initiatives based on timing and method; 2) available evidence on effectiveness; 3) analysis of HEPPP reports  Typology “derived from widespread assumptions about potential barriers or inhibitors for low SES students rather than a comprehensive empirical conception of the terrain, for none exists” (p.9). Literature suggests there are 5 broad periods in a student’s life cycle: a) prior to seeking access, b) at point of selection/admissions, c) during transition, d) during studies, e) post-completion period of finding work. Outreach is core of initiatives for aspiration-raising but there is little effectiveness. Literature points to school performance/ low SES so there is “an argument for implementing early initiatives aimed at improving students’ academic achievement and year 12 retention rates; scholarships/ financial support are important but cost might not be the only barrier to participation. Literature strongly supports idea that transition/orientation initiatives are valuable. Evidence suggests that low SES students less likely to make use of support services – better/ more extensive support services doesn’t necessarily increase retention.  *Prior to starting HE* – discussion of Year 12 (p.15); aspirations (p.16); VET-HE (p.17)  *Selection/ Admissions* – scholarships and grants (p.18-9)  *During transition* – transition/ transition programs (p.19-20  *During studies –* effective factors in successful completion for low SES, childcare, mature age, not seeking/using support servicesp.21-2  **Methodology:** Draws on gov’t (DIIRSRTE) data to examine % representation. Two methods use for determining low SES: postcode and census collection districts (CD measure) = see page 31-2. Examined 38 HEPPP reports for 2011  **Findings:** Data analysis shows that population parity was still far off in 2011 (disability = 5.07 std pop v. 10.6% Aus pop; indigenous = = 1.38 std pop v. 2.5% Aus pop; NESB = = 3.1 std pop v. 3.8% Aus pop; WINTA = = 17.47 std pop v. 50.6% Aus pop; low SES = = 16.76 std pop v. 25% Aus pop; Regional = 18.63 std pop v. 29% Aus pop; Remote = 0.91 std pop v. 2.3% Aus pop**).** Studentsfrom equity groups “are almost as likely to successfully complete their studies as any other student” (p.25) – but see lower retention and success rates of indigenous students and attrition rates of remote students, especially in Year 1. Chapter 4: CIF and evidence/ plausibility table.  Chapter 5: Distribution of HEPPP against CIF. 49.3% of HEPPP = pre-entry initiatives; 34.5% on post-entry and 16.2% on costs associated with management of equity programs. Highest % of HEPPP funding spent on provision of student services, scholarships and later-year outreach to schools. Lowest % was spent on marketing, school curriculum enhancement and adult ed outreach |
| O’Shea, S. & Vincent, H. (2011). [Uni-Start: A Peer-Led Orientation Activity Designed for the Early and Timely Engagement of Commencing University Student](mailto:https://ro.uow.edu.au/edupapers/1173/)s, *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education,* 59, 152–160.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords. *higher education; peer-led support; transition; orientation; student equity* | **Context:** Offers reflection on one approach to supporting diverse students in Australian university (presumably UOW), based on community of practice model. Notes need for students to be inculcated into university practices/ routines/ conventions etc. Discusses transition program = ‘Uni-Start’ (began in 2007) which drew “on the experiences of the experts within the university community to provide the skills and knowledge necessary for the “novice” or newcomer to cope with this new environment” (p.153). Set in context of increased participation in HE and in the marketised HE sector (student-as-client and brand establishment) – working towards call for need to understand importance of student-institution relationships and communication. Cites AUSSE statistics from 2010 that suggest students were unhappy with level of familiarity with staff – many had not received ‘timely’ feedback from teachers, and a decreasing number believe their teacher knows their name (“sense of isolation and disjuncture” (p.154)) – foregrounds need to attend to social dimension of transition/ learning  **Aim:**  **Theoretical frame:** Based on Lave and Wenger’s concept of communities of practice, which are ”built on the idea of shared understandings that characterize an environment, much of which is not taught formally” (p.154)  **Methodology:**  **Findings:** Uni-Start = 2-day program: systematic and individualised approach: students encouraged to learn in socially situated context. Program = led by student facilitators (students in higher years of study) who apply for the position and are trained in adult learning principles/ techniques for facilitation/ given book vouchers as incentive-payment: “This peer-led transition program utilizes experiential, situated learning activities, building on a constructivist approach that recognizes the need for learning to be situated within the environment where these new skills and knowledge will be used”  (p.155). Program content based on what student-facilitators view as ‘missing’ and engage new students in ‘meaningful dialogue’. New students encouraged to reflect on skills and knowledges they bring to university. Activities include: ice-breakers, orientation/ scavenger hunts/ trivia tests; also, sometimes = presentations on university terminology/ essay writing etc. (decided by student facilitators).  Discussion of evaluations and feedback gained: mostly satisfied and considered relevant. Follow up phone call data = all students would recommend attending the program. More discipline-specific focus desired  Opportunity for student-facilitators to ‘give back’ = “unexpected outcome” (p.157). ‘A number of’ facilitators expressed that they would be happy to do it in voluntary capacity |
| Peacock, D.; Sellar, S.; & Lingard, B. (2014). [The activation, appropriation and practices of student-equity policy in Australian higher education](mailto:https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02680939.2013.839829), *Journal of Educational Policy*, 29(3), 377–396.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords: *higher education; equity policy; institutional ethnography; student recruitment; university outreach* | **Context:** Explores student-equity policy and practice in Queensland in two universities (one is UQ, the other a smaller/newer metro QLD university) and including the Queensland consortium, focusing on low SES students. Makes point – drawing on Bourdieu – that in the contested field of academia, there will always be elite/isolated institutions and less autonomous/more networked institutions – this is rationale for choice of case study institutions – but the creation of a state-wide consortium suggests possibility of collaborative practices and enactments of policy. HEPPP encourage(s/d) competitive market for low SES students.  **Aim:** To trace the activation and appropriation of student-equity across different stakeholders in one state of Australia  **Theoretical frame:** Draws on Bourdieu’s conceptual tool of the contested field  **Methodology:** Employs Smith’s (2005) institutional ethnography “to map how student-equity workers’ local practices are articulated and aligned, via the locally produced policy statements of the Group, to federally established social inclusion targets for each university and to the accomplishment of ruling neoliberal policy relations established by the federal government” (p.379). Key = tracing the coordination of activities to ‘ruling relations’ = capitalist societies, which are “text-mediated” systems of communication, knowledge, information, regulation  **Findings:** The consortium split up the schools in the state and assigned them to universities – working to negate the negative impact of competition – but left a clause in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that permitted competition [poaching] when a student expressed interest in a university outside of the ‘catchment’ area their school fell in. Discusses the enactments of student-equity policy - partnership component of HEPPP:   * UQ: restricted their outreach to Year 10-12 and some outreach in Year 8-9 (but much smaller), No primary school outreach. UQ based equity outreach on targeting ‘best and brightest’ low SES students (but did not change entrance requirements; hence forcing low SES students to adapt – see p.388). UQ were keen to shift their mix of students, rather than grow (because they were in process of reducing UG numbers and increasing PG numbers) * ‘Dawson’: engaged in outreach from Year 6-12 (aka: primary and secondary) and engaged in this work so as to “grow strongly”   The UQ consortium were able to collectively appropriate federal policy in 5 ways:   1. Chair of the Group advocated for more collaborative, non-competitive funding which impacted on final HEPPP guidelines 2. Government encouraged remaining states/territories to collaborate similarly to QLD consortium 3. The Group was consulted on key elements of HEPPP, such as being able to move participation funding into partnership funds 4. Despite indigenous students not being part of HEPPP (because ISP offers separate funding), the Group made this a part of their (successful) bid and thus refracted/ reappropriated policy to suit indigenous students/ units 5. Due to cooperation, most of partnership funding went to regional universities [who are perhaps less competitive than Go8s/research intensive universities??]   **Core argument:** Tension in both case study universities around outreach/widening participation practices and recruitment (made clear in UQ’s persistent poaching of ‘best and brightest’ from Dawson’s school pool). In the context described (UQ consortium), collaborative equity practice is OK as long as it doesn’t challenge the status quo: “ Cooperative student-equity practices amongst universities become strained, however, where there is a potential change in the allocation of academic and reputational capital within the field and a disturbance to the existing institutional hierarchy of the field” (p.390) |
| Penman, J. & Sawyer, J. (2013). [Expanding Horizons: UniReady Program for Multicultural Groups](https://research.monash.edu/en/publications/expanding-horizons-uniready-program-for-multicultural-groups), *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education*, 23(3), 71–81.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker | **Context:** Examines ‘UniReady for Multicultural Groups’ at UniSA (in Whyalla) – aim is to attract ‘immigrant families’ to university. Pilot study = introduced participants to [idea of?] university study, degrees available and future planning for university. Set in context of widening participation. According to ABS data, in 2010, 719,600 migrants (unclear how they arrived; presumably economic migrants??) – 76% = born in LBOTE countries; 91% 15-41 years of age on arrival. 477,800 = temporary visas [457 visas??]. Describes educational backgrounds (e.g. 65% had ‘non-school qualification; 31% had received non-school qualifications since arriving in Australia; 46% of whom = BA or higher) – but unclear if these numbers include NES (UK/CAN/US etc.)  **Theoretical frame:** None  **Methodology:** 15**/**18 (83%) community members participated in pilot program = paper draws on experiences of participants and 4 staff members. Survey tool used = quantitative and qualitative data collected. Program advertised via flyers [unclear if these were translated]. Program consisted of 5 hours = intro to program, intro to pathways to study, discipline information sessions for Foundation studies, Engineering, Business, Social Work and Nursing.  **Findings:** Potential students: Most important information = ‘how to get started’ and clarity of information given.Staff: “reported the need to encourage people to consider studying in the area of Business” (p.76) and ‘opportunity to spread the word’ |
| Rissman, B.; Carrington, S. & Bland, D. (2013). [Widening Participation in University Learning,](https://ro.uow.edu.au/jutlp/vol10/iss1/2/) *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice,* 10(1), 1–20.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords: *Higher education, widening participation, secondary education, socio-economic disadvantage, student equity, benefits, barriers, workload, university and school partnership* | **Context:** Describes an outreach initiative at QUT with QLD Dept. Education and Training to increase enrolments of low SES students. Initiative (‘QUTeach’) involves university lecturers and school teachers working together to deliver and assess 4 x B(Ed) units to Year 11 and 12 students at one secondary school. Scopes literature on under-participation of low SES students (WP/ equity agenda in Australia), transitional barriers and first year programs  **Aim:** To describe OUTeach and report on data collected through evaluation of program in early stages; to answer 2 RQs:  How do students, parents and staff describe the QUTeach program?; and  Do students, parents and staff perceive that the program is effective in increasing LSES student enrolment in higher education? (p.7)  **Theoretical frame:** Draws on notion of ‘cultural capital’ (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977); positioned as informed by ‘social constructionist perspective’ (see Crotty 1998).  **Methodology:** Evaluation: focus groups and individual interviews with parents and students (n=26; 5 x m; 21 x f). Explicates qualitative, thematic approach to analysis (Patton, 2002)  **Findings:** Long discussion of benefits (e.g. making university appealing, increased sense of pride, course visits = convenient for students/ timetabling, academic writing focus = benefits for school work, access to university library and on-campus visits = well received). Discussion also of challenges (stress, time management, difficulty in balancing work-study-study+) **Core argument:** Offers theorised and critical example of school-university partnership that is designed to specifically promote success with multiple benefits for all involved. |
| Scull, S. & Cuthill, M. (2010). [Engaged outreach: using community engagement to facilitate access to higher education for people from low socio-economic backgrounds](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07294360903421368), *Higher Education Research & Development,* 29(1), 59–74.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords: *community engagement, equity, access, outreach, disadvantage* | **Context:** Discusses a model of ‘engaged outreach’ –based on principles of community engagement to develop stronger links between universities and local communities -as an alternative to traditional outreach. Outreach program is specifically focused on two Pacific Island communities in southeast QLD (area of ‘high social deprivation’). Purposes of outreach = building aspirations and increasing access to HE.  **Aim:**  **Theoretical frame:** Initiative based on notion of ‘engaged scholarship’: “engaged outreach seeks to promote  a framework based on active engagement with multiple stakeholders, who work collaboratively to address factors impacting on higher education access” (p.60) – working with broad group of stakeholders – developing a sense of [co-]ownership of the program  **Methodology:** 2-year study to develop engaged outreach with two identified communities (based on a view of multiple disadvantage: low SES/CALD). Intentional move away from school-based outreach to collaboration and negotiation with range of stakeholders (see fig, p.63) = community-based participatory action research approach    Stage 1: preliminary scan of area for issues relating to access to HE for CALD communities = informal meetings with 76 different people (via snowball recruitment). Stage 2: interviews/ committee meetings/ literature review. Also recruitment of community liaison officers and community leaders identified. Stage 3: stakeholder analysis, community leaders’ workshop, action planning meetings. 24 interviews conducted in Stage 2: 11 young people/ 13 parents  **Findings:**   1. Access to HE is an issue for low SES/ CALD students 2. Lack of RPL = issue for adults from these communities 3. English language proficiency and time needed to acquire appropriate level for tertiary study = concern for many   Findings specific to Pacific Islander participants:   * Cost = significant issue * Parental involvement in children’s education = minimal * School engagement and attainment = ‘major issue’ * HE perceived to take a lot of time and investment and thus, while highly regarded, HE = not always prioritised * Few HE-educated role models in the communities studied   Three key strategies identified through community consultation:  Provision of accessible information  Provision of better support at school  Raise aspiration to higher education **Core argument:** “Key to facilitating increased access is a comprehensive understanding of current community attitudes and aspirations towards higher education and of the specific constraints impacting on higher education access” (p.71) |
| Skene, J. (2010). [Developing productive relationships with partner schools to widen participation. A Practice Report](mailto:https://fyhejournal.com/article/view/25.html), *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education,* 1(1), 77–83.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords: *aspirations, school, widening participation, equity* | **Context:** ‘Practice Report’. Working from context of underrepresentation of equity groups, especially in Group of Eight universities, the paper offers strategies for forming productive relationships with partner schools to widen participation = Aspire UWA program, which has partnerships with 24 schools (6 in rural area, 18 in outer-metropolitan Perth). Aims to raise aspirations with students from Year 9  **Aim:**  **Theoretical frame:** None  **Methodology:** Description of program  **Discussion/ description:**  UWA Aspire = outreach program. Started in 2009 directly due to Bradley Review targets [and new compacts and HEPPP presumably]. Program “aims to raise aspirations and improve academic readiness of students in high schools with a low transfer to higher education” (p.78). Has been ‘received enthusiastically’ by schools = program has ‘whole of university’ approach via reference groups with various schools and faculties. There is also teacher reference group to ensure school investment/ feed-in & representation from DET. |
| Skene, J.; Pollard, L.; & House, H. (2016). [Aspire UWA: A case study of widening access in Higher Education](https://studentsuccessjournal.org/article/view/585), *Student Success, 7*(2), 11–20.  AUS  Annotation written by Katie Osborne-Crowley  Keywords: *Aspire UWA; non-traditional students; low socioeconomic; LSES; widening participation* | **Context:** The Aspire UWA program has 3 components: 1) a core learning framework for years 7-12, 2) outreach specifically for indigenous students and iii) a pathway program to medicine and dentistry and UWA. Staff deliver academic enrichment designed through the learning framework supported by current university students (ambassadors). Their model of sustained whole-of-school engagement encourages a school culture where high academic achievement is an expectation rather than the exception. The program aimed to target students who were “most able least likely” (Harris, 2010) and develop their confidence, academic attainment and aspiration to study at university. Given a wide variety of partner schools, from large, multicultural metropolitan schools to small, rural schools with large Indigenous populations, Aspire UWA has sought to be responsive to local contexts.  **Aim:** To investigate whether long-term partnerships with schools affect the cultural change required to address the multiple factors that act as barriers to LSES students accessing HE.  **Theoretical frame:** none  **Methodology:** A case study of the first 7 years of Aspire UWA using quantitative and qualitative survey data and institutional access and participation data.  **Findings:** *School surveys.* In a 2011 survey, 80% of school partners agreed that Aspire UWA enhanced student motivation, increased their awareness of HE, and increased their interest in specific areas of study. Of educators surveyed, 70% reported becoming more proactive in encouraging students to consider going to university since being in partnership with Aspire. In a 2013 survey, 88% of school partners agreed Aspire had increased the motivation of students to attend HE and 70% agreed that working with Aspire had strengthened the academic focus of the school.  *Access and participation data*: An upward trend in enrolments at WA universities from Aspire schools between 2009 and 2014 has been identified (although there is no way of attributing this to Aspire programming directly). Students from Aspire schools have performed as well as students from non-Aspire schools once enrolled at UWA, even though they tended to have lower ATARs upon entry. Students from Aspire schools also had similar or better first-year retention rates than students from non-Aspire schools.  **Core argument:** The WP literature suggests that cultural change in schools to raise the expectations of students about high academic achievement is critical to long-term success. The authors argue that this case study of suggests that UWA’s approach of long-term school partnerships has been successful in changing the culture of the schools they work in and ultimately in increasing the numbers of students from these schools who attend university. They do not actually present convincing evidence of this, though. |
| Smyth, J. & Harrison, T. (2015). [What it means to be studying against the grain of neoliberalism in a community-based university programme in a ‘disadvantaged area’,](mailto:https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00220620.2015.996862) *Journal of Educational Administration and History,* 47(2), 155–173.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords: *disadvantage; class; participation in higher education; community-based education; aspirations* | **Context:** Community-based university study. In context of Australia, which is “deeply confused and conflicted around a policy discourse of inclusion that is sutured within an existential context heavily committed to the tenets of neoliberalism” (p.155). For low SES students in particular (authors problematise this term and ‘disadvantaged’) it is difficult to access university (as seen in steady figures of under-representation of people from lowest SES quartile). Authors describe misappropriation of ‘social justice’ orientations into neoliberal discourses/ policies as “The middle class has become somewhat adept at pursuing its own interests, while at the same time, seeking to claim otherwise” (p.156) = concealment of power. Class = relational and lived (not a set of attributes or characteristics). Offers critique of higher education as high level exercise in power – particularly seeking to conceal admissions procedures, in particular the lack of nuance in the use of ATAR: “The short story about what is problematic about the ATAR is that it pays no heed to socio-cultural circumstances”(p.158). Describes neoliberalism as “reframing identity by inscribing it with a particular ensemble of notions: the supremacy of invisible market forces as the ultimate means of regulating all social activities; the inevitability of competition as a result of the operation of global forces; the retreat of the state to a focus on performative  policy indicators; success based on meritocracy with rewards following by dint of personal efforts; and the cultivation of an entrepreneurial self through self-responsibilisation” (p.159). Neoliberalism forces the blame for ‘failure’ on students for having made ‘bad choices’ and positions them as ‘flawed consumers’ (Bauman, 2007).  **Aim:** To explore experiences of one student (case study) who took part in community-based program and challenges and obstacles he faced because of HE system and neoliberal policy discourses.  **Theoretical frame:** Takes a ‘capacities’ approach (as opposed to focus on barriers) – see Sellar and Gale (2011)  **Methodology:** To describe BA Griffin (community engagement program: not its real name) – aimed at young people without conventional entry requirements (e.g. not good VCE preparation) in low SES regional city in Victoria. Students accepted into program on basis of EOI and/or recommendation of someone who knew them well. Program based on pedagogical model = democratic and engaging and uses familiar school/ community settings: 3 hour workshop based on ‘critical dialogue’ model (critical pedagogical underpinnings). Not presented as second chance education; “The key aim of the programme is to prepare students to succeed in a mainstream  university setting in second year and have flexibility in programme choice” (p.163). Paper draws from larger critical ethnographic longitudinal tracking study over 3 years (same students into UG study). Presents case study of ‘Jake’  **Findings:**  Challenges faced by Jake = the volume and diversity of reading to be undertaken and the new experience of writing and referencing essays  Jake drew on peers, support staff in program (teachers in secondary college + UG students from university)… interesting silence on academic staff  Suggestion that direct school-university transition = ‘too daunting’.  Analysis = Jake = missed out on ‘the structure of feeling’ (Williams, 1989) that makes university feel ‘normal’ or ritualized and he has lack of access to grapevine knowledge. Jake had to move away from friends/ old peers, “and he had to sacrifice old values for the new ones he was taking on” (p.167). **Core argument:** Common elements of participating in BA-Griffin = familial/ community expectations of reproduction of working-class lives; working-class educations = typical focus on vocational education (‘hands on’ stream); ‘fitting in’ = related to home/ working-class identities and perceptions of (from students, cultivated by institutions?) higher education |
| Wilkens, P. & de Vries, J. (2014). [*Monitoring and Evaluation of Higher Education Equity Initiatives: Expert Summary 01/2014*.](https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Expert-Summary-Monitoring-and-Evaluation-Final.pdf) National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education: Curtin University.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker | **Context:** Evaluation of Outreach, Access, Support initiatives to improve student equity and social inclusion  **Aim:** Identifies key issues to assist practitioners – commissioning/planning/starting evaluations of equity initiatives  **Core argument:**  Evaluation in general: “requires systematic, rigorous and objective approaches to answer specific questions about how well initiatives and strategies are working” (p.1). Evaluation should be: scoped, planned, reported on. Need clarity on objectives. Evaluations = address performance at different levels of ‘performance hierarchy’ (inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, impacts). Evaluation should address each individual objective.  Equity evaluations: needs conceptual frameworks; clear identification of equity groups in planning stages should be matched in monitoring/evaluation; engaging in research analysis can help to differentiate disadvantaged students and see who benefits from interventions  Student equity evaluations: equity-focused initiatives grouped as outreach, access, support; understanding those who do/don’t enroll is important; contribution analysis could enable the significance/ interplay of participation, retention and success; Group of Eight proposed evaluation framework for equity initiatives.  Offers list of references relating to evaluation. |
| Wrench, A.; Hammond, C.; McCallum, F.; & Price, D. (2013). [Inspire to aspire: raising aspirational outcomes through a student well-being curricular focus](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13603116.2012.718804?scroll=top&needAccess=true&journalCode=tied20), *International Journal of Inclusive Education,* 17(9), 932–947.  AUS  Annotation written by Sally Baker  Keywords: *well-being, aspirations, pedagogy, low SES* | **Context:** Examines federal policies which relate to students’ aspirations for university – Transforming Australian HE (2009), based on Bradley review = SES targets – cites Bok’s critique of the individual nature of this policy, which fails to recognise the social and cultural/ complex community connections with aspirations. Based on  **Aim:** To explore intersections between pedagogical practices, curriculum based on a well-being framework, and the shaping of subjectivities and aspirations of young people in a region characterised by socio-economic challenge (abstract)  **Assumptions**: aspiration is social/cultural – not individual; last 2 years of school = too late for outreach; action research facilitates ‘professional conversations’ which enables change  **Thematic frame:** Well-being, based on South Australian DECS Learner Well-being Framework (2007).  **Methodology:** Draws from data collected in ‘School of Education Aspirations Project’ (SEAP) 2-year case study/ action research project in high school (R-12) in South Australia (2010 = 4 networks of schools; 2011 = 6 networks). Data include: narratives, field notes, student work samples and professional conversations (abstract). Series of interventions in curriculum were co-designed with schools, including experiential learning for schools teachers, school and university students; curriculum redesigns and “a performative expectation for student learning” (p.934). School described = 40% of students have school cards (low SES marker) and increasing number = NESB  **Findings:** 3 themes: Pedagogies and learning activities, Relationships, caring and connections, Places, spaces and belonging. Describes pedagogical strategies of ‘Dee’ with critical support from ‘Marnie’ = Dee believes that self-awareness is key to aspirations: “Explicit teaching and learning included work on ‘strengths and values’ resource cards, learning styles, aspirations and student conceptualisations of well-being” (p.937) and catered to diverse learning styles. Connections made to Dee’s recognition of emotional and modeling role she plays in classroom. Also foregrounds Dee’s belief in place-based experiences – worked hard to create a sense of belonging and social/emotional connectivity. Part of project = university visits as part of Group Adventure Initiative  Tasks (GAITs) **Core argument:** Low SES students have aspirations. Foregrounds importance of identity and subjectivity to aspiration-forming. Pedagogy and curriculum are significant for student engagement; the role of the teacher is highly important in social and emotional domains “which connect student life-worlds within their particular contexts, building cultural capital and broadening capabilities, self-awareness, aspirations and achievement” (abstract). “…a sense of ‘place’ underpinned Dee’s classroom curriculum and was strengthened through socially critically pedagogies that incorporated, developing student voice around how they learn, building emotional connectivity and relational trust within the classroom community, developing a sense of student ownership, identity and belonging and creating spaces for dialogue” (p.943) |