



# My voice, my story: the lived experience of being a non-traditional student at university

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# Overview of the workshop

- Overview of the Fair Access Research Project, our aims and goals
- Exploration of Photovoice as a method for capturing data
- Students photographs and their stories
- What can we learn from this and next steps moving forward

Our sector-leading approach involves the co-creation of research to transform practice and make a difference for students.

The research covers five core areas of work and establishes new ways of working in the field of widening participation research, practice and policy. This feeds into the over-arching strategy of **Learning Together** to promote equality, opportunity and achievement.

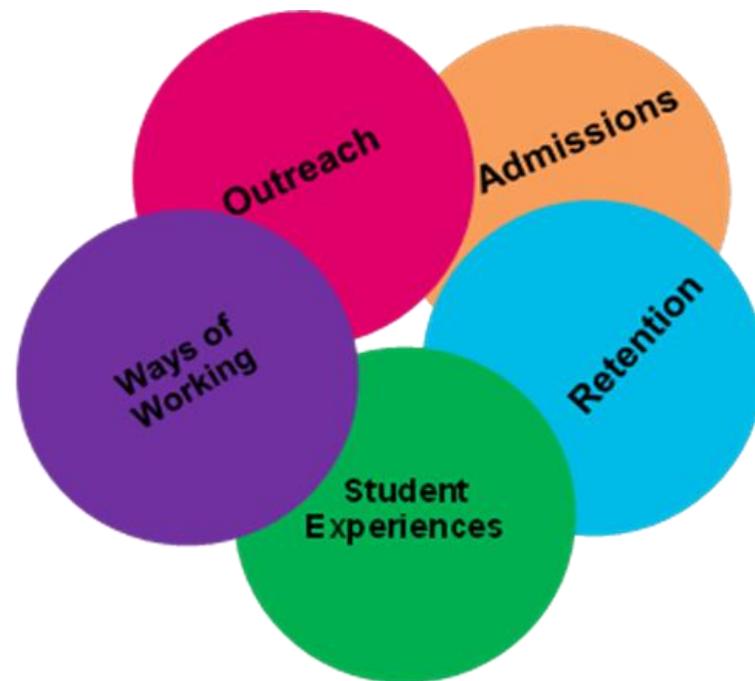
By learning together with students and colleagues from across the university and the higher education sector, we are building a community who can share experiences and expertise to meet the complex challenges facing widening participation research, policy and practice.

# FAR Overview

- **Mature students**
- **Students with disability or additional learning needs**
- **Students from Black, Asian or minority ethnic origins**
- **First generation / first in family to attend higher education**
- **Students from low income families and socio-economic groups 4-7**
- **Students applying from Lower Participating Neighbourhoods**
- **Care Leavers**

To achieve this strategy we address four major themes:

- **student lifecycle journey** of people from underrepresented backgrounds
- development of a **transferable methodology**
- ensuring **continued improvement** and **social capital for organisational learning**
- a **targeted dialogic strategy** for disseminating the research methodology to inform and transform policy and practice, and community engagement, both internally and externally



## Input

Listen to students and colleagues  
Facilitate partnerships

- *Networking*
- *Academic buy-in*
- *Professional buy-in*
- *Partnerships resources*

Map effective practice  
Learn with students and other experts  
Undertake research

- *Person-centred theories*
- *Creative approaches*
- *Data collection*
- *Publications*

Share knowledge  
Enable others to adopt and adapt

- *Disseminate research*
- *Fair Access Briefings*
- *Guidance and consultation*
- *Self-assessment tool*

Establish focus  
Demonstrate sustainable legacy

- *WP online hub*
- *Impact narrative*
- *Final report*

**Partnerships**

**Knowledge**

**Praxis**

**Sustainability**

## Impact

- Different groups working and learning together

- Diverse resources to enable others to improve ways of working

- Changing praxis in university
- Enhanced experiences for students

- Lasting infrastructure for research
- Sustained changes in praxis

## Evidence

- Tracking engagement
- Tracking use
- New collaborations

- Outputs
- Citations
- Tracking use
- REF case study

- Policy developments
- Improvements in student metrics

- Continuing research
- Funding allocation
- Continued improvement for students
- Inclusion in strategies

# What is photovoice?

- Collier and Collier (1986) noted that photographs can stimulate new thoughts and memories that can be prompted by although not necessarily contained in the photograph images.
- Bukowski and Buetow (2011) argue that photographs have surface content as visual records, but they can also make the “invisible visible” (p. 739) by evoking feelings, memories, and thoughts that require verbalization to be accessible to researchers.
- Adding sight to sound (through the use of photographs) can expand sensory awareness and increases the reflexive process (Harris & Guillemin, 2012).



# Why photovoice for this project?

Fair access, or widening participation, is fundamentally concerned with ensuring that individuals with the talent to succeed at HE are given the opportunity to do so, across the whole student journey (pre-entry to employment).

We focus on students from non-traditional backgrounds because research shows how the lived experiences of these students are often marginalised by institutions and that this can impact upon attainment and degree outcomes (Hunt et al., forthcoming; Thomas, 2012).



Photovoice has involved provision of cameras to people living in different communities in order to:

- record and reflect their community's assets and concerns,
- discuss issues of importance to the community...to promote critical dialogue and produce shared knowledge, and
- reach policy makers (Wang and Redwood-Jones, 2001).

## Photovoice Method



# Student images: students' voices



- Please view the images the students shared. As you are looking at these reflect and note the feelings it evokes in you.
- What do the images and pictures tell us about the lived experiences of being and becoming a non-traditional student.
- Please write your thoughts on the post it notes by the photo boards.





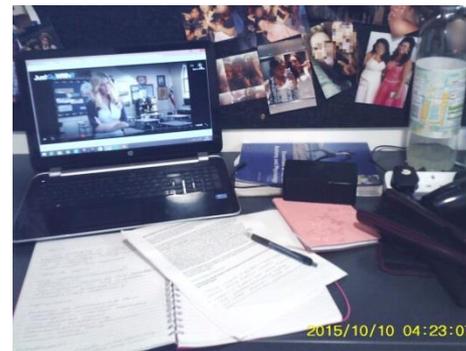
# My Voice; My story

Here some of the participants involved in the project will share their experiences

- Josh
- Emma
- Daryl
- Danielle

# Reflecting upon the stories

- Think back to your initial thoughts and feelings from reviewing the students photographs and listening to their stories
- Please note your thoughts on the tablecloth or paper provided considering
  - Key themes
  - Key challenges





# Our response to emerging themes

- How can we respond to what we have learnt from hearing the students' voices; from listening to their stories.....
- In small groups, work together to find practical responses to the themes that emerge.



- Please share one key message and one action point you will take home with you today
- Please participate in the evaluation of the session
- Please leave your contact details for networking