

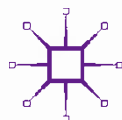


# WIDENING PARTICIPATION, HIGHER EDUCATION AND NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS

*Supporting Transitions through  
Foundation Programmes*

*Edited by*

**CATHERINE A. MARSHALL,  
SAM J. NOLAN *and* DOUGLAS P. NEWTON**



# Widening Participation, Higher Education and Non-Traditional Students



Catherine A. Marshall • Sam J. Nolan • Douglas P. Newton  
Editors

# Widening Participation, Higher Education and Non- Traditional Students

Supporting Transitions through Foundation  
Programmes

palgrave  
macmillan

*Editors*

Catherine A. Marshall  
Durham University  
Durham, United Kingdom

Douglas P. Newton  
Durham University  
Durham, United Kingdom

Sam J. Nolan  
Durham University  
Durham, United Kingdom

ISBN 978-1-349-94968-7      ISBN 978-1-349-94969-4 (eBook)  
DOI 10.1057/978-1-349-94969-4

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016940531

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016

The author(s) has/have asserted their right(s) to be identified as the author(s) of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use. The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made.

Cover illustration: © redtea / Getty

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave imprint is published by Springer Nature  
The registered company is Macmillan Publishers Ltd. London

## FOREWORD

The global landscape of higher education provision is changing rapidly. Many UK universities have pursued an active internationalisation agenda while at the same time seeking to ensure fair access for under-represented groups of students. One innovative approach has been to develop an in-house foundation centre aimed at UK mature students and younger international students. This book explores the rationale behind this approach and how it fits into the landscape of national foundation year provision. The chapters describe various innovative approaches to admissions, marketing and recruitment and to the development and delivery of curricula which support students hoping to study further in a research-intensive university. The book concludes with three case studies of students who have gone on to successful careers within and outside academia.

The contributors to the book were praised for supporting good practice in the field of widening participation and social mobility in the 2012 Millburn report *University Challenge: How Higher Education Can Advance Social Mobility*. The lessons learned from this approach will interest all who work to widen access to higher education.

Professor Stuart Corbridge  
Vice Chancellor and Warden  
Durham University, UK



## PREFACE

Obstacles, real and imagined, stand between some people and higher education. Some may have left school early and/or lack the expected paper qualifications, some may have had family obligations which had priority, others may see a disability or the kind of life they live as denying them access, while others see higher education as something “people like us just do not do.” The need to include people like this, to *widen participation* in higher education, has received a lot of attention. It is variously seen as having the potential to support the national economy, to alter the nature of society, to enable equal opportunity, and to reduce alienation stemming from perceived or real exclusion.

From time to time, various strategies have been devised to encourage wider participation, and higher education institutions may be offered incentives if they increase their intake of under-represented groups, or are subject to disadvantages if they do not. But much less is available on the practicalities of making these students’ experience of higher education a successful one. This has been a personal and collective interest of the contributors to this book. Bringing together the various strands of interest has allowed us to describe the endeavour, and how the students’ needs may be met as they follow an introductory, *foundation year*, a preliminary year, or Year 0, in a university, preparing them to begin an undergraduate degree. During this year, students’ knowledge and skills are refreshed, updated, and extended, and they are inducted into ways of learning that are very different from those they met in school.

In what follows, we sometimes refer to these foundation year students as “non-traditional” students. They comprise those who are subject to



obstacles like those mentioned earlier, and they generally would find direct entry on a degree course of their choice unlikely, fruitless, or too daunting. Many could be described as “mature” students, largely from the UK, who are older than the majority of undergraduates commonly found in the UK’s higher education institutions; that is to say, they are over 21 years old, and often much older, often having had paid employment in the intervening years between school and the foundation year. Such students may feel there is or has been more than one obstacle between them and higher education. Others, described here as “international,” are from all parts of the world, particularly the Far East, and tend to be younger and lack the paper qualifications required for direct entry to a particular degree course. The term “non-traditional student” is a wide and somewhat vague one and can vary with context and cohort. We have indicated what it commonly means for us, but readers will be able to relate and interpret our accounts to suit their own contexts and their own students and, hopefully, find them of some practical use.

CAM, SJN, DPN,  
Durham University, 2016

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editors and contributors thank Rachel Dunn for her work in reading and painstakingly putting these diverse chapters into a uniform layout, and drawing our attention to some errors of commission and omission. Any that still remain are ours.

All editors and contributors are currently based at Durham University, except Sarah Learmonth, who is at Cambridge University.



# CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Barriers to Accessing Higher Education</b>	<b>1</b>
	Catherine A. Marshall	
<b>2</b>	<b>Understanding Foundation Year Provision</b>	<b>19</b>
	Steve Leech, Catherine A. Marshall, and Geoff Wren	
<b>3</b>	<b>Language Issues Facing Non-Traditional Students: Some Problems and Solutions</b>	<b>41</b>
	Megan Bruce, Simon Rees, and Julie Wilson	
<b>4</b>	<b>Teaching Mathematics to Adults: Integrating New and Old Knowledge</b>	<b>57</b>
	Mary Dodd, Jean Mathias, and Sam J. Nolan	
<b>5</b>	<b>Breaking Barriers: Overcoming Anxieties in Practical Science</b>	<b>73</b>
	Sam J. Nolan, Simon Rees, and Carole Rushall	
<b>6</b>	<b>Selecting Mature Learners: A Toolkit for Admissions Tutors</b>	<b>89</b>
	Ian Moreton	

<b>7 Challenges and Opportunities in Using Facebook to Build a Community for Students at a UK University</b>	105
Nick Pearce and Sarah Learmonth	
<b>8 Engendering an Online Community: Supporting Students on the Transition into University Life</b>	119
Sam J. Nolan, Megan Bruce, and Steve Leech	
<b>9 Culture Shock: Applying the Lessons from International Student Acculturation to Non-Traditional Students</b>	133
Catherine A. Marshall and Jinhua Mathias	
<b>10 Adjusting Teaching Practices for Mature Adults to Incorporate Understandings of Affective Processes and Self-efficacy in Maths</b>	151
Mary D. Dodd	
<b>11 Students' Academic Emotions, Their Effects and Some Suggestions for Teaching Practices</b>	165
Douglas P. Newton	
<b>12 Stories with a Foundation</b>	179
Catherine A. Marshall	
<b>Index</b>	189

## CONTRIBUTORS

*Megan Bruce, BA (Dunelm), MA, DELTA, SFHEA* is a senior teaching fellow and Director of Learning and Teaching in the Foundation Centre. Her disciplinary background is Linguistics and Lexicography, and her scholarly interests include corpus building and native-speaker English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

*Mary Dodd, Ed.D, M.A, BSc, ACGI, FHEA, PGCE* is a senior teaching fellow at Durham University. Following her first degree in Chemical Engineering, Mary taught a variety of maths and science courses before joining the Foundation Centre in 1995. Mary's scholarly interests focus mainly on adults' mathematics learning and the interaction of previous learning and emotion with new mathematics learning.

*Sarah Learmonth, BA* is a criminology postgraduate student at the University of Cambridge. Sarah is a previous student of the Durham University Foundation Centre, where she later held the role of Social Media Assistant. Following completion of her undergraduate degree at Durham University, Sarah is now researching technology within prison education programmes.

*Steve Leech, BSc, MSc, FHEA* is a teaching fellow with a disciplinary background in Anthropology and has taught at the Foundation Centre for 11 years. Steve's scholarly interests include fair access in recruitment, widening participation, and supporting care leavers and veterans in higher education. Steve is the Secretary of the Foundation Year Network, a national body which represents foundation year practitioners in the UK.

*Catherine A. Marshall, MA (Oxon), EdD, PGCE(Science)* is Director of the Foundation Centre at Durham University and Chair of the national Foundation Year Network. Catherine joined the Foundation Centre in 1994 and has been

instrumental in its development. Her scholarly interests focus on students' self-efficacy and conscientiousness and how these affect student outcomes.

*Jinhua Mathias, PhD, FHEA* is a teaching fellow with a disciplinary background in Mathematics and Engineering and has taught at the Durham University's Foundation Centre for some six years. Jinhua's scholarly interests include international student resilience and cultural adjustment, peer mentoring and mature students learning of mathematics.

*Ian Moreton, FRSA* is a teaching fellow with a background in engineering and has taught at Durham University's Foundation Centre for some eight years. Ian's scholarly interests focus on issues surrounding the selection of students in a WP context.

*Douglas P. Newton, BSc, MEd, PhD, DSc, SFHEA* is a professor with a background in science and is a lecturer in Science and Technology Education. His scholarly interests include strategies to support productive purposeful thinking, such as reasoning, understanding, creative and critical thinking, and wisdom. Some recent, related books are *Teaching for Understanding* and *Thinking with Feeling* (Routledge, London).

*Sam J. Nolan, MSci, PhD, SFHEA* is Assistant Director of the Centre for Academic, Researcher and Organisation Development at Durham University. From 2010 to 2015 Sam led the Foundation Centre's Scholarship Forum and co-developed the Centre's strategy for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Sam's own scholarly interests include student transition, laboratory skills development, and conceptual understanding.

*Nick Pearce, PhD* teaches sociology and anthropology at the Durham University Foundation Centre, and managed their social media presences across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. He has published widely around the use of social media such as YouTube and Pinterest in his teaching and was recently named in the top 50 UK higher education social media influencers by JISC.

*Simon Rees, BSc, PhD, SFHEA* is a teaching fellow with a disciplinary background in Chemistry and has taught at the Foundation Centre for some six years. Simon's scholarly interests include the language of chemistry and virtual experimentation.

*Carole Rushall, BSc, MSc, FHEA* is a teaching fellow with a background in Environmental Science, Geology and Cartography and has taught at the Foundation Centre for 16 years. Carole's scholarly interests include developing virtual fieldwork resources and mature student transition into higher education.

*Julie Wilson, BA* is a teaching fellow who has been teaching at the Foundation Centre for six years. Her disciplinary background is in English and linguistics,