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# Widening Access...Dismantling Barriers...Promoting Success

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Access



access



widening participation



lifelong learning



social inclusion

A shifting  
nomenclature  
across the '60s  
to the 21C



# *political/policy/practice shifts*



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new students = new institutions



new students = new programmes



new students = new culture of diversity



new students = new learning ie new discourse of accessing  
flexible learning



OFFA-led changes to *all* HEIs



# *some HE dysfunctions or barriers...*



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- ▶ a concept of institutional diversity that embraces “*our best universities*”
- ▶ a *fair* admissions debate predicated on the routing of A-level students to the “*best*” university of their choice
- ▶ an approach to HE delivery where the “*boarding school*” model persists
- ▶ a failure to fully acknowledge/calibrate learning-in-the-workplace
- ▶ Scant attention to vocational qualifications
- ▶ *and much more...*



# *Government Policy & Initiatives*



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- ▶ 50% participation
- ▶ Greater working class representation
- ▶ Students contribute to cost
- ▶ Maintain retention levels
- ▶ Regional imperative
- ▶ Foundation degrees
- ▶ Fair Access

Summer schools;  
Excellence Challenge;  
P4P; Excellence  
Fellows; Aimhigher;  
14-19 review; LLNs

*Hence:*



# *Aimhigher*



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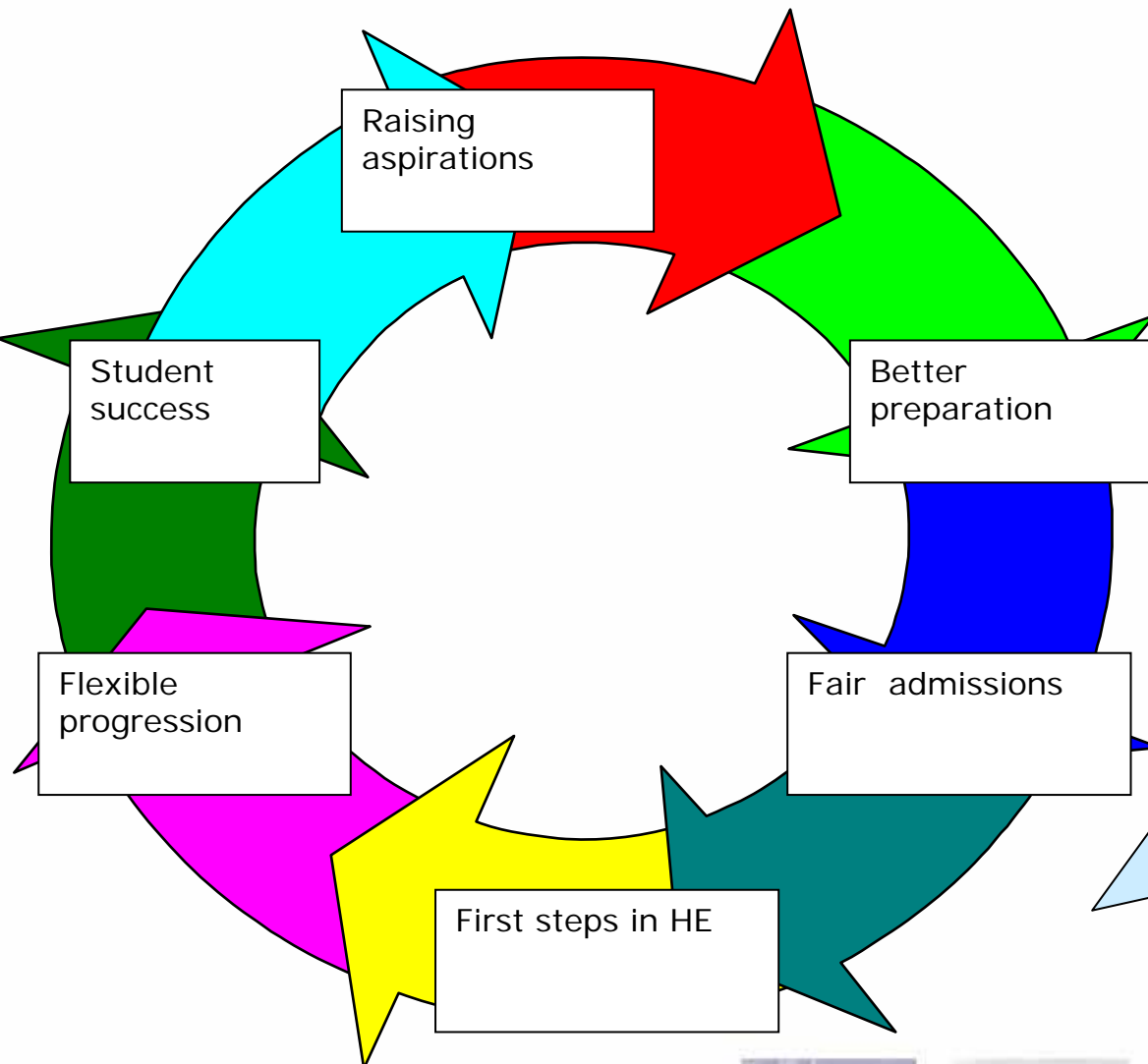
## *Seeks to:*

- ▶ Raise aspirations
- ▶ Build capacity
- ▶ Affect demand
- ▶ Raise attainment
- ▶ Facilitate progression





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**So, which HE models might best promote diverse student success??**





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## *Model One: Join the Club*

*“This is the type of university we are and we will work with you to help **you** fit in”*

### *Characteristics*

Gold standard emphasis,  
*provider-led*

High demand

Well developed and polished school links





# Model Two: Different Products



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University club becomes more welcoming ...a little

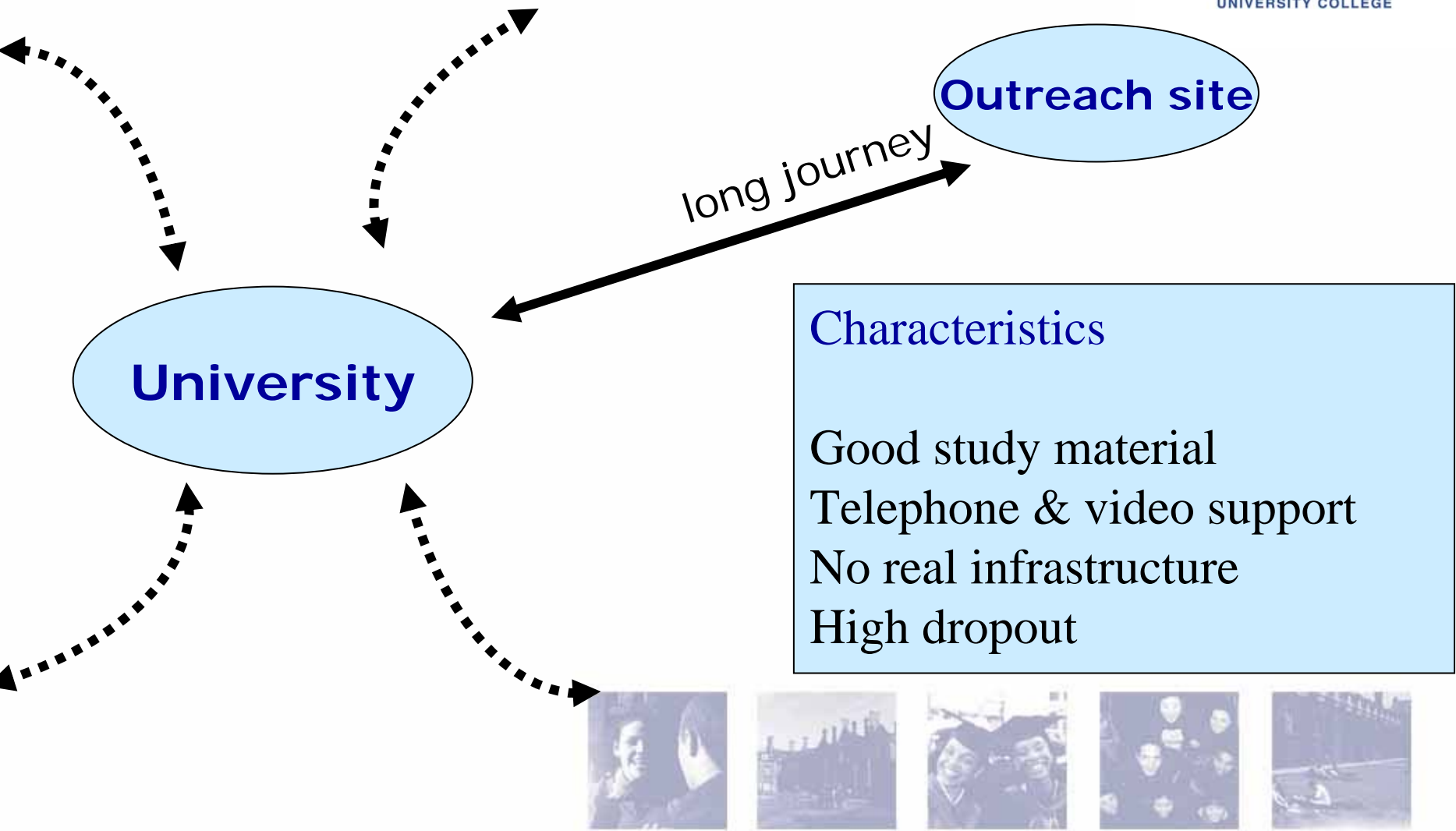
## Characteristics

Provides special courses  
Different support model  
Planned approach to delivery  
*But* danger of ghettoisation & marginalisation

*Early approach* =  
Access course or  
Extramural  
*New Approach* =  
Foundation degrees



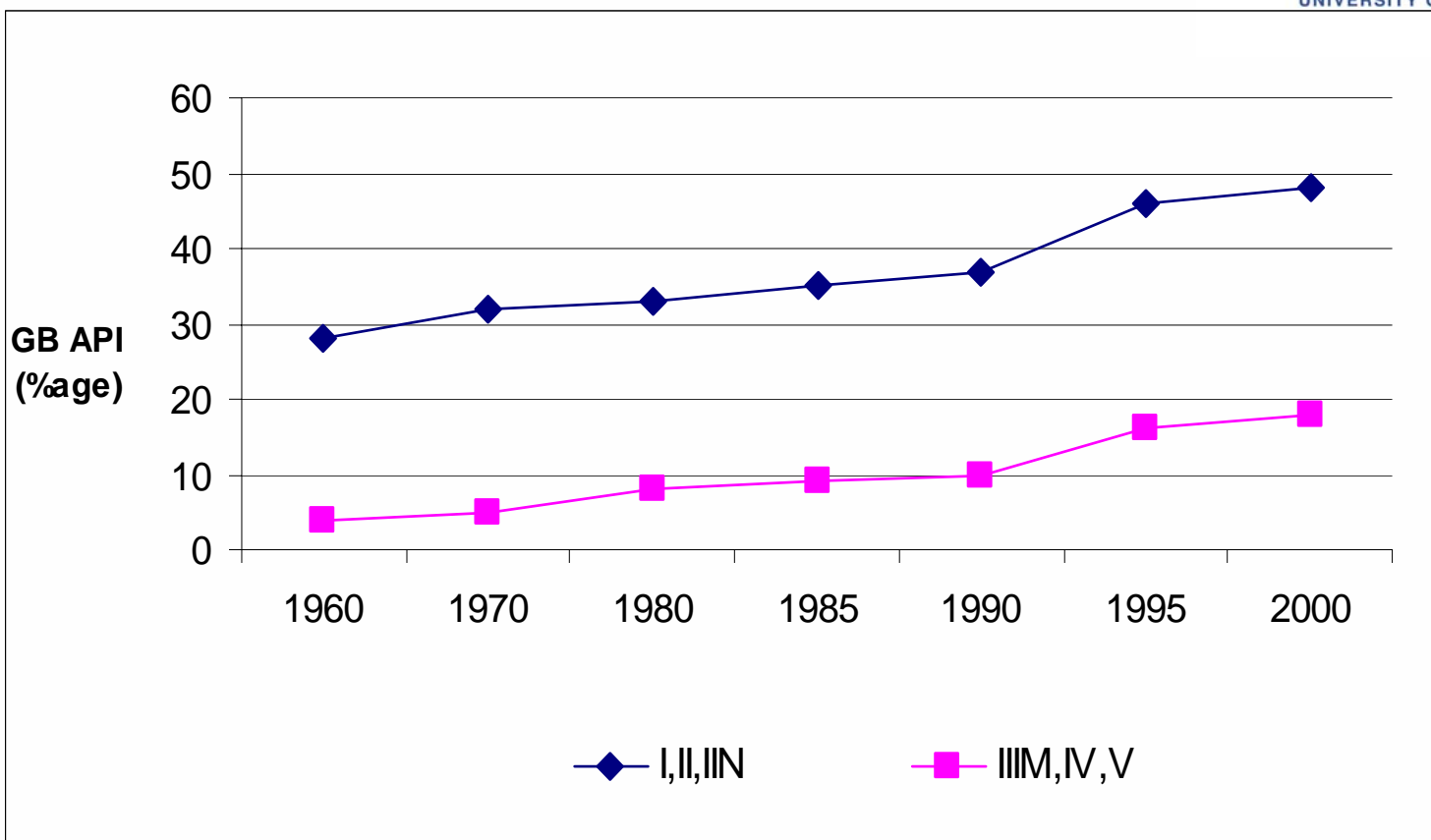
# Model Three: Take it to the People



# Participation in HE: Social Class



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# *Barriers to entry with vocational qualifications*

Connor et al, 2-06



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- ▶ parity of esteem
- ▶ awareness/perceptions re subject relevance or curriculum fit
- ▶ clarity of entry requirements/benchmarking of A levels
- ▶ misconceptions re commitment
- ▶ HEI resource constraints
- ▶ protection of 'standing' amongst selector HEIs
- ▶ personal barriers re aspiration/confidence/strangeness of HEIs
- ▶ IAG quality



# *Possible Interventions - around Vocational Qualifications (VQs)*



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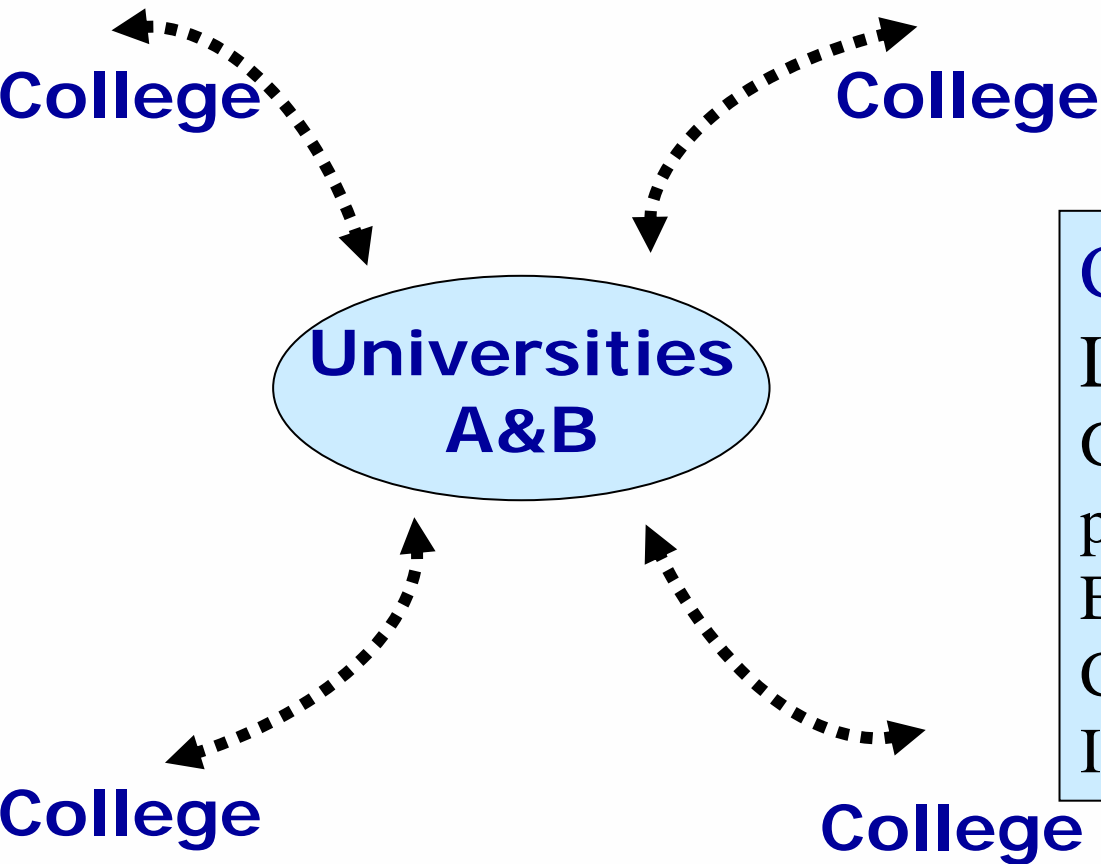
- ▶ develop knowledge/positive attitudes re VQ
- ▶ flexible use of UCAS tariff & Level 3 VQs
- ▶ research better description/communication re VQs
- ▶ *course*-related outreach to vocational students
- ▶ improve UCAS & HESA data on entry qualifications
- ▶ early research on how VQ students choose courses
- ▶ information exchange about T&L with students from VQ entry



# Model Four: LLN Partnership



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- Characteristics**
- Local presence
  - Guaranteed vocational progression
  - Employment linked
  - Curriculum development
  - Individual learner plans





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## *LLN distinctiveness*

- ▶ **progression agreements** with guarantees/ organisational structures to deliver them
- ▶ **embrace FE/HE**; including one research-intensive HEI
- ▶ demonstrate **stakeholder consultation** & involvement
- ▶ meet sub-regional and **regional priorities**
- ▶ set **quantifiable student targets** for entry & progression
- ▶ provide/develop explicit Information, Advice and Guidance (*IAG*) for target learners
- ▶ **curriculum innovation** to facilitate progression eg T&L strategies, flexible study support services etc



# *Development of LLNs since 2004*



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***Nationally:*** 14 Networks; investment of £47m  
75 HEIs; 160 FECs  
Practitioner Network Group led by HY

***Locally:*** ***Higher York (HY)***

Attractive accessible website: 4 HEI/FECs  
Courses from archaeology  $\Rightarrow$  sociology and sport  
City Life...look after yourself...student groups  
New entrants to HE : 687 over 8 subjects





# *Defining Higher York...*



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Higher York is York & North Yorkshire's LLN linking college and university education for the benefit of students, staff, employers and the wider community. It will:

- ▶ provide guaranteed routes for local people to enter and move through education and training
- ▶ listen and respond to learner and employer needs
- ▶ create more flexible study options
- ▶ simplify and clarify information about lifelong learning and student support





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# *Strand 1: LLL & Curriculum*

- ▶ widening participation
- ▶ increasing access & progression
- ▶ integrating Further (vocational) & HE pathways
- ▶ 8 key curriculum areas

*Art, Design and Creative Industries*

*Business and Management*

*Health Sciences*

*Sports, Leisure and Tourism*

*Electrical Engineering and Electronics*

*Archaeology*

*Bioscience*

*IT*



## *Strand 2: Students & Wider Community*



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- ▶ learners at the heart of Higher York.
- ▶ Higher York Student Union (HYSU) support/social activities
- ▶ enhanced information, advice and guidance

## *Strand 3: HE Gateway:*

- ▶ Sharing and developing best practice eg T&L
- ▶ Marketing and Communications
- ▶ Staff Development and Training
- ▶ HY Conferences and events
- ▶ Link with/ lead regional and national LLN developments
- ▶ Equal Opportunities



# *From the Margins to the Mainstream:*

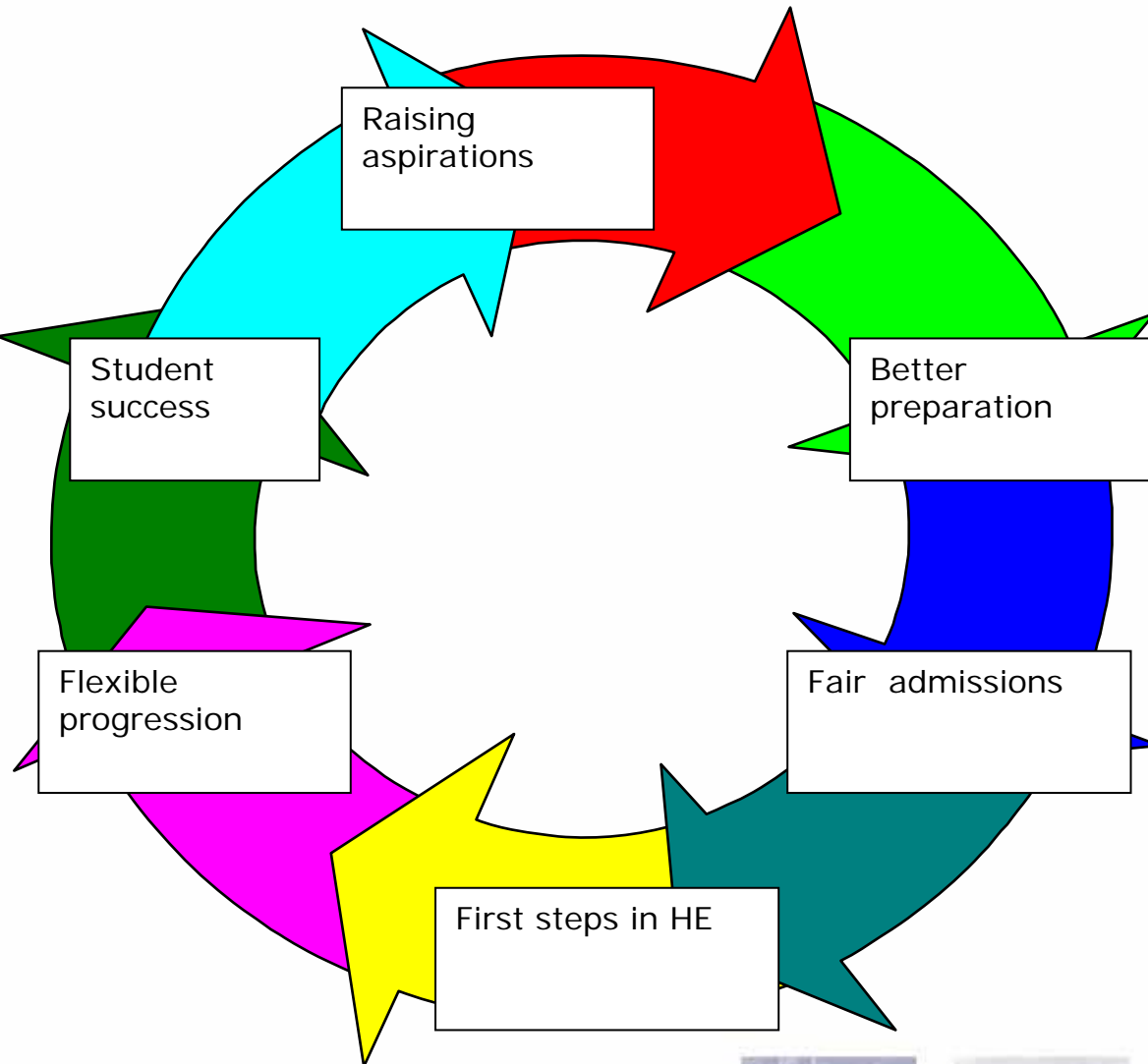


## *some key messages*

UUK/SCOP 2005 YORK ST JOHN  
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- ▶ *embedding message*: demonstrate HEI-wide benefit/use WP premium
- ▶ *targetting message*: understand/focus on under-represented groups
- ▶ *vocational qualifications message*: needs movement into & through HE; needs HE attitude shift!
- ▶ *lifecycle message*: 87% interventions at pre-entry, access & admissions (other 13% = learning support, not embedding change)
- ▶ *measurement message*: tools & data needed to assess impact





**In other words,  
taking the  
student life-cycle  
seriously  
matters...**



***Progressing to higher education: vocational qualifications and admissions***, Helen Connor, Elaine Sinclair and Nicole Banerji, Action on Access, February 2006



***From the Margins to the Mainstream: Embedding widening participation in higher education***, Universities UK, SCOP, December 2005

***C is for College, for Collaboration and Creativity: some SCOP reflections on widening participation***, Dianne Willcocks, Chapter 2, *Widening Participation: which way forward for English higher education?* Edited by Chris Duke and Geoff Layer, NIACE, 2005

