



Centre for
Teaching
and Learning

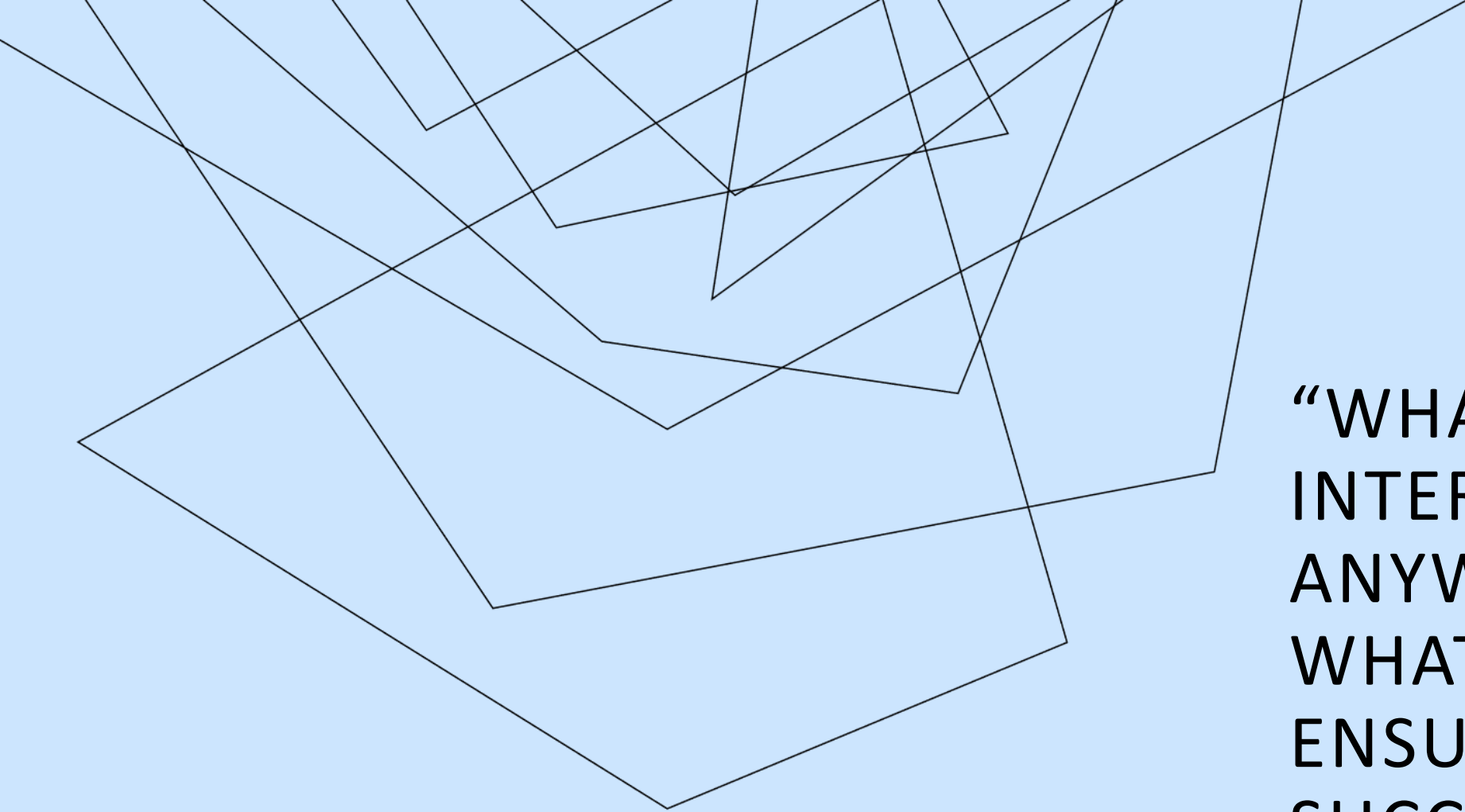


What's an intervention, anyway? What we 'do' to ensure student success in HE

Professor Liz Austen, Interim Associate Dean Teaching & Learning, Sheffield Hallam University and the Evaluation Collective

Chair: Lauren Schaefer, VP Postgraduate Education and Access, Oxford SU

Unlocking the Future of Fair Access – Wednesday 23 October 2024

The top-left portion of the slide features a series of thin, black, overlapping lines that form various geometric shapes, including triangles and polygons, creating a complex, abstract pattern.

**“WHAT’S AN
INTERVENTION,
ANYWAY?
WHAT WE ‘DO’ TO
ENSURE STUDENT
SUCCESS IN HE**

Professor Liz Austen

Associate Dean Teaching & Learning

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OVERVIEW

“What’s an intervention, anyway?”

- Provocation
- Definitions
- Examples
- Policy overview (student voices example)
- Does it matter?

Austen & McCaig (eds) (forthcoming 2025)
Delivering and Evaluating Participation after
Access: Higher Education in a Marketised
System, Emerald Publishing



A PROVOCATION

The APP asks us to define deliverable interventions to ensure student success.

Is inclusive teaching an ‘intervention’?



What do we do? What do we call it? Why does it matter?

An intervention is:

1. designed in response to a known student success problem
2. delivered at any point in the student's academic journey
3. delivered within or outwith the curriculum
4. is time bound with a clear beginning and end point for the student and the delivery team
5. has an immediate focus on short term and intermediate outcomes with aspirations to track over the longer term
6. should be strategically aligned

.....can be confidently evaluated

Types of Intervention (Participation)

Academic and Learning Support Interventions

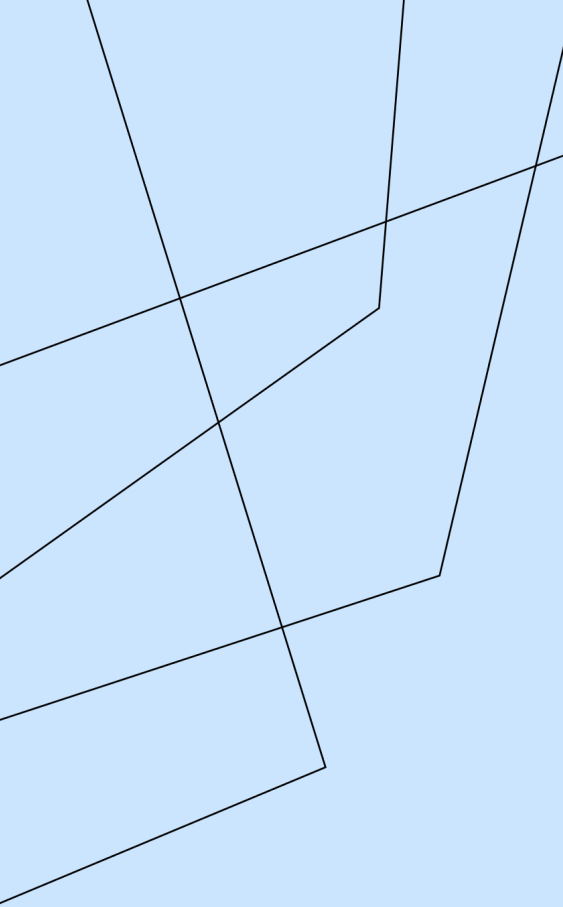
- e.g. targeted assessment support, academic advising/personal tutoring

Learning Community Interventions

- e.g. mentoring, peer coaching, co/extra curricular events/networks

Personal Support Interventions

- wellbeing and welfare support, financial support, careers advice and guidance



What isn't an intervention? (Participation)

- Teaching and learning, good pedagogic practices and evidence informed curriculum design
- Course organisation and timetabling
- A sound data infrastructure



Why does it matter?

- What is delivered, by whom, and in what circumstances influences how it will be evaluated
- What is delivered, by whom, and in what circumstances influences student engagement in co-design
- What is delivered, by whom, and in what circumstances influences what student voices data is gathered

An example: Student Voices in 'Participation' Evaluation

	UK Quality Code	Access and Participation Plan
	Quality and Standards of Teaching and Learning	Impact of Interventions on Equality of Opportunity
Evaluation	Periodic, retrospective assessment of an area of work, project or academic provision and, in particular, of the impact of any action taken as a consequence of monitoring and reviewing.	A systematic assessment of the design, implementation and outcomes of an intervention. It involves understanding how an intervention is being, or has been, implemented and what effects it has, for whom and why.
Student Engagement	Engaging Students as Partners: Providers take deliberate steps to engage students as active partners in assuring and enhancing the quality of the student learning experience	Evidence of how students from a range of backgrounds have been, or will be, involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of the plan.



SUMMARY

- There are various activities that we do in the ‘participation’ space that contribute to student outcomes
- Not all of them can be described as an intervention
- Not all of them will be listed within the APP (the ‘everyday’)
- Teaching and learning might be listed as an intervention in the APP, but doesn’t quite fit with definitions
- There are other regulatory mechanisms which ensure evaluation of participation activities takes place
- Student engagement is a key theme throughout them all (APP, TEF, Quality...)
- Can we ensure some joined up, strategic thinking of delivery and evaluation to manage the evaluative burden on students?

REFERENCES & RESOURCES

To note:

Andrews et al (2023) Approaches to addressing the ethnicity degree awarding gap, <https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Approaches-to-addressing-the-ethnicity-degree-awarding-gap-executive-summary.pdf>

Austen et al (2021). Access, retention, attainment and progression: an integrative review of demonstrable impact on student outcomes, https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/advance-he/AdvHE_Access-Retention-Attainment-Progression_literature%20review_1637334590.pdf

OfS Regulatory Notice 1:

https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/8927/regulatory_notice-1_access_participation_plan_guidance_december_2023.pdf

QAA (2024) UK Quality Code, <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/2024>

To read:

Moore & Summers (2023) Evaluating the everyday <https://taso.org.uk/news-item/evaluating-the-everyday/>