

Welcome to the second issue of the Continuum newsletter. Since our first edition, work within the Centre has moved on at a great pace exploring a variety of important areas of widening participation policy and practice. This is reflected in the considerable number of contacts made with colleagues in the UK and overseas, and in the range of research projects in which we are involved, some flagged in this issue. The launch event for Continuum was a milestone, as was the appointment of our first Research Associates. We are delighted to welcome a new administration co-ordinator and our first Research Fellow. In a range of ways we continue to support the national policy development agenda on widening participation which is being taken forward by both HEFCE and LSC. Internationally, we work closely with the Swedish government's widening participation initiative, particularly in sharing experiences from the UK; and we have also contributed to policy developments in South Africa.

John Storan

Continuum OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED

The launch event for Continuum provided an opportunity for representatives from not only the education and art sector to meet together but also policy makers and practitioners involved in widening participation developments. In opening Continuum, the then Lifelong Learning and Higher Education Minister, Margaret Hodge MP paid tribute to the value of the new Centre's work, recognising the important contribution it can make developing our understanding of the factors which affect participation in learning.

UEL Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Thorne, stated: *"Continuum represents a unique development both for widening participation in UK higher education and for our University, where expanding access and student success are central to our mission."*

In his address John Storan, Continuum Director, said that Continuum aims to become a strategic national and international resource for the research of widening

participation policy and practice. It was, John said, highly appropriate that UEL should be establishing this centre given the experience and commitment to widening participation. John concluded by outlining the initial work plan for Continuum. He emphasised that partnership working will be at the heart of Continuum's research and development work.



UEL Vice-Chancellor Michael Thorne, Margaret Hodge MP, Minister for Lifelong Learning and Higher Education and John Storan, Continuum Director at the launch.

London East arena for research in CATS post 16

Continuum is currently carrying out a Learning Skills Council (LSC) funded scoping study focused on determining the capacity to develop a credit accumulation and transfer system (CATS) for 16-19 provision in London East. Within the context of widening participation policy and

practice, CATS is perceived as an important means of facilitating participation through contributing to student-centeredness and learner motivation as well as to flexibility and choice within provision. This research attempts to understand the issues surrounding CATS including

investigating the perceived benefits of CATS and any potential obstacles toward its development from the point of view of the main stakeholders. For more information on this work, please contact Continuum or email j.andreshak-behrman@uel.ac.uk

£1.3 million research contract on ethnicity and employment

Continuum has been commissioned to lead a national research project which will critically explore the relation between ethnicity and employment. The project will span three years and will mean setting up of five research centres across England including University of Bradford, Leeds Metropolitan University and Edge Hill University College. The project's focus is a pressing issue, Higher Education Statistics Agency research indicates that some ethnic minority

graduates are nearly twice as likely to be unemployed as their white counterparts and perform less well at all stages of a selection process.

Announcing the contract, Continuum Director John Storan said: *"This is an area which has been under researched for too long. This project, bringing together a national partnership of researchers, will address some of the key questions relating to inequalities faced by minority ethnic graduates*

entering the labour market." The project is being funded by the European Union and will start in January 2004.

As for Continuum, this project entails a quite rapid growth for the centre since the start in January 2003. A number of research appointments will be made, adding to the Continuum team. More detailed information and updates on the project's program will be reported on in later editions of the Continuum Newsletter.

Continuum Bulletin Board

The following publication may be ordered from Ulrika Högberg at the Continuum office. Tel: 020 8223 2162 E-mail: U.M.Hogberg@uel.ac.uk

Transfine report – UK study

UK-wide review of the accreditation of informal learning.

Continuum website not far ahead

During autumn Continuum will launch its own website. The site will include descriptions and updates of the different projects in which the Centre is involved and publications, as well as useful links to organisations and areas related to the work of Continuum. At the site you will also be able to find all the issues of the Newsletter and the very latest from Continuum.

Continuum's international touch

Members of staff Ulrika Högberg and Julie Andreshak-Behrman add an international touch to the Continuum team. Ulrika finished her university studies in International Business Administration in Sweden and has joined the Centre as administration co-ordinator. With experience as a freelance writer, Ulrika will among other things set up Continuum's website, manage the newsletter and she is also a valuable asset in Continuum's partnership with the Swedish Special Committee on Recruitment to Higher Education.

Julie Andreshak-Behrman joined the Continuum team in August as Research Fellow. This past June Julie completed a PhD in Comparative and International Development Education at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (USA). Julie brings with her research, teaching, and administrative experience with an international perspective. She has worked in the US, Poland, and Morocco. Currently, Julie's primary responsibility is to undertake LSC-funded research focusing on credit transfer and accumulation for young people in London East.

Continuum Professional Associates announced

We are delighted to announce three colleagues who have made outstanding contributions to the research and development of widening participation and lifelong learning as our first professional associates to Continuum. They are:

Dr Pat Davies – Senior Research Fellow in the School of Education, University of Sheffield and the Executive Secretary

of the European Universities Continuing Education Network (EUCEN).

Professor Michael Osborne – Deputy Head of the Institute of Education and Co-director of the Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning at the University of Stirling.

Professor Akpovire Oduaran – Head of Department of Adult Education at the University of Botswana.



Professional Associate Professor Akpovire Oduaran, University of Botswana and Director John Storan at the FACE 2003 conference.