

***Urban Scholars' Alumni
Reflect on their
Experiences of a Widening
Access Intervention and
Offer Their Advice to
Practitioners.***

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Programme Aims

- Increased achievement
- Promote engagement with learning
- More focused aspirations
- Increased understanding of self and life-world
- Increased HE orientation

Also, to Construct a model which could be replicated by practitioners in different settings.



Collaborations

- 31 Schools
- 300 Urban Scholars (& Alumni)
- Brunel University
- Business Links
- Families & Friends*

Scholar – parent* – school – University and businesses partnership established in 2000.



THE Moody's FOUNDATION

Programme Components

- Subject-specific teaching
- Critical Thinking course
- Development of study skills
- Undergraduate mentors
- Families and friends days
- Careers advice
- Outside Speakers (alumni)
- Personal research projects
- Wellbeing

Some personal advice to widening participation programmes

- 1. Sustained intervention and longevity
- 2. More focused aspirations and goal setting
- 3. Training and use of critical thinking
- 4. Students are informed about pathways they are interested in and equipped with the appropriate skills.

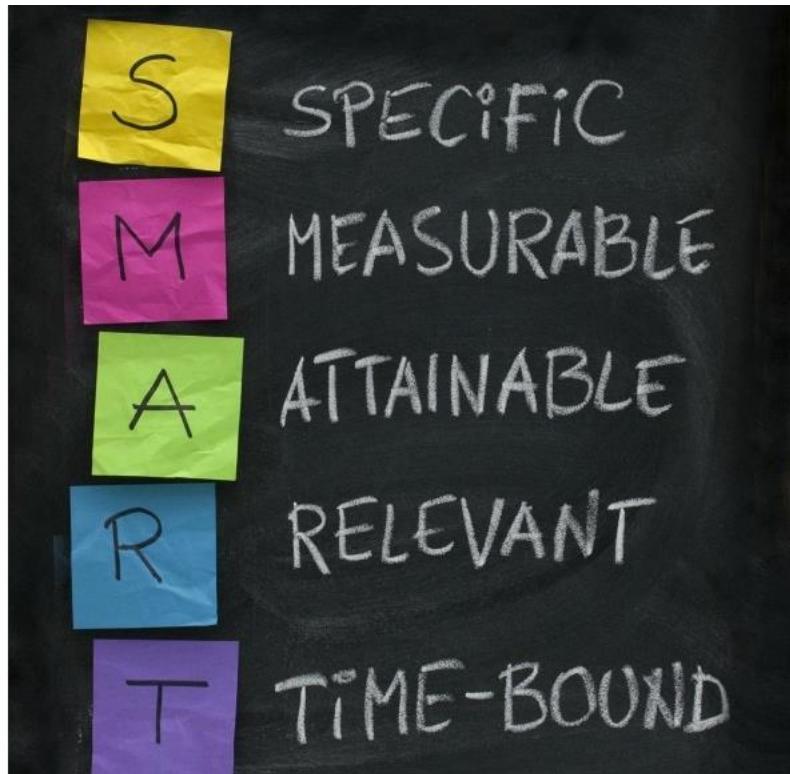
Importance of sustained intervention

- I was an ‘Urban Scholar’ for 6 years!
- A lot of work goes into the continued development of a young person.
- A few sessions simply doesn’t suffice to meet the ambitious targets of many widening participation programmes.
- Different students have different needs
- ROI on time: students see the benefit of investing their time

Critical thinking and pedagogy

- “Critical thinking is reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do” Ennis 1995
- Evaluative thinking which constructs, attacks and defends arguments. A positive and “skilful” activity.
- Requires students to be active learners rather than passive receivers of information
- Education for life - Develops basic skills which can be transferred to other subjects
- Provides an opportunity to develop ideas and explore a range of cultural, moral and spiritual issues
- Requires students to express themselves with clarity and precision in written and spoken form
- Promotes metacognition

More focussed aspirations

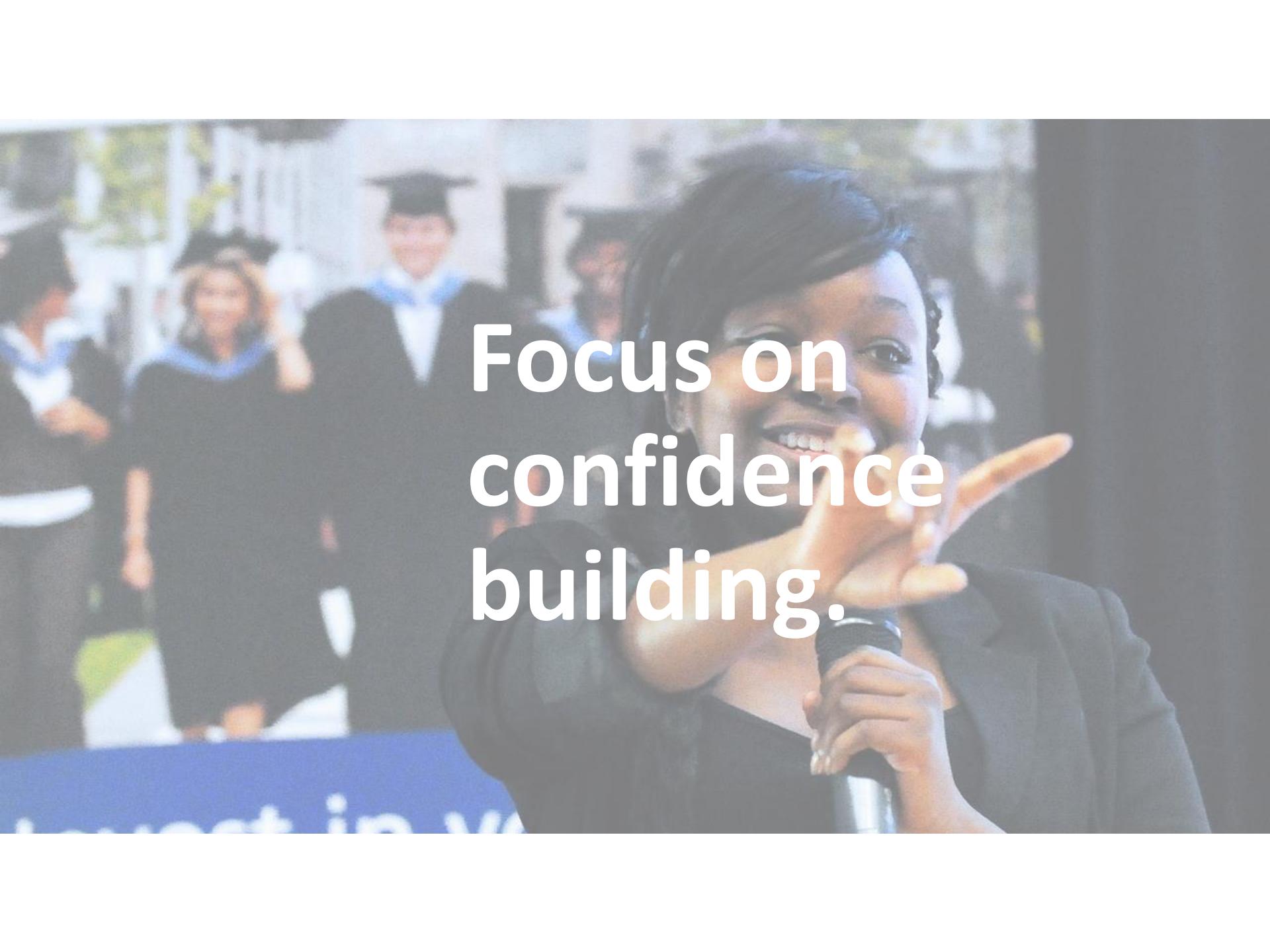


- Insight into the difference between a dream and an aspiration
- Encouraged to think about realistic aspirations
- Setting realistic goals helps to reinforce accomplishment and motivation

Informed and supported students

- Students are making decisions that will have a great impact on the rest of their lives.
- Not to push students into a specific pathway, important that they take the realm and the appropriate knowledge and support provided for what they aspire towards.
- The majority of students who have no family history of higher education are uninformed or ill-equipped.
- Support in many forms (e.g. for HE, personal statements and interview skills).

Encourage
building
relationships and
people skills.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a black graduation gown and cap, is smiling and pointing her right index finger directly at the viewer. She is holding a microphone in her left hand. In the background, several other graduates in similar attire are visible, though slightly out of focus.

Focus on
confidence
building.

Key Findings

From the pilot programme

- The need to rectify the lack of basic skills, but catching up of basic skills was fast
- The need for longer, sustained programmes
- Campus influence
- Importance of mentors and outside speakers

From other groups

- Enhanced confidence
- Increased awareness of steps needed to achieve goals
- Increased HE orientation. Changed perception that '*University is not for us*'.
- Improved social skills
- Improved organisational skills
- Increased goal setting (short and long term)
- The Importance of making parents active partners
- Increased achievement

