

Selecting Mature learners

Towards a Toolkit for Admissions Tutors

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The Importance of mature Students

Groups Underrepresented in Higher Education:

- Members of lower socio-economic groups (LSEs)
- Students with disabilities
- Women
- **Mature students**
- Members of ethnic minority groups
- Ex-Services Personnel
- Students from a Care Background

“Large Majority of the Adult Population.” Tight (2012)



The Role of Foundation Programmes

Foundation Year Courses are:

‘particularly helpful in equipping students from non-traditional backgrounds with the skills necessary to succeed at university’

Milburn (2012, p.54)

At Durham, The Foundation Centre accounts for:

- Around 4% of admissions to undergraduate programmes
- Over 40% of the university’s mature entrants.

The Admissions Process

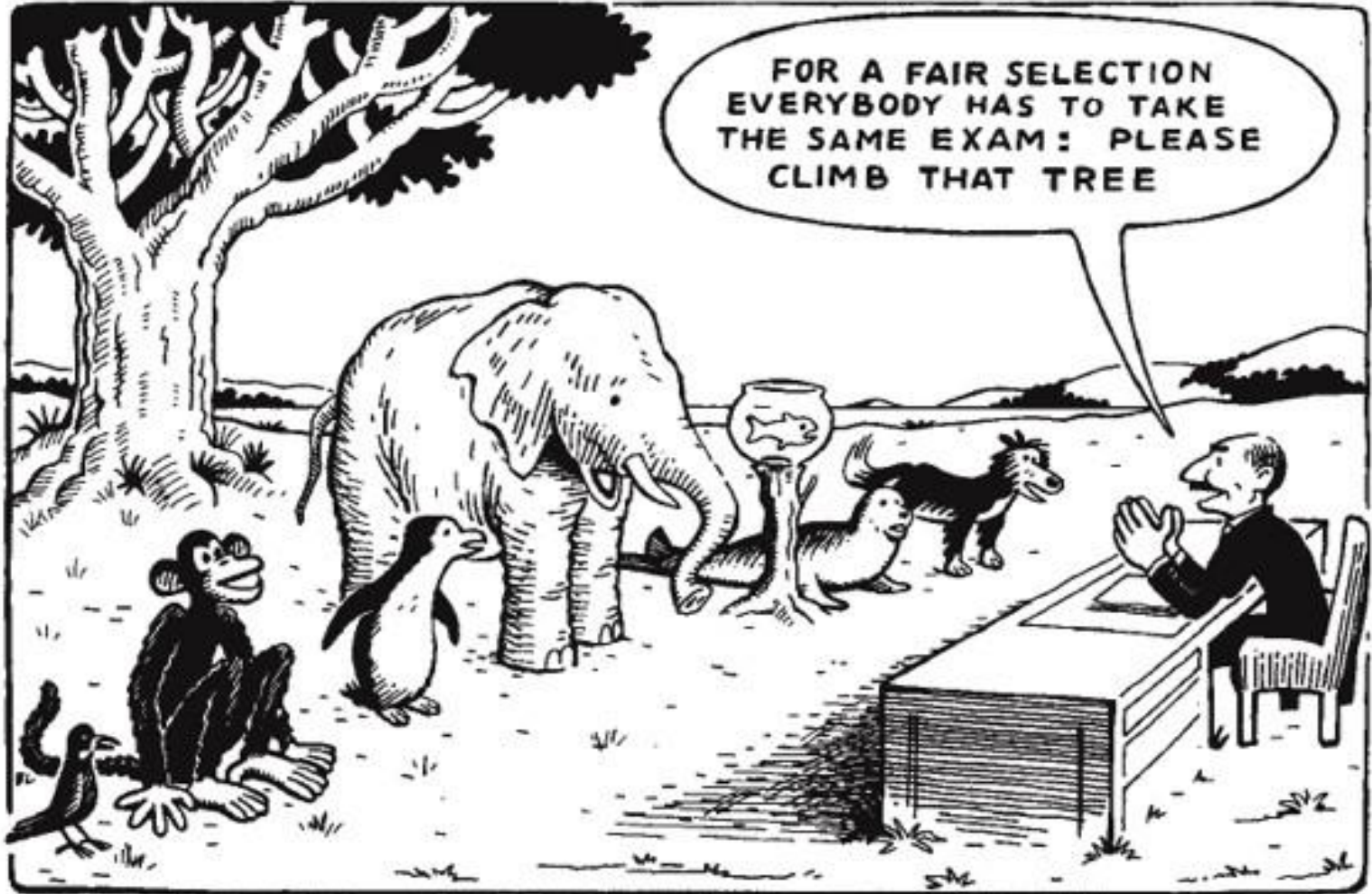
Admissions - the 'gap' between raising aspirations and the transition to higher education (Graham and Shaffer, 2011).

UCAS

Merit and Potential

- **Previous academic performance (GCSE; AS)**
- **Predicted academic performance (A-level, etc.)**
- **Personal statement**





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How do we choose?

“You’ll just know”

“After a while, you tend to get a feel for it”

“In a way, it’s really just a sort of gut feeling”

What Qualities Lead to Success?



Conscientiousness

Motivation

Resilience

Self-Efficacy

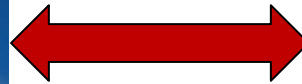
Grit



Survey

- 1: The University Student Motivation and Satisfaction Questionnaire v2.
(Neill, 2004)
- 2: General Self-Efficacy Questionnaire. (Luszczynska, Gutiérrez-Doña & Schwarzer, 2005).
- 3: Personal Resilience Questionnaire. (ODR)
- 4: Short Grit Scale. (Duckworth and Quinn, 2009)
- 5: NEO Personality Inventory. (Costa & McCrae, 1992)

Analysis



Incomplete

Some Initial Thoughts on First Analysis

- **Need to consider each discipline separately.**
- **Need to consider age groups separately.**
- **Measures of attributes worth considering in connection with a discipline/age group will form the basis of the toolkit**
- **BUT, on their own, most of these psychometric tests are not useful indicators of eventual attainment in this context.**

Where Next?

“You’ll just know”

“After a while, you tend to get a feel for it”

“In a way, it’s really just a sort of gut feeling”

Intuition

Paul Thagard’s model of decision-making:

Informed Intuition. (Thagard, 2000)

The Expert Selector

- Experienced in the subject
- Aware of any of the indicators suggested by the analysis of the psychometric tests – ‘*The Toolkit*’
- Use this information in conjunction with his/her intuition to reach an accept/reject decision

QUESTIONS



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