

# Equal Practices?

Findings from a comparative study of widening participation practices in pre and post-92 institutions.



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# About the approach and presentation

- Presented in a research informed comic format (e.g. Vigurs 2016; Sousanis 2015)
- Emerged as a result of positive response to use of Lego as a method of data gathering during interviews
- Focus on high level findings and designed to engage practitioners in the issues.

# EQUAL PRACTICES?

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF WP PRACTICES IN  
PRE AND POST-92 HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

THE STUDY SET OUT  
TO EXPLORE  
SIMILARITIES AND  
DIFFERENCES IN  
WIDENING  
PARTICIPATION POLICY  
AND PRACTICES  
ACROSS DIFFERENT  
TYPES OF  
INSTITUTIONS

A PRE-92 AND  
POST-92  
INSTITUTION FROM  
EACH CITY WAS  
SELECTED

DUE TO POLICY  
DIFFERENCES, THE FOCUS WAS  
ONLY ON ENGLAND



WHERE ARE THE INSTITUTIONS LOCATED?

## PHASE 1

THE 2016-17 ACCESS  
AGREEMENTS WERE ANALYSED TO  
IDENTIFY COMMON THEMES AND  
DIFFERENCES





# PHASE 2

WHO WAS  
INTERVIEWED?



EIGHT PRE-92  
STAFF FROM  
OUTREACH TEAMS

EIGHT POST-92  
STAFF FROM  
OUTREACH TEAMS

THIRTEEN  
FEMALES  
THREE MALES

THREE BAME

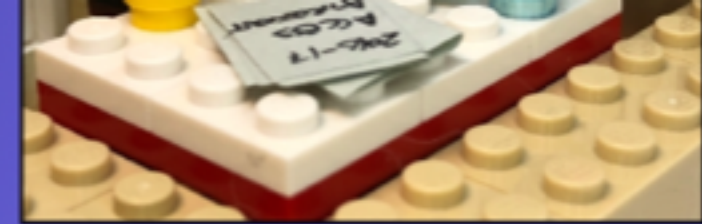
1 MONTH TO 17 YEARS IN  
WORKING IN WP

ALL DEGREE  
EDUCATED

TWELVE OF THE  
PARTICIPANTS WORKED  
IN INSTITUTIONS FROM THE  
INITIAL SAMPLE AND FOUR  
FROM THE WIDER  
SECTOR



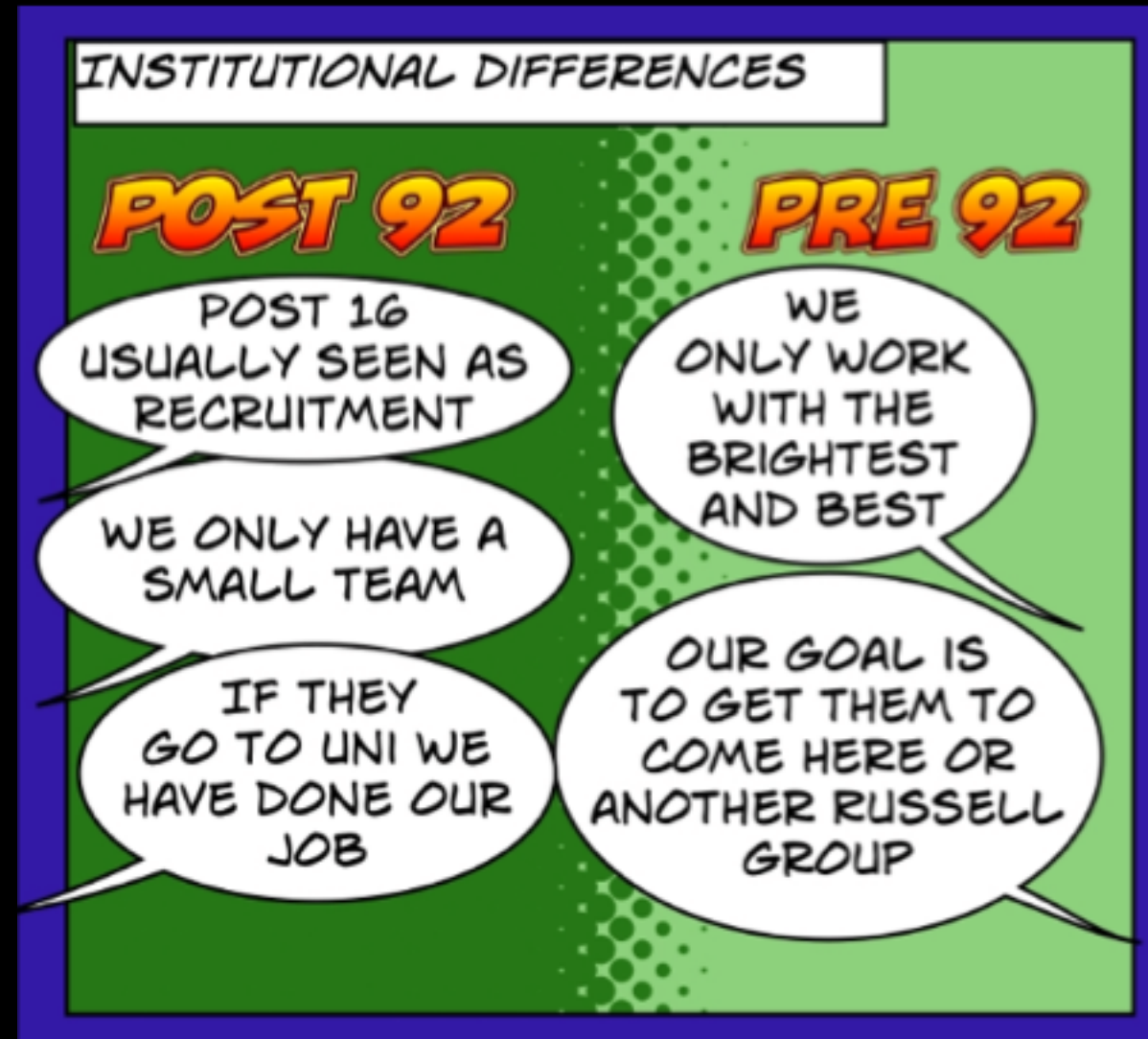
THE  
PRACTITIONERS  
WERE INTERVIEWED  
ABOUT THEIR WORK,  
CAREERS,  
UNDERSTANDINGS OF  
ASPIRATION AND  
TARGETING OF WP  
WORK



THE INTERVIEWS ALSO INCLUDED  
CREATIVE TASKS TO DISCUSS  
SOME OF THE THEMES ARISING  
FROM PHASE 1

# The same but different

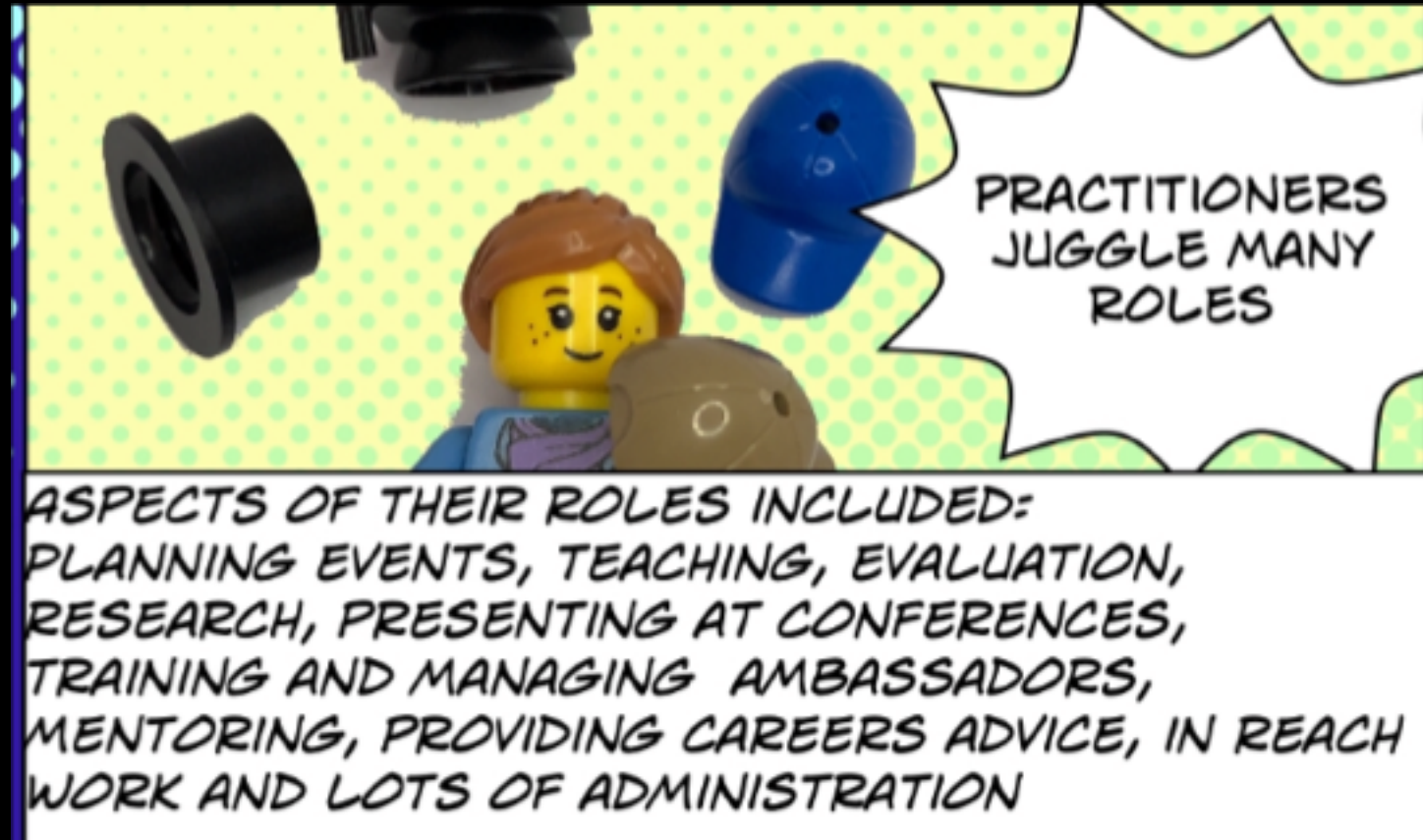
- More clear differences in texts than interviews
- Practitioners generally more focused on the needs of individuals they work with
- All focused on issues of access to their institutions to a greater or lesser extent
- Tension with recruitment was a recurrent theme in interviews especially in terms of resource allocation





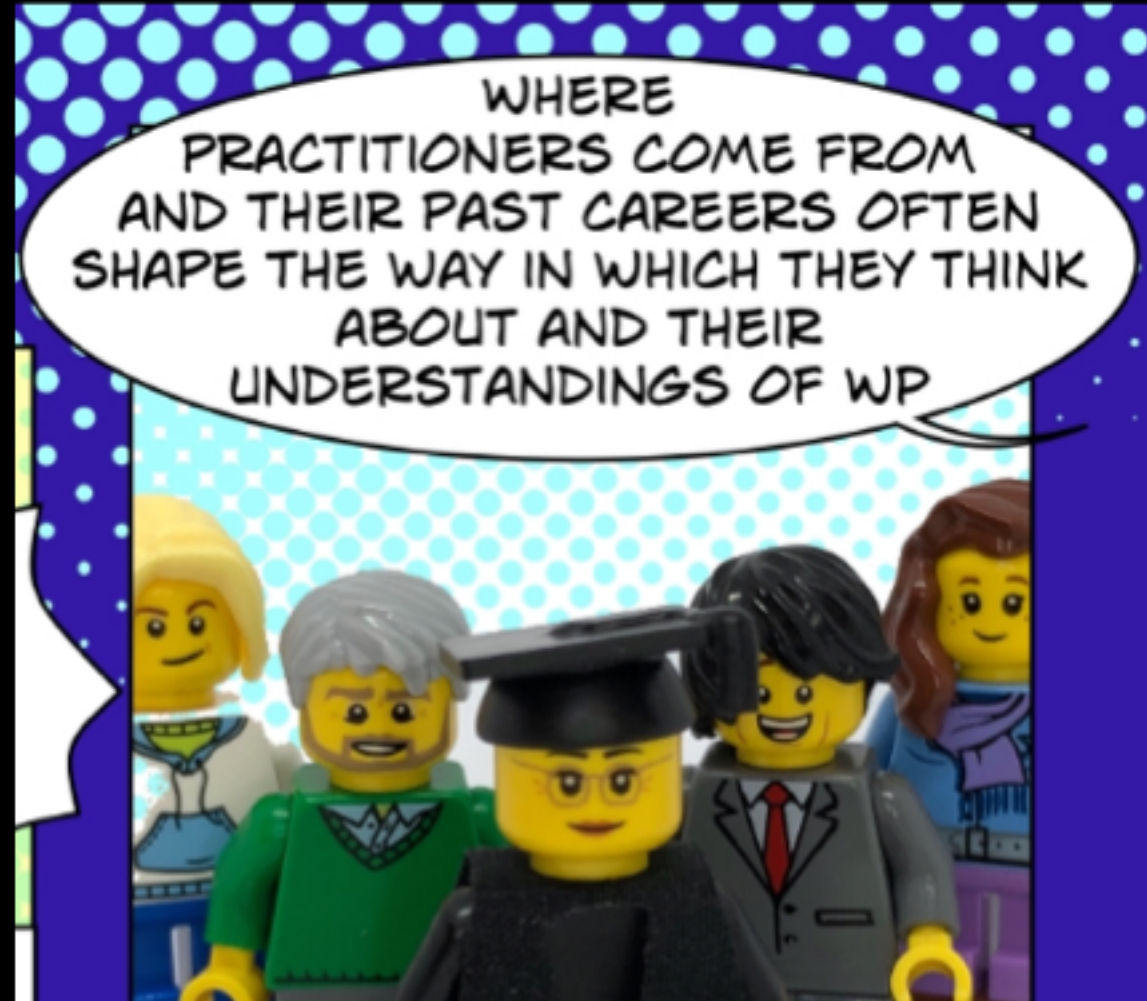
# Policy has created a role that is complex

- Issues of time and capacity seemed to be worse in smaller teams
- Time was a significant barrier to engagement with policy and evaluation
- The sense of doing more with less and the increasing reactivity of work was a clear theme



# Does it matter who delivers?

- Wide range of routes in:
- Varied Educational Backgrounds
- The 'accidental' WP practitioner
  - For some, first career
  - Ex-Teachers / FE lecturers
  - Careers practitioners
  - Marketing



# ‘Raising Aspirations?’

- Used in every access agreement analysed but to a varying extent
- On average mentioned more by pre-92 institutions
- Extensive literature critiquing the idea





THERE ARE LOTS OF  
CHALLENGES  
PRACTITIONERS FACE....

WE NEED TO  
INTERACT WITH  
MORE STUDENTS

WE  
NEED TO  
RECRUIT MORE  
STUDENTS

I WANT  
TO BE A  
PLUMBER

MY SCHOOL  
NEEDS....



POLICY CHANGES

TIME TO REFLECT

RAISE  
ATTAINMENT

DO MORE  
OUTREACH

THE SPEED OF  
POLICY CHANGES WAS A  
CONCERN FOR MANY

WHILST  
MOST  
EVALUATED THEIR  
WORK, FEW HAD TIME  
TO PROPERLY  
REFLECT ON THIS  
EVALUATION



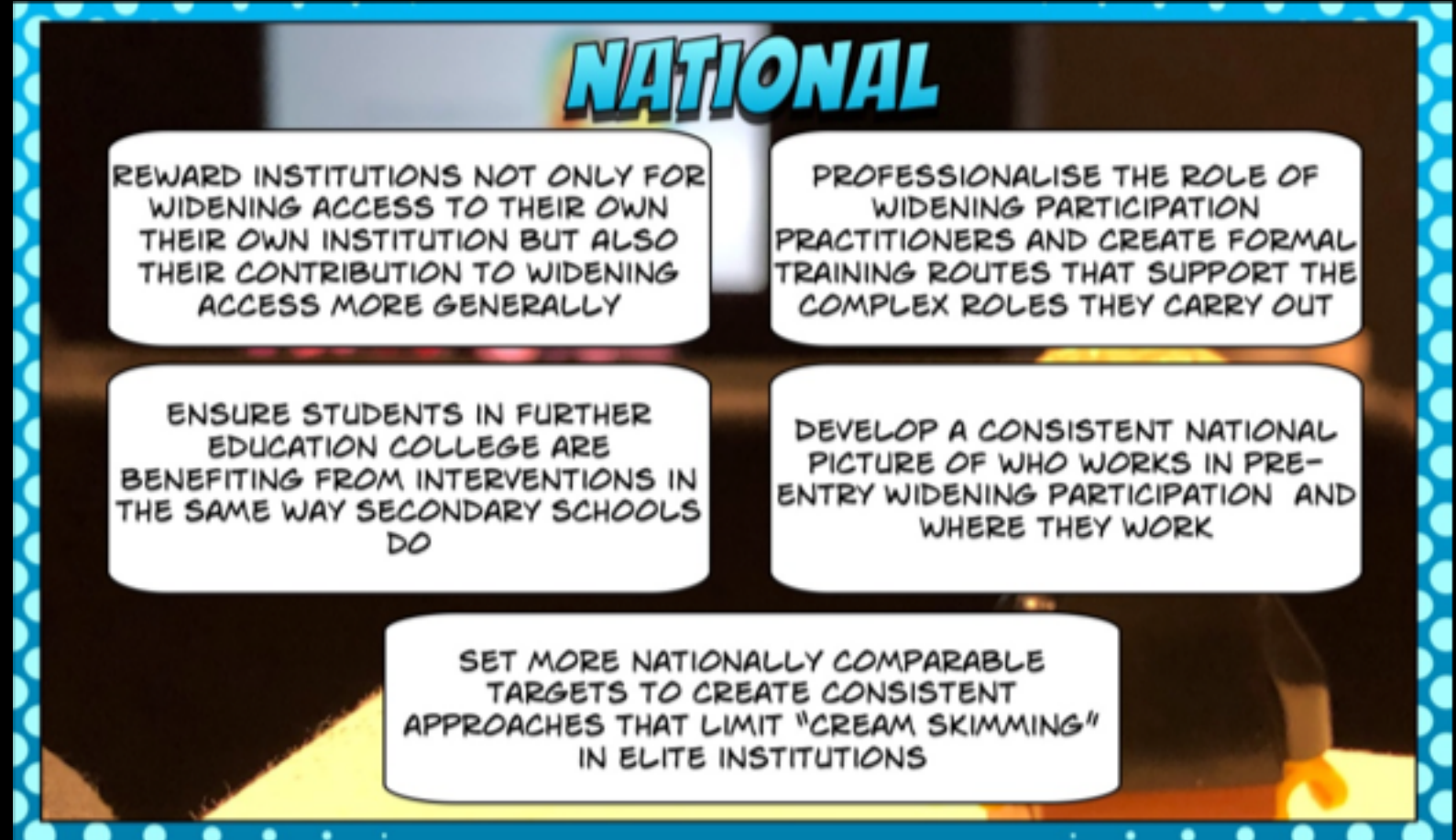
CAREERS KNOWLEDGE



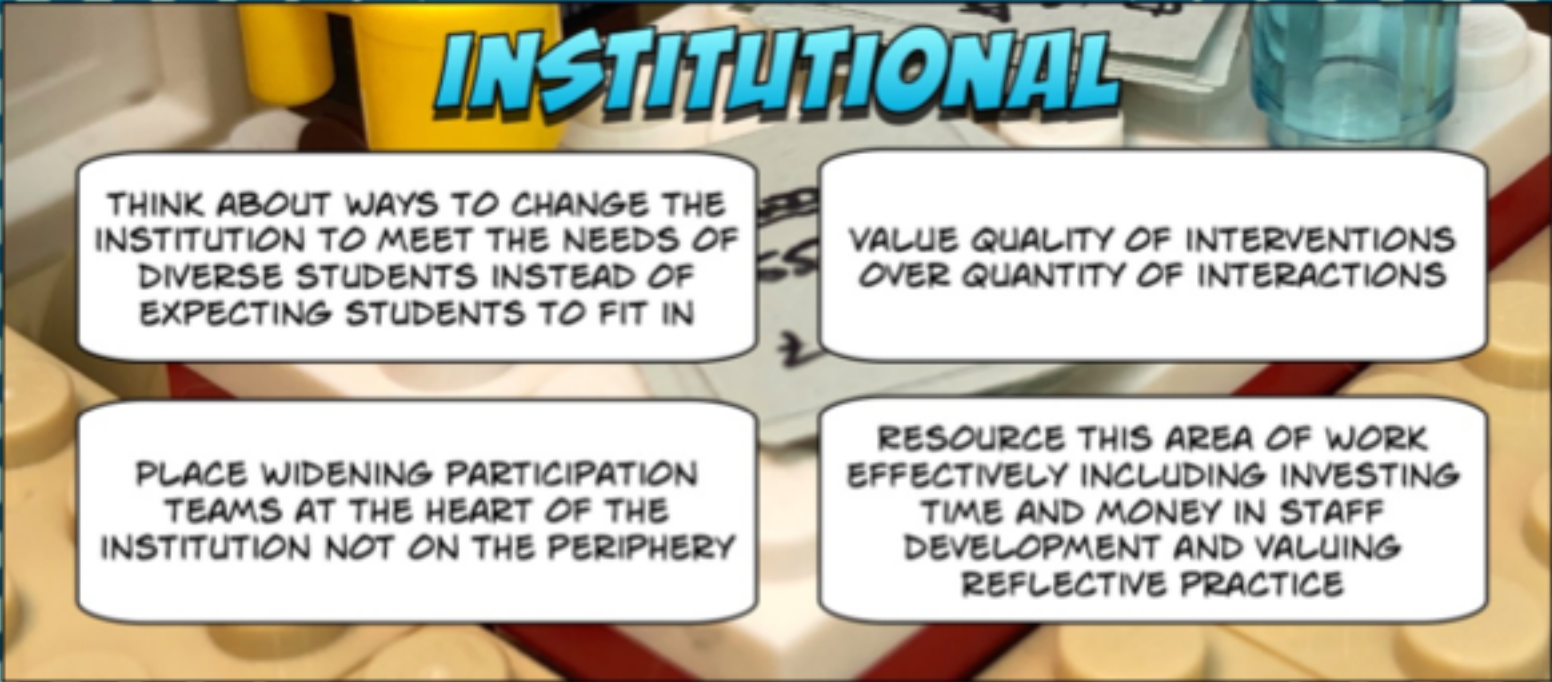
I DON'T  
KNOW MUCH  
ABOUT THESE  
JOBS....

# What can be done about these issues?

- Solutions at all levels; National, Institutional and Individual practitioners







## INSTITUTIONAL

THINK ABOUT WAYS TO CHANGE THE INSTITUTION TO MEET THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE STUDENTS INSTEAD OF EXPECTING STUDENTS TO FIT IN

VALUE QUALITY OF INTERVENTIONS OVER QUANTITY OF INTERACTIONS

PLACE WIDENING PARTICIPATION TEAMS AT THE HEART OF THE INSTITUTION NOT ON THE PERIPHERY

RESOURCE THIS AREA OF WORK EFFECTIVELY INCLUDING INVESTING TIME AND MONEY IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND VALUING REFLECTIVE PRACTICE



## PRACTITIONER

DEVELOP YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF INEQUALITY AND THE COMPLEXITY OF THE LIVES OF TARGET GROUPS OF STUDENTS

REFLECT, CHALLENGE AND RESIST IF WORK IS NOT IN THE INTERESTS OF THE INDIVIDUALS YOU ARE WORKING WITH



# Questions?



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