

## **Learning from Experience: Widening Participation Students in Sociology**

Gareth Millington, Ruth Penfold-Mounce, Merran Toerien, Department of Sociology

This paper reveals initial findings from a qualitative study carried out in the Department of Sociology at University of York into the educational experiences of Sociology students from Widening Participation backgrounds.

The research explores themes such as formative experiences of schooling and education, influence of parents and guardians over education choices, why and how students decided to apply for university (in addition to why York and why Sociology).

Perhaps most importantly, the study asked students to reflect upon their experiences as students from a WP background at University of York. These interviews were revealing not only about the difficulties that students faced entering a middle-class institution but also what they identified as the advantages of having arrived via a WP background.

The presentation will use the former to make suggestions as to how the experience at York of WP students may be improved in addition to pointing to the benefits to the University that can be gained by continuing to attract students from WP backgrounds.