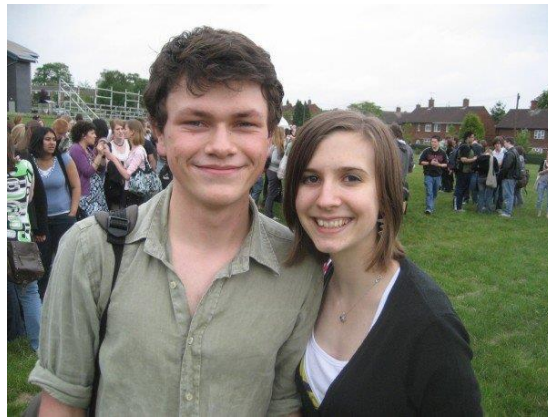# Supporting More Able Learners

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Supporting More Able Learners

- Setting the context
- What do universities want?
- Inside the classroom
- Outside the classroom
- Q and A

Setting the context: students

- Bright students are feeling unentitled
- Bright students are getting bored
- Bright students from access backgrounds are often patronised

Setting the context: students

"I have identified 4 of my AS French students and encouraged them to engage with the OxNet Access programme… Emily has raised her serious reservations about engaging with the OxNet Access programme because of the cost of living in Oxford, and how she would have to work to support herself and would then struggle with the academic work next to more privileged students who do not have to work to study. She is an impressive and analytical and logical linguist."

Setting the context: schools

- Schools are stretched
- Schools don't have easy access to relevant information
- Schools are changing

What do universities want?

- Academic curiosity
- Consistent academic profiles
- Honesty

Academic curiosity

- A yearning for knowledge - *"her eyes lit up when she realised what the answer was"*
- A non-functional approach to studies
- An ability to justify why the subject is important
- Evidence of self-sufficient academic interest
- A desire to question and discover – *"What's your favourite civil war?"*

Consistent academic profiles

- A Levels that match the subject students want to study
- Is the student a "true" linguist/ historian/ scientist?
- Are the student's A Levels academically challenging and rigorous?

Honesty

- Students that are honest about what they know and what they don't know
- *"The best personal statements are the ones that don't contain the word "passion" and the ones that don't claim they've read Proust."*

Inside the classroom

- Ambitious learning materials
- Normalising university
- Interdisciplinary knowledge
- Autonomy
- Extending conversations beyond the curriculum

Outside the classroom

- Subject choice
- Engage with local (and less local) universities
- Read
- Encourage autonomy

An access initiative placing universities at the heart of local communities

1. To stretch the mind: encourage new ways of thinking

2. Expose pupils to a broader range of subjects and topics within the Humanities, Languages, Philosophy and STEM

3. Prepare pupils for successful applications to selective, competitive universities

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

- **Languages**: 'What does it mean to be European?'
- **Philosophy**: 'Religion and Knowledge'
- **Humanities and Social Sciences**: 'Enlightenments and Revolutions'
- **Science**: 'The Sciences of Natural and Artificial Autonomy'

Course Structure

Application & Selection *(in schools)*

Study Day *(Oxford)*

Seminar Series *(London)*

Easter Conference *(Manchester/ Lancaster)*

Summer School *(Oxford)*

Summer School

- A week in the life of an Oxford undergraduate
- Opening tutorial with postgraduate tutor
- Essay produced over the week, with guidance from undergraduates
- Final tutorials in which students individually defend their essays (just like the "real thing")
- Supplementary programme of lectures and cultural activities

Key messages

- Academic curiosity
- Setting ambitious standards
- Subject choice
- Engagement with local organisations

Q and A

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