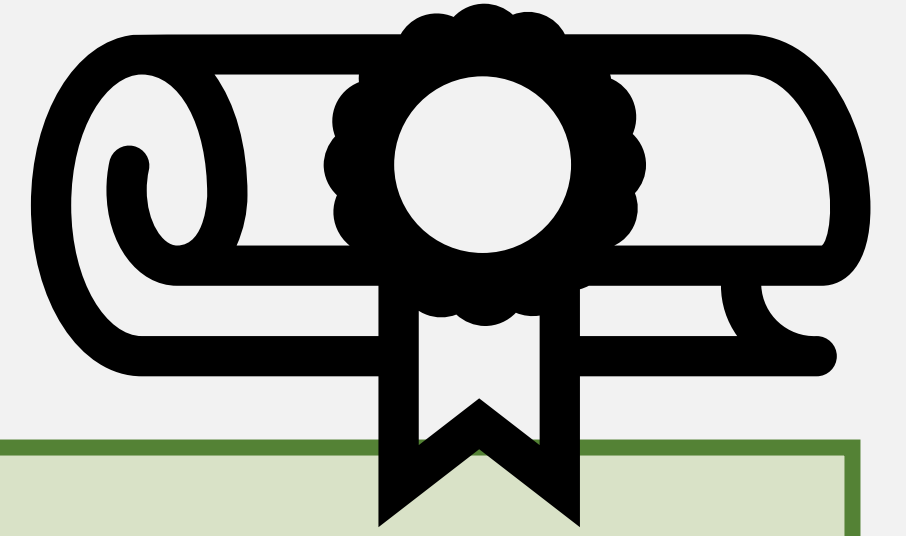


“I just don’t think I should be labelled for being me, for being a black person”:

Improving BAME student attainment by using personal stories.

Learning Enhancement and Innovation Project 2021-22



Introduction

- Literature and experience tell us that Black students have unequal outcomes of racial inequality due to racist systems, microaggression and unconscious bias behaviours. In 2021, the Office for Students reported that black students were less likely than white students to obtain a first or upper second-class degree (OFS, 2021).
- Curriculum design/ teaching and learning practices have a significant impact on the way that students from different backgrounds and ethnicities respond to their course and tutors (Universities UK, 2019);
- UON has successfully recruited an increasing number of Black students to nursing with the percentage of black students from adult nursing increasing from 26% to nearly 40%.

Aims:

- Improve Black student attainment, empowerment and a sense of belonging, through story-telling.
- Raise awareness and challenge tutors on the impact of unconscious bias on student attainment.

Methods

This project is developing a collection of personal stories from the experiences of Black nursing students to enhance self-identity and a sense of belonging, through greater understanding of their lived experiences.

Phase 0: Pre-project consultation	Review (anonymous) student attainment data in Nursing (underpins focus group discussion and design of focus group questions) Recruit students to initial focus group: theme generation for stories
Phase 1: Evidence gathering	Run focus groups x 2 – 45mins Transcription Analysis and write up
Phase 2: Story development	Personal stories created by the students – written, audio, audio and visual Embed stories in example lesson plan
Phase 3: Evaluation	

Initial findings

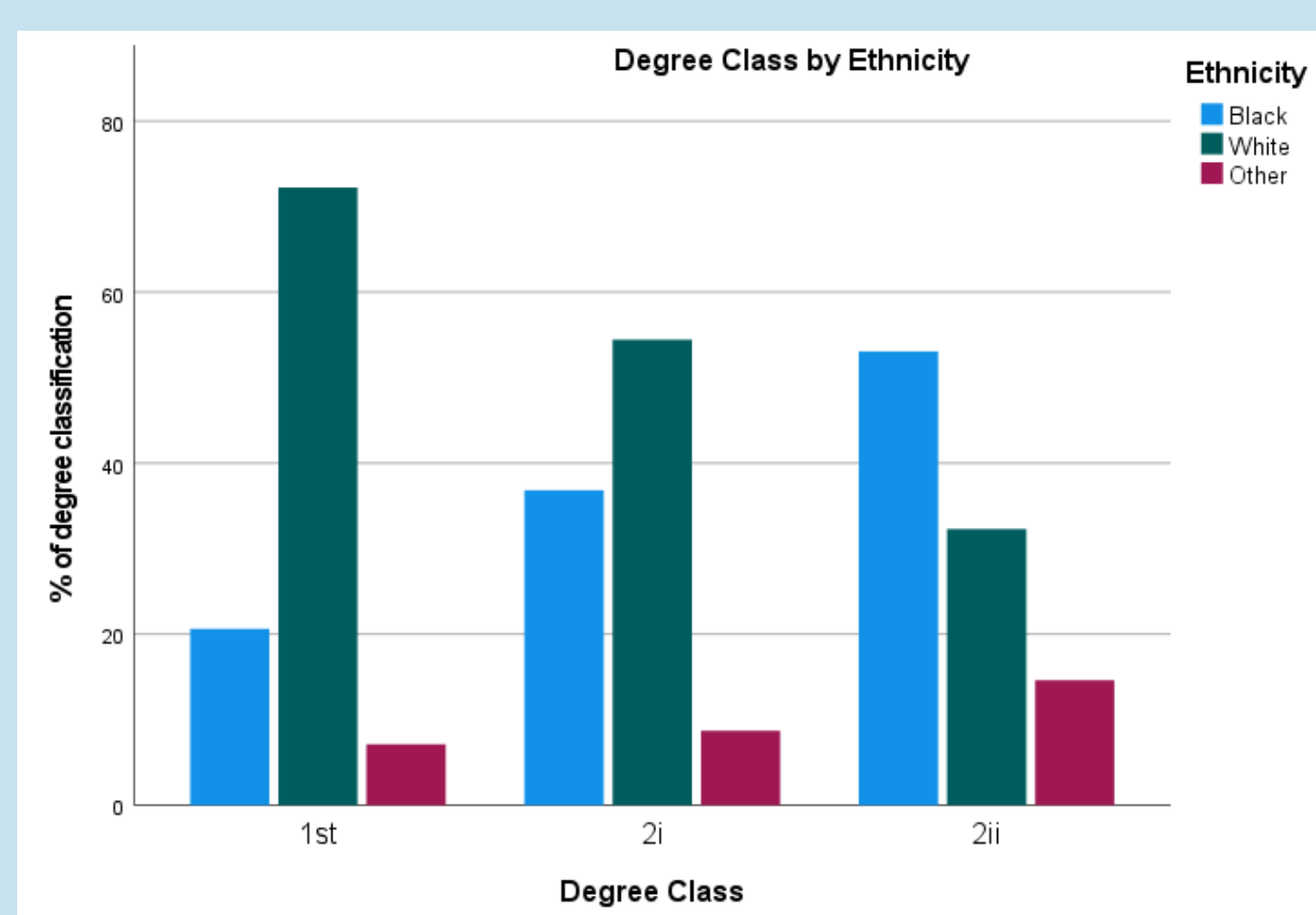


Fig 1: Attainment v ethnicity (degree classification)

BIMI data tells us that:

- There is a statistically significant difference in the distribution of ethnicities across degree classifications ($\chi^2 = 82.80$, $df=10$, $p<0.001$): proportionately more White students (46%) obtain higher classifications than Black students (24%)*.
- Black students more likely to have entered with Access to HE with only 10% having A/AS levels.

“...having us at your uni, you should be able to understand our cultures and know how we do things and how we work and how we talk. Sometimes we might be loud or something, it’s just the way we talk sometimes.”

Themes arising from the qualitative data include the importance of awareness of intersectionality, double standards and unconscious bias, English as a first language, and representation and individual identity (‘People Like Me’).

“I think it is important for the tutors to have an understanding and knowledge of how they treat people so that they don’t have that unconscious bias.”

“...if we could get people that would then understand that these guys...are trying to pick up things where they would need more support than others, I think that would also help.”

“...it’s very important to have more lecturers of different minorities...”

“...you can’t even want to encourage people to come to Northampton University because you don’t want them to be treated the way you’ve been treated as a black student.”

*Nursing programme data is for entry years 2011/12-2019/20

Recommendations and next steps

Next steps (this project)

- Stories being embedded into curriculum resources
- Evaluation to follow
- Dissemination to Deanery and Subject Leader (Faculty)
- Drafting journal article

Subject/ University recommendations

- Support diversity in subject area staff recruitment and SU representation
- Work with students to enhance staff training on (un)conscious bias
- Work to increase advocacy by and for Black students
- Introduce support groups for English language
- Work alongside Black students to implement projects which enhance feelings of belonging.

Future research

- Broaden project to include additional ethnic groups/ different disciplines
- Routinely collected UON data does not classify where English is not a first language for a student: future research could consider the impact of this

