



BLACK STUDENTS IN WHITE UNIVERSITIES: UNCONSCIOUS BIAS OR CULTURAL INEQUITIES

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THE BLACK ATTAINMENT GAP; WHAT'S BEHIND IT?

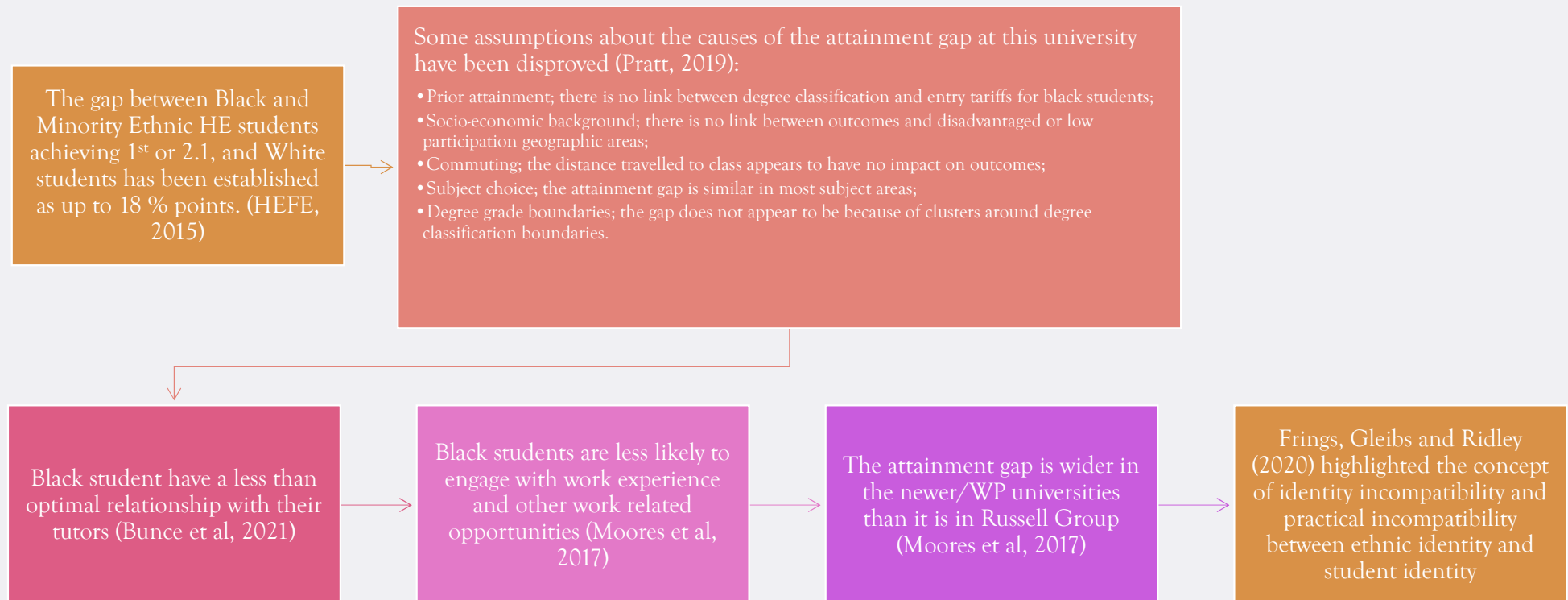
Assumptions
and the
deficit model

What do we
know?

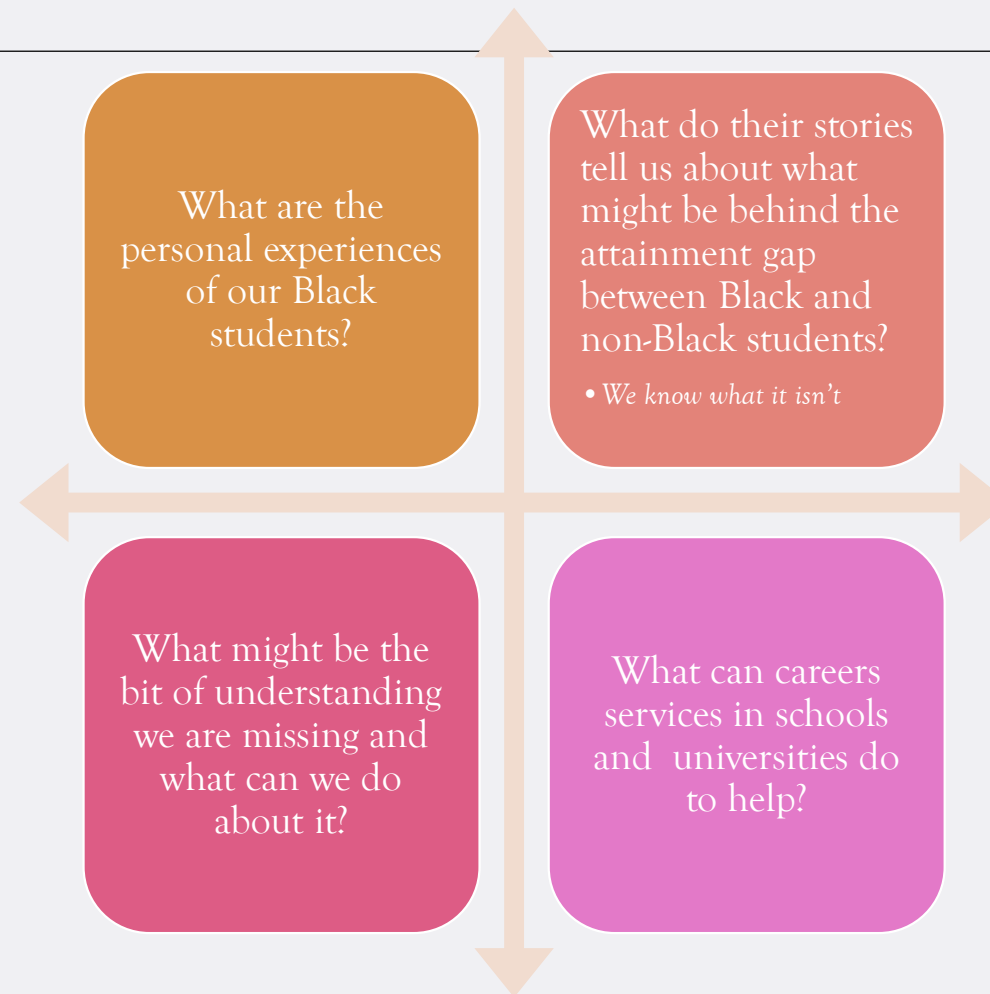
What did we
do?

What could
we do to
reduce or
eliminate this
issue?

WHAT DO WE KNOW?



OUR RESEARCH QUESTIONS



OUR RESEARCH DESIGN

This is essentially a qualitative piece of research but framed by quantitative contextual data



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graph TD; A[This is essentially a qualitative piece of research but framed by quantitative contextual data] --> B[Phase one: Consideration of data from a survey in 2019]; B --> C[Phase two: Added qualitative questions to a university wide survey in 2021. These included questions about notions of belonging, of the importance of the diversity in a university when choosing, and educational backgrounds.]; C --> D[Phase three: Loosely structured interviews with 4 Black students in 2022];
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Phase one: Consideration of data from a survey in 2019

Phase two: Added qualitative questions to a university wide survey in 2021. These included questions about notions of belonging, of the importance of the diversity in a university when choosing, and educational backgrounds.

Phase three: Loosely structured interviews with 4 Black students in 2022



WHAT DID WE FIND?

PARTICIPANTS' THEMES

Student	PG/UG	Course	Gender	Themes
N	PG	Vocational	F	Pragmatism of choice of HEI/ Aspiration/ Influence of family/ Financial security/ Lack of belonging/ Bias or racism
E	PG	Vocational	M	Pragmatism of choice of HEI/ Influence of family/ Lack of belonging/ Bias or racism
I	UG	Academic	F	Pragmatism of choice of HEI/ Aspiration/ Influence of family/ Financial security/ Lack of belonging/ Bias or racism
W	UG	Academic	F	Difficulty in Belonging/ bias from tutors and students/ Focus on after the course rather than the HE experience itself

“ my tutors were very kind and always checked that I understood what they were talking about and that I knew what I needed to do”

‘That’s why inclusion needs to be a bit better. Representation is important, most definitely, I want a lecturer, one that looks like me. Maybe has a cultural background or something similar to me...then they know what they’re talking about.’

‘The stereotype of what people see that you’re here and your kids are young, you have no aspirations. You just want to be a joke on the street Some of us have goals and aspirations.’ ‘My father’s a chartered accountant! Education is important and an expectation’

‘I’m sorry, I don’t need you to help me. I need you had listened to me first place and try to think about me, you may not agree with it. And it’s not my fault, yeah, you know, and and for me so I feel like when I give you the opportunity and you cut me off, well, I’ll help you.’

‘I was one of a minority of black students – mostly other minority ethnic students were Asian. Very different to being in London. It made it difficult to feel part of the university community we didn’t ‘speak the same language’, if you know what I mean”



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

WHAT DO WE UNDERSTAND BETTER?

These Black students do feel 'othered', whether intentionally or unintentionally

Focus is on getting a job or getting on with a successful career rather than in the experience (transformative or not) of university

Concern of racism or bias is real and may be added to by the university experience

Some of the feelings of lack of belonging or 'otherness' means that some students may not embrace extra-curricula or support opportunities including work experience/placement/ careers guidance

Some Black students experience higher levels of suspicion regarding academic integrity and abilities

We found evidence of all of the broader possible causes of the attainment gap cited by KCL report for the OfS

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



'Extra', or additional services or academic support for our Black students may only serve to embed the bias and expectations of tutors. They are not the problem; the problem is the problem



A cultural shift is needed over and above increased diversity in the teaching staff and decolonising of the curriculum

Significant investment in SU into a culturally diverse leadership and programme of development that is not focussed only on international students

Are widening participation universities only wider on entry but otherwise the same? If that's the case then more needs to be done to break away from the 'usual' culture and evolve into a more diverse, inclusive culture



Enhanced CEIAG that is embedded into the curriculum, and works with all students' contexts and priorities, would support ALL students to access the support they need

Design, location and input into choice of work experience/placement or any work related learning

Training for practitioners in acculturation and ensure that there is a diversity of practitioners, opportunities and models of engagement

CEIAG in schools and colleges also have a part to play, not only to get young people into HE



Mandated unconscious bias for academic staff may not be the answer; heightened reflexivity and self-exploration is needed to challenge perceptions whether conscious or not.

This will require significant investment into training and not only an online 'tick through'

REFERENCES

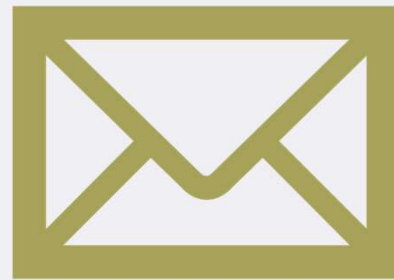
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST



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