

Impacting the institution using counter-storytelling, as a tool for students to share their lived experiences, gain agency, engage with convenors and become co-creators of knowledge

by Dr Barbara Adewumi

Diversity Mark Summary

- Diversity Mark
- Originally conceived as 'decolonising the curriculum' initiative
- Becoming co-creators of knowledge enriches their learning experience and elevates them into becoming critical thinkers
- Present three different case studies of successful DMOs and Convenor collaborations and how it enhanced the DMOs learning experience and gave them agency

What is Counter-storytelling and its relevance to Critical Race Theory?



- Solorzano and Yosso (2002) define counter storytelling “as a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told”
- Critical race theory’s (CRT) method of storytelling was applied to Diversity Mark to demonstrate the value of the voices and scholarship of people of colour
- Helps to facilitate counter narratives towards identifying hegemonic whiteness in academia (Ladson-Billings, 2007)
- By directly addressing structural inequalities, CRT places a focused lens on race to illuminate how systemic forms of racism within education have marginalised voices (Solorzano and Yosso 2002; Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995; Delgado and Stefaniec 2017)

The effectiveness of counter-storytelling in diversifying a curricula to enhance the learning experience of students



- Diversity Mark adopts an organizational wide approach to create sustainable and meaningful change for the curricula
- Diversity Mark officers are employed and trained to review convenors reading lists and lecture content and provide valuable feedback from a diverse student lens
- Becoming co-creators of knowledge enriches their learning experience and elevates them into becoming critical thinkers

Case Study 1 Raahavy's story:

Drawing on her experiences as a law student, she advocated for greater diversity and enhanced student learning within a technical module at the University of Kent.





ABOUT ME



01

Born and raised in Berlin, I moved to the UK in 2010 at the age of 8

02

I am one of four sisters!

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I am currently pursuing a Research Master's in Law at the University of Kent, after having completed my LLB.

04

I am also very proud of my Tamil heritage.

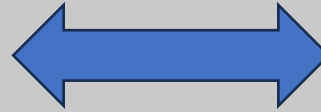


STRUGGLES I FACED

- Overcoming language barriers as well as the pressure to excel academically in a new and unfamiliar environment.
- Struggling with a lack of representation and support in both academia and society.
- Adapting to British culture while preserving my own cultural identity required a delicate balance.
- Constantly confronting South Asian stereotypes.



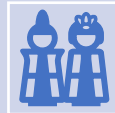
LAW MODULE



TECHNICAL MODULE



REALISED THE NEED FOR CURRICULUM DIVERSIFICATION DURING A CHALLENGING LAW AND POSTCOLONIAL LAW MODULE.



FOUND A LACK OF REPRESENTATION OF ETHNIC FEMALE AUTHORS IN SCHOLARLY MATERIALS.



CRITICALLY QUESTIONED THE RELIANCE ON WHITE MALE PERSPECTIVES IN UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF ETHNIC MINORITY WOMEN.



DESPITE COVERING TOPICS ON GENDER, RACE, AND SEXUALITY, THERE WAS UNDERREPRESENTATION, OFTEN FOCUSING NARROWLY ON SPECIFIC SUB-GROUPS THAT DID NOT ADEQUATELY REPRESENT DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES PRESENT IN OUR SOCIETY.



In contrast to a law module, where there is ample opportunity for diversification, a technical module presents less obvious avenues. However, diversity and inclusion can still be fostered through enhanced student engagement and participation, thereby improving accessibility.



Advocated for the inclusion of a Talis reading list to improve accessibility to required materials.



Proposed integrating interactive elements such as videos featuring BAME individuals to enhance the learning experience.



Advocated for using case studies and examples that reflect diverse demographics to illustrate real-world applications of statistical tools.

Connecting with convenors

As a law student, I bring a fresh perspective to technical modules, offering insights that convenors from non-law disciplines may not typically consider.

My experience as a young student, enables me to articulate current issues within the curriculum and provide a student's perspective on module content and teaching methods.

Collaborating as a Diversity Mark Officer and convenor is crucial; together, we enhance the student experience by addressing gaps and improving accessibility.

Diversity Mark officers strive to elevate existing materials and content, aiming to enrich rather than criticise or undermine the convenors' efforts.

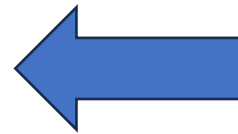
By fostering a collaborative environment, the aim of Diversity Mark is to improve the overall academic experience for students, ensuring their needs and perspectives are represented and prioritised.



Case study 2: Olisa's story



An Accounting and Finance student who spotted gaps in this Law module and brought in the Black male student voice and scholars to the module

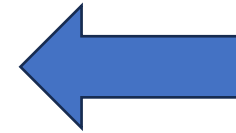


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THE FULL VIDEO*

Case Study 3: Dibra's story



An Anthropology degree student who provided support to the convenor by applying innovative ways to include diverse ethnic backgrounds through practical module assignments

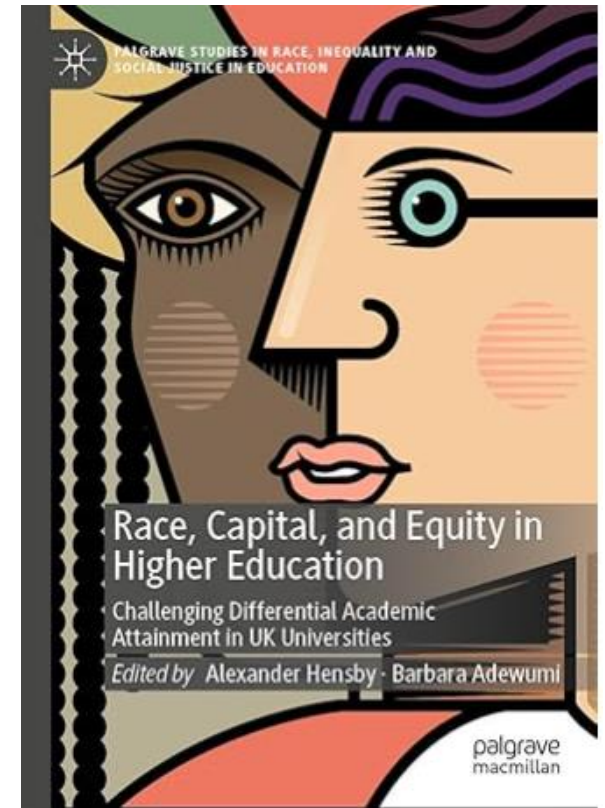


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THE FULL STORY*

Working towards race, equity and an inclusive curriculum



- Diversity Mark has made a lasting impression on the institution:
- Student Success have provided library workshop training on diversified and decolonised resources to provide additional support to quickly review and diversify reading lists, provide positive portrayal images for lecture slides.
- The Diversity Mark toolkit follows a collaborative approach with students and staff incentivising staff members with its direct innovation to teaching and learning.
- Available on Open Access! [Race, Capital, and Equity in Higher Education: Challenging Differential Academic Attainment in UK Universities](#)



Thank you
Any questions?
