

Race, Equity, and Belonging: Addressing the Challenges Facing Black Students in Higher Education

Dr Barbara Adewumi – Senior Research Fellow
Student Success (EDI) , Centre for the Study of Higher
Education
B.Adewumi-282@kent.ac.uk



Introduction

- Racial equity and the need to close the White/Black awarding gap
- Empowering the Black student voice
- Research led interventions
- Belonging and inclusion
- Student Success - doing the work



Institutional White/Black awarding Gap

The University's APP has a number of targets relating to Student Success, specifically retention and good degree attainment gaps. Student Success schools monitor progress of students against these targets and milestones. The APP includes specific 5-year targets set by Office for Students (OfS) to:



**Reduce White/Black
awarding gap from 19.1% to 10%**

What and How: ‘Nothing about us without us’



Students are at the heart of what we do

Highly valued **co-creation programmes**,
offering students **full and direct participation**.

Black Student Voices (BSV) research project led by students to create change for Black students.
BSV Summit held on 7th November 2023.

Diversity Mark - award-winning collaborative initiative run in conjunction with **Students, Academics, Kent Union and Student Success Team**, facilitated by **student interns – Diversity Mark Officers**

Belonging and Representation is part of the solution



Diversity Mark

Developing accessible, culturally diverse and inclusive learning resources and experiences.



Through staff-student co-creation and reflective academic practice.

Dr Triona Fitton + DMO Ola Ozoemana both diversified 'Education in a Global World'



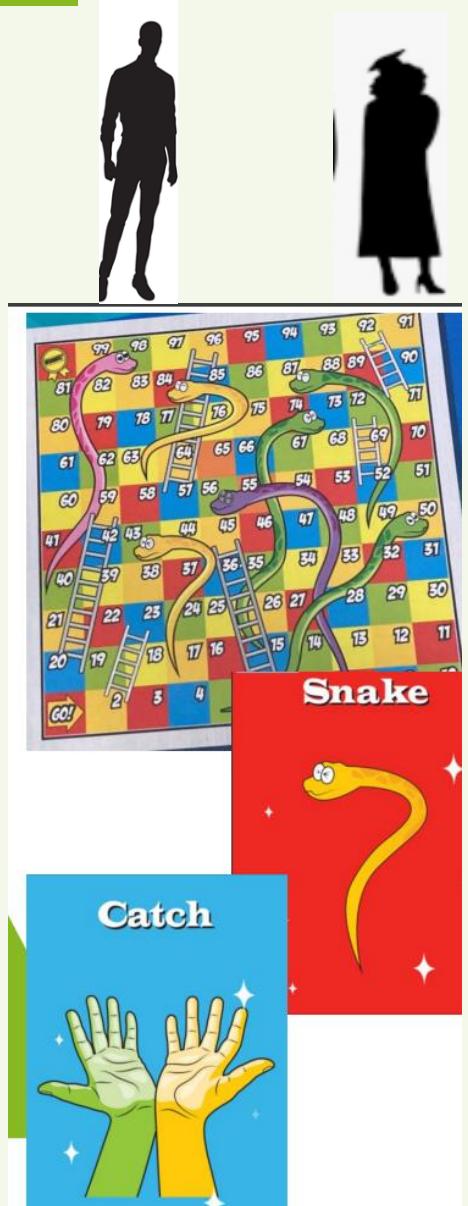
- Diversified course materials, noting important global majority authors on reading list
- Spotlighted Paolo Freire and bell hooks
- Co-created content with students
- Global diversity of perspectives in workshops
- Amplified student voices
- Involved students in feedback process redesign



Academic Excellence Scholarship Longitudinal Project



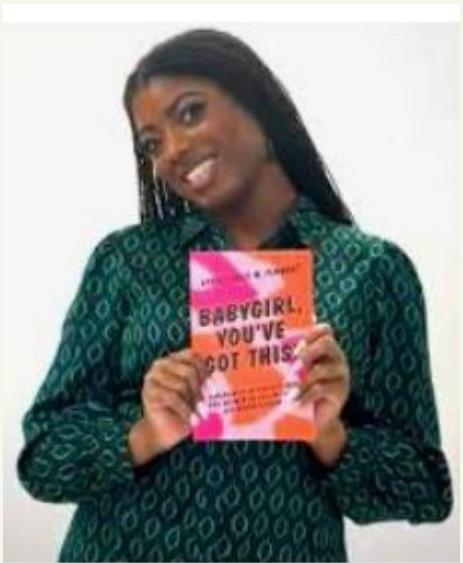
- Research draws on **findings from our 3-year longitudinal study of 25 recipients of academic excellence scholarship (AES) students** who commenced their undergraduate studies at the University of Kent in the 2019-2023.
- **Our research focus:** critically compare ‘high-potential’ students’ learning strategies, motivations, and resource accumulation across their undergraduate study. Sample design enables us to compare students by ethnicity, entry qualification, and class background.
- **Theoretical frameworks:** **Bourdieu’s theory** highlights how cultural and social capital are rewarded in education, reinforcing privilege but offering limited insight into race or agency. **Critical Race Theory (CRT)** addresses this by centring the role of racism and whiteness in shaping racially minoritised students’ experiences, such as through microaggressions and Eurocentric curriculum. **Self-Determination Theory (SDT)** complements these by focusing on individual motivation, emphasising the need for competence, relatedness, and autonomy.



Student Success Snakes and Ladders staff activity

Dr Yetunde Kolajo and Lucy Panesar Centre for
the Study of Higher Education (CSHE)

Inspirational speakers



Dr April-Louise
Pennant



Nathan Ghann



Professor Jason
Arday



Pauline Campbell



Dr Nira
Chamberlain MBE

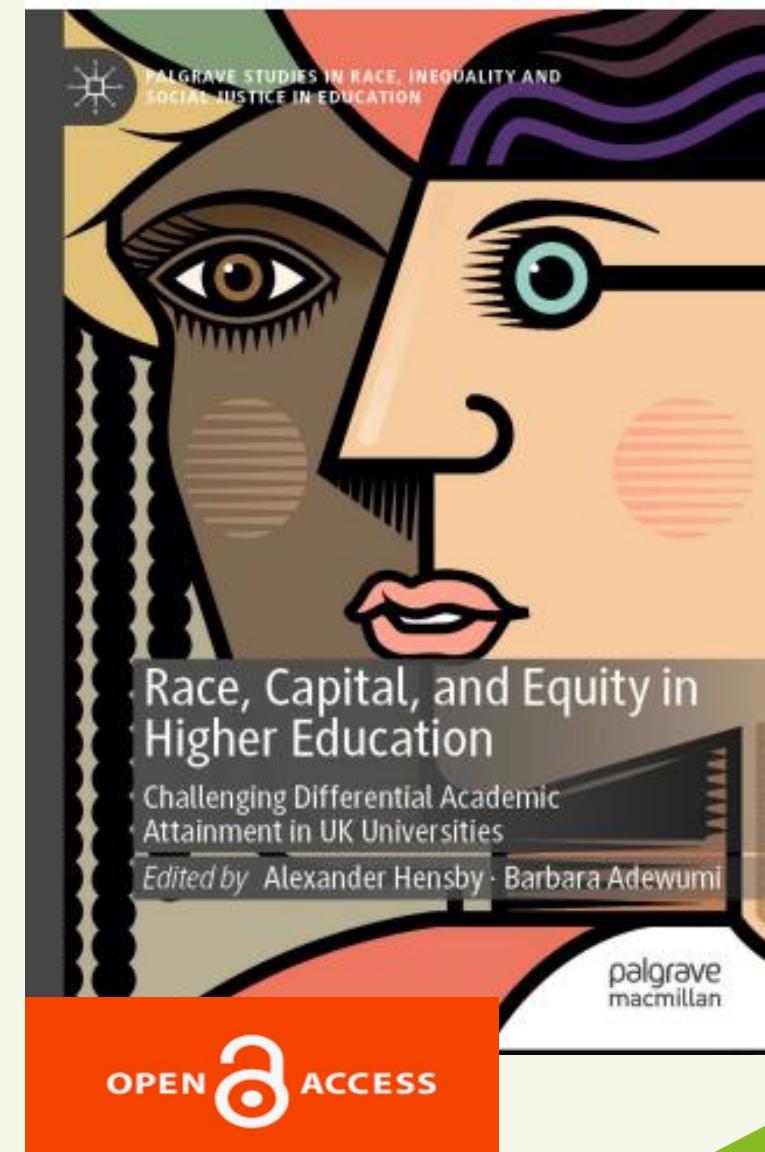
Doing the work

<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-51617-7>

Chapter 4: BAME Students' Extracurricular Belonging at University: Building Networks, Representation and Capital
by Alex Hensby, Barbara Adewumi, Anne-Marie Twumasi and Dave S.P. Thomas. Page 85

Chapter 7: Doing the Work: Institutional Policy , Research, and Practice for Closing the White–BAME Awarding Gap by Alexandra De La Torre, Elizabeth Buswell, Ellen Dowie and Jan Moriarty. Page 169

Chapter 10: Race Equity and Inclusive Curriculum: Diversity Mark and Making a Lasting Impression on the Institution by Barbara Adewumi. Page 243



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References:

- Adewumi. B and Mitton. L (2022) [Diversifying the Social Policy Curriculum: A Collaborative Approach](#)
- Ghann, N, (2024) Belong HE [podcast](#)
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/1WoRLTxK48s8ryZ9VWvXFH>
- Hensby. A and Adewumi. B. (Eds), (2024) *Race, Capital and Equity in Higher Education*, Palgrave Macmillan <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-51617-7>
- [Kolajo, Y and Panesar, L \(2024\) Snakes and Ladder's activity](#)
- Pennant, A. (2024) BabyGirl, You've Got This! Experiences of Black Girls and Women in the English Education System, Bloomsbury Academic

Thank you.