



Supporting Black students to progress to selective universities



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Outline of the session

- Introduction to the landscape in the UK for Black students
- Meet some of our Interns who are current Black students at the University of York
- Outline how you could support Black students in your school
- An introduction to Black Access at the University of York

The stats...

- In the 18/19 academic year, 554,445 students started an undergraduate degree in the UK
 - 413,895 of these were White (around 75%)
 - By comparison, only 7.9% were Black and 4.2% Mixed heritage
- In 2015, a mere 2,740 Black students progressed to Russell Group universities

The stats...

- In 2015, UCAS found that only 16% of Black students apply to Higher Education institutions with three or more A Levels at AAB or above
- Universities UK published in 2017 that 57% of Black graduates received a first or 2:1, compared to 81% of their white peers, suggesting an awarding gap exists

The problem with 'BAME'

- The UK government encourages organisations to use the term BAME to refer to their Black, Asian and Mixed ethnic minority students
- This can be dangerous, as it groups each of these individual groups into one 'bracket' suggesting they have similar experiences
- In fact, this is not the case, and each community should be recognised and celebrated in its own right

Educational Barriers

From a young age, children are exposed to racial slurs, microaggressions and segregation due to their skin colour.

This not only affects their wellbeing, but also impacts their education.

This presentation will feature some of the potential barriers Black students may face, but of course there are others not mentioned today...

Exclusions

- In January 2020, the BBC reported that exclusions for racism in England's primary schools were rising at a rate of 40% in the last ten years
- It has been widely reported that school uniform policies 'punish' Black children, often leading to exclusions
 - Black Caribbean pupils are three and a half times more likely to be excluded than their peers

Exclusions are a two sided coin. We can see evidence that children targeting Black (ot other ethnic minority students) and this is being dealt with, but cases are in fact rising rather than improving.

In addition, Black students are also often excluded for their own behaviour, but this is often due to a lack of cultural understanding. For example, uniform policies, which are not inclusive of Black hair styles.

Curriculum

- There are growing concerns about the white-centric, and Euro-centric nature of the curriculum
- Although Black cultures, communities and figures are included, this usually focuses on their hardships without many celebratory additions
- Calls to decolonise the curriculum are growing from primary through to higher education level, with the hope it will enable Black pupils to learn about their own history, and help their peers to understand, thus decreasing ignorance and racism

Educators

- In 2019, 85.7% of all teachers in state-funded schools in England were White British
 - Only 2.3% were Black
- In 2020, The Guardian reported that 46% of schools in England did not have any non-white teachers in their workforce
- Only 1% of 23,000 university professors in the UK are from a Black background

This clear lack of role models can be challenging for Black students, and we can begin to see why they feel disconnected from their education.

Attainment Gap

- In 2017, 57% of Black graduates received a first or 2:1
 - Compared to 81% of their white peers
- It has been suggested that the 'attainment gap' should in fact be referred to as the 'awarding gap' in recognition of the lack of inclusive educational environment as opposed to capability of these students

Meet our Interns

Soul



Hannah



UNIVERSITY
of York

How can I support Black students?

1. Provide a welcoming and inclusive environment at school
2. Engage with and encourage curriculum pieces by varied authors and figures
3. Consider wellbeing and mental health
4. Create access for role models and relatable figures
5. Showcase authentic 'real-life' higher education experiences

1. Do you understand and educate yourself and your colleagues about issues faced by young people? How can you work towards being an ally? This is a continued practice - we can never know everything! Do you have a racism policy in school and is this effective? Do you celebrate key cultural events and holidays throughout the year in school? (see [inclusion calendar](#) for support)
2. Can you advocate for more diversity in the curriculum? Use [The Black Curriculum](#) to support you
3. Young Black people may experience additional mental health worries due to racism and discrimination they may face. Can you signpost and support them? [YoungMinds](#) has some fantastic resources.
4. If you don't have role models in your current workforce, how you advocate for this? Could you use other networks (such as alumni, careers / HE provision from external providers) to support you?
5. Young people tell us they learn effectively from others who have gone through similar experiences. Not all experience is negative - understanding, though, is key. One way to do this could be through HE Access programmes.

Black Access programme



- Designed “for Black students, by Black students” - current students at the University of York
- Supports young people from a Black background to discover higher education, in particular at high-tariff institutions such as York
- Support from first year of sixth form through to joining the University

Black Access programme

Focusing on three main themes (Study Skills, Applying to University and Transition to University)



Students on the programme will have the chance to:

- ☐ Meet current students at York, acting as role models and providing ongoing support
- ☐ Visit our campus, with all funding provided
- ☐ Participate in online and in-person events to discover and prepare for university life

Black Access programme



Upon completion of the programme, students can unlock some fantastic benefits, including:

- ★ Guaranteed interview or offer to study at York
- ★ Alternative offer of up to 3 grades below standard
- ★ Scholarship opportunity upon joining York
- ★ Transitional support leading up to arrival and throughout first year of study

Take home messages:

- A significantly lower proportion of Black students are currently less likely to progress to the top third of selective universities compared to their white peers
- Despite this, it is important to educate Black students about the opportunities available to them at these universities, such as those in the Russell Group
- There are many ways we can support and acknowledge the barriers faced by Black students, and we should ensure we approach this in a safe and inclusive way
- Many selective universities offer access programmes to support students to learn about their institution, or higher education more generally

Any Questions?

Read our blog post for more details and support:

www.advancingaccess.ac.uk/blog/supporting-black-students-to-progress-to-selective-universities

Find out more about Black Access:

www.york.ac.uk/schools-and-colleges/post-16/black-access

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