Black and minority ethnic student attainment

A survey of research and exploration of the importance of teacher and student expectations
Structure

• Introduction – purpose of funding, range of projects, the OU’s project.
• Approach to survey of research.
• Findings
• Conclusions
Background

• Higher Education Academy Programme
• Range of funded projects
• Great Expectations: Project Aims and Objectives
• Role of review within the project
Higher Education Academy
Strategic Development Grants

Call for funding

Strategic development grants: Enhancing the attainment of black and minority ethnic students
Funded projects

- Supporting the degree attainment of black and minority ethnic students within creative disciplines. Lizzie Gauntlett, The Arts University Bournemouth, £7,500
- Co-construction and collective understanding of assessment criteria on final year projects (COCUAC). Kevin Tapley, Sarah Hubbard, University of Leeds, £10,000
- Mobilisation of research knowledge for student success (MoRKSS). Manny Madriaga, Sheffield Hallam University, £10,000
- Great Expectations: creating a positive environment to achieve positive outcomes. Tony O'Shea-Poon, The Open University, £10,000
- Reimagining attainment for all: enabling the success of BME students. Jo Peat, University of Roehampton, £10,000
- Disparities in student attainment: improving student attainment through an understanding of structures, spaces and people. Gurnham Singh, Coventry University, £10,000
- Developing and evaluating the use of BME student mentoring as an intervention to narrow the attainment gap. Jane Tope, University of Birmingham, £8,425
- Writing beyond race?: students as partners in curriculum design. Sara Upstone, Kingston University, £2,250
Great Expectations

• Explore hypothesis that high tutor and student expectations support high engagement and achievement.

• **Desk research to explore and develop hypothesis.**

• Increase knowledge and understanding amongst ALs through practical resources and materials, development workshops.
Approach

• Focussed review: identifying and developing practical strategies.
• UK and US literature predominantly.
• Areas of focus
  – Role of HE staff
  – Belonging
  – Language and academic support
  – Student and tutor expectations
Findings: overview

- Belated recognition of the issue
- Cautions and caveats: definitions and difficulties
- Positives and negatives: participation, retention, achievement, progression
- The attainment gap: stark headline figures
Findings: explanatory narratives

• institutional racism/ethnic bias; or student deficit models
• new approaches
  – Previous educational experience
  – Academic preparedness and development
  – Different student/staff perspectives
  – Educational life histories and ‘possible selves’
Findings: addressing the gap

• Institutional approaches: policies and practices (LTA)
• Student engagement
• Sense of belonging
• Language use and academic literacies
• Student and tutor expectations
Findings: student and tutor expectations

- Increased prominence – building on work in schools and US
- Resilience and self-agency
- Combatting low tutor expectations and lack of intellectual challenge
- Clear expectations of achievement for all
- Further research needed
Conclusions

• Working with expectations: approach at Open University
  – Challenging low expectations; communicating high expectations
  – Engaging students to create a positive sense of belonging
  – Building competence and confidence
• Approaches for the sector?
A positive learning environment
for a positive learning experience

Affirm

Challenge

Success

Identity & awareness

Confidence

Competence

Task-specific

Engagement

Belonging

Positive interactions

How to..
Great Expectations – A resource