



Data is not enough: using data as a starting point to improve student outcomes

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# Aim of session

- What did we do in response to the data?
- Action research projects: university led, locally owned
- What works to address differences in attainment in each context?
- How we worked with staff to:
  - understand their own school level data in the context of sector data
  - develop an evidence based approach to addressing disparities in student progression and attainment
- What have we learnt so far?

# Action research projects

- Working together: CADQ, SCCO, EDI and others
- Focus on progression and attainment
- Informed by the data: School specific Equality & Diversity and Widening Participation Data Analysis Report
- Framework for action agreed
- Aim is to build up an evidence base at NTU about what works to address disparities in student progression and attainment
- Each School was asked to identify a research question that can be evaluated during the academic year 2014/15
- Expand or start a new project 2015/16



**How did we work with staff to understand data and use an evidence based approach to designing their projects?**

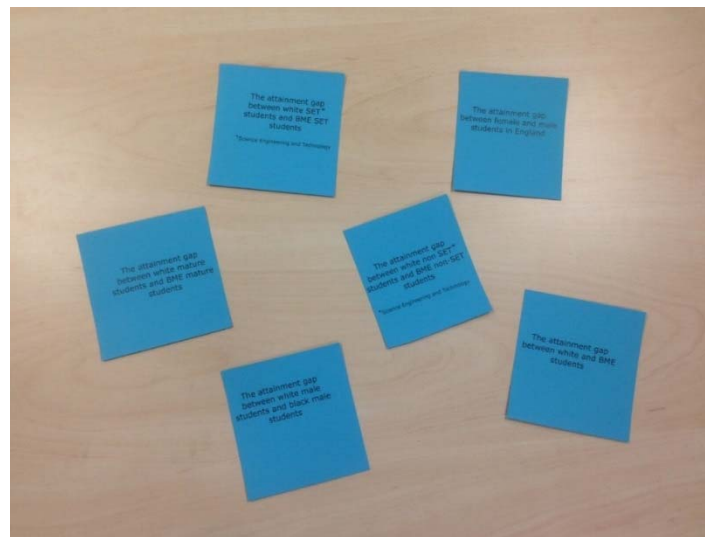
# Understanding sector data activity

## Purpose of the activity.

- Understanding of sector patterns when looking at own data
  - Multiple identities of students
  - Differences between ethnic groups
- All data is from EQUALITY CHALLENGE UNIT (ECU), 2014. *Equality in higher education: statistical report 2014 Part 2: students* [online]. Available at: <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/equality-higher-education-statistical-report-2014/>

# Understanding sector data activity

As a table, please sort the cards in order from the largest to the smallest attainment gap



The ethnicity degree attainment gap is measured as: “(percentage of UK-domiciled white first degree undergraduate qualifiers achieving a first/2:1) – (percentage of UK-domiciled BME first degree undergraduate qualifiers achieving a first/2:1)” (ECU, 2013, p12)

# Understanding sector data activity

The attainment gap between white male student attainment and black male student attainment

27.1%

The attainment gap between mature (aged 36 and over) white students and mature BME students

24.3%

The attainment gap between non-SET (Science Engineering and Technology) white students and non-SET BME students

17.6%

The attainment gap between white and BME students

16.8%

The attainment gap between SET (Science Engineering and Technology) white students and SET BME students

14%

The attainment gap between male and female students in England

-4.6%

# What Works? Student retention and success.

- No one silver bullet or specific intervention
- Know your own students
- Address themes found to support retention
- and success according to own context
- Importance of belonging to student retention and success

*"No single cause has been found to solely explain why there is a gap"*  
(Richardson, 2013, p11),

*"The evidence points to a complex range of differently connected factors"*  
(Singh, 2009, p24)



# Sector understanding of causes of disparities

## Purpose of the activity

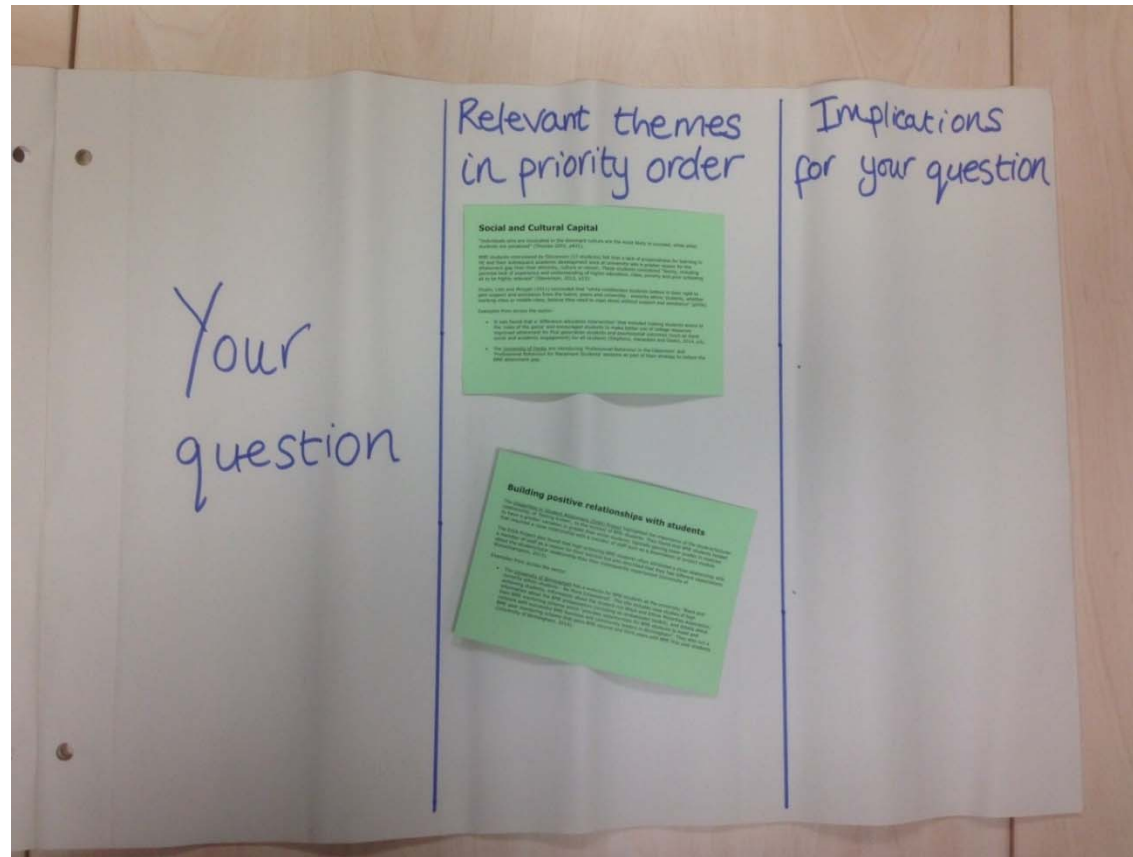
- Introduce current sector understanding of causes of the disparities in progression and attainment

## 6 Themes

- Study habits, assessment and feedback
- Building positive relationships with students
- Seeking support
- Social and cultural capital
- Institutional racism and unconscious bias
- Motivation and aspirations

# Sector understanding of causes of disparities

- Please work within your school



# Summary of project themes 2014/15

- **One-to-one meetings/tutorials with academic staff**
  - All students and linked to development logs (NBS)
  - Low engaged students (ARES)
  - Low attending students (ADBE)
  - Students with fail or low third Structured self assessment tool for students at risk of failure by Course Tutors (SST)
- **Buddying (A&D)**
- **Aspirations and motivation.**
  - 'Praising excellence' letters to high engagement students (ADBE)
  - Inspirational lecture by former student (A&H)
- **Assessment and study skills.**
  - Guided peer feedback on assignment plans (ED)
  - Assessments lecture series (NLS)

# Summary of project themes 2015/16

- Blended learning, belonging and studio space (ADBE)
- Active learning (SCALE-UP) (NLS)
- Student designed online transition resource (A&D)
- Developing professionalism module (ED)
- Academic mentors (NBS)
- Gender research (ARES)
- Demystifying assessment (A&H)
- BTEC interventions and measuring distance travelled (SSS)
- Attendance monitoring and self assessment questionnaire (S and T)

# What have we learnt so far?

- What works best to identify 'at risk' students?
  - Student engagement
  - Early formative assessment
- What works best in response to 'at risk' students?
  - Offer one-to-one sessions to all students - 'culture change'
  - Informal contact, phone calls, choice of appointment times
- What works best to facilitate one to one interventions?
  - Guidance for staff and students
  - Student Dashboard
- Interventions vs resources – what is doable?
- Rewarding high engagement – setting high expectations



**Reflections and questions**

# References

- EQUALITY CHALLENGE UNIT (ECU), 2014. *Equality in higher education: statistical report 2014 Part 2: students* [online]. Available at: <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/equality-higher-education-statistical-report-2014/>.
- RICHARDSON, J., 2013. The under-attainment of ethnic minority students in UK higher education: what we know and what we don't know. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 39:2, 278-291. Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0309877X.2013.858680>.
- SINGH, G., 2009. *A synthesis of research evidence. Black and minority ethnic (BME) students' participation in higher education: improving retention and success* [online]. Available at: [https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/bme\\_synthesis\\_final.pdf](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/bme_synthesis_final.pdf).