Transformative Racial Dissonance

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The voices of staff and students on the fringes of HE

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The Race Matrix

Background

- Playing the game
- 'The more things change, the more they stay the same'.
- Comparison
- Realities

Racial Dissonance

Literature

- "Racial dissonance as the moment when an individual's schema for making meaning of racial interactions no longer makes sense or violates a moral principle" (Robbins and Jones, 2016, p.633).

- Disdain, discomfort and disconnect (Bentley-Edwards, 2016).

- Dissonance for development

- Resisting, engaging and transforming.

The Research

HE staff and students

- Fringes

- Less likely to achieve first class or upper 2.1 degree (Universities UK, 2019).

- Course experiences, achievement, aspirations and social inequalities.

- Online questionnaire and interviews.

Staff Voices

Motivating and mentoring

Staff 1: "*So, one of the key things is to build up confidence and I do this by focusing on the positives from their work and then building on what they could improve... I'm quite pragmatic so very much driven by the goal or the activity*".

Staff Voices

Contact with students

Lecturer 3: "…"it's like a closed club really for BAME students in a way is it… and they have to break down those barriers to become a member… I mean what do they need to do, how do they have to perform to become a member because it not just about what you know, but how you demonstrate that and how you perform academically that tick the boxes. I think what I am saying is that we as the institution need to think about how we access BAME students".

Lecturer 2: "So now they are talking about decolonising the curriculum and no extra time …. I mean… it is an impossible job for the lecturers, so the university has to invest money…to making things easier for the lecturers so that they will have more time for students".

Staff Voices

Reading, reflecting and representation

Staff 2: "…we do not have full representation of staff, black staff, to represent the population of the university that is one thing I must emphasise… students do not have people who look like them in top positions".

Lecturer 2: "…we read…it's a great way of learning about black authors and cultures…we have to be able to call out racism when you see it…but you can't do that if you are not aware of the culture which is the problem".

Student Voices

Aspirations and decolonising the curriculum

Participant E: "*I want to become a veterinarian, I love animals and will do a MA programme*".

Participant C: "*I am not bothered about the curriculum and what they teach. Racism and discrimination is the norm, I am not surprised we are use it, it won't change, they are undercover this is how they treat us, repeated behaviours, they are only adjusting a bit because they don't want it to look too obvious. Therefore, am not bothered because nothing will change*".
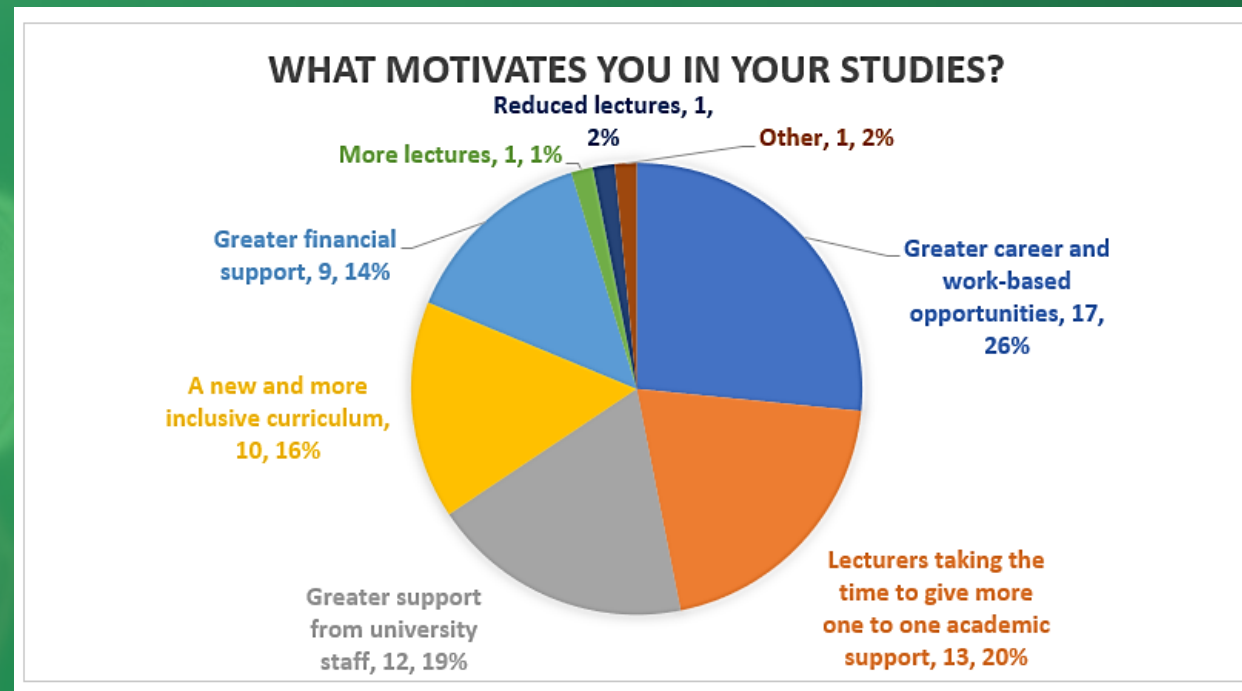
Student Voices

Course experiences

Participant D: "For example some of these lecturers don't believe in us black students, I think they expect us to achieve low grades. But, at the time I would achieve an A when they predicted me to get a C, so I think they set us up to fail so that's sad. So, I have always tried to prove lecturers wrong but without trying to prove them wrong I didn't believe that I was able to do it".

Participant C: "BAME students don't engage in group work and they don't engage in discussions because they look around and it's all white students around them".

Student Views

Motivation – your time and the future

Further Reading

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