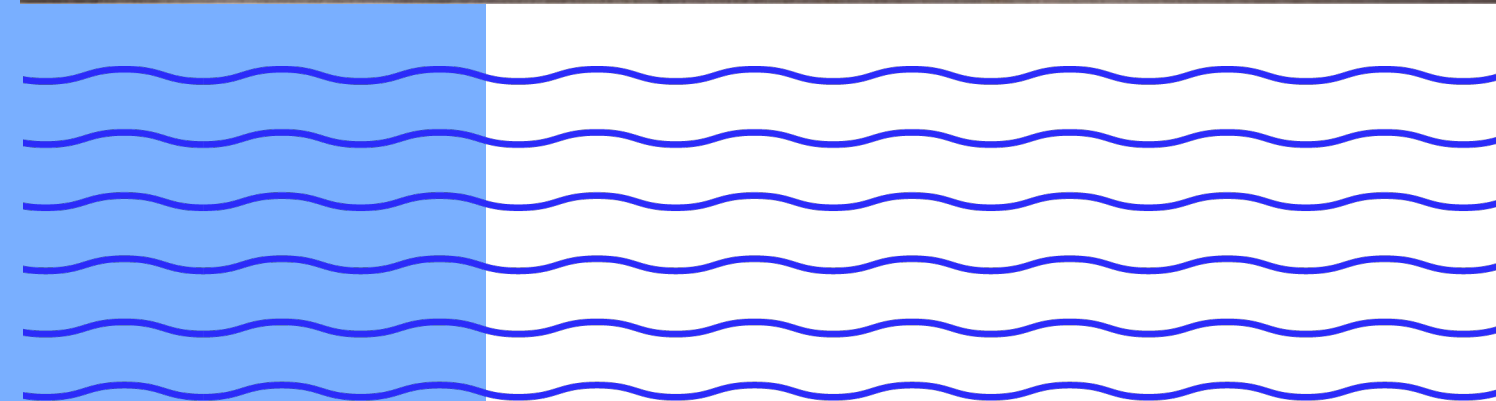


This week

Mond	Data Day Concerns
Tue	Harassment and sexual misconduct
Wed	Extenuating circumstances, safety nets, academic regs and assessment
Thu	Social capital, community and student activities and opportunities
Fri	Race, racism and closing the awarding gaps in HE



WONKHE
SUs

Tackling race and racism on campus

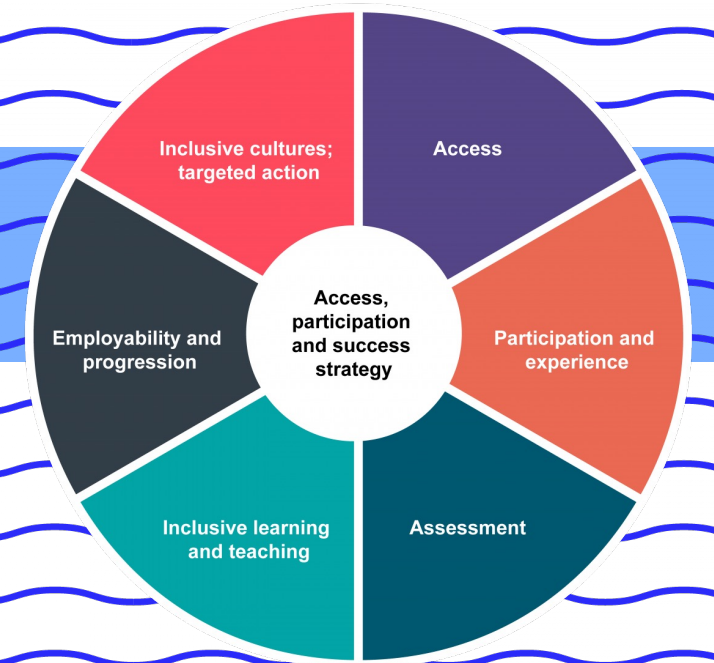
The "awarding gap" as a case study in achieving change



WONKHE
SUs

What are SUs doing?

- Engagement database
- Initiatives database
- Analysis blog SUs
- Analysis blog mainsite



Build financial capital

Plenty of bursaries and scholarships, not so much on reducing costs and norming

Build academic capital

Lots of specific support and study skills, some curriculum reform, almost nothing on assessment

Build social capital
Very little, quite "single group"

Universities minister compares ‘decolonisation’ of history to ‘Soviet Union-style’ censorship

Historians say MP ‘talking out of her arse’ and ‘completely misunderstands’ efforts to place Britain’s past in context

Peter Stubley | Sunday 28 February 2021 16:28 | 336 comments



Michelle Donelan claimed key books were being removed from reading lists by ‘censors’

University censorship is fictionalising history, says Universities Minister

Michelle Donelan tells Chopper's Politics podcast: 'The so-called decolonisation of the curriculum is censoring history'

By Christopher Hope, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT and Louisa Wells, PODCAST PRODUCER

27 February 2021 • 9:30pm



Michelle Donelan, Universities Minister | CREDIT: Will Wintercross/Will Wintercross

Views on decolonising the curriculum depend on how changes are presented

20 July 2021

Less than a quarter of the public in England support 'decolonising' the curriculum polling for the UPP Foundation and Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI), conducted by Public First, finds.

The UPP Foundation and Higher Education Policy Institute Public Attitudes to Higher Education Survey shows people are largely hostile or in two minds about 'decolonising' the curriculum: 31% disagree with it, 33% neither agree or disagree and only 23% of the public support it.

Yet, when asked about broadening the curriculum to take in people, events, materials and subjects from across the world, 67% approve – with just 4% against.

The findings suggest universities can find widespread public support while implementing changes to the curriculum if they are presented thoughtfully.

A major new survey on public attitudes to higher education from the UPP Foundation and HEPI asked over 2,000 adults in England about the value of degrees, opinion on universities and campus culture. It found that support for universities is weaker amongst older people, Leave voters and people in less advantaged socio-economic groups.

Part of the survey mirrors work in the United States that found Democrats were 34% more positive about universities than Republicans, with as many as 59% of Republicans having a negative view of universities. Similar patterns in sentiment were found towards universities in England, with Leave voters 18% less positive towards universities than Remainers (Leave 35% positive, Remain 53% positive). There was also an 8% gap between Conservative voters (41% positive) and Labour voters (49% positive).

Demand for studying a degree remains high. Nearly half of people (46%) would want to attend university if they were leaving school now and only one-quarter (26%) would not. Most parents want their children to go to university, including 70% of those with children aged 11 to 15.

Less than a quarter of people support 'decolonising' the curriculum

Critics fear making university courses less focused on the West would 'compromise free speech'

By Camilla Turner, EDUCATION EDITOR
20 July 2021 • 3:44pm

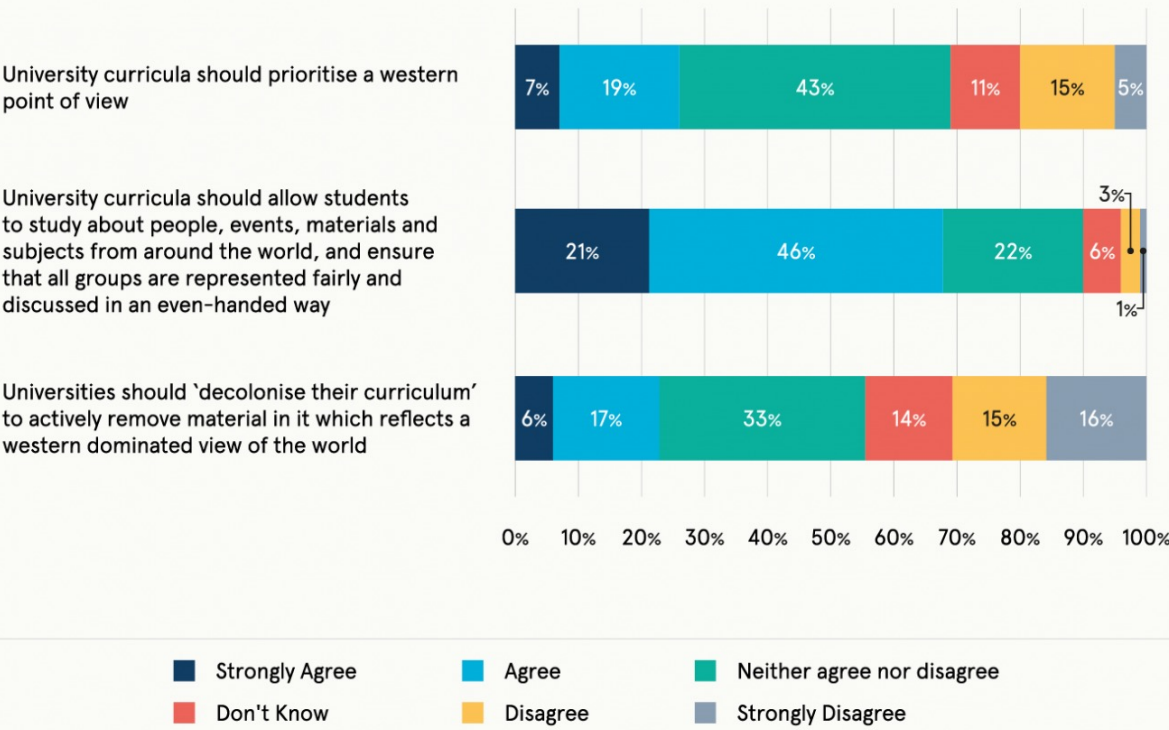


The row over Cecil Rhodes' statue at Oriel College, Oxford, has highlighted a growing divide over free speech at universities | CREDIT: GETTY IMAGES

Less than a quarter of the public supports "decolonising" the curriculum, a report has found.

Just 23 per cent of people in...

Figure 22: Perceptions on curriculum content changing with several wordings



Views on decolonising the curriculum depend on how changes are presented

20 July 2021

Less than a quarter of the public in England support 'decolonising' the curriculum polling for the UPP Foundation and Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI), conducted by Public First, finds.

The UPP Foundation and Higher Education Policy Institute Public Attitudes to Higher Education Survey shows people are largely hostile or in two minds about 'decolonising' the curriculum: 31% disagree with it, 33% neither agree or disagree and only 23% of the public support it.

Yet, when asked about broadening the curriculum to take in people, events, materials and subjects from across the world, 67% approve – with just 4% against.

The findings suggest universities can find widespread public support while implementing changes to the curriculum if they are presented thoughtfully.

A major new survey on public attitudes to higher education from the UPP Foundation and HEPI asked over 2,000 adults in England about the value of degrees, opinion on universities and campus culture. It found that support for universities is weaker amongst older people, Leave voters and people in less advantaged socio-economic groups.

Part of the survey mirrors work in the United States that found Democrats were 34% more positive about universities than Republicans, with as many as 59% of Republicans having a negative view of universities. Similar patterns in sentiment were found towards universities in England, with Leave voters 18% less positive towards universities than Remainers (Leave 35% positive, Remain 53% positive). There was also an 8% gap between Conservative voters (41% positive) and Labour voters (49% positive).

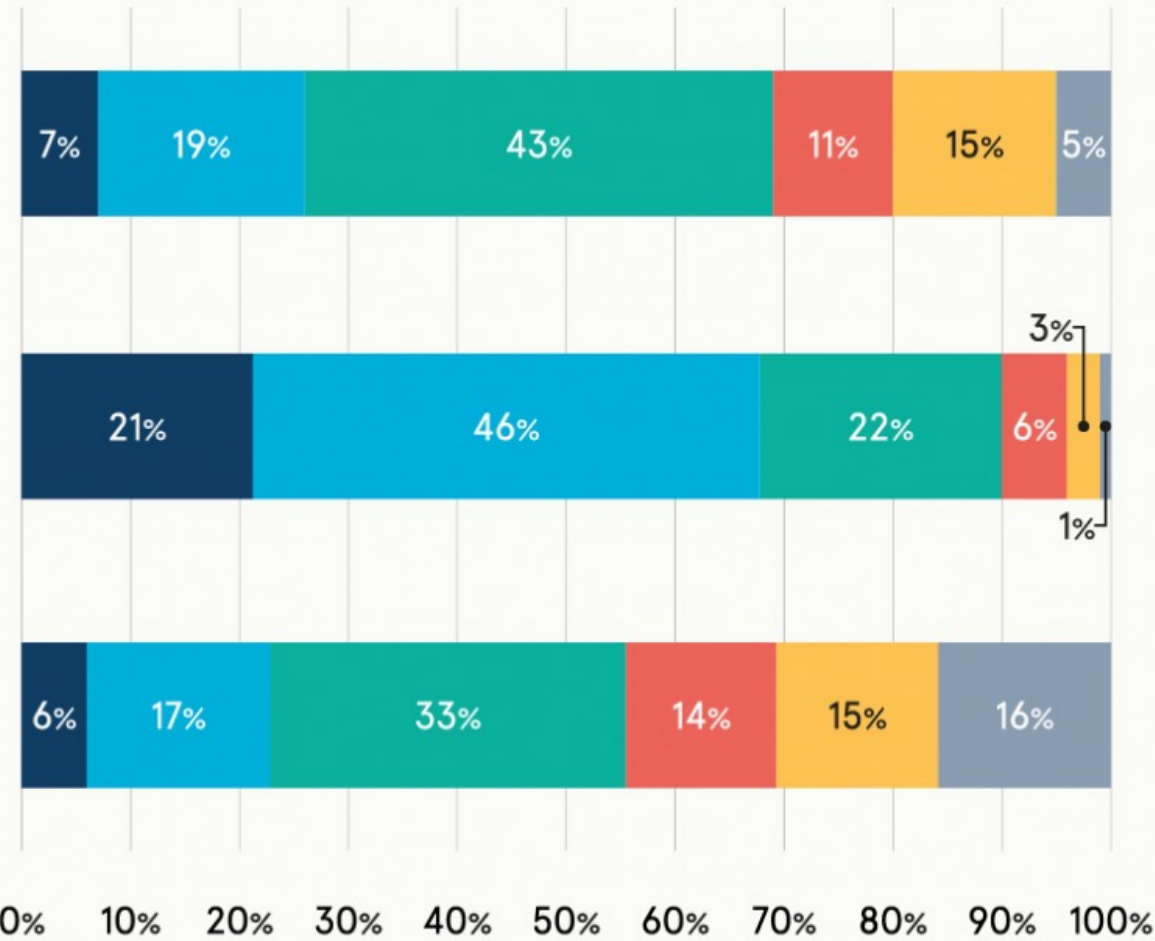
Demand for studying a degree remains high. Nearly half of people (46%) would want to attend university if they were leaving school now and only one-quarter (26%) would not. Most parents want their children to go to university, including 70% of those with children aged 11 to 15.

Figure 22: Perceptions on curriculum content changing with several wordings

University curricula should prioritise a western point of view

University curricula should allow students to study about people, events, materials and subjects from around the world, and ensure that all groups are represented fairly and discussed in an even-handed way

Universities should 'decolonise their curriculum' to actively remove material in it which reflects a western dominated view of the world

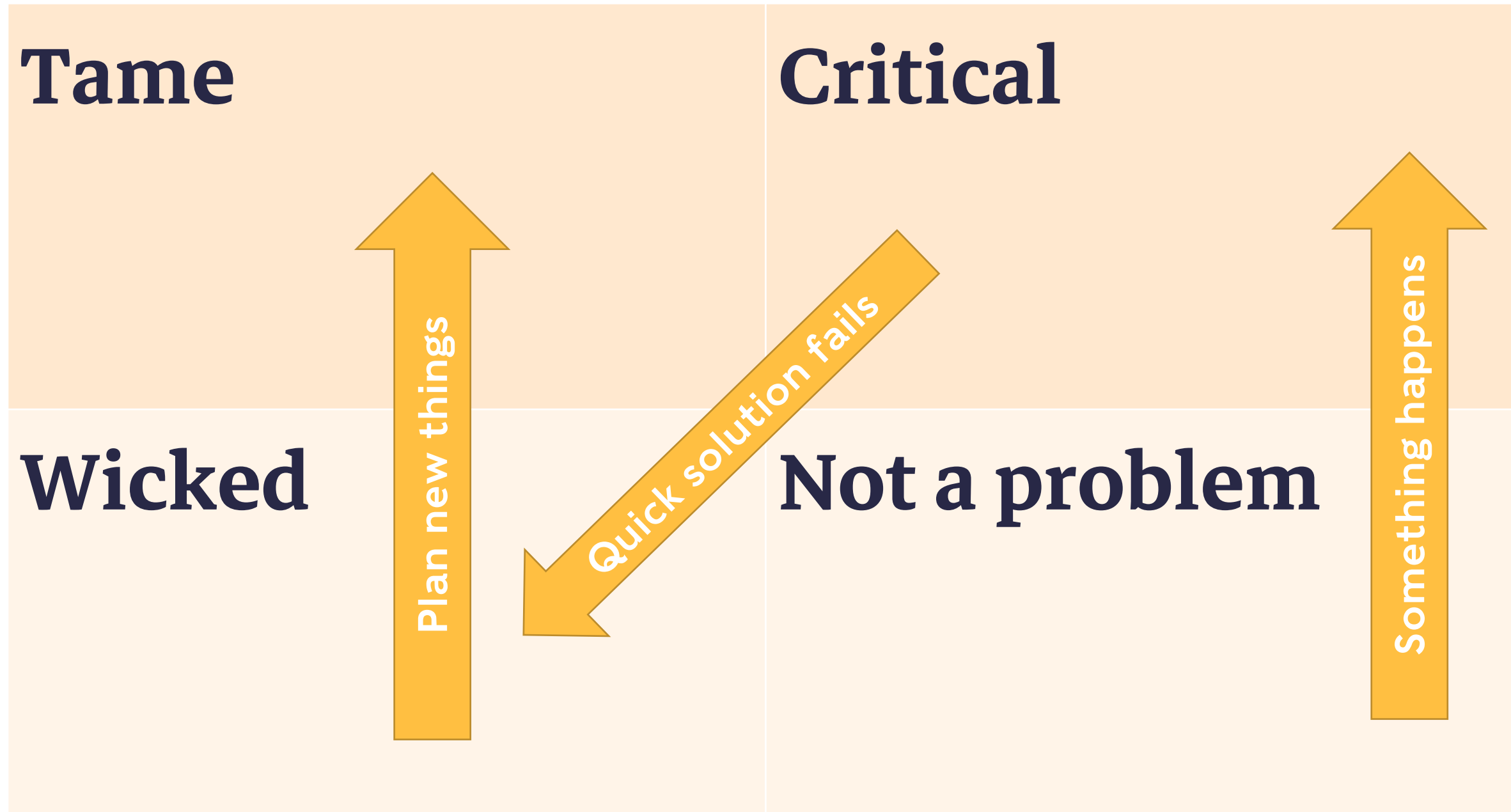


- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Don't Know
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

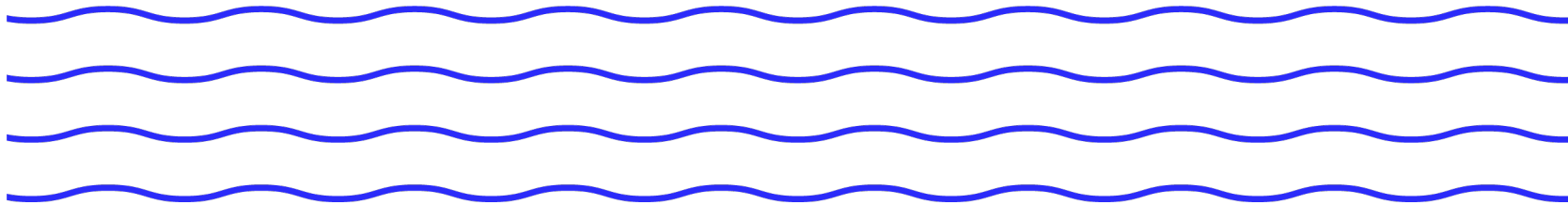


Based upon Rittel and Webber (1973)

Moving around



BAME awarding gap



Stats

What are we talking about?

Issues

What do we know?

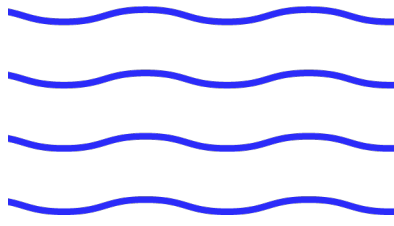
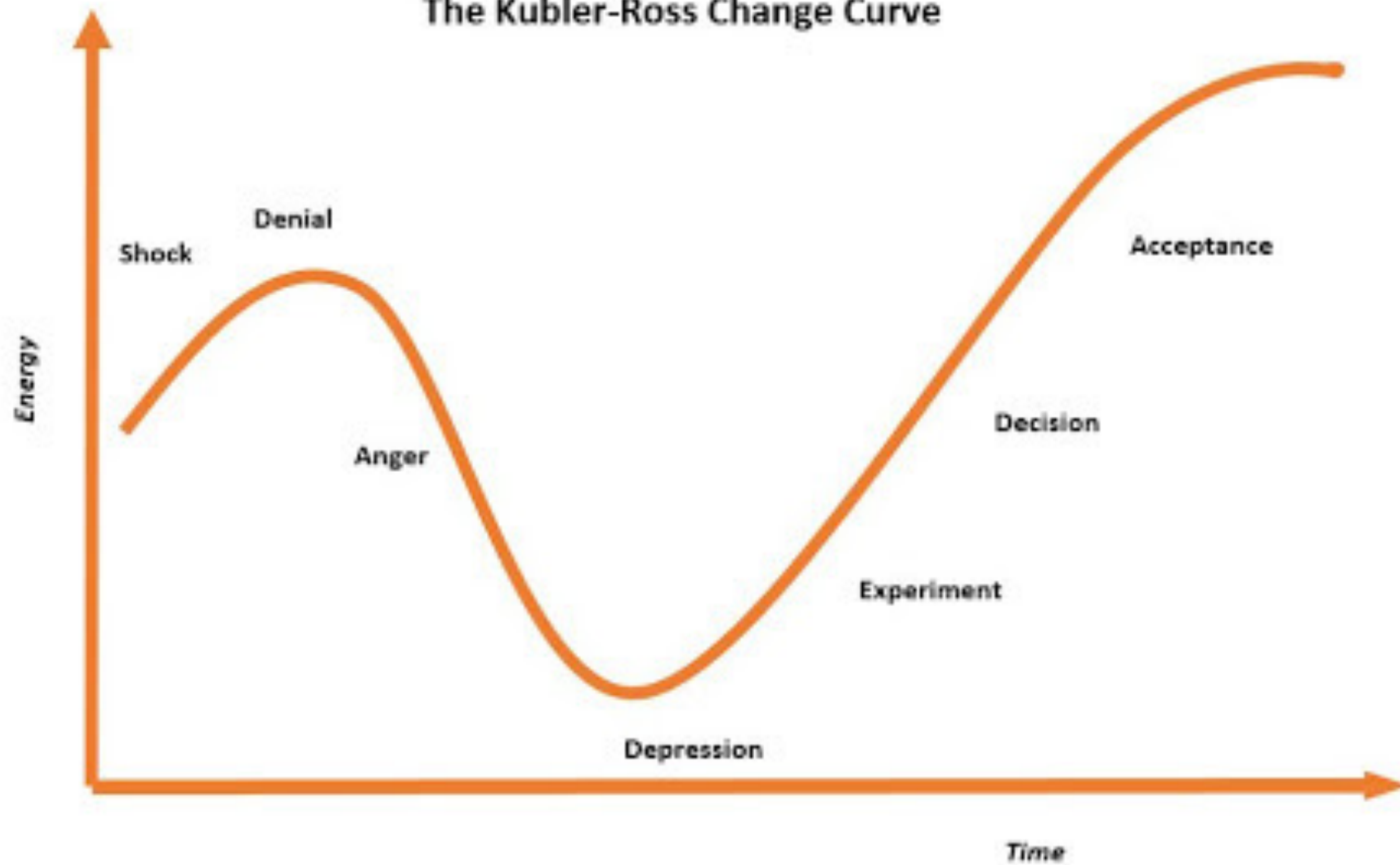
Comfort

Are we ready for difficult conversations?

Practice

What can be done?

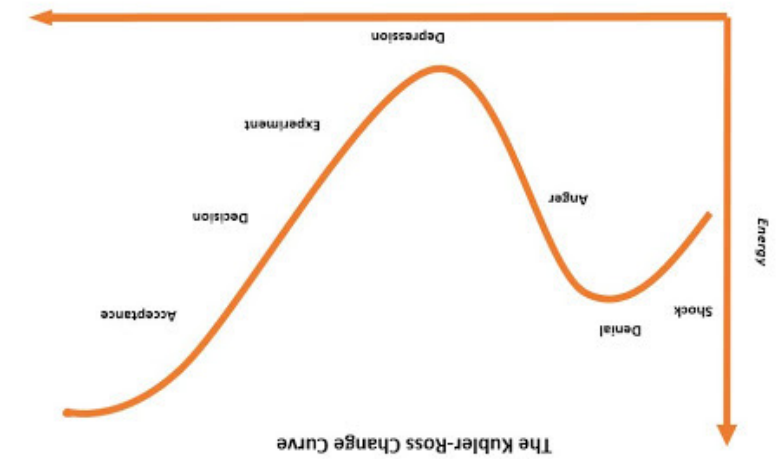
The Kubler-Ross Change Curve



...

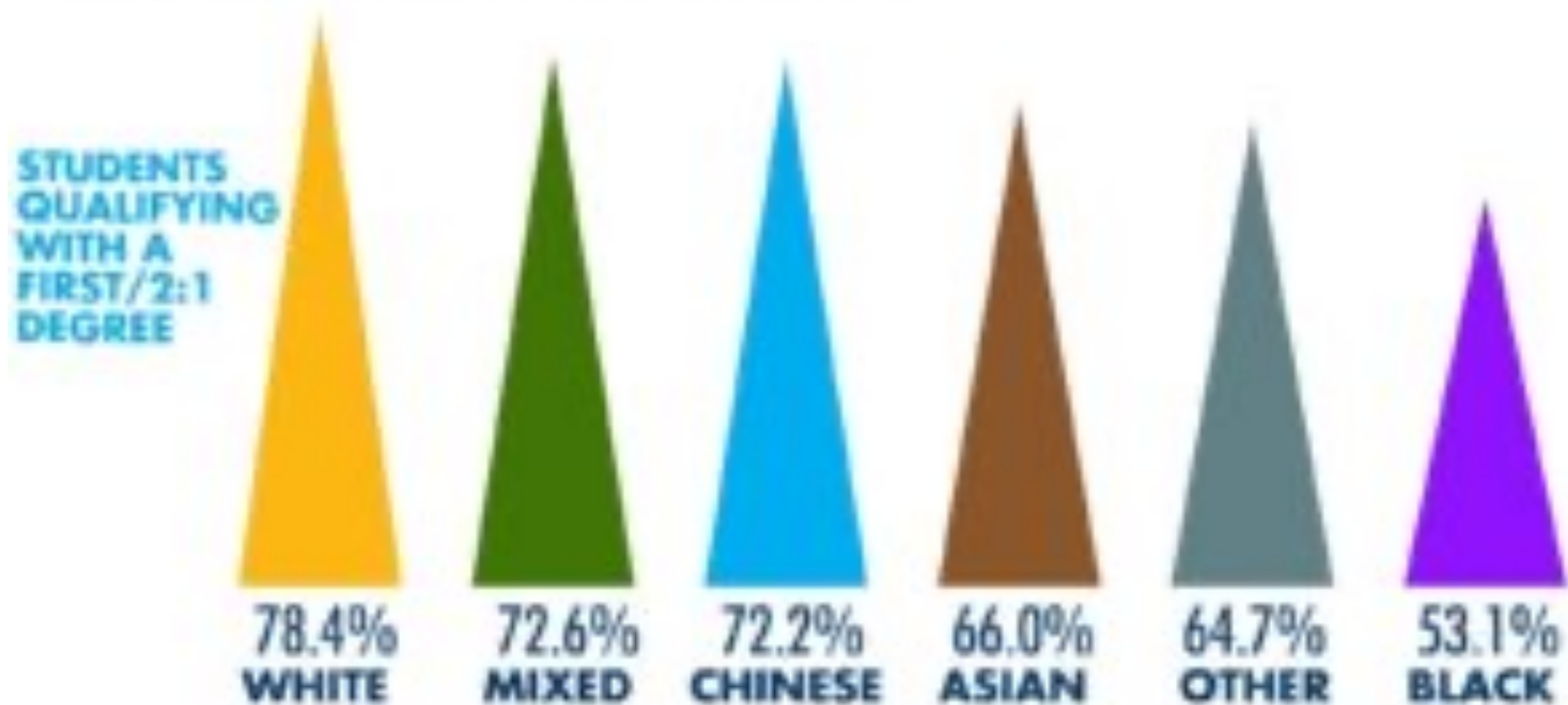
New stages?

- This is not a problem
- This is not a real problem
- This is not our problem
- This is a problem
- This is not my problem to fix
- This is our problem but BaME students must own the fixes
- Let's fix the problem. But how?



Back in the day

THE ATTAINMENT GAP BETWEEN **WHITE AND BLACK** STUDENTS WAS 25.3% POINTS



9: UK domiciled first degree undergraduate qualifiers with a First/2:1 degree by ethnic group, 2015-16



#ECUstats

ECU (2017). Equality in higher education statistical report 2017 - weighted by full person equivalent

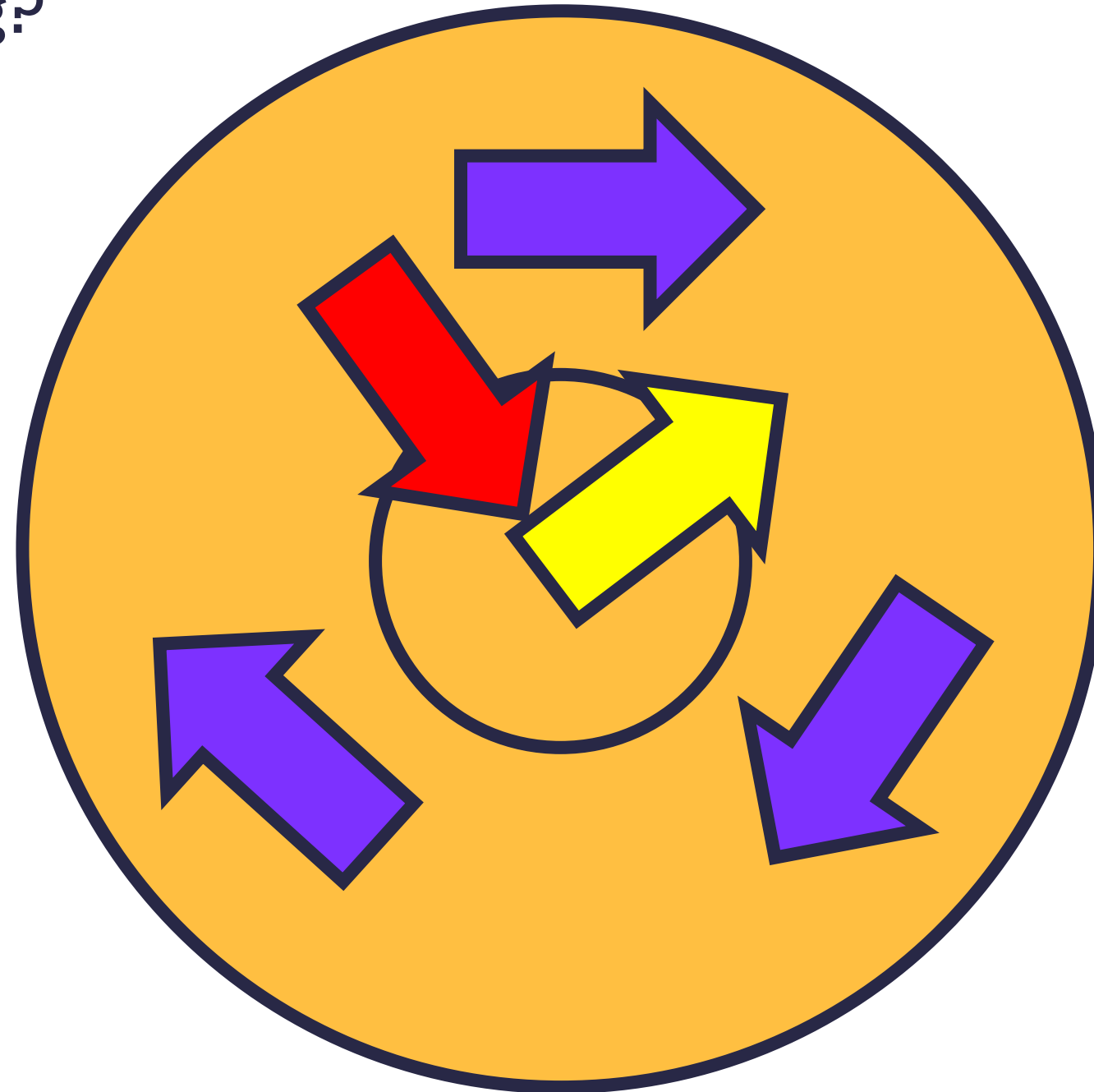
WONKHE

SUs

Frame game

- Attainment or awarding?
- What is the problem?

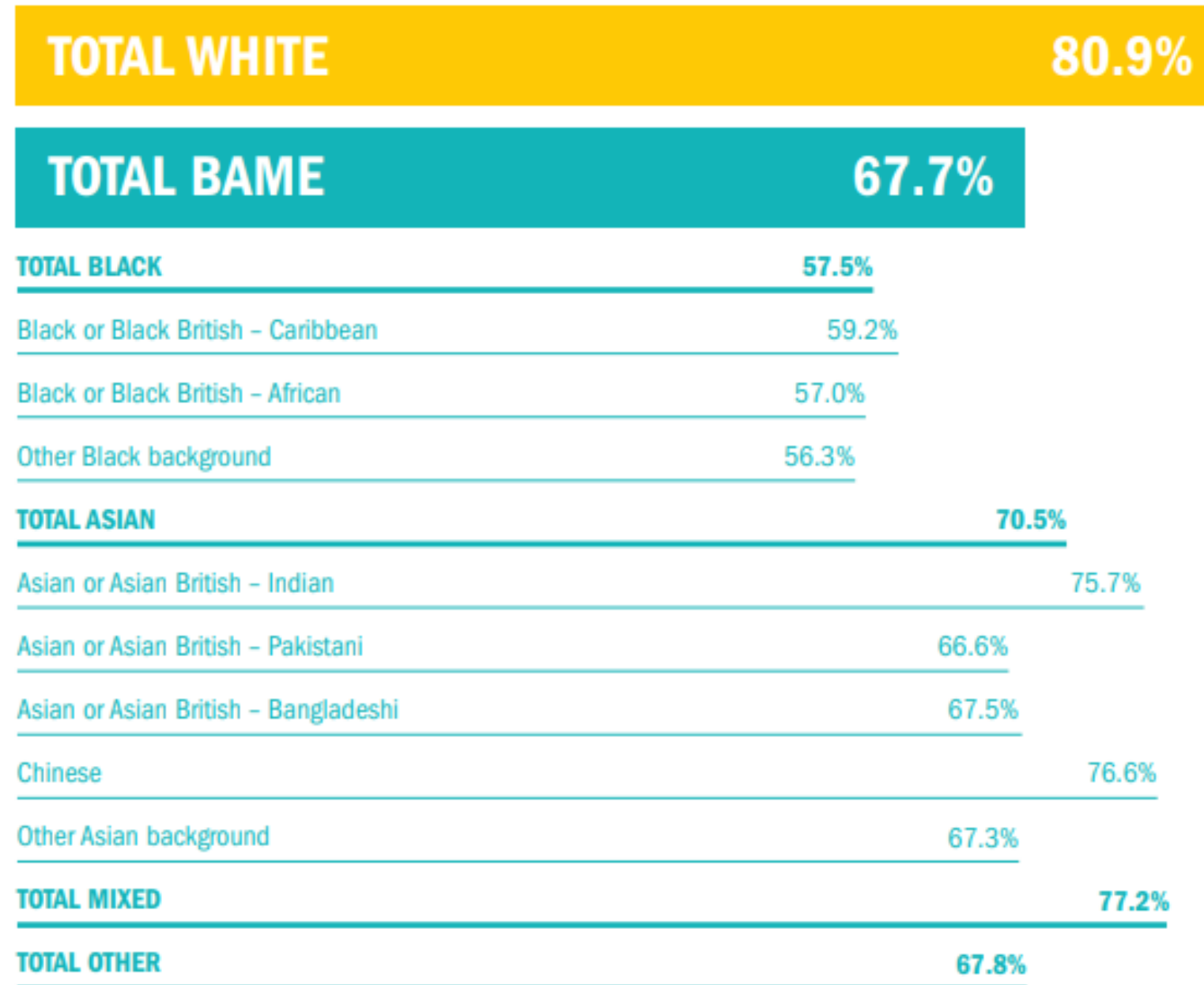
- Change students (attainment at A level, “Aim Higher”)
- Change universities (culture, structure, support)
- Change society (economics, social policy)



Mind the gap

- Gap varies by ethnic group
- Differs in different institutions (ranges from less than 5% to more than 25%)
- It also (probably) varies by subject

FIGURE 1: PROPORTION OF UK-DOMICILED QUALIFIERS AT UK HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS WHO RECEIVED A FIRST- OR UPPER-SECOND-CLASS DEGREE BY ETHNICITY, 2017–18



Source: HESA Student record, 2017–18

Mind the gap

- Gap varies by ethnic group
- Differs in different institutions (ranges from less than 5% to more than 25%)
- It also (probably) varies by subject

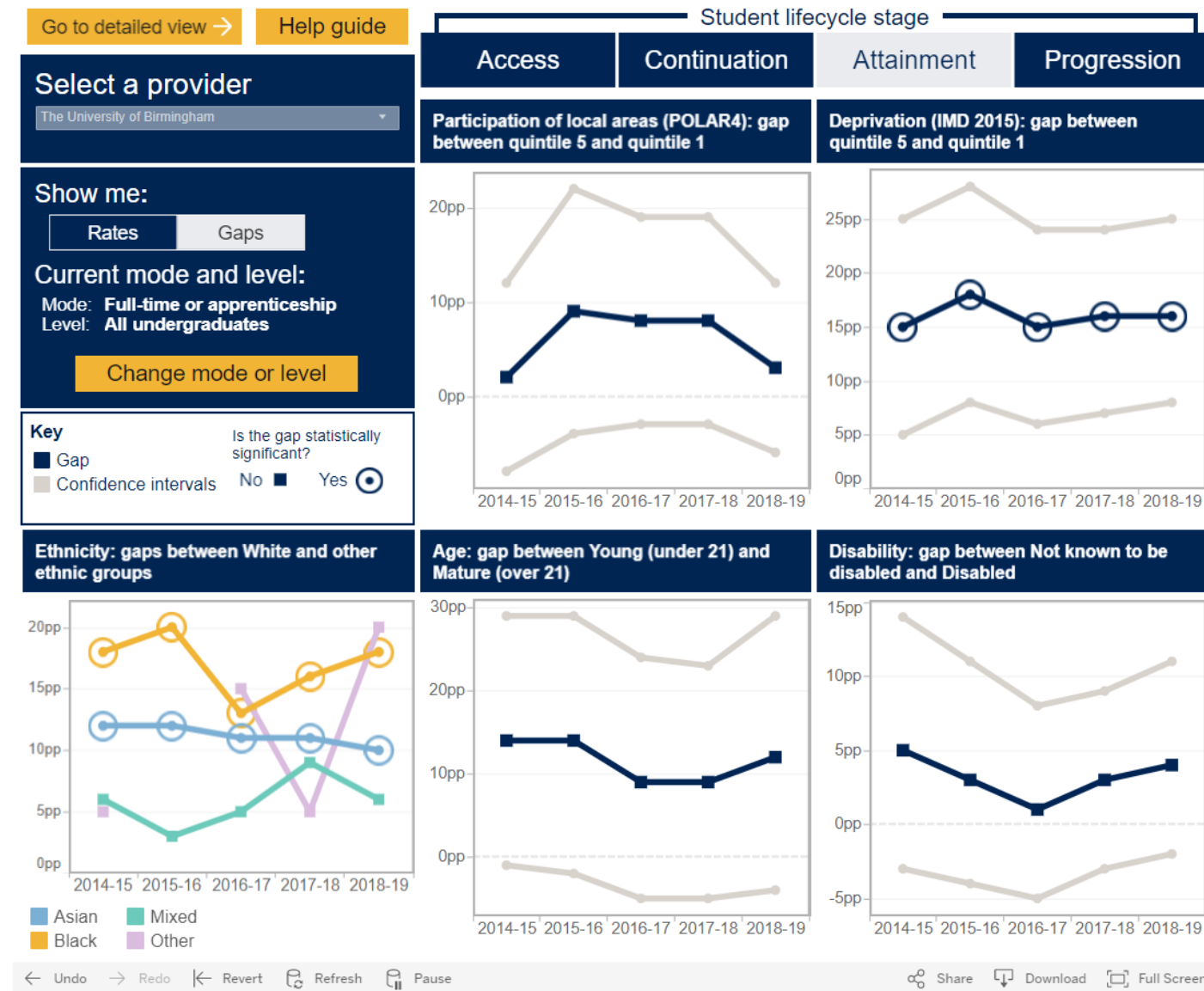
FIGURE 1: PROPORTION OF UK-DOMICILED QUALIFIERS AT UK HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS WHO RECEIVED A FIRST- OR UPPER-SECOND-CLASS DEGREE BY ETHNICITY, 2017–18

TOTAL WHITE	80.9%
TOTAL BAME	67.7%
TOTAL BLACK	57.5%
Black or Black British – Caribbean	59.2%
Black or Black British – African	57.0%
Other Black background	56.3%
TOTAL ASIAN	70.5%
Asian or Asian British – Indian	75.7%
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	66.6%
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	67.5%
Chinese	76.6%
Other Asian background	67.3%
TOTAL MIXED	77.2%
TOTAL OTHER	67.8%

Source: HESA Student record, 2017–18

The gap

- Selection of a particular metric (does focus on it obscure or catalyse action on other gaps?)



The gap narrowed!

See more data →

Help guide

Select a provider

* All English higher education providers

Show me:

Rates

Gaps

Current mode and level:

Mode: Full-time or apprenticeship

Level: All undergraduates

Change mode or level

Key

Gap

Confidence intervals

Is the gap statistically significant?

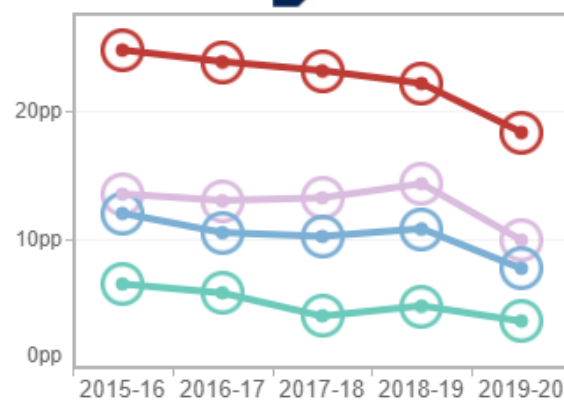
No

Yes



Ethnicity: gaps between White and other ethnic groups

Relevant to OfS KPM 4



Asian Black Mixed Other

Student lifecycle stage

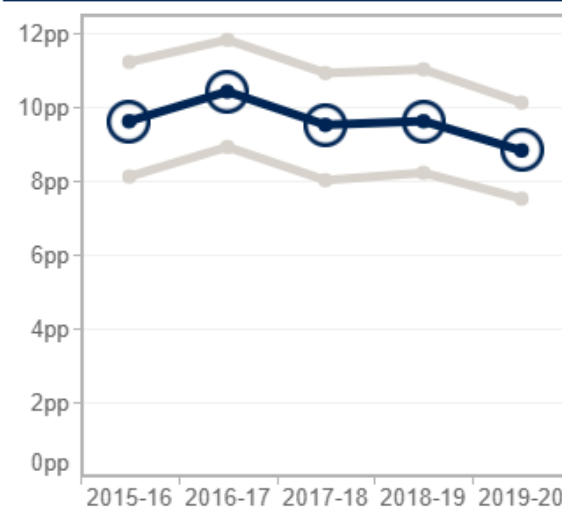
Access

Continuation

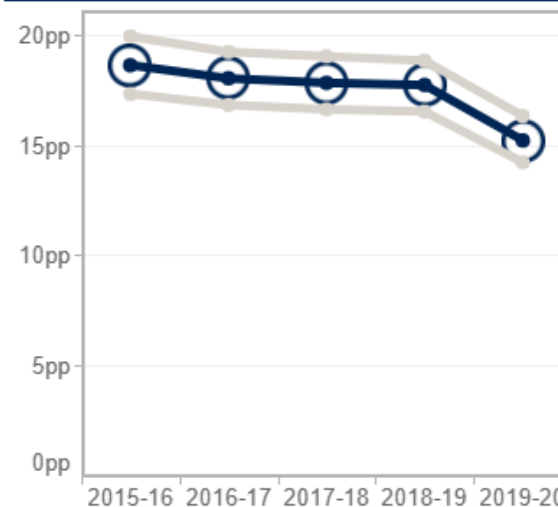
Attainment

Progression

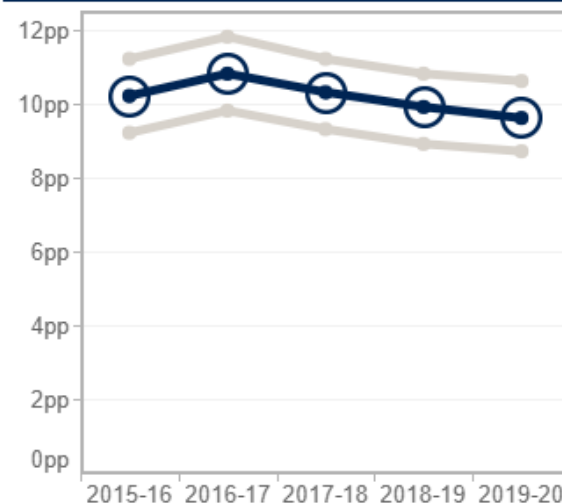
Participation of local areas (POLAR4): gap between quintile 5 and quintile 1 for young (under 21) students



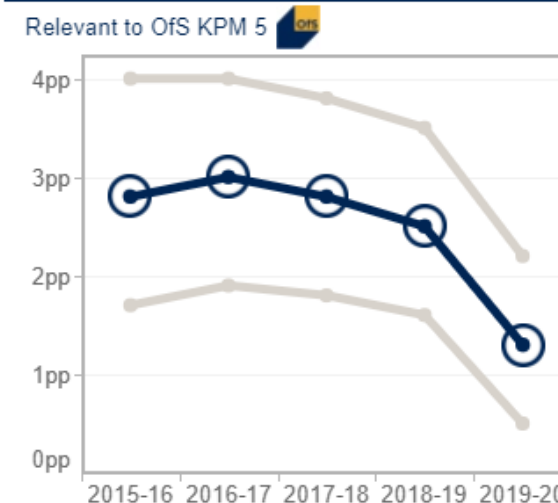
Deprivation (IMD 2019): gap between quintile 5 and quintile 1



Age: gap between Young (under 21) and Mature (over 21)



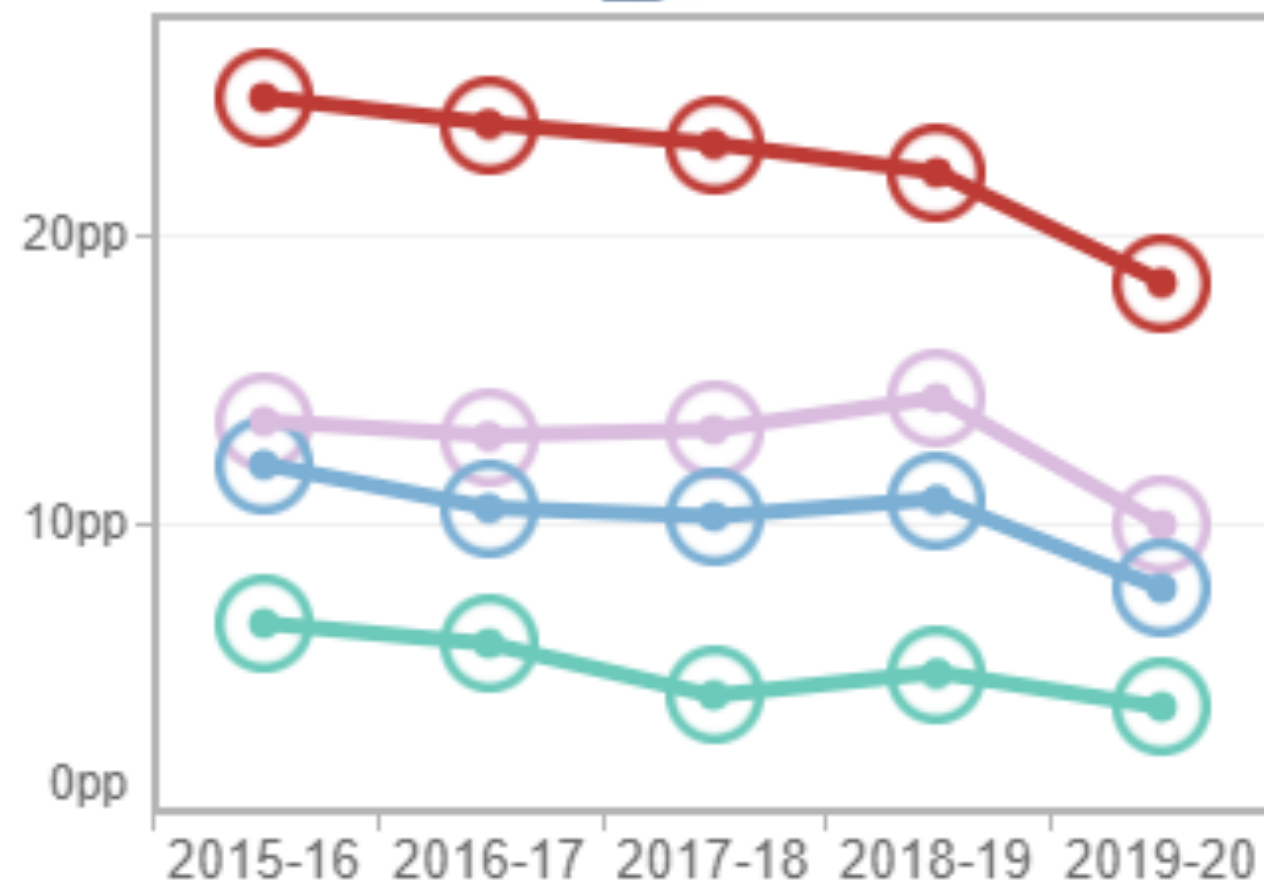
Disability: gap between No disability reported and Disability reported



The gap narrowed!

Ethnicity: gaps between White and other ethnic groups

Relevant to OfS KPM 4

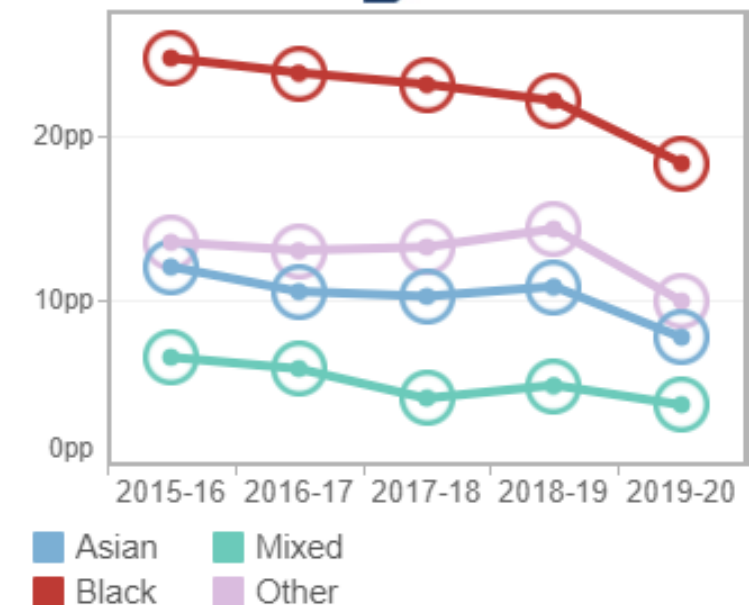


The gap narrowed!

- Theories include “no detriment” and “safety net” policies, levelling of disadvantage and assessment changes
- But did it narrow?
- If everyone did x%points better, the gap would look like it’s narrowing...
- Interrogating actual attainment often difficult nationally and even institutionally

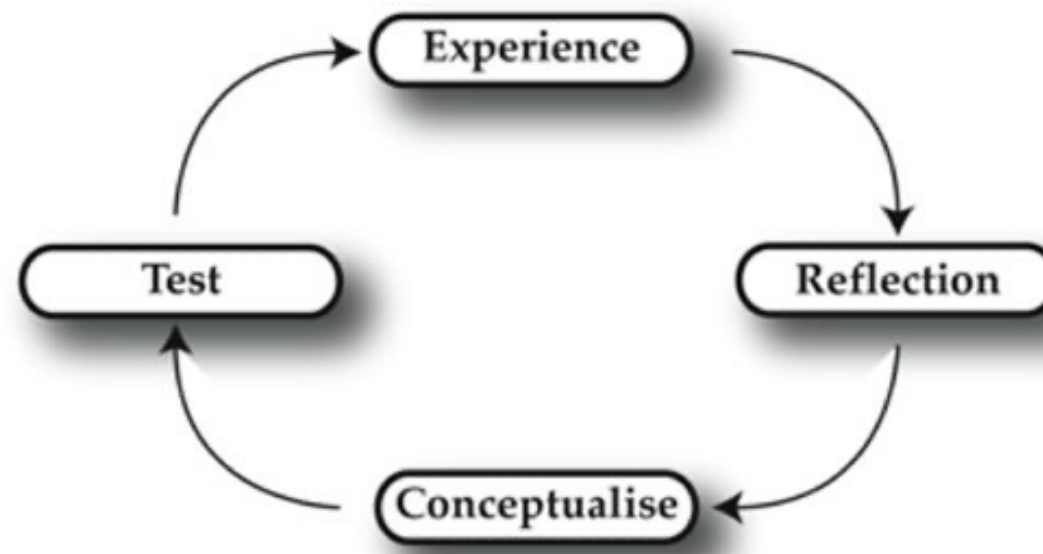
Ethnicity: gaps between White and other ethnic groups

Relevant to OfS KPM 4



The gap

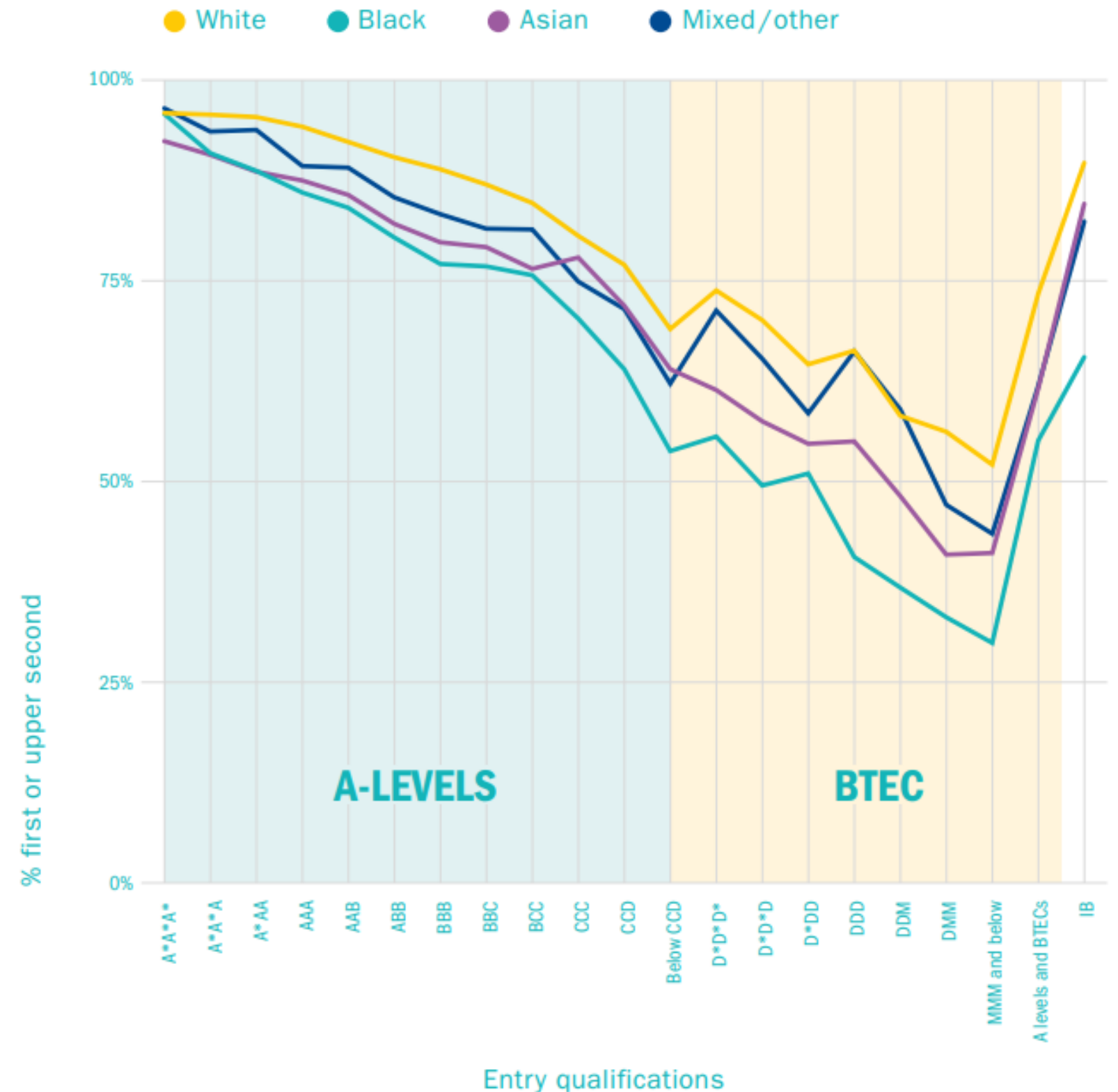
- Selection of a particular metric (does focus on it obscure or catalyse action on other gaps?)
- “BAME” as a statistical category v BAME as a concept (non-white, deficit model, supremacy etc)
- BAME as something that obscures causes and experiences



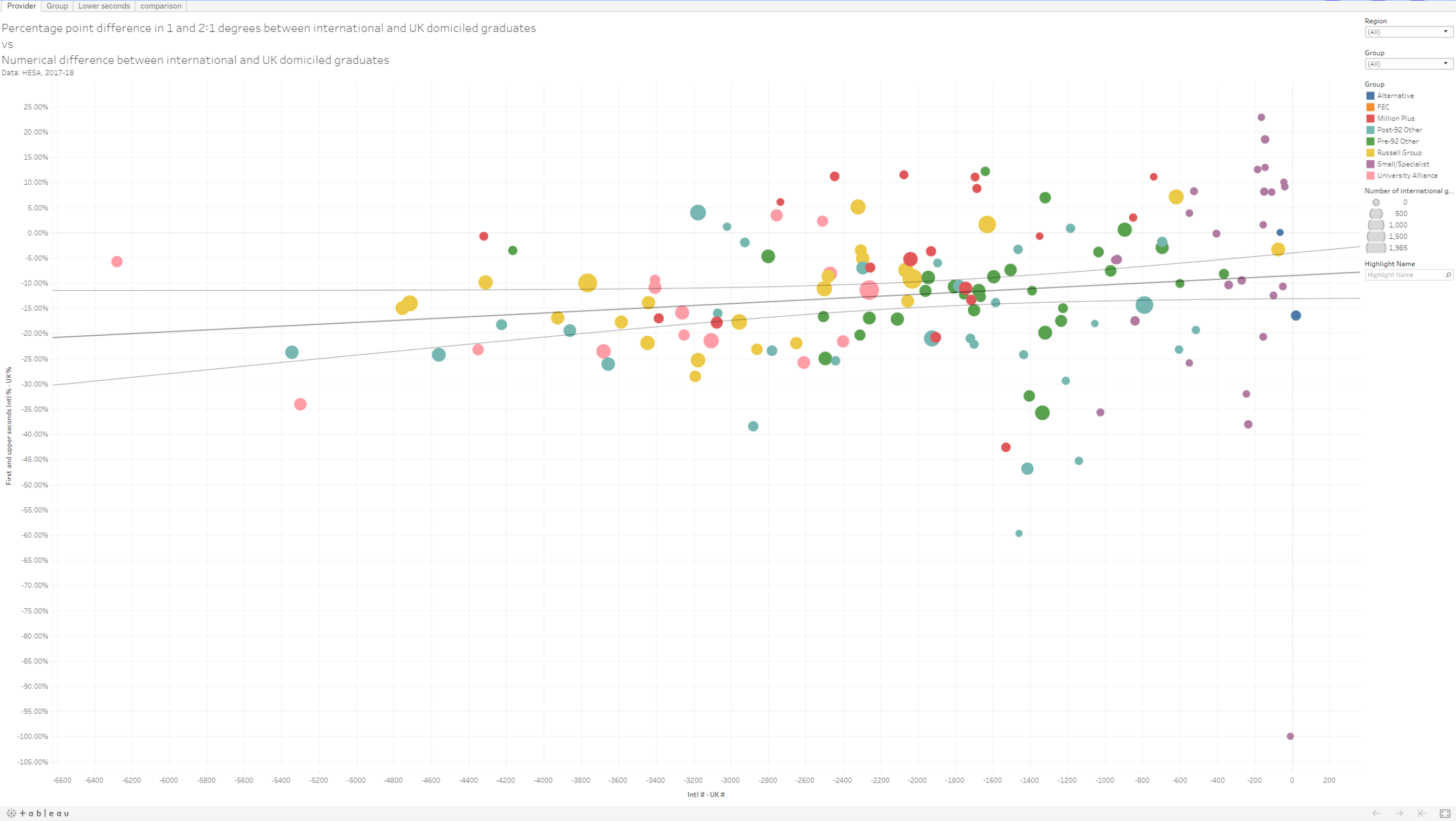
Persists...

- Gap persists even when prior quals taken into account
- This is important because it allows us to debunk that as a blaming factor
- See also “international students”...

FIGURE 3: PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS QUALIFYING WITH A FIRST- OR UPPER-SECOND-CLASS DEGREES, BY ETHNICITY AND ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS IN ENGLAND

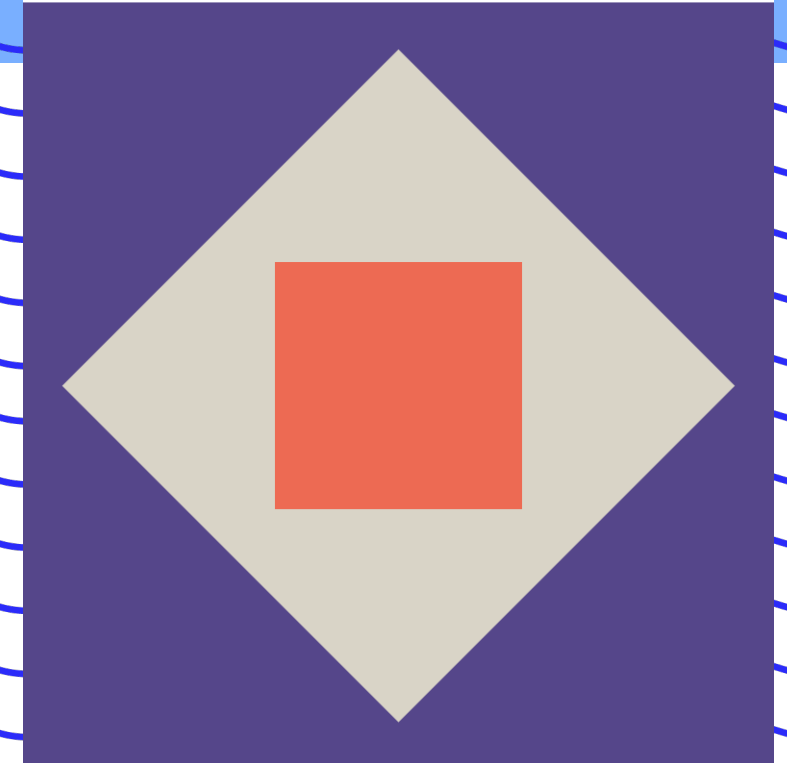


International...

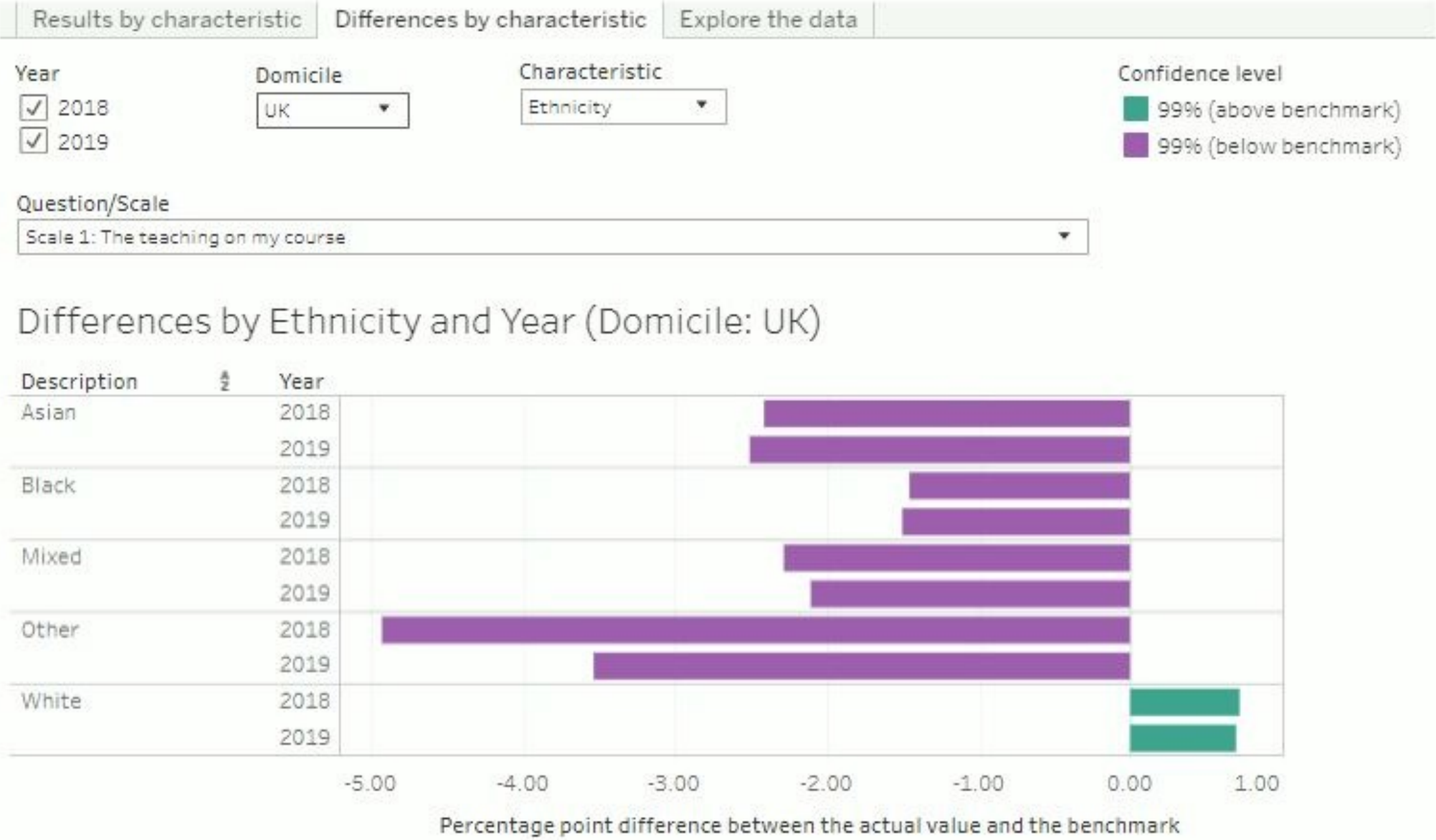


HEPI experience

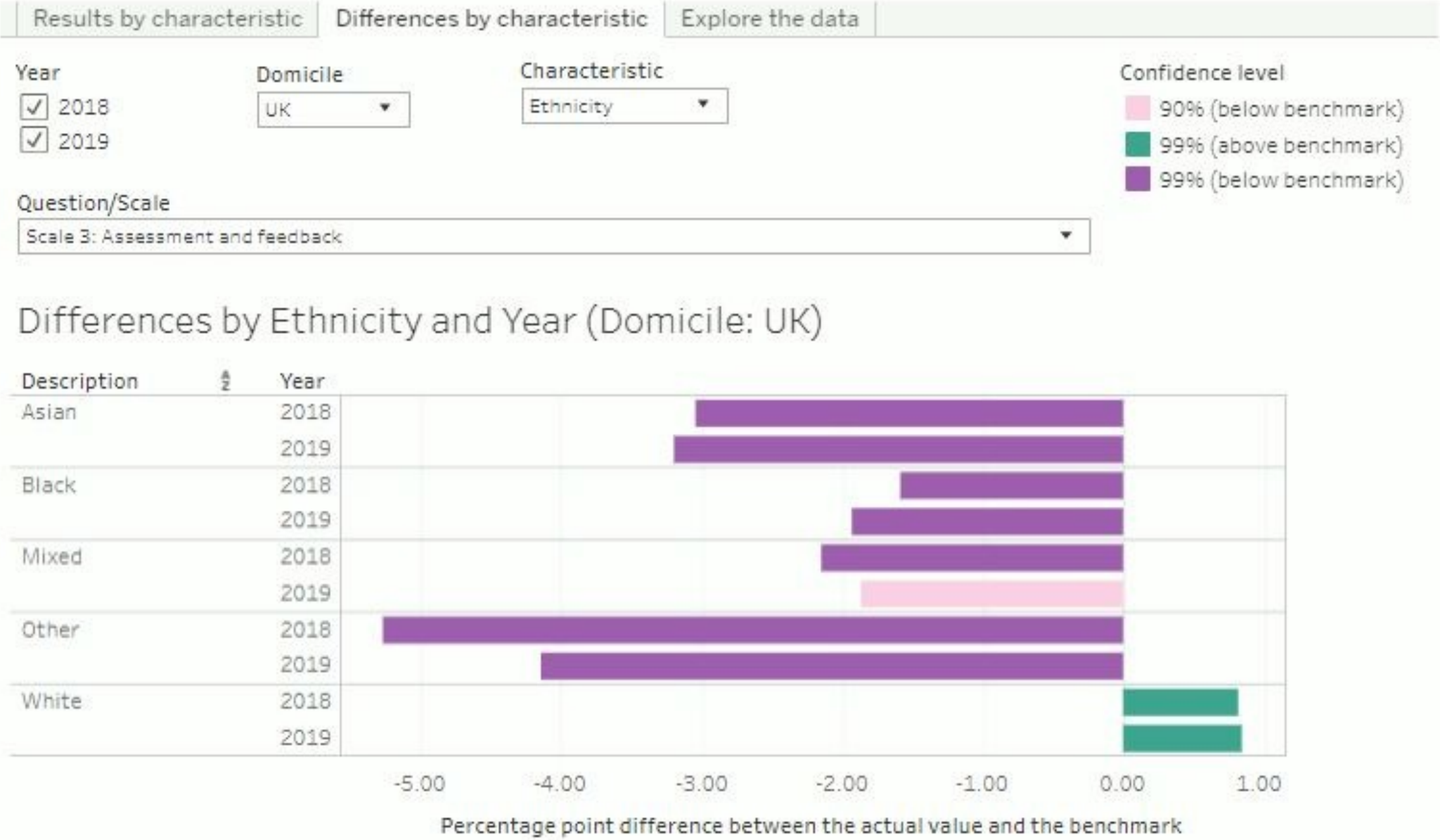
- Encouraged to take responsibility for own learning BAME 72% White 82%
- Agree teaching staff clearly explain course goals and requirements BAME 61% White 68%
- Agree staff helpful and supportive BAME 58% White 68%
- Agree staff work hard to make the subject interesting BAME 47% White 57%
- Agree staff motivate them to do their best work BAME 43% White 56%



NSS secrets



Assessment and feedback



Learning support

Results by characteristic Differences by characteristic Explore the data

Year ☒ 2018 ☒ 2019

Domicile

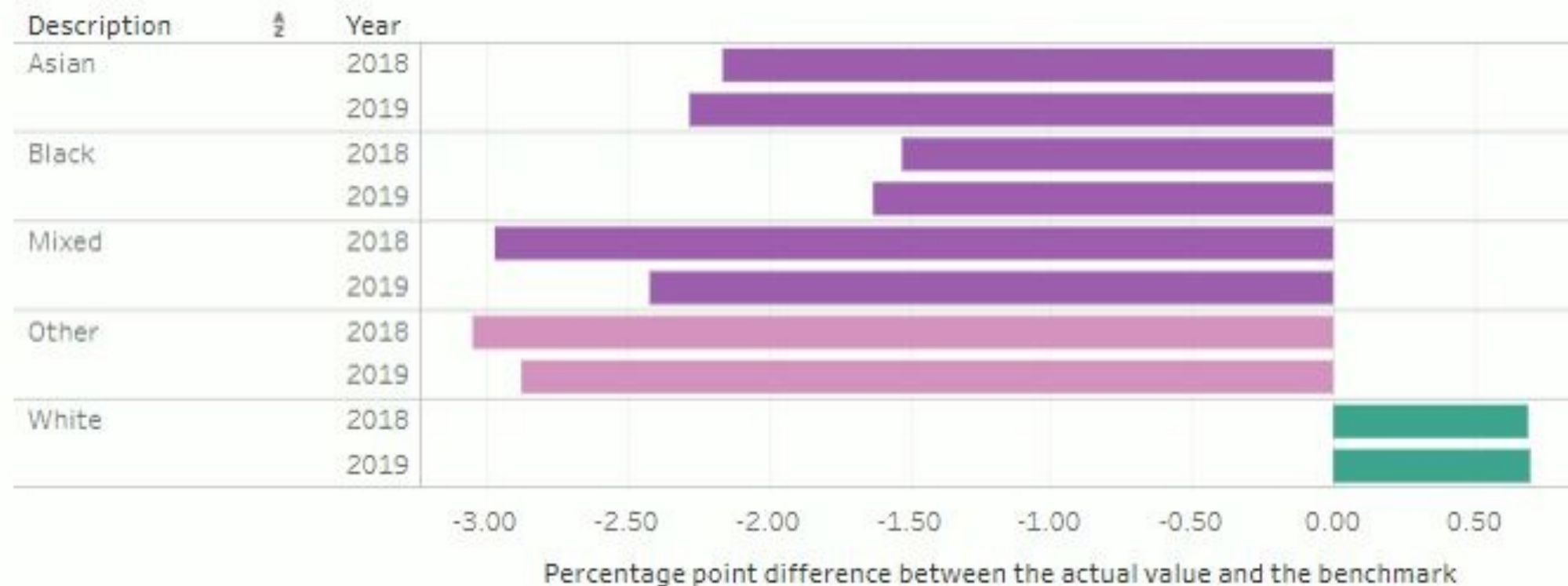
Characteristic

Confidence level

- 95% (below benchmark)
- 99% (above benchmark)
- 99% (below benchmark)

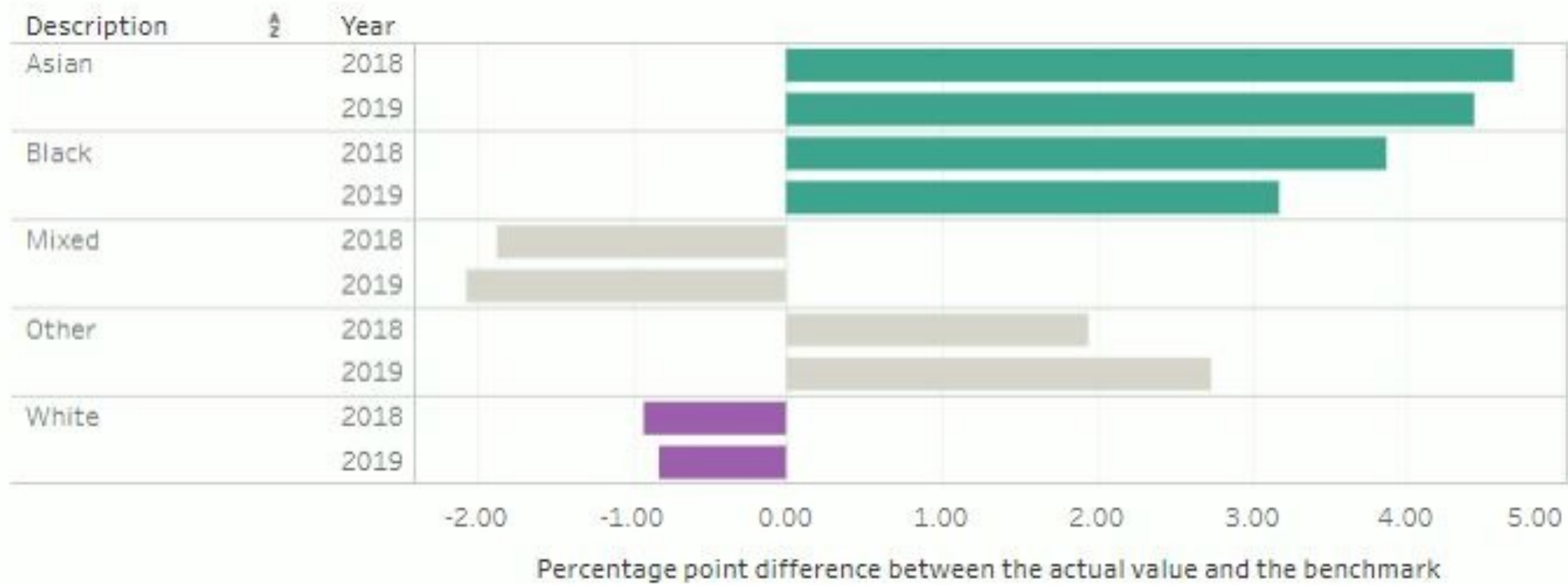
Question/Scale

Differences by Ethnicity and Year (Domicile: UK)



Students unions

Differences by Ethnicity and Year (Domicile: UK)



Results by characteristic Differences by characteristic Explore the data

Year
☒ 2018
☒ 2019

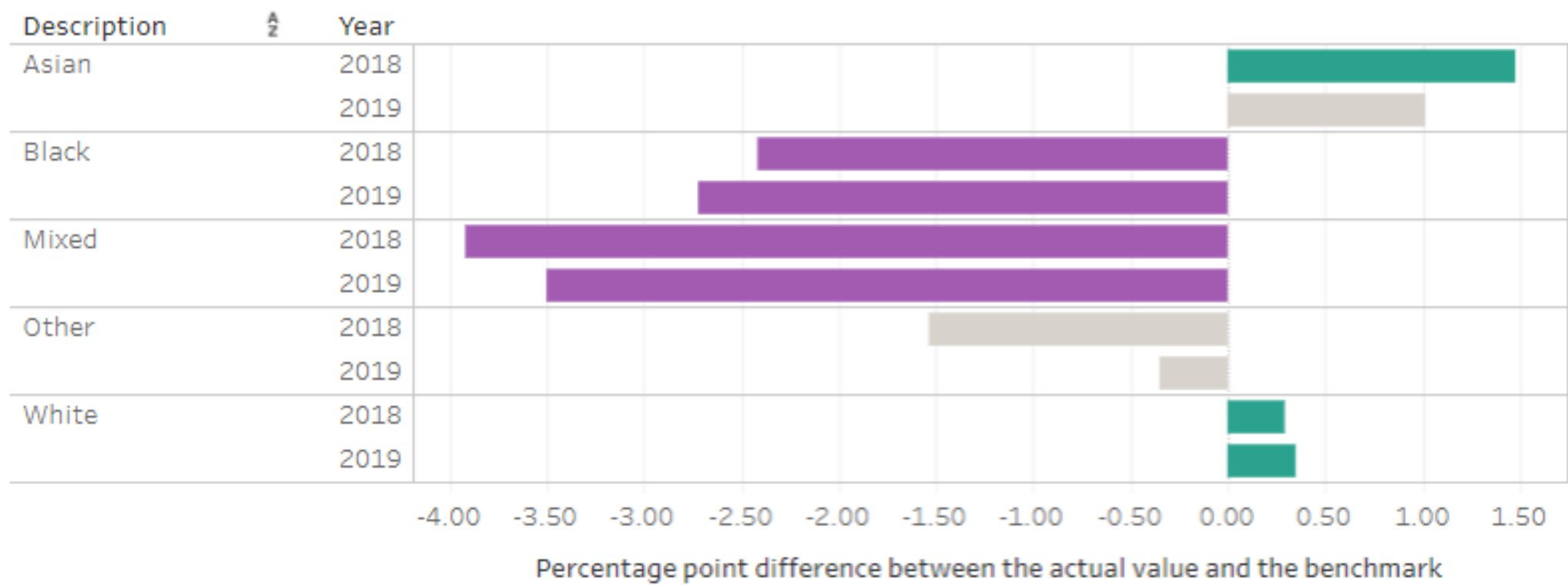
Domicile
UK ▼

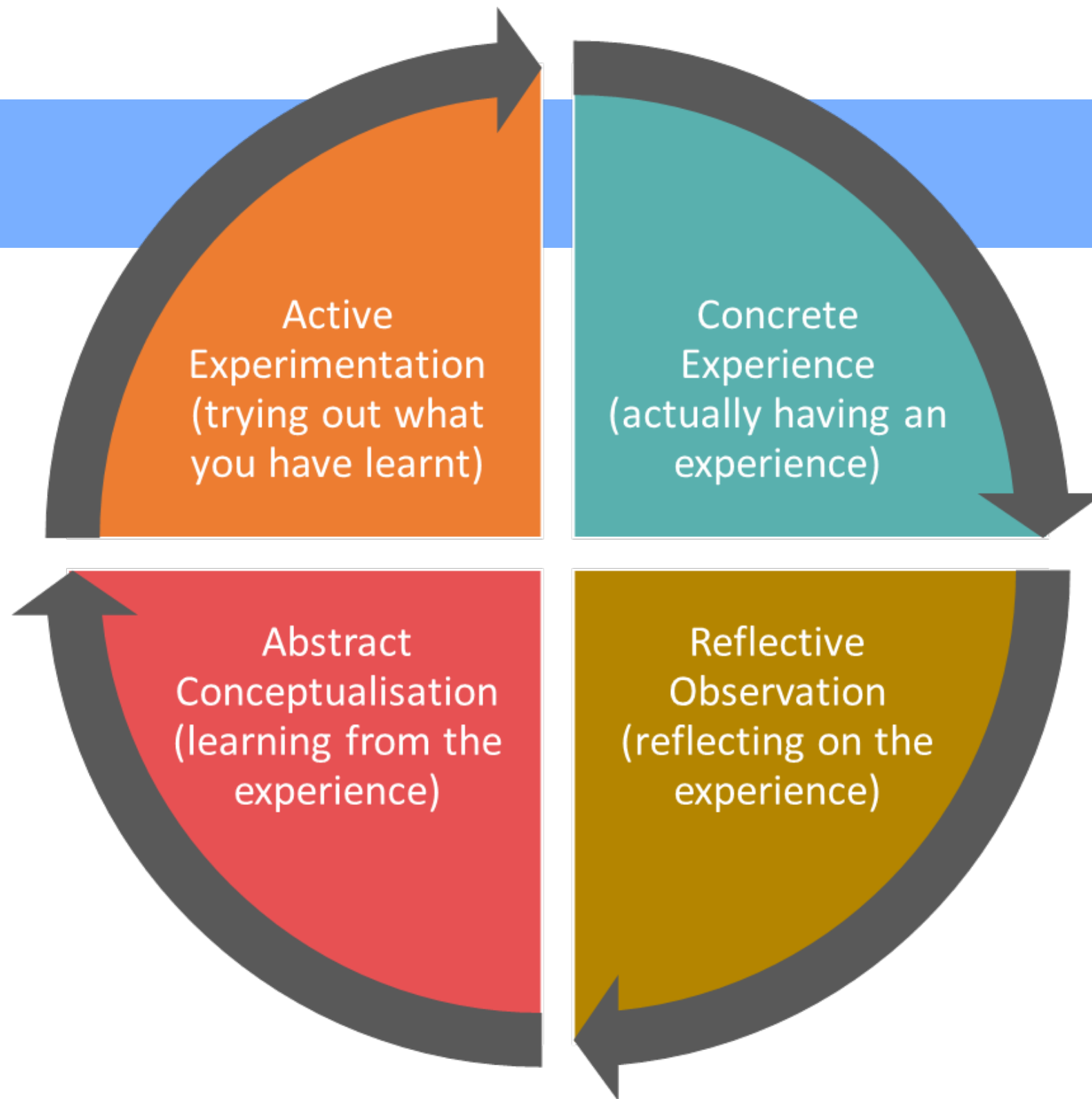
Characteristic
Ethnicity ▼

Confidence level
Not significant
99% (above benchmark)
99% (below benchmark)

Question/Scale
21. I feel part of a community of staff and students. ▼

Differences by Ethnicity and Year (Domicile: UK)





Why? Hypotheses

- Structural racism — a society that tends to disadvantage BAME people
- Established higher education cultures and practices that take whiteness as the established norm and are not inclusive of other perspectives (IAC, curriculum, "heroes", institutional histories)
- A lack of BAME role models in academia and in some cases limited opportunities for peer support
- Deficit models that seek to change BAME students rather than addressing the wider culture Institutional racism, individual biases, casual racism, stereotyping, and microaggressions
- Low understanding of the impact of intersectionality — the diversity within BAME experiences (class, disability, gender)



Why?

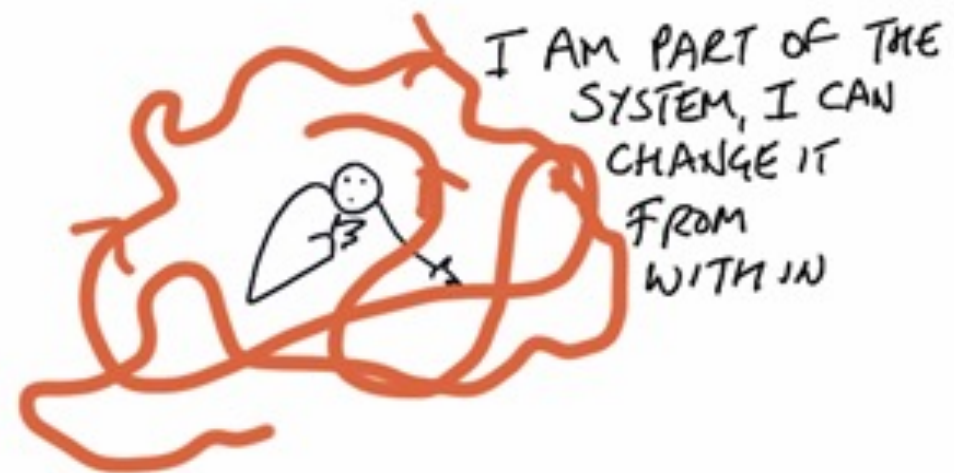
1. Institutional culture (inc understanding and awareness)
2. Intersections (ie distance, socio-economics and finance)
3. Staff (role models & understanding)
4. Inclusivity of curriculum design, content and delivery
5. Prior attainment



Plus

- White people being really super uncomfortable about having these conversations in case they accidentally say something "wrong" or are exposed as biased
- But until white people start self-educating and welcoming these conversations, we won't see culture change
- Everyone has prejudices and biases they need to confront. We need to get comfortable with being uncomfortable
- Leaders have a vital in role modelling this (both student and university leaders)
- BAME people should not have to be responsible for the additional burden of "educating" white people

Sleeves rolled up

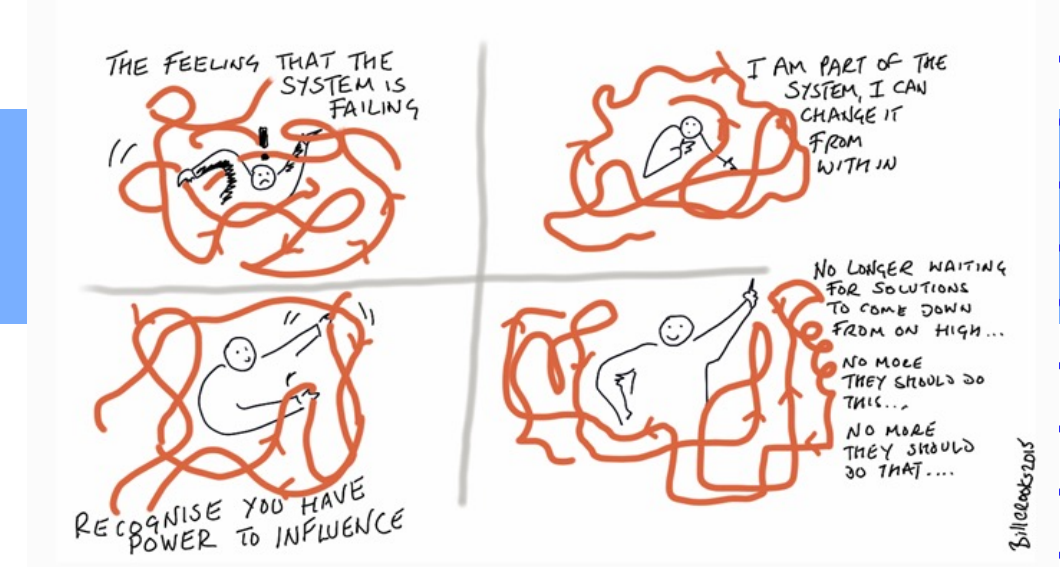


Billieeoks2015

Student leadership

Where and how students can play a role:

- Designing, operating and running interventions and local work to solve a problem
- Commenting on, critiquing and improving strategic solutions to a problem (noticing issues and gaps)
- Co-commissioning evidence gathering, prioritising, designing and choosing solutions at the strategic level



How leaders define problems

Tame

There's a simple solution
Programmes
Planning, checking, target setting
"Level headed" response
Often misses issues/detail
Can be hard to change - professionals

Critical

Urgent, rapid, prioritisation
Emotional issue/response
Significant injection of time/money
Big "single solution" responses

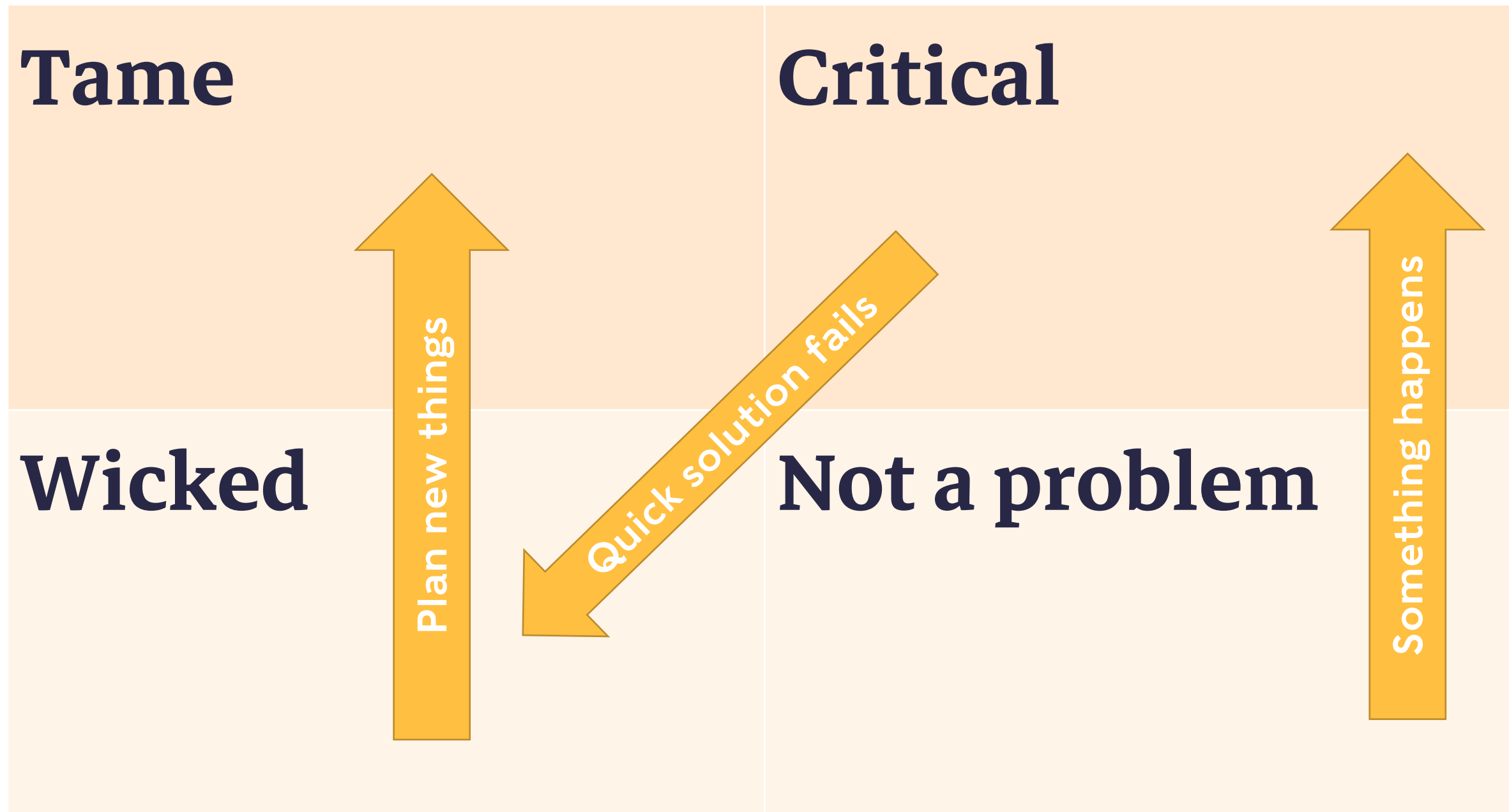
Wicked

Complicated
Different views on who, what, how and when
Requires lots of people to do things
Requires those affected to be involved

Not a problem

Denial that it's an issue
It is an issue but it's someone else's issue
(NHS, State, Parents, Media)
It is an issue but much more of an issue elsewhere

Moving around



Do things

- Institutional ownership at a high level and inclusion of reducing attainment gaps in strategies and plans — with recognition for those who lead in this area
- Research and data to understand the specifics of the issues, involving BAME students in the design and interpretation of the research
- Institution-wide training on valuing diversity and practising inclusivity
- Creating spaces to talk openly about race and the impact of racism on student and staff experiences and wellbeing eg film screenings, panel discussions, staff conferences, art shows — with additional coaching for leaders to role model best practice if necessary



Do things

- Ensure there is a clear and safe way of raising specific incidents, with the confidence that action will be taken
- Review of curriculum, teaching practice, extra-curricular offer — with attention to the "hidden" curriculum (what messages BAME students are hearing about what student life and study means)
- Careful design of targeted interventions that offer additional support to BAME students (eg a mentoring scheme) — involving students in design, testing success, ensuring intervention does not add to burden of students and staff and that their time is recognised and valued
- Get woke — read books and blogs by BAME authors, listen to podcasts that explore diversity and inclusion — be prepared to have your perspective challenged

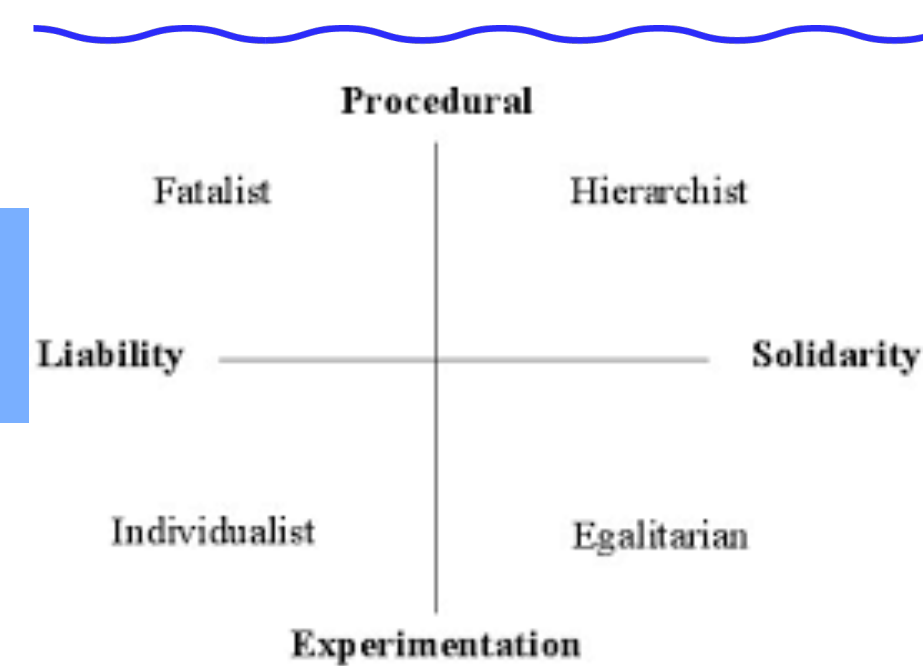


What works

- Having the right data
- Having the right data at the right level (more often, lower down)
- Trying to understand what leads to the data
- Space to talk about race
- Enhancing ethnic diversity within academia
- Taking steps to review curriculums and teaching and learning practices
- Understanding differential need and access to support services
- Understanding differential need and access to social/community/culture activities
- Developing (piloting) initiatives (hypotheses)
- Rolling out initiatives
- Looking at what's working and amending

More general debates

- BaME students should lead work on awarding gaps and their lived experience should be central to development of plans v BaME students should not be suppliers of free labour (inc emotional labour – trauma of racism)
- Racism as “incidents” and racism as institutional/structural
- What does it mean for a university to take action (and at what level) inc getting in v getting on
- Framing and “free speech” – the idea that work in this area somehow censors others/history etc



Taking action?

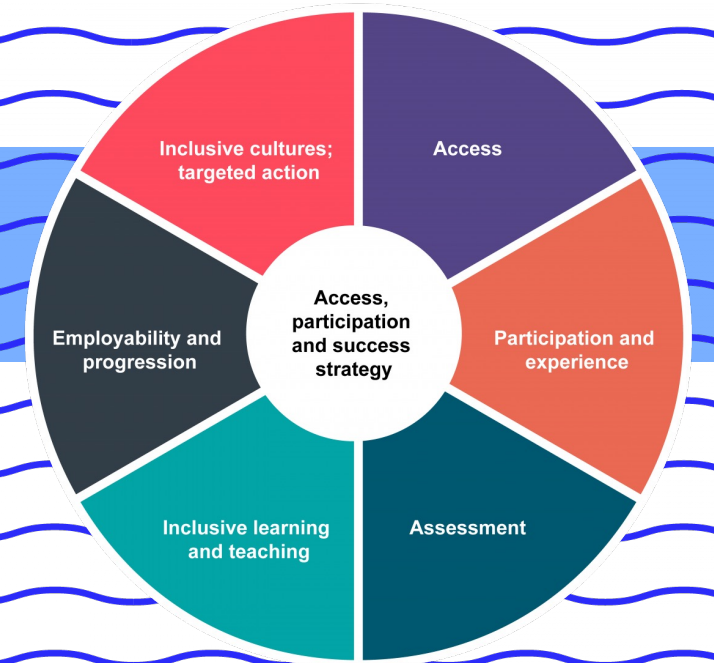
- Egalitarian – policy as education and awareness
- Individualist – policy as reward and recognition
- Authoritarian – policy as monitoring and punishments

Awarding gaps

- Assessment design
- Teaching for inclusion
- Belonging and confidence
- Curriculum
- Academic staff
- Harassment

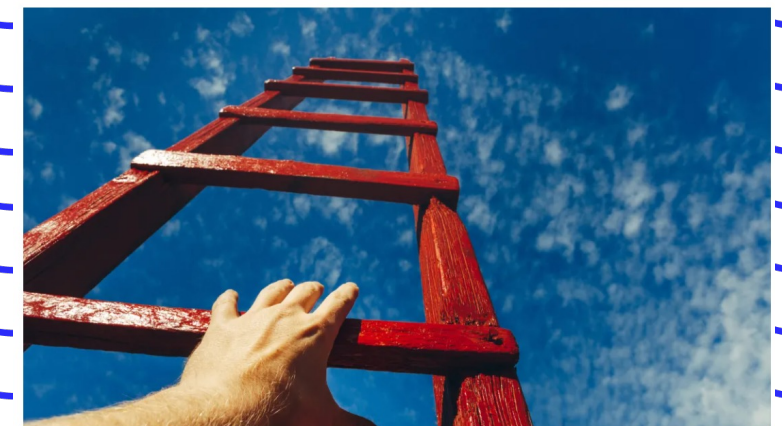
What are SUs doing?

- Engagement database
- Initiatives database
- Analysis blog SUs
- Analysis blog mainsite



WONKHE SUs

What role do SUs have in Access and Participation Plans?



Jim Dickinson
Jim is an Associate Editor at Wonkhe

Every time we talk to SUs about Access and Participation plans, we tend to get asked what's in everyone else's plans with reference to SUs.

This is important right now because SUs in England are busy preparing independent student written submissions evaluating APPs in their first year of operation, and many SUs are on the hunt for viable and sensible recommendations.

To help with that, we thought we'd read every published APP that's on the OES website and search for mentions of SUs in the text. [You can find the results here.](#)

Latest SUs blogs

Being an officer is confusing and complex – and not all because of Covid-19

Letting students lead – reflections on virtual access and outreach

Build financial capital

Plenty of bursaries and scholarships, not so much on reducing costs and norming

Build academic capital

Lots of specific support and study skills, some curriculum reform, almost nothing on assessment

Build social capital

Very little, quite "single group"

WONKHE Here's what happened when I read every Access and Participation Plan

As providers prepare monitoring returns and impact reports, Jim Dickinson reads every APP in England and has thoughts on student success in a post-pandemic context.

Image: ICON

Jim Dickinson
Jim is an Associate Editor at Wonkhe

That ACCESS & WP BUILD BACK HIGHER

In the aftermath of the publication of the [Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities](#) report, I was [tweeting](#) about the persistence of the Black attainment gap, and someone slid into my DMs to ask a question.

"Out of interest", said the correspondent, "how much of the apparent narrowing of the awarding gap remains if you normalise for the change in overall distribution of degree classifications?"

Now there's an intriguing question. Clearly, if everyone got a 1st or 2:1, the gap would be 0 per cent – so the question was whether the apparent improvement that the sector congratulates itself upon reflects a systemic improvement in the lot of black students, or is instead a statistical side effect of attainment improving in general.

What you measure is what you get

So I had a look. In the latest 2019-20 HESA figures (UK domiciled first degree qualifiers, all modes) there's a 17.9 percentage point awarding gap between black and white students. That's down from 30.7 percentage points in 2018-19, and from 23.1 percentage points in 2014-15. So it's reducing, and that reduction accelerated in the last, partially Covid-struck academic year for reasons that need to be interrogated.

That gap was based on those getting firsts or upper seconds, so I thought I ought to interrogate firsts to see if the pattern was consistent. There the gap was also 17.9 percentage points in 2019-20, and given Deliveroo had just appeared, I didn't think much more of it.

But a week or so later, having skim-read all of England's access and participation plans for an analysis for our SU subscribers, I came back to the spreadsheet just to double-check on the historical trajectory. And it's remarkable. That gap in 19-20 was up from 16.0 percentage points in 18-19, and that was up from 13.7 percentage points in 14-15. When it comes to firsts, the gap is getting worse.

There will be plenty of ways to explain that finding that I'll not go into here – suffice to say that in the context of both reducing disparities and effective regulation, it's important that we don't kid ourselves, and that we keep an eye on what we're measuring. In an interview reflecting on the accomplishments of the Office for Students (OfS) recently, outgoing chair Michael Barber said that the thing he's most proud of is progress on access and participation. I'm hoping his [new book on accomplishment](#) doesn't make the fatal mistakes of confusing intention and target setting with achievement, and of confusing setting targets (hope) with actual human accomplishment.

Tackling race and racism on campus



WONKHE
SUs

Tackling race and racism on campus



WONKHE
SUs