

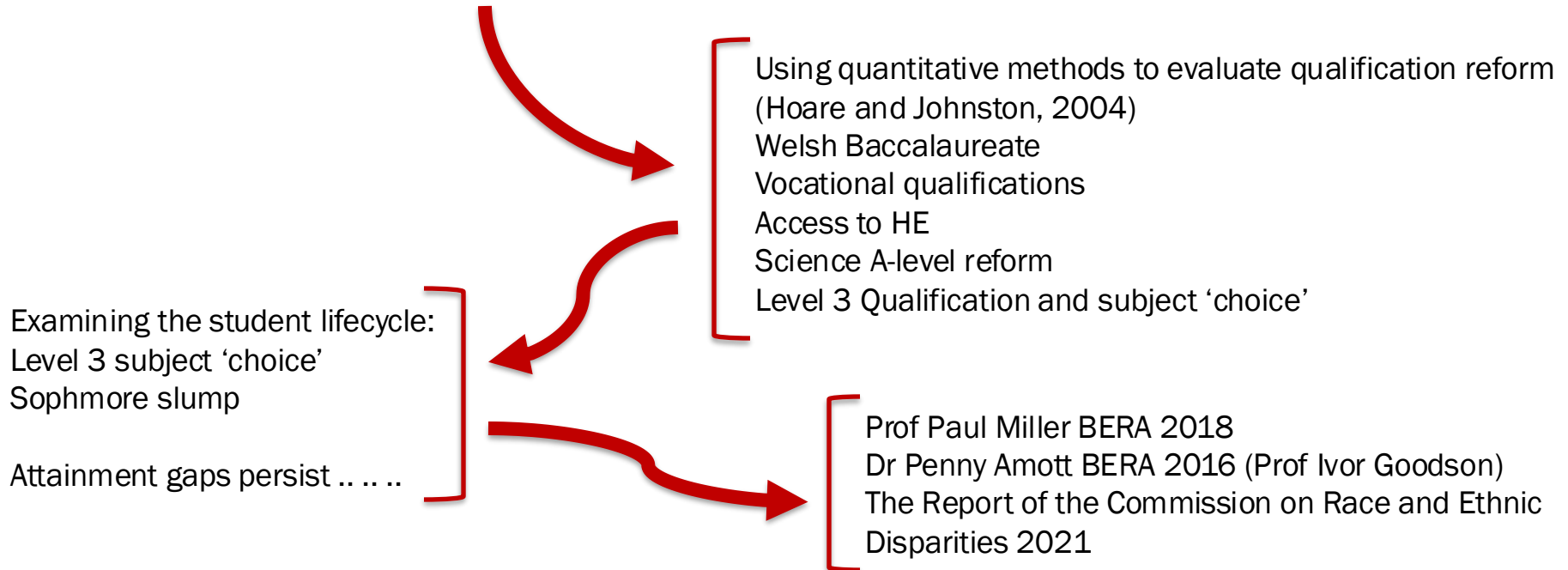
The Experience of Learners from Ethnic Minorities – Their Story



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The narrative leading to this study...

Experience delivering and writing vocational qualifications in FE



There is a range of literature, why do more research?

“It is important to understand how students from different BME groups in your area identify within the education system, and learn about the specific issues that they may face.” (OfS)

Communicating/reinforcing to the wider community the experience of these learners and their experience of the student lifecycle could be a powerful force for direct, targeted, and contextual change.

To understand the experiences of students who identify as being in an ethnic minority in our community

Their experiences in **their** context, what **they** wanted to tell us was important to **them**.

What was their experience of Higher Education, in the context of our community?

Shape our community and future by building equity.

Approach

An adapted Life History method

Places the participants experience at the center of the research

We want to know what is important to them

Adapted to direct them to thinking about their experience of Higher Education

Grounded theory approach to the analysis of the interviews

Using the narrative to generate the themes

Who are the participants in the study?

12 UG and 1PG student, all in the same department (Biosciences)

All identify as belonging to an ethnic minority group

Who are the researchers?

11 final year UG students who are peers and near-peers of the participants

2 academic staff

Ethical review was undertaken by the Cardiff University School of Biosciences Research Ethics Committee.

Year A

6 UG Students

1PG Student

<2hr Interview

“Could you describe to us the key events that you feel impacted your education since joining the School of Biosciences?”

Transcription

Two independent Line by line coding's in NVivo

Year B

7 UG Students

<2hr Interview

“Can you tell me about the positive and negative experiences you’ve had that led you to study Bioscience at Cardiff university?”

Transcription

Two independent Line by line coding's in NVivo

Line by Line Coding

Look for: Search In PILOT STUDY Find Now Clear Advanced Find

27 01 Line-by-Line Pilot 18 01

27 01 Line-by-Line Pilot 18 01

Orten when I speak to a native English speaker, I am talking and saying a word and he's just, I have to repeat that word 10 times because I mispronounced one letter, even a stupid example from a taxi – Sinclair Place, and they don't know where it is because of the wrong emphasis, I once got on a bus and asked if it was going to Dundee Street and he asks what street I am talking about – because you pronounce it Dundee, it seems the same to me, I know I'm wrong but he was just pretending that I spoke a completely different language, I mean come on...

Jarek: Did it, and do such situations, influence you in any way?

1 selected text (box 1) had to be coded in NVivo (box 2)

Generally, it makes me feel like a lesser being, I don't know if it is my fault sometimes and I mispronounce words, I say this wrong, or I just get frustrated sometimes, I feel like a lesser being... It was mainly happening at the beginning that people spoke to me and I understood very little and I really felt alienated, like a child, like a lesser being.

JAREK: Can you tell me more about the way you felt? You said alienated, like a lesser being, like a child? Can you develop this thought, describe how exactly you felt and why?

The actual 'codes' created in Nvivo (see box 2)

- SELF-Confidence and Self-esteem
- amount of language use or contact
- EXPERIENCES
- Self-assessed proficiency
- Difficulties with Scottish accent
- Being different in Polish and English
- Beliefs about Status of English, its speakers and its varieties
- 2 - EFFECTS OF ELI
- Relationship with NES and NMES
- Beliefs about other people's perceptions/feelings/stereotypes or beliefs
- Negative attitudes towards English education in Poland
- 27 01 Line-by-Line Pilot 18 01 2015
- Coding Density

the 'codes' created in Ms Word were only a text in NVivo (box 3)

- Feeling like a lesser being
- Feeling of frustration
- Feeling like a lesser being
- Initial difficulties
- Difficulties with understanding other people
- Feeling alienated
- Feeling "like a child", Feeling like lesser being

In Nodes Code At Feeling like a lesser being

55 Editable Line: 57 Column: 55 100%

Year A

6 UG Students

1PG Student

<2hr Interview

“Could you describe to us the key events that you feel impacted your education since joining the School of Biosciences?”

Transcription

Two independent line by line coding's in NVivo

6 independent sets of thematic analysis

Year B

7 UG Students

<2hr Interview

“Can you tell me about the positive and negative experiences you’ve had that led you to study Bioscience at Cardiff university?”

Transcription

Two independent line by line coding's in NVivo

5 independent sets of thematic analysis

Identification of the most common themes

Themes

Year A

“Could you describe to us the key events that you feel impacted your education since joining the School of Biosciences?”

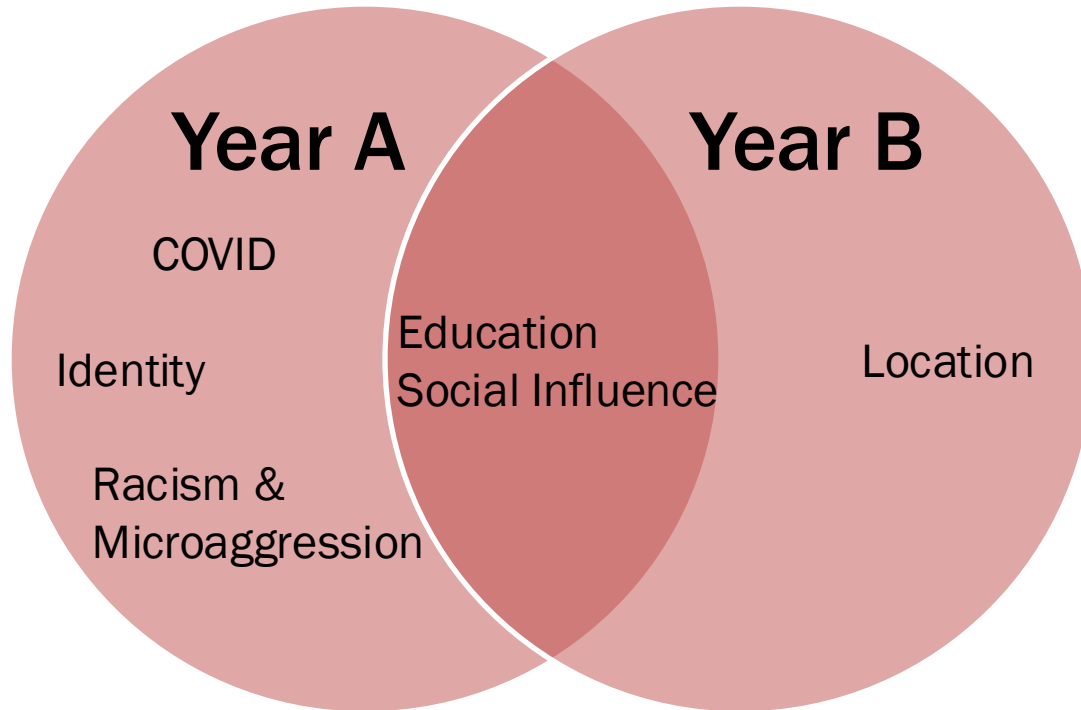
- COVID
- Identity
- Educational Support
- Experiences of Racism

Year B

“Can you tell me about the positive and negative experiences you’ve had that led you to study Bioscience at Cardiff university?”

- Education
- Social Influence
- Location
- Exams
- Culture

Themes



A. Themes – COVID-19

Participants described a lack of support during the COVID-19 pandemic:

*"We went into lockdown, and there was **a lack of communication**...they were silent for weeks and we just had a generic emails that everyone in the university received, yeah just **a lack of support** even from personal tutors."*

*"it did feel like I was just teaching myself the course which was kind of annoying in a sense because I felt like I **should have had a bit more like support at the time.**"*

*"in terms of not being to go into labs, not being able to go into uni and not having contact with your friends, I think it's **it feels quite isolating.**"*

A. Themes – Identity

Participants noted a lack of ethnic minority staff:

"There's really few Black role models at Uni...I don't think in first year I was lectured by anyone of colour at all..."

*"I think of the quote 'you can't be, what you don't see'. I really feel like having someone to affirm that you belong here, **when no one else looks like you**, in a senior position would have been really good."*

*"if an Undergrad sees that there are more people in the Postgraduate world or you know in lecturers or in academia **that kind of look like them or more fit their demographic**, then maybe they'll be encouraged to stay."*

A. Themes – Identity

Participants also noted a lack of ethnic minority students:

*"Even within my year there were like, I think there were less than ten of us and like I knew all the Black girls by face because **there were so few of us.**"*

*" **The vast majority of people in those halls were white...** I wasn't necessarily expecting but like I was saying about coming to University and I had it in my head that it was diverse place..."*

*"**I saw like one other Black girl in the room** and I just decided like I went and sat next to her and like we're going to be friends ...that was like it was important for me and like we remained friends - like it was important having that support and that like someone who gets it."*

A. Themes – Racism & microaggression

Participants described their experiences of racism & microaggression:

“I am biracial but I white pass pretty well, so it means that some people can say some insensitive things, that are microaggression, slightly racially insensitive.”

“She was far eastern Asian international student and somebody shouted at her in the street about coronavirus”

“She did quite an insensitive impersonation of an international student from her seminar...”

“I wasn't too keen on joining societies because I'd heard of experiences from one of my friends... she'd experienced you know two or three times... people had been there with black face and [they] didn't think there was anything wrong with it.”

Participant experiences of education prior to University influenced their subject choice:

“My secondary school was really supportive in like helping me...I had like the backing of my teachers and I didn't really have many negative experiences, I was always encouraged and always pushed, like always challenged.”

“Because I want to do what I thought I'd enjoy. So, you know, chemistry, biology, was some of my favourite subjects at A levels.”

“My focus at the time it was like biology, I was really like I was like really good at biology.”

A & B. Themes – Education

Participants frequently described the UCAS clearing process:

“I came in through clearing. So that was like sort of a mix of the negatives like I'm not getting the grades so I didn't necessarily want to be here.”

*“I felt dumb cause I was surrounded by all these people who were getting like A*s, As and what not and I only had like Bs.”*

*“I had to go to the whole adjustment and clearing process...obviously with results day not being ideal, that part was **quite a negative**. I feel like coming to Cardiff, I kind of **landed on my feet** a bit, if that makes sense.”*

*“I knew that I'd be in accommodation, that was guaranteed. Cardiff is, it was just one of the **easiest places to get in through clearing**.”*

A & B. Themes – Social Influence

Prior participant experience of a BIOSI-related field:

“I've always had like a science background, I guess, because my dad he also works in healthcare so I've always had a bit of an interest in biology.”

“My mum, she's a psychologist, but she was also in she's also in the academic field. So I that I kind of realized that I really wanted to go in and like develop my career that way.”

*“...so even around tour she was **very passionate** about what you spoke about”*

*“I spoke to a lot of different um sort of like professors and stuff. And I found them really, **really helpful**. There was a lot of very **enthusiastic people** about their subjects, which I think got me more excited to be here.”*

A & B. Themes – Social Influence

Family and cultural pressures:

“I wanted to be close to my family”

“So yeah, that's like a big factor as well, like ah I'm not comfortable to ask money from my parents [...]. Like I know how much money she vaguely makes...in some ways it's like I'd say it's a crime because I know how much she has.”

“in terms of finance, I don't have that much of a support system because it's just my mum and with my uncle being so far away she can only kinda do so much in terms of like supporting me.”

B. Themes – Location

Location was an important factor in choosing where to study:

“a little bit of pressure from my, my parents that they wanted me to stay close.”

“I have family and friends and stuff here, so I decided to apply here as well, and I got the offer. And decided that I would come here.”

*“[There was a] sort of natural sort of **inclination for me to stay close**, even though if I wanted to, I could have only probably gone further.”*

*“**Having my family want me to stay near** and how that probably limited my choices a little bit because then it was up to you know, either stay home at Swansea for uni, or you know, to venture out a tiny bit to Cardiff which isn't too far.”*

Where next?

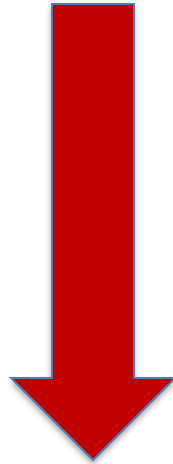
Using these themes as a catalyst for change/activism

School EDI committee

Revalidation of degree schemes

College

University



Building Scale

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Studies in Higher Education.
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https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/145556db-8183-40b8-b7af-741bf2b55d79/topic-briefing_bme-students.pdf

The report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities. 2021.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-report-of-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities/summary-of-recommendations>

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**THANK
YOU**

DIOLCH

**ANY
QUESTIONS?**