



Changing Mindsets

Changing Mindsets: Reducing stereotype threat and implicit bias as barriers to student success

Project Funder

Office for
Students



Project Partnership



University of Brighton

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About the Project

Changing Mindsets is one of 17 Office for Students funded projects focused on closing attainment gaps currently underway across the UK. Changing Mindsets is a student and staff workshop-based intervention that builds a **Growth Mindset**: the belief that ability develops through effort and by embracing challenge.

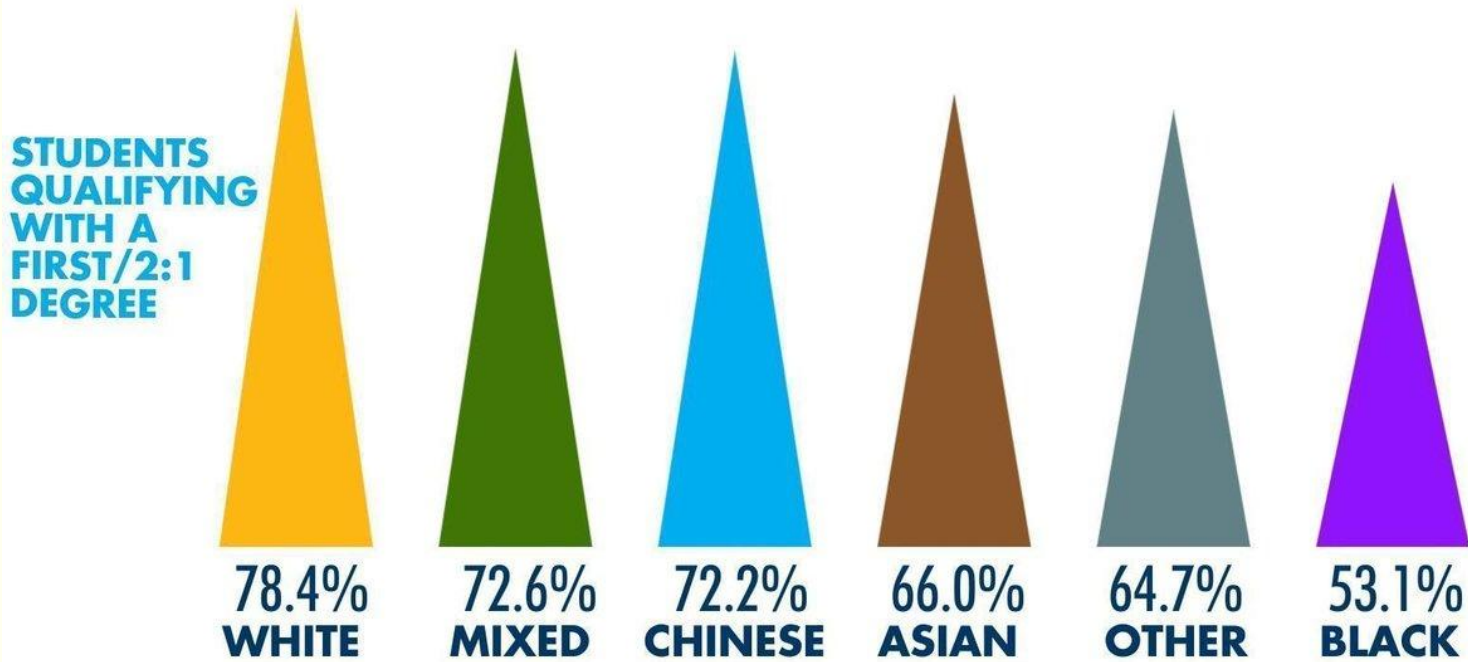


Initially developed at the University of Portsmouth in 2012, the intervention aims to close the attainment gap in student experience, retention, progression, academic attainment and employability by changing mindsets and eroding stereotype threat (Osbourne & Walker, 2006) and implicit bias (Staats, 2014; Devine et al, 2012) as barriers to learning.

National Gaps by the Numbers

- Home/EU BME students are **15%** less likely to receive a 1st or a 2:1 to compared to Home/EU White peers (ECU, 2017).
- Students from the least advantaged backgrounds are **14%** less likely to receive a 1st or a 2:1 to compared to students from more advantaged backgrounds (Mountford-Zimdars et al, 2015).
- Black students are **50%** more likely to withdraw from university in England than their White and Asian peers (UPP, 2017).
- **8.8%** of students from low socio-economic backgrounds withdraw from university compared with less than 5% withdrawal rates among students from the most advantaged backgrounds (OFFA, 2017).
- More in the Mid-Project Report: **bit.ly/cm-report**

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



Equality Challenge Unit

#ECUstats

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

“The degree attainment gap was most pronounced between black male qualifiers (of whom 50.4% received a first/2:1) and white female qualifiers (79.8%, a difference of 29.4% percentage points)” (ECU, 2017).

Project Evaluation Methods

Pre-intervention data collected at each institution:

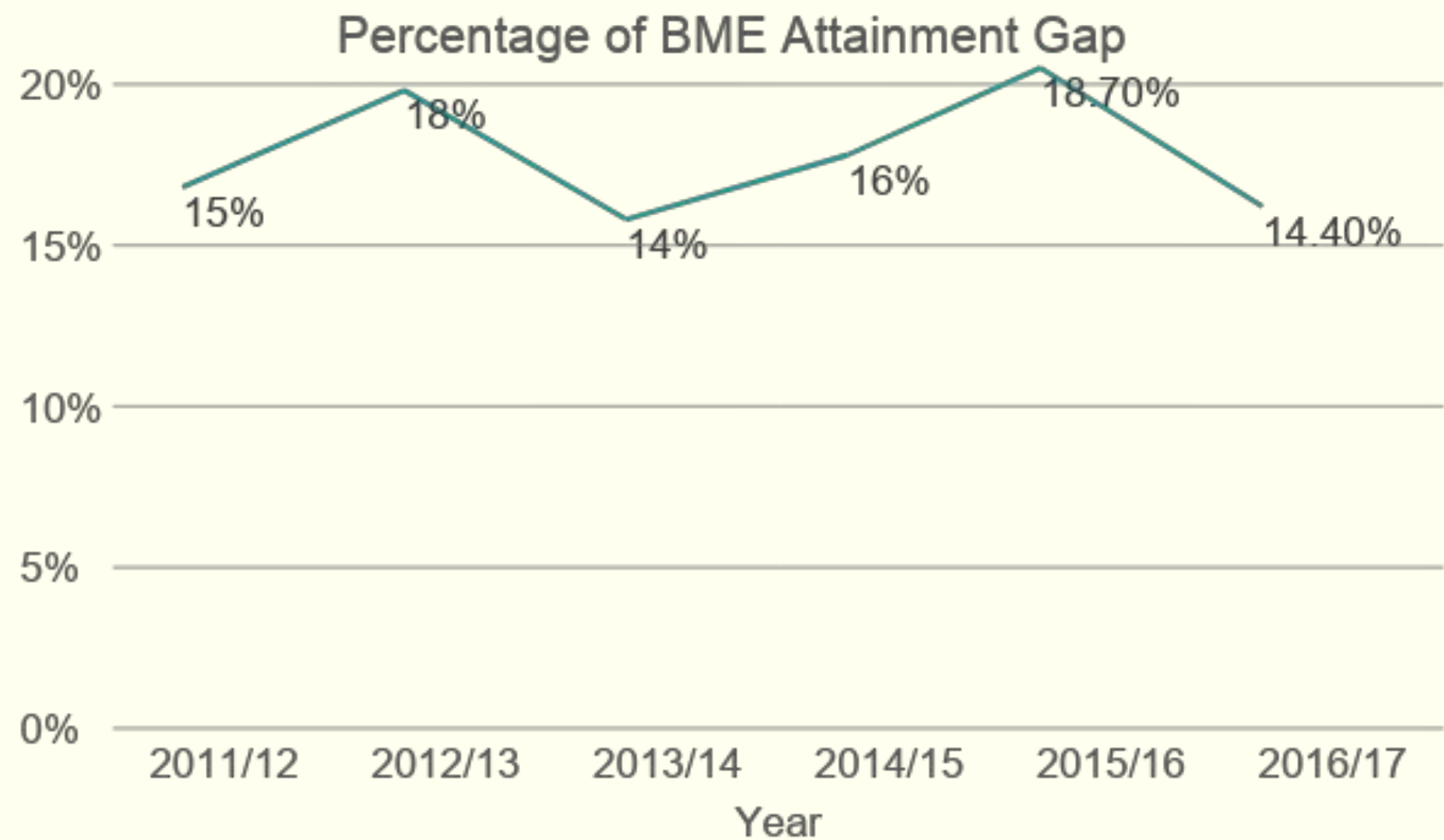
- Attainment and outcome student data for the past five years in the schools and programmes in which the intervention is run
- Student and staff survey data from the intervention cohorts

Post-intervention data currently being collected at each institution:

- Attainment data for the cohort of students who participated in the intervention at the end of their first year
- Student and staff survey data from the intervention cohorts
- Interviews and focus groups with student and staff intervention participants

Longitudinal data will be collected through Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT)

Institutional Patterns of Inequality



Closer Look: School/Department

University and Faculty average attainment gaps can hide substantial variations and outliers at the school and programme level. Amongst the pilot schools, examining existing data through Learner Analytics revealed one school with lows of a 3.4% BME attainment gap and one school with more than a 32% BME attainment gap.

Tariff on Entry

Examining the five years of pre-cohort data across the Changing Mindsets project, the analysis of student outcomes by tariff on entry does not account for persistent attainment gaps within the schools and programmes participating in cohort one of the project. This finding is consistent with similar findings by Mountford-Zimdars et al (2015).



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The Myth of Low tariff = high risk



PROFESSIONAL

JOBS

SUMMITS

RANKINGS

Rise in firsts and 2:1s highest among those with lowest A levels

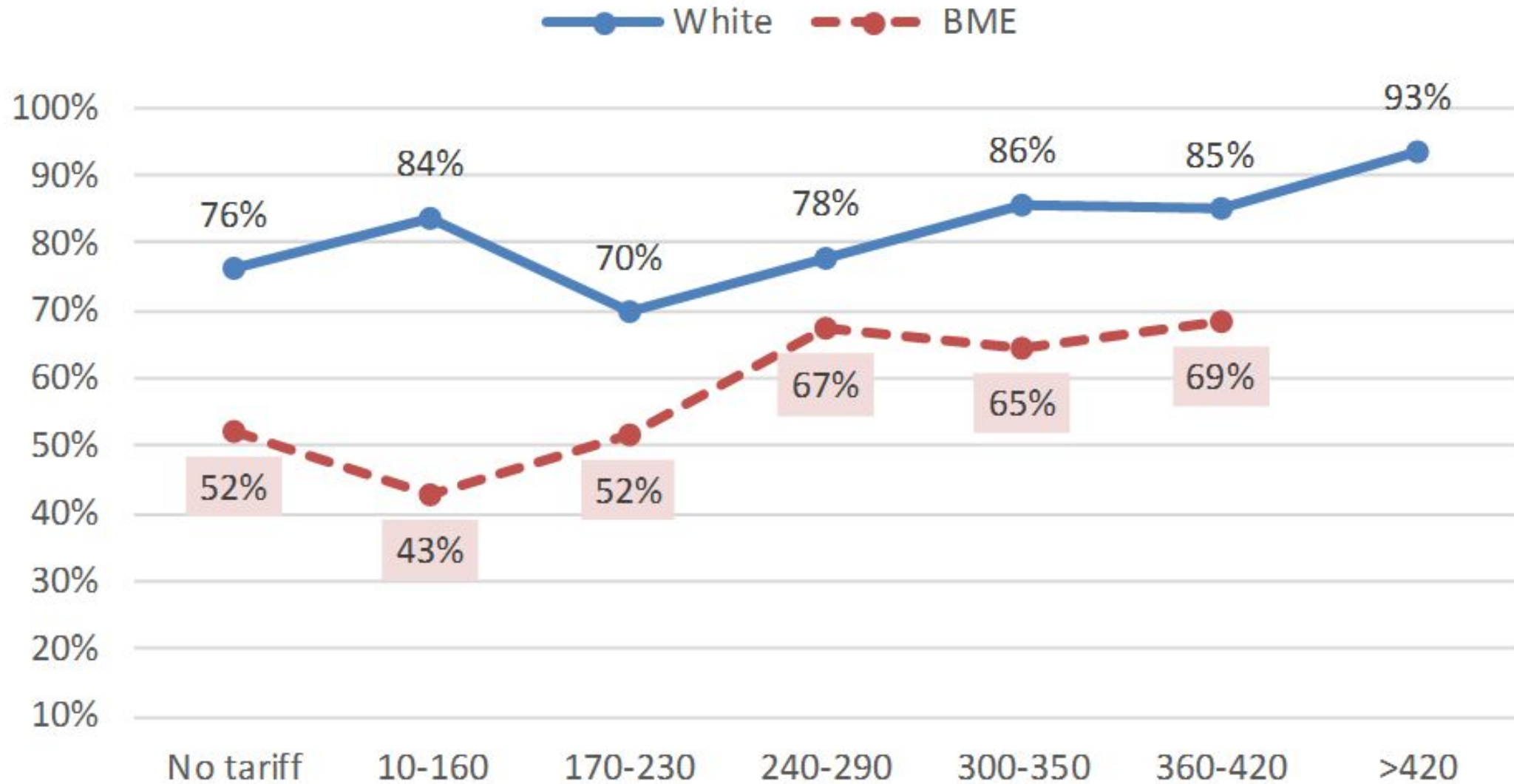
Data from one of last Hefce reports likely to throw down the gauntlet to new Office for Students on grade inflation

April 5, 2018



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The Myth of Low tariff = high risk



The Myth of Type of qualification

🏠 > Education

Universities now admitting twice as many BTEC students as they did a decade ago, figures show

The type of qualification on entry may not explain persistent attainment gaps. In three out of the four of the pilot schools at UoP, White students who entered with BTECs were more likely to have attained a good degree compared to their White peers with A-levels. In one pilot school:

- White students with BTECs were **79.1%** likely to receive a 1/2:1
- BME students with BTECs were **39%** likely
- White students with A level qualifications were **77.3%** likely
- BME students with A level qualifications were **51.9%** likely

Initial findings from survey data

- Staff and students who have growth mindsets are more likely to want to create inclusion and to overcome bias. Within the pre-survey data for both staff and students, there are statistically significant positive correlations between growth mindsets and creating inclusion and overcoming bias. Staff and students with fixed mindsets are more likely to hold stereotype beliefs. Within the pre-survey data for both staff and students, there are statistically significant negative correlations between growth mindsets and stereotypical beliefs.
- Most staff and student survey participants indicated that they are committed to speaking out against hate and to making all students feel welcome and part of the campus community. However, nearly all staff and students who completed the survey also admit to unintentionally stereotypical thoughts.

Where do we go from here?

- Universities should develop strategies to tackle attainment gaps using learner analytics to examine existing institutional data to better understand patterns of inequalities at the school or programme level.
- University strategies to address inequalities should be multi-faceted, including multiple research-informed and evaluated approaches, and should be embedded within the institutional culture in order to contribute towards the possibility of real, lasting change.
- University strategies for tackling attainment gaps should include myth-busting campaigns to dispel widely-held erroneous beliefs about why inequalities in student experiences and outcomes, including attainment gaps, persist.

Where do we go from here?

- Given the potential for variation in attainment gaps even within the same faculties (or similar disciplines) within the same institution, university strategies to address inequalities should be tailored to account for those differences.
- Since the Changing Mindsets project initial findings indicate that most staff and students are likely to want to actively work towards creating inclusion, universities should provide opportunities for staff and students to work in partnership to address inequalities.
- Universities should publish their attainment gaps on their websites so students can consider that data when making an informed choice about which university to attend.



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Thank You! Questions?

Mid Project Report and
References:

bit.ly/cm-report

