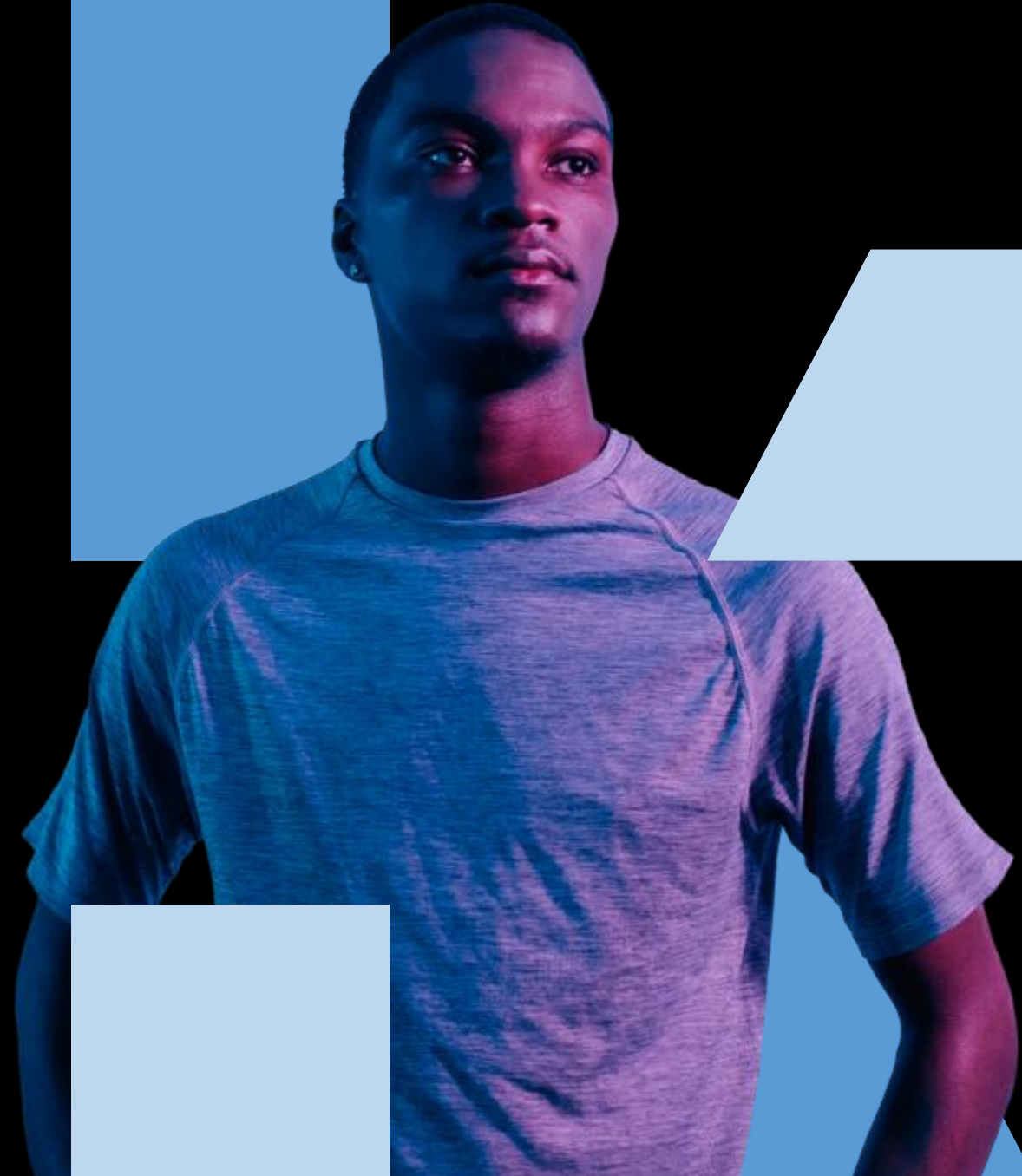


University of  
**Kent**

**We're here to  
make ambition  
count.**

Stand for ambition.  
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# Diversity Mark

**The Power of Student Stories:  
Reflections on counter-storytelling as a method for curriculum  
diversification processes.**

**PRESENTERS:**

Rachel Gefferie – Senior Diversity Mark officer

Tiz Buswell – Assistant Manager Student Success

Lucy Panesar – Lecturer in Higher Education

Paige Sharma – Student Diversity Mark officer

Bunmi Omojuwa – Student Diversity Mark officer

Stand for ambition.

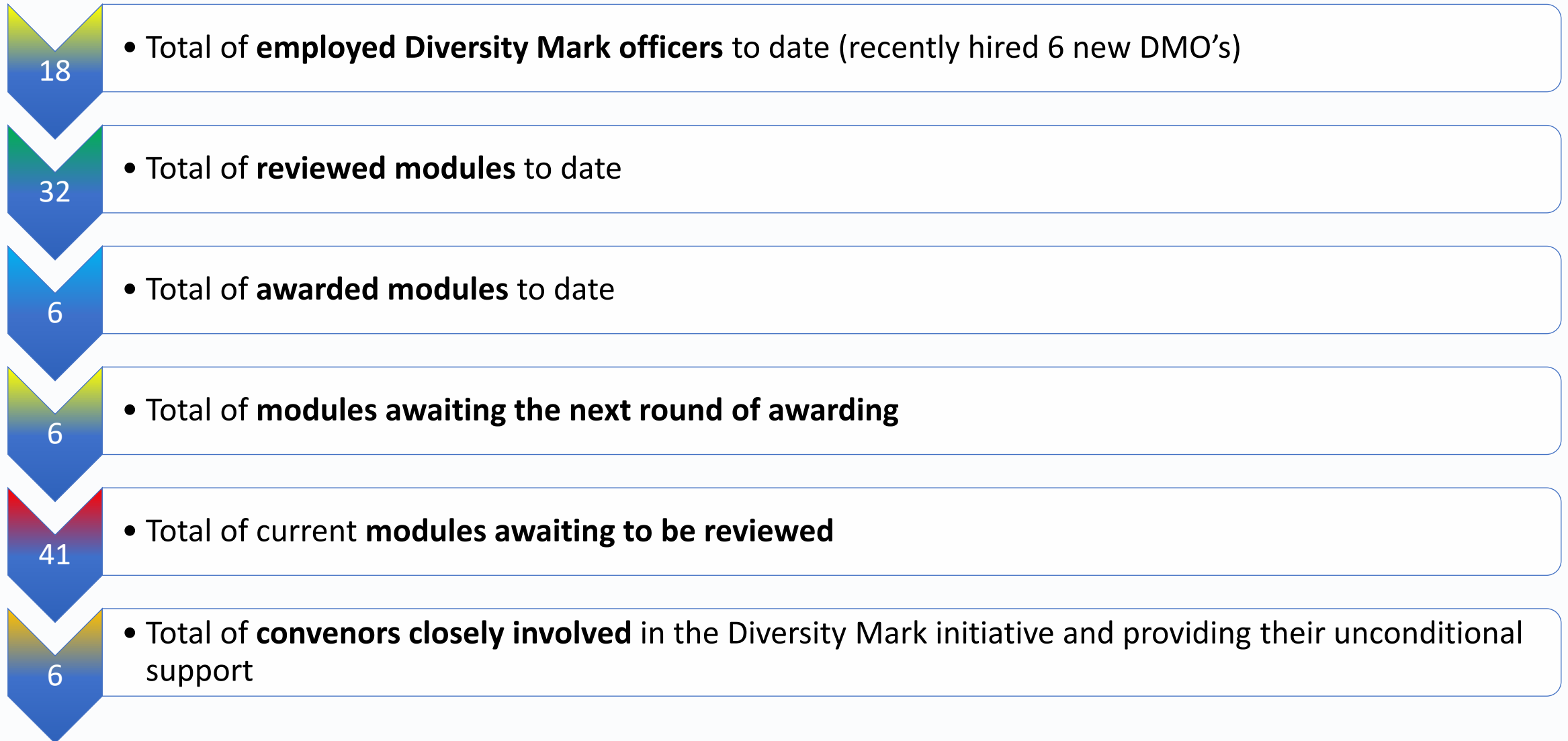
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# INTRODUCTION

- About the Diversity Mark program
- The significance of valuing students as Diversity Mark officers
- Began in 2018 as a pilot Staff engagement increases when working directly with students.



# THE EXPANSION OF DIVERSITY MARK



# STUDENTS AS DIVERSITY MARK OFFICERS



## The role of the DMO

- Their tasks (not just an admin role)
  - Guidance to academic staff
  - Advocating for the student cohort

## How it evolved

- A seat at the table
- Empowering tools to achieve results
- Gain transferable skills
- Become key in the convenor's journey of awareness

# OUR OWN LIVED EXPERIENCES ARE OUR GREATEST TOOL IN THE PROCESS



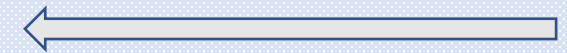


# OUR STUDENT STORIES CATALOQUE

**Rachel Gefferie - From  
DMO to SDMO :**  
**My journey in becoming  
a Diversity Mark Officer**  
**- Student Success -  
University of Kent**



**Paige Sharma:**  
**Articles and Blogs -**  
**Student Success -**  
**University of Kent**

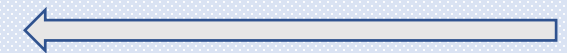


**Victory Onifade - Exploring  
the impact of Diversity Mark:**

**<https://www.kent.ac.uk/student-success/diversity-mark/podcasts-and-videos>**



**Irene Binil:**  
**Respecting equality**  
**in a diverse society -**  
**Student Success -**  
**University of Kent**



# THE STORY OF BUNMI

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## *The Process of Drafting my Story*

- I joined the Diversity Mark project as I was motivated by the opportunity to make positive change during my time at university
- The role has validated many of the lived experiences that I have had, and enables me to use this strength to speak up for other students





## USING MY STORY IN PRACTICE

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- By shaping my story and having a greater understanding of my strengths, it has allowed me to connect with the module convenors
- I have also been able to share the process of drafting my story to support the training of other DMOs



## POSITIVE OUTPUTS

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- While the role of a DMO is evolving considerably, we are still empowered to make decisions. I was able to establish boundaries and recommend that the module convenor begin with BAME focus groups due to the lack of representation.
- I have also had the opportunity to meet with student to get their feedback on how their experiences with the module regarding diversity and inclusivity



# THE STORY OF PAIGE SHARMA

## *The Process of Drafting my Story*

- I pursued the Diversity Mark Officer role to make a personal and impactful contribution to my university using my Sociology degree.
- The Diversity Mark Officer role placed extreme value on the power of the insights that my unique background offers.

University of Kent

Undergraduate BA (Hons)

## Sociology

Study a subject that employers respect, and that can make a difference in the world.

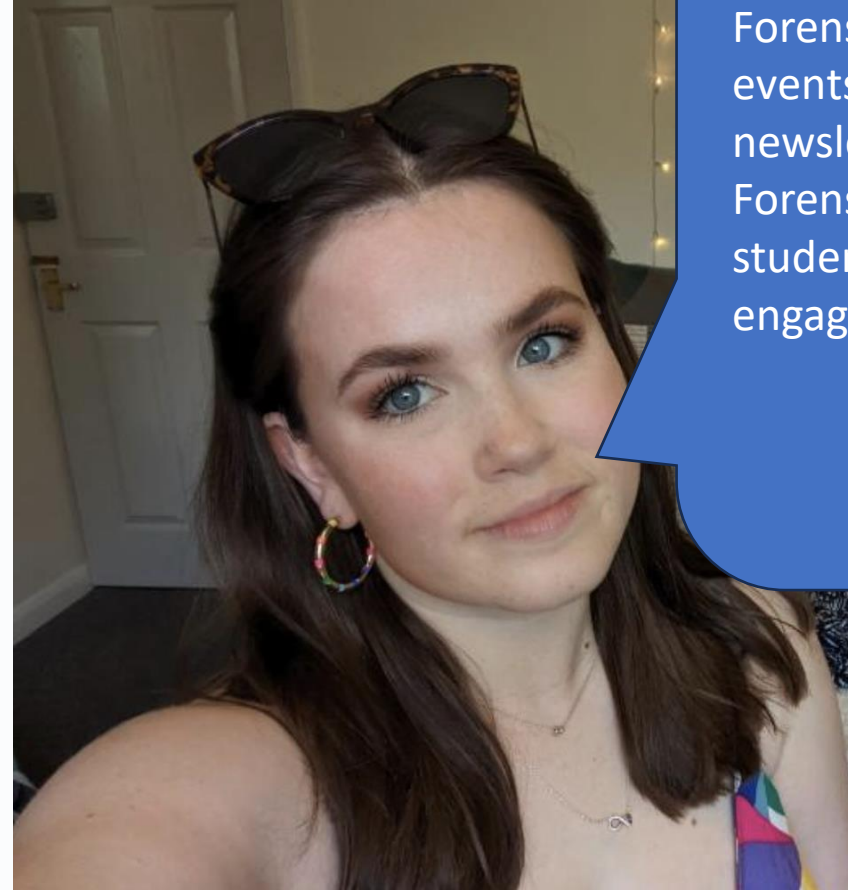


***The Diversity Mark initiative taught me that my unique lived experience of migrating the UK provided valuable insights to ideas about a sense of identity, community and belonging.***

# BRINGING ELEMENTS OF MY STORY INTO PRACTICE

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- In my Diversity Mark Officer role, I used story-telling as a device to connect to convenors and represent the student voice - acting as a mediator between the two.
- The role enables me to capture valuable nuances within convenor's modules from the student voice.



“The convenor made a real effort to plan excursions, Forensic Science society events, and weekly newsletters related to Forensic Science to keep students updated and engaged”

- Tate Farman  
Bsc Forensic Science  
University of Kent

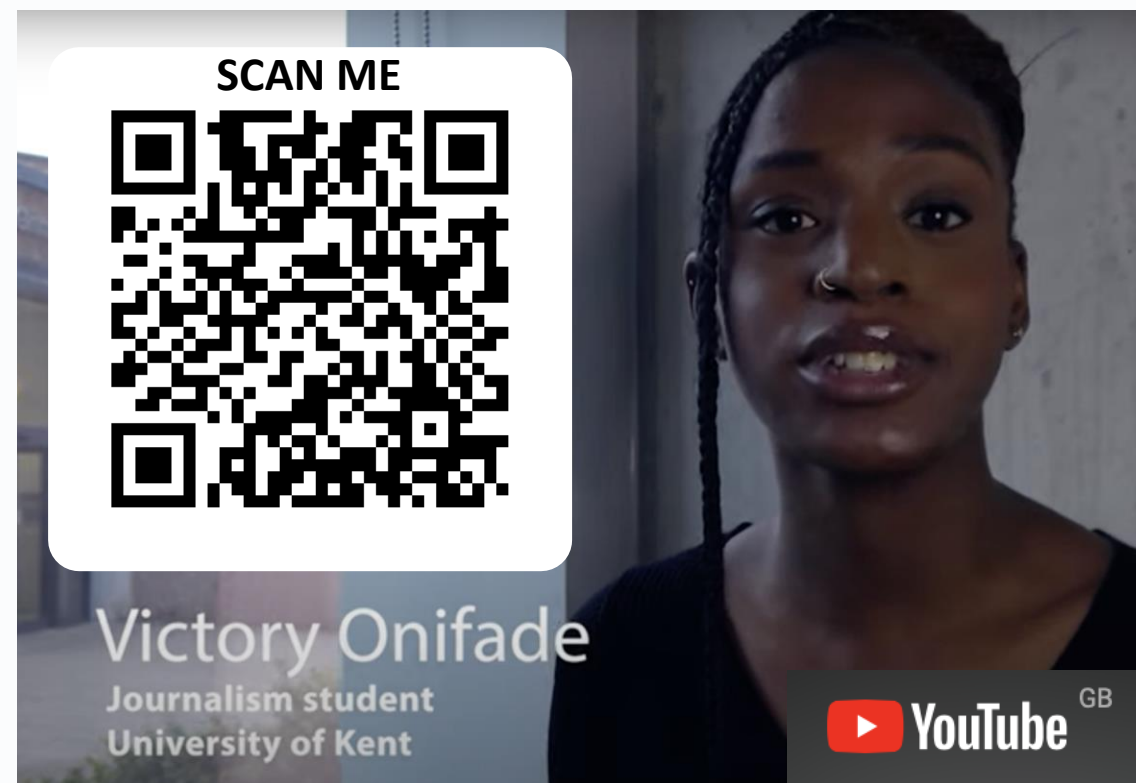
***Engaging with a convenor's former student, Tate enabled me to identify the convenor's commitment to engaging students with the module and promoting their success.***

## POSITIVE OUTPUTS FROM STORY-TELLING

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- Recommending that a convenor adjusted the scientific language used when referring to ethnic classifications to create a more inclusive learning environment for students.
- Suggesting that a convenor integrates his optional Diverse Reading list into his main reading material to promote Global South narratives in the course material, advocating the value of 'unheard' narratives.

### *Interview on Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Kent*





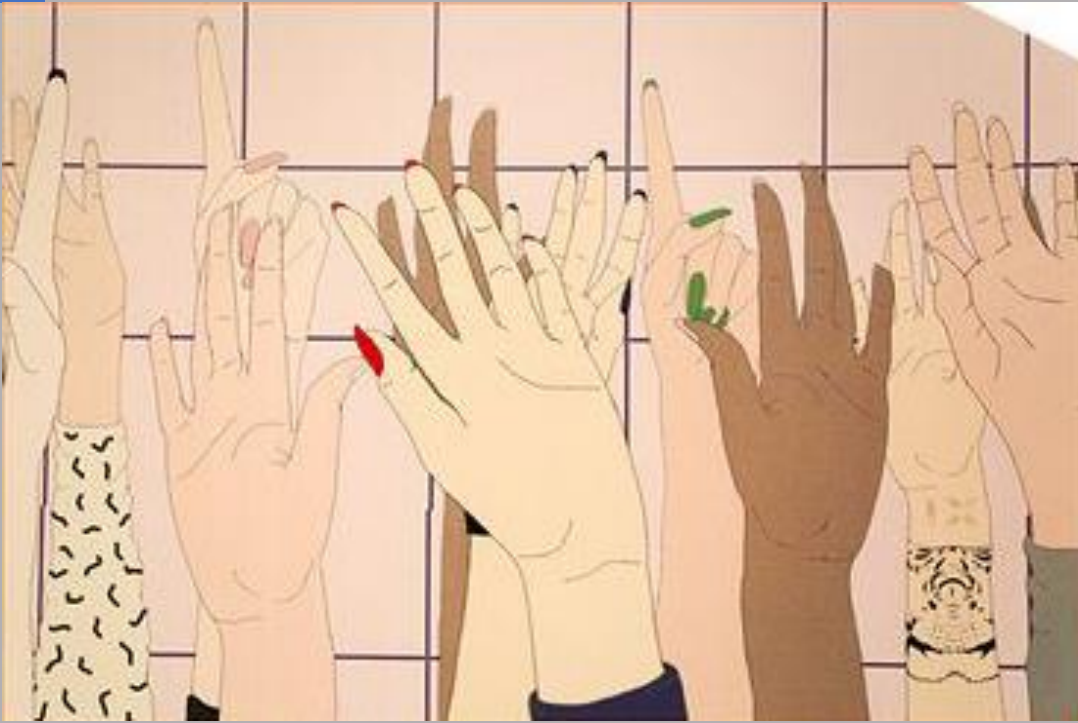
## A CONVENOR'S EXPERIENCE WITH STORYTELLING

*Lucy Panesar SFHEA*

Lecturer in Higher Education







## UAL Changemakers

Illustration by Nia Hefe Filiogianni

## Decolonising the Arts Curriculum

Cover image by Abbas Zahedi

Decolonising the Arts Curriculum:  
Perspectives on Higher Education



PGCHE modules

Introduction to  
Learning, Teaching  
and the Academic  
environment

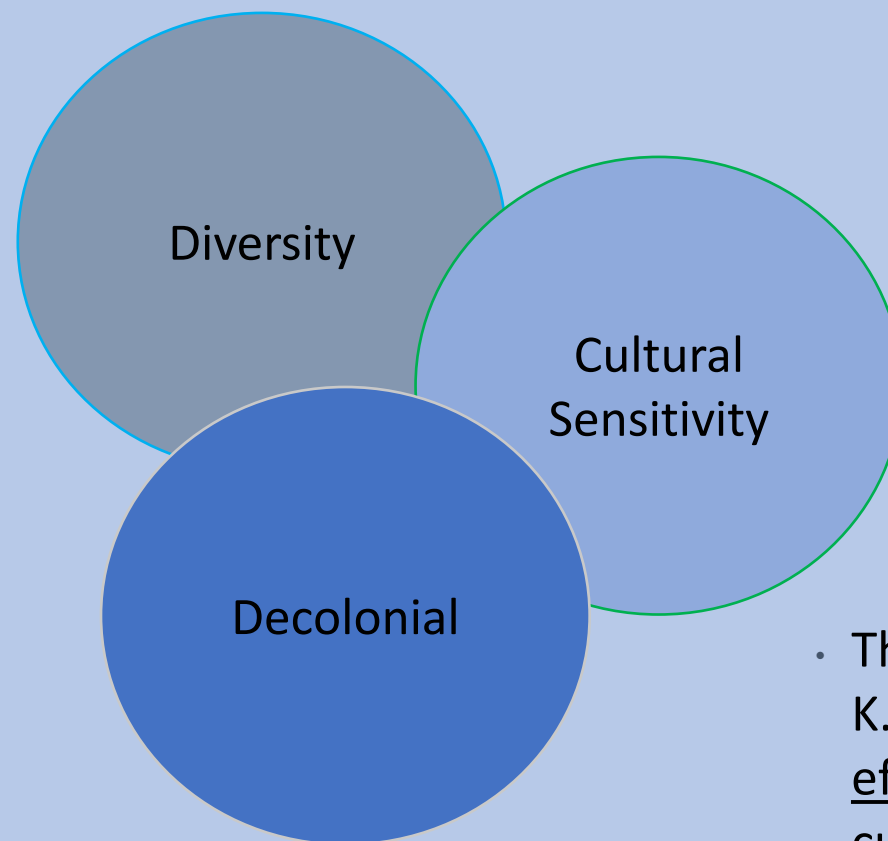
Contextualising HE  
Teaching and  
Learning

Registered for  
Diversity Mark

The Inclusive  
University



University of Kent (2023)  
Diversity Mark



- Thomas, D.S.P. & Quinlan, K.M. (2023) Reimagining curricula: effects of cultural (in)sensitivity of curricula on racially minoritised students' engagement

Thomas, D. and Jivraj, S. (eds.) (2020)

Towards Decolonising the University



## The Inclusive University - learning outcome 3:

# 'Appreciate a diverse range of learner experiences in higher education and their implications for inclusivity in universities'.

- Scenarios from Working in higher education in the 21st century (Marr and Forsyth, 2011)
- Ahmed's 'conversations with Muslim women' and Memon's 'intersectional conversations with Muslim men' from Towards Decolonising the University (Thomas and Jivraj, 2020)
- Student stories via Student Journey Game (BARC, 2019)

## LUCY'S EXPERIENCE

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- **Undergraduate:**

Full time student + part time waitress.  
Minority ethnic + class.

- **Postgraduate:**

Part time student + full time lecturer.  
Minority ethnic + class.





'humanising' narratives of 'the lived realities behind the grim statistics of under-representation'  
(Doharty et al, 2020)

'counter-storytelling these experiences can help strengthen traditions of social, political, and cultural survival and resistance'  
(Solórzano and Yosso, 2002, p.32).



# CLOSING REMARKS

Since 2018 Diversity Mark has grown to listen to the student voice and instill best practice by changing the whiteness and lack of inclusivity of the curriculum.

Our work study students act as **agents of change** and have given convenors the opportunity to **reflect on their pedagogical practices** and invest time for their modules to become **more diverse and engaging to all.**



*Visit the Diversity Mark Toolkit at <https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/diversitymarktoolkit/decolonising-literature/> for more information.*

**Thank  
you.**



## References

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