

## Teaching, learning and personal tutoring: A virtual mini-conference

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## What you say matters: assessing unconscious bias within the use of language

Sumeya Loonat

[sloonat@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:sloonat@dmu.ac.uk)

Senior International Student Lecturer

Decolonising DMU Fair Outcomes Champion

Di Zhang

[di.zhang@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:di.zhang@dmu.ac.uk)

International Student Lecturer

Dr. Xiaozhe Cai

[Xiaozhe.cai@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:Xiaozhe.cai@dmu.ac.uk)

International Student Lecturer



# Recognising students of colour identity at DMU

- ❖ Students of colour: 54% of the student body at DMU; many use English as a second or third language
- ❖ Over 2,500 international students from more than 130 countries
- ❖ Diverse identities and lived experiences; complex and fluid
- ❖ BAME label homogenises student identity; consider disaggregating data
- ❖ Decolonising DMU initiative as a safe space



# Students of colour barriers to success in HE

- ❖ Lack of support and opportunities to integrate with other students leading to feelings of isolation and segregation
- ❖ A reduced sense of entitlement to other additional forms of support
- ❖ A tendency to avoid help-seeking strategies; cope alone or with peers
- ❖ Hesitance to ask questions in classrooms
- ❖ Low teacher expectation; under-valuing or under-challenging of students of colour
- ❖ Prejudiced attitudes associated with linguistic competence

(Singh 2011; Stevenson 2012; UUK/NUS 2019; Tate 2020)



# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON BLACK, ASIAN & ETHNIC MINORITY STUDENTS

This poster raises awareness on the impact COVID-19 will have on BAME students



## Isolation

COVID-19 has reduced the ability for those who share similar cultural values to come together. Online societies and virtual space can provide creative spaces to meet.



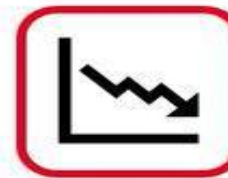
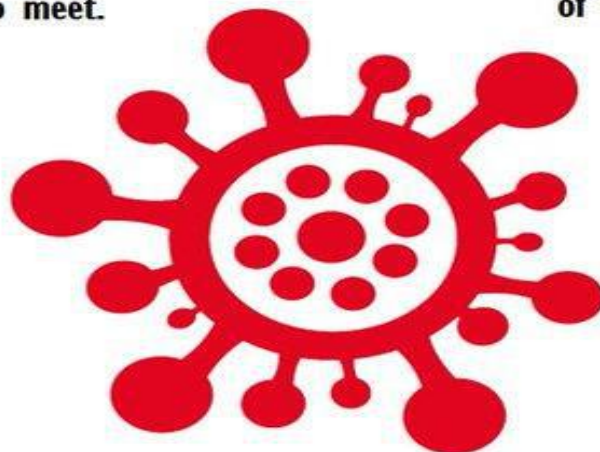
## Less likely to seek support

With COVID-19 making students spend more time learning at home, BAME students might be more less likely to meet with support staff in fear of sharing issues in the presence of their family. Creative access to support services is needed.



## Racism

COVID-19 outbreak has seen a surge in racism, particular towards overseas students and therefore it is vital we are vigilant to stop such behaviour.



## Student Outcomes

Changes in teaching and learning due to COVID-19 need to be reflective so they also continue to address the BAME attainment gap rather than potentially widen it.



## Health concerns

Greater percentage of patients critically ill with COVID-19 were from the BAME community. Students should not be penalised if they are feeling at risk and therefore creative approaches to learning and assessment should be present.



## Electronic Resources

COVID-19 has meant that students are less likely to study on campus. BAME students often do not have sufficient resources to support their learning. Need to provide access to vital technology to help support online learning.



They always stay in their own groups...

I think its because they don't speak English at home.. That's why they find it difficult to speak in class or understand tasks...

They are really quiet and passive

Oh you are so articulate... you sound like a native!

Oh its a cultural thing...

They write like they speak...

**Unconscious, implicit and conscious biases can have a significant effect on the sense of belonging and attainment of BAME students (EHRC, 2019b).**

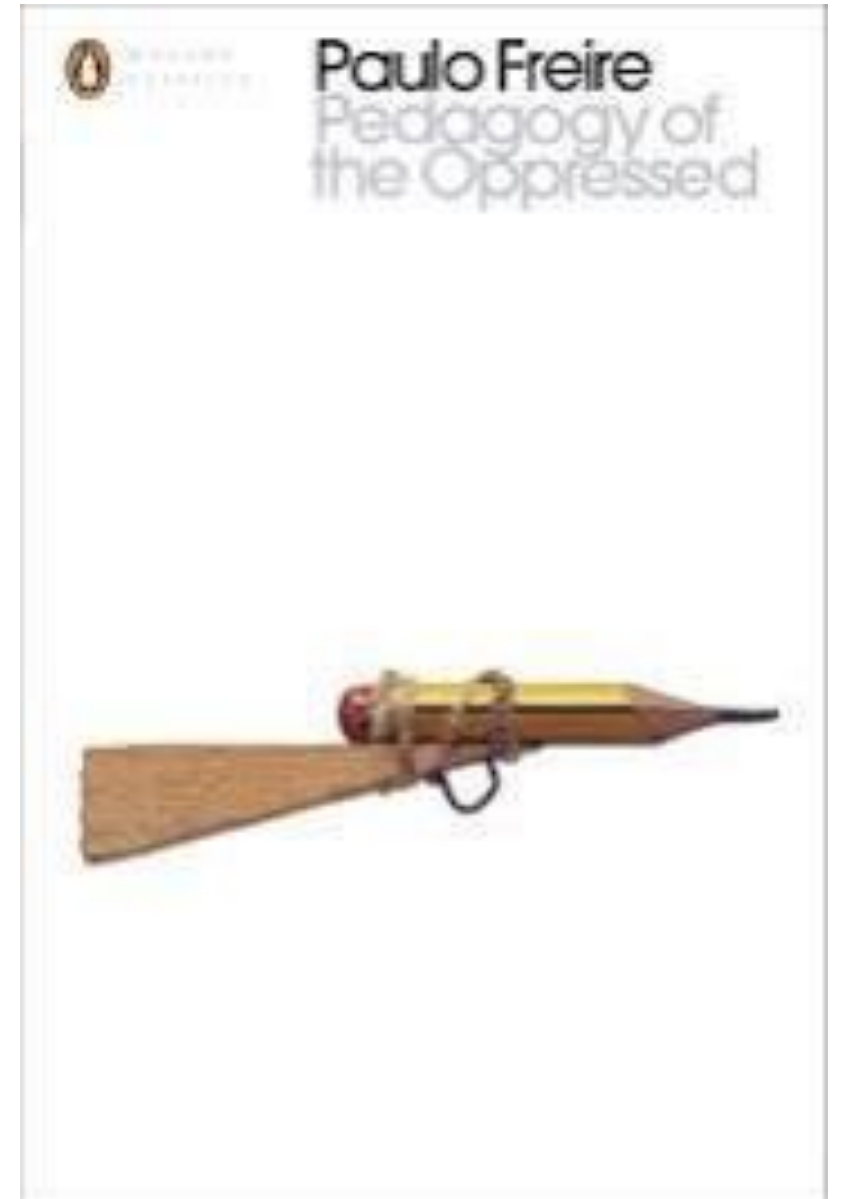


# Impact of using the deficit model to explain outcomes

“...the deficit model focuses on the attributes and characteristics of the student as the main contributing factors for attainment differentials...The model does not therefore allow for an examination of societal or institutional structures and the discrimination that exists within them...ownership, accountability and responsibility for the inequalities in attainment similarly are not placed with the institution, only the individual.” (UUK/NUS, May 2019, p.16).



“Often, educators and politicians speak and are not understood because their language is not attuned to the concrete situation of the people they address...In order to communicate effectively, educator and politician must understand the structural conditions in which the thought and language of the people are dialectically framed” (Freire, 1973, p. 69)





# Reflections on linguistic capital

Yosso (2005) challenges and reframes traditional deficit thinking and encourages us to consider the linguistic capital of students of colour who bring multiple language and communication skills.

- How are we supporting the language and communication strengths of our students?
- How can we recognise and include multiple forms of linguistic capital in our teaching and learning practices?
- How can we decolonise our teaching and learning practices so that we recognise and respect diverse voices?
- What forms of language do we use in our institution? Does it work to marginalise or silence some of our students?
- What opportunities do we give to students to tell their stories of success and struggles?

(Questions adapted from Stevenson et al; 2019)





# Online learning and teaching environments

- ❖ Unique challenges in terms of the way we perceive each other
- ❖ The need to work harder in an online learning environment to ‘read’ non-verbal cues
- ❖ Role of students as active partners
- ❖ Asynchronous learning allows for greater flexibility, can be more responsive to cultural differences (Singh 2020)



# Creating a sense of belonging in an online environment

- Learn and pronounce student names correctly- don't anglicise names without consent
- Use non-threatening ice-breaker activities
- Use online discussion boards and breakout rooms to reduce language anxiety
- Don't pressure students into giving quick responses
- Encourage all students to share thoughts in a non-judgemental way
- Establish some 'ground rules' and involve students in establishing these
- Promote micro-affirmations in online interactions

Adapted from Singh, G. (2020) Covid 19 does discriminate so we should tackle its impact on BAME students, WONKHE <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/covid-19-does-discriminate-so-we-should-tackle-its-impact-on-bame-students/>



# Academic language use: practical measures

- ❖ Examine your use of language in synchronous and asynchronous learning materials: is it clear, easy to follow and accessible?
- ❖ Use shorter sentences
- ❖ Be mindful of using colloquial language, academic jargon and cultural references
- ❖ Explain key terminologies and specialised vocabulary
- ❖ Use of instructional verbs as part of deconstructing assessments
- ❖ Formative feedback before assessment is due: use a checklist

## In-Text Referencing: Guide for International Students

Reporting verb function	Reporting verb example	Sentence example
To make a case	<b>Believe, consider, say, suggest, think</b>  Pattern: reporting verb + that	Loonat (2020, p.54) <b>suggests that</b> first contact with a company in the service sector is crucial.
More emphatic reporting verbs	<b>Argue, assert, claim, conclude, confirm, contend, insist, maintain, state, warn</b>  Reporting verb + that	Cai (2018, p.2) <b>maintains that</b> within all group situations, leaders identify themselves first of all through body language.
The idea of showing	<b>Demonstrate, explain, indicate, note, prove, reveal, show</b>  Reporting verb + that	Figures released by UKGOV (2018) <b>indicate that</b> unemployment is at its lowest level for five years.
The paraphrased writer is commenting on someone else's work or opinions	<b>Accept, agree, deny, doubt</b>  Reporting verb + by + author	Thompson (2015) discussed the problems created by lecturers using colloquial words. This use of informal language was also <b>agreed by</b> McHardy (2018).
The paraphrased author takes a negative or critical position	<b>Blame, condemn, criticise</b>  Reporting verb + somebody/something + for + noun/gerund	Obara (2019) <b>condemns</b> previous researchers <b>for</b> distorting the data.
The idea of describing	<b>Classify, define, evaluate, identify, portray, present</b>  Reporting verb + somebody/something + as + noun/gerund/adjective	Letzgas and Towlson (2018) both <b>present</b> their data <b>as</b> conclusive.

### Paraphrasing

This is where you put the author's main ideas in your own words, the length is similar to the original.

You must keep the author's original meaning.

### Summarising

You put the author's ideas in your own words but keep it brief. Only use the main ideas- no examples, new information or supporting evidence.

You must keep the author's original meaning.

### Direct quotations

This is where you copy the author word-for-word and have not paraphrased.

How to reference a direct quote:  
**(Author's surname, date, page number)**  
(Jones, 2017, p.23)

### Indirect quotations

This is where you have paraphrased or summarised an author's argument. You have not copied the text word-for-word.

How to reference an indirect quote:  
**(Author's surname, date, page number)**  
(Jones, 2017, p.4)



# SUMEYA LOONAT

BAL INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT

International students studying on Business programmes are given the opportunity to co-create study skills resources to develop their learning by attending my drop-in sessions and workshops on English language and academic writing skills. Through student feedback from these sessions I produced a referencing guide for international students which took their learning perspectives into account by using contextualised examples and keeping the design, content and language simplified and accessible. Resources created are intended to be used as supplements alongside central university materials and have been very well received by module tutors and students within the Business and Law faculty. Academic skills workshops are also embedded into some Business programmes with a large international student cohort so that students can access contextualised academic support and while these sessions are not compulsory, attendance is always at its maximum!

PROUD TO BE MORE

# Using a glossary to avoid misconceptions

## Glossary examples

### New vocabulary

- Synchronous (a learning event in which a group of students are engaging in learning at the same time)
- Asynchronous (not delivered live stream)
- Physically-present (face to face)
- Blackboard
- Turnitin

### Cultural Difference

- Module (Course)
- Programme (Major)
- Module leader
- Programme leader

### Same meaning in native language

- Extension
- Deferral

# Being mindful of how we use language

## ❖ Make it more specific

毕业证

To:

您好,

我想咨询下,下文(复制的原文)说的resit assessment是补考吗? 是7.14发布补考成绩还是说给题目可以提交补考? 如果是七月份补考,几月份才可以拿到毕业证? 会延期吗? 祝好!

Resit/Deferral Assessment

Dear All,

The resit/deferral assessment will be released to you at 9.00 am on July the 14th July.

regards

# Personal tutors' responsibilities change when staff move **departments, institutions and countries.**



- ❖ In the US, personal tutors have long and extended appointments with students to discuss plans for their future in their freshmen year.
- ❖ In China, personal tutors used to be dedicated administrative staff who would be responsible for 2-3 cohorts of students. They help students to plan, organise and facilitate their study, and social activities, on faculty and institution level. It has become compulsory for early career researchers to take up this role for 2 years when they join the institution.
- ❖ In the UK, personal tutors' role is more like a Google search engine of academic life: they can't give you direct answers to most of students' questions, but they know who to ask and where to find the answers. Their responsibilities is different in different disciplines, and size of the departments.





- ❖ **Using a list of FAQs to help students understand your actual responsibility and how you could support them.**
  - Don't just upload it BlackBoard; take 20mins to introduce the list.
  - A printer friendly version
  
- ❖ **Term 1: start of university life and academic year**
- ❖ **Term 2: keeping up with study and wellbeing**

# Term 1: start of university life and academic

## What your Personal Tutor can help you with...

- ✓ **I'm not confident with my academic writing; How can I improve it?** You could go to Centre for English Language Learning for academic English skills sessions. You could also visit the Library to access their academic skills support and book appointments with academic skills tutors to help with your academic writing <https://library.dmu.ac.uk/class/workshops>
- ✓ **I'm still not so sure about my university life, where can I get some advice?** Contact your personal tutor and have a chat about what exactly is confusing or difficult. It's always worth going to activities and workshops organised by #HealthyDMU <https://www.dmu.ac.uk/healthy/index.aspx> . They have plenty of information to help you orientate and organise your university life.
- ✓ **I'm going miss one class due to a family matter, how do I report my absence?** Please send an email to [BALabsence@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:BALabsence@dmu.ac.uk)
- ✓ **I'm struggling to go to my classes for some time now:** students can talk to the personal tutor if they have reasons like a disability, a physical or mental health condition, a specific learning difficulty or another issue related to finance.
- ✓ **How can I see a doctor? Inquiries about GP:** We have De Montfort Surgery, on campus. You can ask to register to see medical professionals there. Please consult their webpage for registration information: <https://www.demontfortsurgery.co.uk/index.aspx>

# Term 1: start of university life and academic year

Support you could get from other tutors and the university...

- ❓ **I want to change my programme:** Please contact your programme leader to book an appointment to discuss this, then contact Student Advice Centre to get relevant forms.
- ❓ **Who is my programme leader, module leader, personal tutor, programme administrator?** Please check your BlackBoard for this, and if you struggle to find this information, please contact Student Advice Centre.
- ❓ **I can't find this Room A, and where is building B?** Please contact Student Advice Centre.
- ❓ **I have no timetable.** Please contact Student Advice Centre.
- ❓ **I want to change some of my modules:** Please contact Student Advice Centre as soon as possible, this process will be closed by the end of week two of teaching.
- ❓ **I have some questions about this specific module:** please contact the seminar tutor or module leader directly
- ❓ **How do I decide which module to choose:** Please consult this page:  
<https://www.dmu.ac.uk/study/courses/undergraduate-courses/undergraduate-courses.aspx>
- ❓ **If I choose this module, if it can be exempt from the ACCA?** Please consult the module leader and your

## What your Personal Tutor can help you with?

- ✓ **I'm going miss one class due to a family matter, how do I report my absence?** Please send an email to [BALabsence@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:BALabsence@dmu.ac.uk)
- ✓ **I am struggling to go to my classes for some time now:** students can talk to the personal tutor if they have reasons like a disability, a physical or mental health condition, a specific learning difficulty or another issue related to finance.
- ✓ **How does the university calculate my degree?** The best 105 credits (highest marks) at level 5 and the best 105 credits at level 6 are used to calculate degree classification, triple-weighted towards level 6.
- ✓ **I would like to get advice on applying for postgraduate course.** Please email your personal tutor to book an appointment to discuss.
- ✓ **Where can I see the reading list?** Check module information on BlackBoard
- ✓ **How can I see a doctor? Inquiries about GP:** We have De Montfort Surgery, on campus. You can ask to register to see medical professionals there. Please consult their webpage for registration information: <https://www.demontfortsurgery.co.uk/index.aspx>
- ✓ **Can I get a reference letter from you?** Yes, personal tutor can provide reference letter based on your study performance. However please make sure you have asked your personal tutor about listing them as your referee before you submit your application.

## Support you could get from other tutors and the university...

- ? **I want to change my programme:** Please contact your programme leader to book an appointment to discuss this, then contact Student Advice Centre to get relevant forms.
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# Conclusion

- ❖ Students of colour face many barriers especially under COVID
- ❖ Avoid using the deficit model to explain student outcomes
- ❖ The way you may expect a student to learn is not the only right way
- ❖ Recognise and challenge bias
- ❖ Does your use of language work to marginalise or silence other voices?
- ❖ Don't assume students have the same understanding as you; check and clarify
- ❖ Students as partners; work with students for better online engagement



# Thoughts and questions?

- ❖ Please use the chat function or raise your hand if you would like to speak

# References



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