

Student Diversity, Engagement and Integration

An exploration into the social interaction patterns of students from a diverse range of backgrounds at Kingston University, London.

Dr Annie Hughes, Dr Peter Garside, Dr Mary Kelly
Ryan Ashton, Chelsie Cull, Louis Knight- Adams, Jessica
Mansell

Nona McDuff, Owen Beacock (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion)

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Context: Student (Dis)Engagement?

- Identified Trend of disengagement

“many academics....suggest there is an increasing trend towards student disengagement.” (Baron and Corbin, 2012: 763)

- Poor attendance
- Apathy to classroom preparation
- Students increasingly socialising off campus (McInnes and Hartley, 2002)

Student (Dis)Engagement: a problem?

- Participation and attendance

“attendance per se does not ensure that learning takes place.”
(Rodgers, 2002: 265)

- However, if students are not putting:

“the time, energy and resources.....[in]to activities designed to enhance learning at University” (Krause, 2005:1)

- Beyond getting a degree – ‘rounded graduate’; ‘global citizen’

Importance of Student Involvement, Interaction and Integration for Retention and Attainment

- Alexander Astin (1984)
 - Student involvement: a development theory of HE
 - collaborative learning (student/student as well as staff/student)
- Ashwin (1986)
 - Social disengagement leads to isolation which negatively affects students learning – students left to master their own understanding of the material
- Vincent Tinto (1993) Integration theory
 - Student retention is predicated on social and academic integration
- Kuh (2008)
 - Interactive educational practices have the best outcomes for retention and attainment (e.g. learning communities, internships etc.)

Importance of co/extra-curriculum activities

“if you can engage students outside of the curriculum then they will also be more engaged inside the curriculum”. (Gibbs, 2014)

Our Study: Key Areas of Interest

1. Integration into university life
 - Role of university in facilitating interaction and intergartion
2. Integration with other students
3. Role of university attendance in broadening social relationships and horizons

Sample Characteristics: changing landscapes (n = 725)

Whole Cohort Ethnicity	No.	%
White British	177	24.8
White Other (inc. Irish)	112	15.7
Mixed	29	4.6
Asian or Asian British	217	30.0
Black or Black British	139	19.4
Chinese/Other	41	5.7

BME Comparison	BME	WB	Total
BME	360	173	533

- International student? 14.2%
- First in immediate family? 40.7%
- SEN? 5.5%
- Part-time? 4.1%

Whole Cohort (Term Time)	No.	%
Halls	124	17.1
Non- University accommodation with students	176	24.3
Non – University accommodation without other students	99	13.7
Home/with family	308	42.5
Other	18	2.5

Whole Cohort Age	No.	%
18-22	583	81.5
23-26	63	8.8
27-35	40	5.6
35+	29	4.1

Whole Cohort Gender	No.	%
Female	477	66.7
Male	230	32.2
Other	8	1.1

Integration into University Life: axes of difference

Whole Cohort	No.	%
I feel integrated into KUL life.	385	53.1
University activities have provided me with opportunities to interact with other students.	281	38.9

	Ethnicity	WB/BME	Gender	International	S.E.N.	First in immediate family	Age
I feel integrated into KUL Life	0.501	0.365	0.434	0.612	0.078	0.967	0.063
University activities have provided me with opportunities to interact with other students	0.606	0.452	0.808	<i>0.002</i>	0.399	0.074	0.181

Integration into University Life: Living Arrangements

	Living with KU Students	Living at home or not with KU students	
Whole Cohort	% agree	% agree	p =
I feel Integrated into KUL life	58.0	48.6	0.048
University activities have provided me with opportunities.....	45.5	34.0	0.007

Whole Cohort % agree	University Halls of Residence	Non-university accommodation with other KU students	Non-university accommodation without other KU students	Home with parents /family	Other
I feel Integrated into KUL life	59.7	56.8	46.5	49.4	72.2
University activities have provided me with opportunities.....	51.2	41.5	39.4	32.2	38.9

Integration with other students: axes of difference

Whole Cohort	No.	%
I have made friends with other university students.	634	87.4
I am involved in social activities with other students at KUL	251	34.7

P values	Ethnicity	WB/ BME	Gender	International	S.E.N.	First in immediate family	Age
I have made friends with other KU students	0.134	0.634	0.583	0.788	0.621	0.773	0.001
I am involved in social activities with other students at KU	0.004	0.000	0.935	0.019	0.293	0.508	0.015

Integration with other students: exploring ethnicity

BME Comparison	WB (%)	BME (%)	p =
I have made friends with other university students.	89.6	87.8	0.634
I am involved in social activities with other students at KUL	44.5	26.9	0.000

Ethnicity	WB (%)	Asian (%)	Black (%)	Mixed (%)	Other (%)
I have made friends with other university students.	83.1	79.8	74.4	83.3	80.0
					p = 0.134
I am involved in social activities with other students at KUL	44.3	24.7	28.6	39.5	20.0
					p = 0.004

Interaction with other students: regularity

How many times per week do you socialise with other students?	No.	%
Regularly (every day or several times per week)	472	65.1
Sporadically (less than once per week but more than once per month)	144	19.9
Rarely (less than once per month)	109	15.0

P values	Ethnicity	WB /BME	Gender	International	S.E.N.	First member of Immediate Family	Age
	0.066	0.078	0.203	0.898	0.328	0.223	0.000

Interaction with other students: regularity (exploring ethnicity)

How many times per week do you socialise with other students?

p = 0.066	WB (%)	BME (%)
Regularly (every day or several times per week)	113 (65.3)	241 (66.9)
Sporadically (less than once per week but more than once per month)	41 (23.7)	60 (16.7)
Rarely (less than once per month)	19 (11.0)	59 (16.4)

p = 0.078	WB	Mixed	Asian	Black
Regularly (every day or several times per week)	113 (65.3)	17 (70.8)	138 (69.7)	84 (63.2)
Sporadically (less than once per week but more than once per month)	41 (23.7)	3 (12.5)	35 (17.7)	20 (15.0)
Rarely (less than once per month)	19 (11.0)	4 (16.7)	25 (12.6)	29 (21.8)

Extending Social Relationships

Whole Cohort	No.	%
I have made friends at KU and spend most of my socializing time with them	261	36.0
I have made some friends at KU and I socialise with them as well as the friends that I had before University in equal measure	292	40.3
I came to KU to study but most of the friends who I socialise with do not attend KU	172	23.7

p values	Ethnicity	WB/ BME	Gender	International	S.E.N	First member of Immediate Family	Age
	0.015	0.000	0.935	0.002	0.154	0.801	0.000
	Complex picture	Much less likely to select Much more likely to select B		More likely to select B			More likely to select C.

Extending social relationships: ethnicity

Ethnicity p = 0.000	WB	Mixed	Asian	Black
I have made friends at KU and spend most of my time socialising with them	74 (42.8)	9 (37.5)	76 (38.4)	26 (19.5)
I have made some friends at KU and I socialise with them as well as the friends that I had before University in equal measure	60 (34.7)	7 (29.2)	93 (47.0)	63 (47.4)
I came to Kingston to study but most of the friends who I socialise with do not attend KU	39 (22.5)	8 (33.3)	29 (14.6)	44 (33.1)

Role of university attendance in broadening social relationships and horizons

Whole Cohort % Agree	No.	%
Coming to Kingston University has expanded my social horizons.	326	45.1
I socialize with a more diverse range of people since joining Kingston University.	358	49.4
I have more friends from different ethnic backgrounds to myself since coming to Kingston University.	367	50.7

	WB/ BME	Gender	International	S.E.N.	First member of immediate family	Age
Coming to Kingston University.....	0.006	0.119	0.047	0.726	0.388	0.015
I socialise with a more diverse....	0.139	0.065	0.001	0.459	0.628	0.085
I have more friends from.....	0.457	0.171	0.000	0.523	0.617	0.026

Social Horizons: BME Comparison

BME Comparison % agree	WB	BME
Coming to Kingston University has expanded my social horizons.	89 (52.0)	137 (38.1)
		$p = 0.006$
I socialise with a more diverse range of people since joining KU	84 (48.6)	101 (44.7)
		$p = 0.139$
I have more friends from different ethnic backgrounds to myself since coming to Kingston University.	85 (49.1)	168 (46.8)
		$p = 0.457$

Differences between BME and WB students in their choice of living arrangements

P = 0.000	With students (%)	Without other students (%)
White British	64.5	35.5
White Other (inc. Irish)	54.1	45.9
Asian	27.6	72.4
Black	28.2	71.8

P = 0.000	WB (%)	BME (%)
With students	64.9	26.0
Without other students	35.1	74.0

Students living at home/with family only

Length of Commute	WB (%)	BME (%)
Under 45 minutes	48.6	12.9
Over 45 minutes	51.4	87.1

Key Findings

- Students are 'doing' university differently
 - KUL forefront of these changing landscapes
- Recognise the diversity within student body and address these new ways of 'doing' University (all aspects of policy and practice)
- Move away from the student-deficit model
- Interaction/connections must be improved
- University must do more to promote the efficacy of for student interaction
- New ways of doing things
 - Pedagogy, timetables, structure of academic programmes, function of halls of residence

Going Forward.....

Use the students to help: willing and able

“all students should be viewed as partners in the educational journey and systematically involved in the design and implementation of increasing learning, teaching and assessment activities.”
(Stevenson, 2012: 19)

Where to continue the evolution?

WHERE TO START COURSE LEVEL?

I have mostly made friends at KU through	WB	BME
P = 0.002		
Meeting other students studying on my course	128 (74.0)	311 (86.4)
Joining a KUSU Society	9 (5.2)	11 (3.1)
Meetings students at the LRC	0 (0.0)	4 (1.1)
Joining in with a University Sports Team	6 (3.5)	5 (1.4)
Meeting other students in social spaces around the University	7 (4.0)	10 (2.8)
Knowing people that were already studying here	4 (3.2)	6 (1.7)
I have not been able to meet any students at KU	2 (1.2)	5 (1.4)
Other	17 (9.8)	8 (2.2)

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