136 Diversity in Fashion and Textile Design education

Authors
Carolyn H.M. Hardaker, Samantha Penfold
De Montfort University, UK

Corresponding author chh@dmu.ac.uk

Abstract
The drive for increased diversity in design is a contemporary issue and its importance is recognised by government think-tanks and leading academic networks. The Design Council's recent report to investigate the link between diversity and business performance, profiles the UK design ecology and outlines the impact that increased diversity within the design community can bring. This paper puts this into an educational perspective in terms of fashion and textiles higher education.

Based in the School of Design at De Montfort University in Leicester, one of the UK's most culturally diverse cities, this study considers the current profile of fashion and textiles students and outlines current initiatives to promote the value of diversity. These initiatives actively present the debate to the student cohort, emphasising diversity through the use of positive role models across fashion and textiles disciplines.

This paper also considers the student pipeline, and outlines an initiative to promote design as a potential career to key stage 3 pupils at local schools. This was focussed on footwear design and incorporated a novel activity pack to inspire and engage a diverse audience of potential future designers.

The work is ongoing and the emphasis on diversity is seen as a very positive development to the fashion and textiles design curricula and ultimately the UK's design ecology.

1. Introduction

This paper considers the need for diversity and inclusion within Fashion and Textiles Design education. Specifically, the UK Design Council's recent Design Economy 2018 report and industry statistics (Benton, Miller and Reid, 2018) are considered in the context of the School of Design and Fashion and Textile disciplines at De Montfort University (DMU) Leicester.

The current position of DMU is considered, in terms of being based in Leicester, one of the UK's most culturally diverse cities and also being recently awarded the 2018 Sunday Times inaugural award for Social Inclusion. An award that recognises the University's commitment to ensuring that every student has an equal chance of success, irrespective of background, through the DMU freedom equality charter.

To provide context for the debate, a summary of the diversity statistics from the city of Leicester and the University as a whole are presented. The University statistics are compared with the subject level equivalent for students studying design disciplines within the School of Design and also where possible with industry statistics from the Design Council's research.

The paper considers the pedagogy from an inclusivity perspective that has been adopted within the School of Design and presents the current work, the opportunities and challenges, including a future proofing approach to address the student pipeline to promote design as a University degree to a diverse population.

2. The context

2.1 Diversity and inclusion within design

"The design economy generated £82.5bn in gross value added (GVA) to the UK in 2016," (Benton, Miller and Reid, 2018).

In this context the Design Council also states that there has not been a more critical time to understand the value and importance of design, against the backdrop of uncertain political times including Brexit. The recently published Design Economy 2018 report features key industry issues; localisation, how design benefits business, innovation and diversity and inclusion. In terms of diversity the report recognises that the Design industry has a diversity challenge and states, 'a more diverse industry will not only help to reinforce the talent pipeline but also bring a wealth of new ides and originality of thought supporting greater innovation in the future'. (Benton, Miller and Reid, 2018: p16)

The Design Council's feature on Diversity and Business performance (Reid, 2018), presents the benefits of diversity in terms of improving the talent base, improved creativity and problem solving, better decision making, innovation, increased productivity and reduced costs, enhanced trust and commitment of the workforce. The feature also points out that the full benefits of diversity cannot be leveraged if increased diversity increases conflicts that are not managed.

Industry statistics quoted in the Design Economy 2018 from research undertaken in 2016, consider diversity in terms of gender and ethnicity across 8 design subsectors, 4 of which relate to the School of Design and are considered: Design (craft, which

includes jewellery and ceramics), Design (clothing), Design (multidisciplinary which includes fashion and industrial), Design (product/industrial).

In terms of the gender mix, all subsectors except Design (clothing,) and Design (multidisciplinary) presented a mostly male work force, with 78% of designers within the total Design Economy being male. Design (clothing) and Design (multidisciplinary) presented a predominantly female workforce of 72.5% and 63.7% respectively. (Benton, Miller and Reid, 2018; p 52)

In terms of ethnicity the report highlights that the design economy employs a slightly higher proportion of people from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background, than are employed in the wider UK economy (12.3% compared with 11%). The incidence of designers from a BAME background in the subsectors considered is summarised in table 1.

UK Design Subsector	Percentage of designers from a BAME background
Design (multidisciplinary)	10.4
Design (Craft)	2.5
Design (Clothing)	36.2
Design (Product and Industrial)	12.3
Design Economy	12.3

Table 1: Incidence of BAME designers in Design Subsectors, (Benton, Miller and Reid, 2018; p 61)

Interestingly the subsector with the highest representation of designers from a BAME background is the Design (clothing)
subset which features fashion design.

2.2 Diversity within Leicester city

DMU is situated on a campus very close to Leicester City Centre. Leicester is the most populous urban centre in the East Midlands and is by population, the 11th largest city in the UK. It is also one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse. This has resulted from a series of migrations, following political events across the globe. The first in 1948 saw Indian citizens move to Britain attracted by the post war manufacturing boom, this followed India's independence from British Empire, and the British Nationality Act in 1948 where all Commonwealth citizens were granted the right to move to the UK. In the 1970s further migration of East African Asians from Uganda and Kenya was seen following the implementation of General Idi Amin's Africanization policy. More recently, Leicester has become home to many Eastern

European citizens who migrated to the UK following the ascension of 10 countries to the EU in 2004. In fact, as Hardman states in a paper for Leicester City Council, residents of Leicester hail from over 50 countries from across the globe, with 34% of city residents being born outside of the UK (Hardman, 2012: p1).

Census data from 2011 records Leicester's population as 329,839, with a regional analysis (Jivraj and Finney, 2013: p1) demonstrating an increased ethnic diversity from previous census data and highlighting that no one ethnic group is in the majority. In fact, Leicester's population consists of White British (45%), Indian, (28%), White Other (5%) and Other Ethnic Group (21%).

This diversity brings a great wealth of cultures and religions to the city, as highlighted by an ESRC funded project in 2015 on Super-Diverse Streets (Hall, King and Finlay, 2015). This study by the London School of Economics highlighted Narborough Road, one of the key routes into the City Centre from the motorway network as the most diverse high street in the UK with shop keepers from 23 countries trading from 222 shop units. This report made quite an impact in the national and local press at the time, with the lead author highlighting that Narborough Road was a world in microcosm, with many people from different cultures living and working together.

2.2 Diversity at DMU

DMU is a large University, with 25,142 students (2017-18 enrolment figures) studying across 4 Faculties; Health and Life Sciences, Business and Law, Computing, Engineering and Media, Arts, Design and Humanities.

DMU has a long standing commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity (EDI), introducing the DMU freedom charter in 2016, which outlines the University's policy to ensure that every student has an equal chance of success, irrespective of background. To achieve this the University has developed several initiatives which have been put in place across the University. These include:

- Mandatory EDI training for all academic staff,
- 'Freedom to Achieve', an initiative which aims to negate the current attainment gap between white and BAME students.
- 'Dare to be', mentoring scheme specifically for BAME students

The success of the policy has been recognised nationally and internationally, DMU being recently awarded the 2018 Sunday Times inaugural award for Social Inclusion. DMU is recognised as outperforming socially inclusive peers in key performance measures covering teaching quality, student experience and graduate job prospects, (McCall, 2018). The University has also been recognised by the United Nations,

having been chosen to be a designated hub for Goal 16, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions as part of the UN Sustainable Development Goal programme.

A review of the enrolment data for 2017-18 has been completed to present the current ethnic diversity within the student population at DMU with a specific focus on the School of Design. A School that brings together Fashion and Textile disciplines (Fashion Design, Contour Fashion, Footwear Design, Textile Design, Fashion Textile Design, Fashion Communication and Styling and Fashion Buying) with Product Design, Interior Design and Design Crafts under one roof in the award winning Vijay Patel Building.

Table 2 provides a summary and shows 56.5% of the University's student population came from a BAME background. While this percentage shows BAME students as the largest cohort within the student population and coincidently mirrors the 2011 census statistics for the City, the proportion of BAME students within the School of Design is lower, with 39.1% of students identifying with a BAME ethnic group.
At subject level the data shows some interesting variations across the disciplines, with Interior Design and Design Masters having a higher percentage of students from a BAME background than the University percentage, while Contour Fashion and Design Crafts having a much lower number level of diversity with the student cohort than both the School and University's percentages.

Cohort	Student Population 2017-18	BAME student enrolment percentage	Variation from University's BAME student enrolment percentage
University	25,142	56.5	0
School of Design	1,584	39.1	-17.4
Contour Fashion	219	17.3	-39.2
Design Crafts	87	11.5	-45.0
Fashion Design	303	45.8	-10.7
Fashion Buying	334	38.3	-18.2
Footwear and Textiles Design	202	37.1	-19.4
Interior Design	184	63.5	+7.0
Product Design	185	36.0	-20.5
Design Masters (PG)	70	64.3	+7.8

Table 2: BAME student enrolment percentages, data compiled from tableau.dmu.ac.uk

3. Pedagogy

The School of Design is engaged with both University wide and subject level initiatives to promote diversity and inclusivity within the curricula. The University wide initiative, Freedom to Achieve and two subject level case studies are outlined.

3.1 Freedom to Achieve

Freedom to Achieve was launched in 2017, with DMU, one of a group of UK universities (six higher education and one further education) to be awarded the maximum funding of £500,000 by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) Catalyst fund. The funding was for a project led by Kingston University, to help identify why fewer BAME students achieve First or 2:1 degrees compared with their fellow white students; a discrepancy known nationally as the BAME attainment gap. DMU is committed to creating a learning environment in which all students have the freedom to succeed as part of the university's equality and diversity strategy. The project aims to ensure that every student at DMU can achieve their potential and can see themselves and people like them reflected in the course(s) they study.
DMU has actively engaged the BAME cohort through a series of initiatives starting with a co-creation event where students and staff discussed ways to tackle the attainment gap. The four targeted areas are:
- Development: Personal and academic
- Community and belonging: Being a student at DMU
- Environment: Learning, living and social spaces
- Curriculum: Appropriate and culturally aware

For development and community activities, a mentoring scheme 'Dare To Be' has been launched, open to all students, for one to one guidance on achieving personal and academic goals. A series of talks by inspirational speakers including Mo Bros, three brothers of Indian heritage from Leicester who have created a million pound business in men's grooming have been held. A conference on 'Black Education Matters' organised by DMU alumni has also been inspirational with over 150 students attending.

Feedback from students as part of Freedom to Achieve was that BAME students do not see themselves reflected in the environment and curriculum. An example of a small action making a difference was for the faculty of Arts Design and Humanities to create a wall of inspiration to showcase the diversity of individuals connected with the faculty and to support Freedom to Achieve/Fair Outcomes objectives around improving the diversity of the imagery used in our building dressing.

Curriculum review was a major part of this programme. Academics reviewed briefs, lecture materials and supporting documentation to ensure that a global perspective on design was reflected in the learning materials. With the support of a Faculty Fair Outcome Champion, ideas for change were shared and the result was that small

actions, such as choosing design examples that reflect global designers and having a broader range of literature on reading lists can make a dramatic difference.

3.2 School of Design subject level case studies

a. Interior Design's Role Model Summer project

Interior Design devised a Summer Project for new entrants that could reflect their heritage (Fitton and Harding, 2018). Students were asked to identify two role models; one in the design world and one from another field and discuss with the group what it was about their choices that inspired them. The role models identified by the group reflected the diversity of the student cohort (Interior Design, 63.5% are from a BAME background, 2017-18). Students used the opportunity to select a role model that they could identify with from the worlds of interiors, architecture, design and entertainment, The discussions around attributes demonstrated that certain types of behaviours were conducive to success, no matter what field to which you aspire. The images of the role models and attributes were used to create a display in the studio, strategically placed the display generated discussion and comment by other subject areas. The outcome was very successful, with high student engagement, the key benefits reflecting the aims of Freedom to Achieve and enriching the curriculum for all interior students.

- Positive diverse role models connected to a subject area to create a feeling of 'belonging' to the subject area.
- An outlook on current design influences to enhance the international perspective.
- Identification of key attributes for success at the start of studying for a degree.
- Creating an environment that reflected all the student cohort.

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b. Textile Design's #DMUGlobal visit to Bangalore.

#DMUGlobal is an international experience programme for De Montfort University students, which aims to enrich studies, broaden cultural horizons and to develop key skills valued by employers. As part of the pilot Freedom to Achieve project, Textile Design created a #DMU Global trip to India through a series of student led co-creation events (Taylor, Penfold and Bazaz, 2018). The primary driver was to create a globalised curriculum and awareness of Textile practices beyond Europe, culturally relevant to Leicester and BAME students, for both staff and students that reflected the diversity of Leicester. The inclusion of Industry visits would give world working environments with professional role models.

A series of co-creation workshops were attended by 28 second year students of which 7 were of a BAME background. The students were encouraged to consider what they would like to achieve through reflecting on: curriculum content, exploring what and how the students wanted to learn and by using discussion to allow for the creation of a more democratic curriculum.

The trip delivered an understanding of global design skills through a series of activities planned with a partnership institute NIFT (National Institute of Fashion Technology). These included:

•	A series of workshops with NIFT students and tutors in traditional Indian embroidery techniques

•	Visits to traditional and industrial manufacturing factories to gain an insight into global sourcing.

•	The opportunity to experience Indian culture and collect visual images for subsequent projects.

The aim of the project was also to create a legacy, not just a one-off experience for one group of students. By taking a technical instructor on the visit to learn skills alongside the students, it ensured that the skills will be taught to students not on the trip and also to future year groups. The links between the DMU and NIFT academics provided an opportunity to swap references and reading lists alongside current information on up and coming designers. These benefits are longer term as it has helped staff build wider cultural understanding, to create a more culturally competent curriculum and embed the visit into the curriculum as well as advising other departments on creating similar activities.

The trip provided an opportunity for active learning and knowledge check, peer to peer development and creating a more inclusive learning environment. By encouraging students to be part of the process to plan the visit, they took ownership and engaged at a high level. The international experience of the textile and design industries enhanced employment skills and built confidence. These outcomes reflected the four targeted areas of the Freedom to Achieve initiative.

4. Pipeline

The future pipeline of students wishing to develop a career in Art and Design is of concern, a result of the recent demographic downturn of 18 year olds, combined with the Government's emphasis on STEM subjects, and changes to the A Level Design and Technology syllabus.

To promote design as a degree option and career the School of Design has developed an outreach initiative to provide key stage 3 students with the opportunity of working on a short design project set by the University and supervised on a weekly basis by undergraduate design students. The initiative, named #iwanttobe, aims to inspire the next generation of designers and ran as a pilot in 2018 with Footwear as the design discipline. Three city centre schools, all with a diverse student population, participated. The culmination of the project was an exhibition of the design outcomes as part of the University's annual Art and Design degree show, with a prize-giving event for the best portfolio and best design outcome. The pilot was a great success, with one teacher noting, 'that the project had made the students feel special which had been a huge influence on their creativity' and 'it had

given students a real thirst to further their interests in design and consider it as a possible career'. (Sagoo, 2018: p2)

#iwanttobe is now in its second year, with projects due to start in Spring 2019 in Footwear Design, Contour Fashion and Fashion Marketing with ten local schools participating.

5. Evaluation and future work

The initiatives outlined in this paper have made an impact not only quantitively on the BAME attainment gap, but also qualitatively on the student experience and staff awareness of the issues.

The University wide Freedom to Achieve project commenced in 2016-17 and good Honours statistics, (table 3) show that the BAME attainment gap has reduced from 14.6% in 2012-13 to 8.9% in 2017-18.

Academic Session*	Overall	White Good Honours (First / 2:1)	BAME Good Honours (First / 2:1)	Attainment Gap
2012-13	66.5%	72.4%	57.8%	-14.6%
2013-14	70.9%	76.9%	63.6%	-13.3%
2014-15	70.1%	74.4%	65.1%	-9.3%
2015-16	67.3%	73.5%	60.0%	-13.6%
2016-17	71.3%	75.2%	64.7%	-10.5%
2017-18	75.1%	78.9%	70%	-8.9%

Table 3: DMU attainment gap over the last 6 academic years, data compiled from tableau.dmu.ac.uk

Subject analysis of the data for 2017-18, reveals a 19.4% attainment gap for the creative arts and design subject group, with specific programmes Fashion Design having a 19.2% attainment gap, Interior Design 12.9%. Statistics for Textile Design are not available due to the recent small cohort sizes . However as a guide, figures for Textile Design from 2016-17 show a 49.1% attainment gap between the 3 Asian students and the 17 White students. Although the number of students in this sample is small, it highlights the issue in the context of a programme that has recently achieved 100% overall student satisfaction in the National Student Survey. These statistics indicate that this work is just beginning and there is significant work to do to eliminate the gap across all subjects and this is acknowledged in Freedom to Achieve interim report (Astley, 2018).

The report presents a baseline survey of 233 students involved in pilot Freedom to Achieve projects from across the University, revealed that the 55% of students surveyed, had not experienced any changes to their learning experience. However, where students had experienced changes, it was in the following ways:

Curriculum content	Greater representation	Listening to student voice
Teaching methods	Increased access	Relationships
Learning materials	Increased access	Greater opportunity for personal development
Assessment	Removing barriers	Greater variety of approaches
Feedback	Greater opportunity for personal development	Improved timing of feedback

Table 4: Changes to learning experience (Atkins, 2018; p26)

These changes are reflected in the School of Design subject level case studies. The Interior Design Positive Role Models project inspired a greater representation of design influences, providing the student cohort and staff the opportunity to develop an increased understanding of the individuals within the cohort. The project worked well as an ice-breaker, helping to develop a more informed and culturally sensitive student and staff community.

Students who participated in the #DMUGlobal Bangalore embraced the opportunity to co-create the itinerary for the visit, which elevated their self-confidence. The opportunity to travel independently was also a new experience for some students, with many embracing this independence. One exciting outcome from this visit was that the students renewed their interest in their own cultural heritage. As one student stated,

> *The trip to Bangalore heavily influenced my third year of study at De Montfort University. As a weaver, I was inspired by the 'weave clusters' and saree shops we visited. During pre-collection, I taught myself the saree techniques and will be using them in my final collection. Bangalore has also inspired me to consider pursuing further study in doing a Master's degree, where I hope to revisit India to learn the ancient techniques and document them, in order to come up with innovative designs and combinations of techniques for modern textiles.* Khadija Dookanwala, current third year Textile Design student.

The interim report also considers the staff perspective, and the results of a baseline staff survey of 44 members of staff across the 40 pilot projects (Atkins, 2018; p27) conclude that seventy per cent of staff have responded to the statistics demonstrating the attainment gap by making changes to their programme. These changes manifest in a variety of ways through changes to curriculum content and in their responses to students during teaching or tutorial sessions. Of the remaining staff, sixty per cent felt they already worked in an inclusive manner.

From the School of Design perspective, Freedom to Achieve has heightened an awareness in staff of the BAME attainment gap. Through the visibility across the University of the Freedom to Achieve project and the subsequent subject specific interventions. The planning of these activities is now part of business as usual. Textile Design's plan is highlighted in table 5.

	Intervention	Short / Medium or Long
1	Create and collect culturally competent resource for the programme, through recording visits via social media	M
2	Include more positive BAME role models representation in teaching practice	M/L
3	Build a diverse reading list for the programme	S/M
4	Create and nurture students' own design identity from level 4 and embed free or heavily subsided visits to exhibitions locally and nationally	M
5	To create a localised opportunity for those students who cannot access #DMUGlobal visits	L
6	Continue to visit India via #DMUGlobal	L

Table 5: Textile Design Intervention summary

Although as already noted there is a long way to go to eliminate the BAME attainment gap, the projects discussed in this paper have contributed to the development of the learning experience to respond to the diverse cohort at DMU. The local interventions have been disseminated across the School and are being adopted and adapted to suit the needs of other subject areas.

The pipeline project is very much a long-term initiative but it is envisaged that this positive outreach project will inspire students from diverse populations each year to consider design as viable career option.

6. Concluding remarks

This paper has evaluated the current work in promoting diversity within Fashion and Textiles within the School of Design at De Montfort University, in the context of the University the City of Leicester and also the wider industry.

The University's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity, through engagement with the Freedom to Achieve initiative has been shown to be successful, evidenced by national recognition through the metrics of the Sunday

Times Social Inclusion League table 2018. This commitment is reinforced from an industry perspective by the Design Council through their narrative in support of increasing diversity in design.

The School of Design has embraced the opportunity to review its curricula from a diversity perspective as part of the University wide Freedom to Achieve initiative, introducing subject level local projects and outreach work. These projects have had a positive impact on the learning experience for current students, and the future student pipeline, with the work ongoing.

In terms of measuring success the Freedom to Achieve project is proving successful in terms of reducing the BAME attainment gap, however there is still some way to go before the attainment gap is eliminated.

DMU located in Leicester, with its heritage of diversity, invites a debate about choice of study location. Does the diversity of the City attract diversity to the University? This indeed could be the subject for a much broader study.

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