

# Teaching Inclusively

Report for 2020-2021

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## Acknowledgements

This project was funded by the VC's Diversity and Inclusion Fund to audit the curriculum in the Department of Humanities as an example of good practice in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. When I began this project I had no substantial training in EDI but I took part in EDI training that was also supported by the VC's Diversity and Inclusion Fund and arranged by the Humanities Director for EDI at the time. This training, 'Creating an Inclusive Culture', was delivered by Dr Julie Scanlon. I am grateful to the University for the funds for this project and for the EDI training, and to Dr Scanlon for her help with issues around terminology and language use in particular. In 2020 I completed a MOOC run by Cornell University: 'Teaching & Learning in the Diverse Classroom' and I defer to Professor Matthew Ouellett's and Professor Melina Ivanchikova's guidance on inclusive teaching and terminology throughout this report. Thank you to all the academics who contributed to this work by giving time to speak to me for the qualitative interviews and to all academic colleagues in Humanities for allowing me to look through module provision and reading lists. Thank you also to Dr Clare Elliott for ongoing conversations about this project. Finally, a thank you to Diego Cammarano for helping the Excel and pie charts look presentable.

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## Background and Aims

The brief was to review reading lists to examine them for statistics, specifically on gender and race representation on Humanities modules and to speak to academics about teaching provision and practice. These are the only characteristics covered in this project although I have considered intersections between gender and race. However, the work on the project threw up bigger questions about reading lists and diversifying, about racial categorising and terminology, about auditing for gender stats while thinking about trans and non-binary inclusion, amongst other issues. These big issues cannot be managed in a short reading-list review and so, although the parameters of the project were specific the work quite quickly became rather expansive in scope. I present my findings here in two ways: through quantitative and qualitative data. The former answers the project's brief, while the latter, the qualitative part, allows for the broader scope where I tried to think through the implications of what it might mean to teach inclusively. This qualitative part offers up lots of food for thought going forward and I present this report as a starting point for further discussions about these issues. The data for the project was gathered through analysing a sample of modules from the Humanities undergraduate programmes and through 1-1 interviews with academics who offered to give up their time to speak to me. Several colleagues provided positive feedback after their interviews, explaining that the process of being interviewed about their teaching and their modules had enabled them to gain new perspectives on what they offered to students and how they made their teaching accessible and pedagogically inclusive.

The 1-1 interviews helpfully broadened the parameters of this study to think beyond the categories I was looking out for here. Colleagues and I began to consider trans and non-binary representation, disability, sex and sexual orientation, religion, belief and more. We also discussed the limitations of EDI terminology and the problems with categories such as BAME

(Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) and whether or not that allowed for the consideration of, for example, Jewish identity. Those expansive conversations were good reminders of the limitations of a study of this kind. This project offers guidance on good practice, and sets out approaches to inclusive curriculum design through wider University forums and through external-facing events (e.g. on outreaching with local schools and on Northumbria University experience days and open days). These findings from this work will inform the Athena Swan Departmental application for a bronze award. The categories of gender and race were the main focus of this project to complement the Departmental work on Athena Swan and the University's commitment to the Race Equality Charter. I would have liked to have been able to look at other characteristics, but this wasn't possible given the budget of hours and the nature of collecting data. The interviews were confidential and, as such, I have collated responses here and I have analysed the collective findings and present them as anonymised qualitative information on the Humanities modules. There are five outputs from this project. The first is this report which deals with the qualitative and quantitative data that was gathered from the module guide audit and the 1-1 interviews with colleagues about their teaching provision and practice. Second, there is an Excel database with the quantitative data from the module guide review which can be used to pinpoint data. Third, there is a recorded presentation where I am in conversation with Clare Elliott, the lead academic on this project, about the challenges of the project, some highlights of the study and to suggest some next steps. I offer a second recorded presentation that I put together as a student recruitment tool where, again, I am in conversation with Clare Elliott, speaking to prospective students about the VC's commitment to and investment in EDI and the inclusive modules on offer to Humanities students that the project highlights and to emphasise that the Department has engaged in this self-reflective exercise because it takes inclusive teaching and decolonising pedagogy seriously. Finally, I have authored an article titled: 'Who has the time and responsibility to decolonise English

studies?’ which is forthcoming with *English: Journal of the English Association*. All outputs are with the Department EDI Director and the Humanities Head of Department to use as they see fit.

## BAME and Problematic Terminology

At the Humanities’ EDI Steering Group meeting on 9 December 2020, I presented a draft of this report and invited feedback. We discussed the limitations of EDI terminology, and I drew on the expertise in the room, from colleagues in history, linguistics, literature and creative writing, to help me to think through the language used in this final report. I am grateful to colleagues in attendance at that meeting for the fruitful conversation about the limitations of EDI terminology and what we might do about that. For example, we discussed the BAME Over Statement (Inc Arts UK) (<https://incarts.uk/%23bameover-the-statement>) and the problems with the term BAME. The feedback, that day, from the Humanities EDI Steering Group on this draft report was that the conversation around terminology is ongoing and that other EDI terms (diversity and inclusion included) are also problematic and that we should be explicit in the limitations of the language used when discussing inclusive teaching. As such, despite the problems of this term, I opted to use the term BAME for this report to keep us in line with the Decolonising Northumbria Network and for further information on EDI terminology and its limitations I direct you to that network where Humanities colleague Edward Anderson has contributed resources on the limitations of terminology when it comes to race in particular. There is a lot of discussion in and beyond academia about alternatives to BAME. BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) + Asian might be a more accurate and inclusive term as it recognises the historic experiences of Black and indigenous people and names Asian people separately. However, for me, this still functions as an umbrella term and positions whiteness as the norm against which all else is measured.

## Decolonising or Diversifying?

The first big concern that the project threw up, I found, was how to audit reading lists and maintain a commitment to decolonising curricula to make teaching more inclusive, rather than to diversify curricula, which has problematic connotations of cancel culture. For this report it is important to acknowledge the issues with the term ‘decolonising’, as it is regularly misunderstood in the media, and to explain what I mean by it. In February 2021 when the University of Leicester proposed cutting Medieval English as a way to diversify its teaching, the media reported this as a ‘decolonising’ assault on the discipline (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-55860810>). But what happened at Leicester had very little to do with decolonising curricula, as I understand it. Cutting subjects (and academic staff) under the pretence of being more inclusive amounts to a very contentious diversification that decolonising our pedagogy and provision does not profess to do. Rather, decolonising curricula, as I understand the term, means reflecting on what we teach and how we teach it. It has more to do with adding to the stories that literature, history, and linguistics tell us about ourselves and very little to do with cutting texts or, indeed, entire subject specialisms, as in the case at Leicester. Decolonising, rather than diversifying, is about adding decolonial perspectives and pedagogies to what we already do. A reading list audit has a place in this, I think. It allows us, at a glance, to notice who we read and it enables us to think about whether we want to incorporate different voices in our modules or to reflect on the reasons why our reading list might look one way and not another. But a reading list audit cannot provide the full picture, which is why the qualitative part of this study has been so helpful for reflective purposes.

Several Humanities colleagues at Northumbria participate in this debate about decolonising vs diversifying and several do the work of decolonising Humanities in

their research and teaching. For example, May Sumbwanyambe's 2018 drama, *The Trial of Joseph Knight* (Bruce Young, dir.), returns to eighteenth-century Scotland to foreground the experience of the enslaved Joseph Knight. Claudine van Hensbergen published an article in 2020 for *The Conversation* about the toppling of the Edward Colston statue in Bristol: <https://theconversation.com/public-sculpture-expert-why-i-welcome-the-decision-to-throw-brisols-edward-colston-statue-in-the-river-140285>. Edward Anderson has also written on this reckoning by examining London street names in his article, 'Confronting Colonial Legacies in London's "Little India"' for *The Conversation* (8 December 2020). Decolonising is an attempt to think about the approach one takes when teaching our subjects. Where a diversifying approach to literary studies, for example, might demand that we 'cancel' Harriet Beecher Stowe's and Mark Twain's fiction due to overtly racist content, I would hope that decolonising means, as Claudine van Hensbergen puts it in her article, 'facing up to history', that is, putting the historical past in context and confronting the history, in the case of Stowe and Twain, of nineteenth-century US slavery, albeit in their fictional accounts.

### **Stained Histories**

Earlier this year, the Universities' Minister, Michelle Donelan, made comments to the contrary of this argument to suggest that academics were removing books from reading lists to, somehow, protect their students from having to encounter, what she referred to as 'stains' (<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/history-curriculum-university-michelle-donelan-culture-war-b1808601.html>.) But this is to misunderstand the decolonising efforts that colleagues are undertaking here. Decolonising work is an attempt to think about more history, of course, not less. In *Black and British: A Forgotten History* (2016), David Olusoga writes that: 'Black history is too often regarded as a segregated, ghettoized narrative that runs in its own shallow channel alongside the mainstream, only very occasionally

becoming a tributary into that broader narrative.’ He goes on to say that ‘black British history is not an optional extra. Nor is it a bolt-on addition to mainstream British history deployed only occasionally in order to add – literally – a splash of colour to favoured epochs of the national story.’ Olusoga, who, incidentally, has an honorary Doctorate awarded by Northumbria University, argues that history isn’t composed of a narrative interrupted by ‘stains’ and ‘splashes of colour’. Rather, according to Olusoga, black history is ‘an integral and essential aspect of mainstream British history. Britain’s interactions with Africa, the role of black people within British history and the history of the empire are too significant to be marginalized, brushed under the carpet or corralled into some historical annexe.’ Olusoga seems to be pointing to the essential work of giving a full account of history. Black history is not a ‘tributary into that broader narrative’ and shouldn’t be represented as such and fuller accounts of history are, surely, just better, more accurate, history. Northumbria colleague Laura O’Brien might agree as she was quoted in *Independent* in response to Donelan, writing: ‘Efforts to decolonise curricula do not seek to ‘leave out the bits we see as stains’. Hardly! If anything, they draw greater attention to questions of race, empire, slavery, colonisation’. O’Brien goes on to argue that historians are interested in multiple voices and not in censoring the past.

It can be noted here that one of the differences between using the word ‘diversity’ and using the word ‘decolonising’ is the fact that decolonisation looks beyond data-based representation. What decolonisation does, on the other hand, is engage with where the data comes from, and whether the issues of sex, gender, sexuality, disability, race and ethnicity are actually discussed and worked through in the content. If you are interested in contributing to this ongoing debate at Northumbria you might consider joining the Decolonising Northumbria Network where colleagues across disciplines are thinking through language use, EDI terminology, and what it might mean to decolonise our teaching.



## Trans and Non-Binary Inclusion

The parameters of this study were shaped by the Athena Swan Charter (<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity/athena-swan/>) and the Race Equality Charter (<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity/race-equality-charter/>). I did consider auditing by sex entirely and using ‘man’, ‘woman’ categories in the quantitative analysis to include trans authors, keeping in line with the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics (<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics>). However, auditing for sex is problematic, too, because of the binary implications in the approach that discounts non-binary authors and, potentially, conceals trans authors. In my recommendations in this report, I draw attention to Athena Swan principles that include a commitment to ‘tackling the discriminatory treatment often experienced by trans people’ and I would suggest that this work acts as a starting point to reflect on how we might extend that principle into our teaching content and delivery. I am suggesting, in my recommendations for next steps, that the Department runs trans awareness training and that future work of this kind might look closely at module provision and trans and non-binary experience. Likewise, the category of race is problematic when using quantitative data as the quantitative approach does not allow for complex discussions about race and ethnicity and race as a construct. The problems embedded in the audit approach are discussed in full in the qualitative analysis.

## Methodological Reflections

Quantitative data in particular is limiting in a study like this one and, in fact, looking for empirical data from reading lists on BAME representation, in particular, can produce a misleading picture of ethnic diversity in our curricula because of the parameters of this study and its focus on essential/reading and not additional/ recommended reading. As I will show, the constraints of this study serve some subjects better than others in illustrating the decolonising work that is already well underway in the Department. For example, a discipline like English Language tends to draw on textbooks for essential/ primary reading and students might refer to one textbook over an entire semester while supplementing that reading with a varied diet of additional reading too. Because English Literature tends to categorise some theoretical texts as essential reading, especially on theory modules, this changed the look of English literature provision from Language and Creative Writing, I felt. As such, I created two categories for English Literature: essential prose/poetry/drama reading; essential theory reading. I found that, had I included additional reading in the data then the picture of teaching provision in English Language, in particular, would look very different. Two examples of where the methodology has produced a misleading representation of ethnic diversity:

- Language and Society, Level 5, core, EL5013 (Robert McKenzie)
- Advanced Creative Writing, Level 6, opt, EL6046 (Laura Fish)

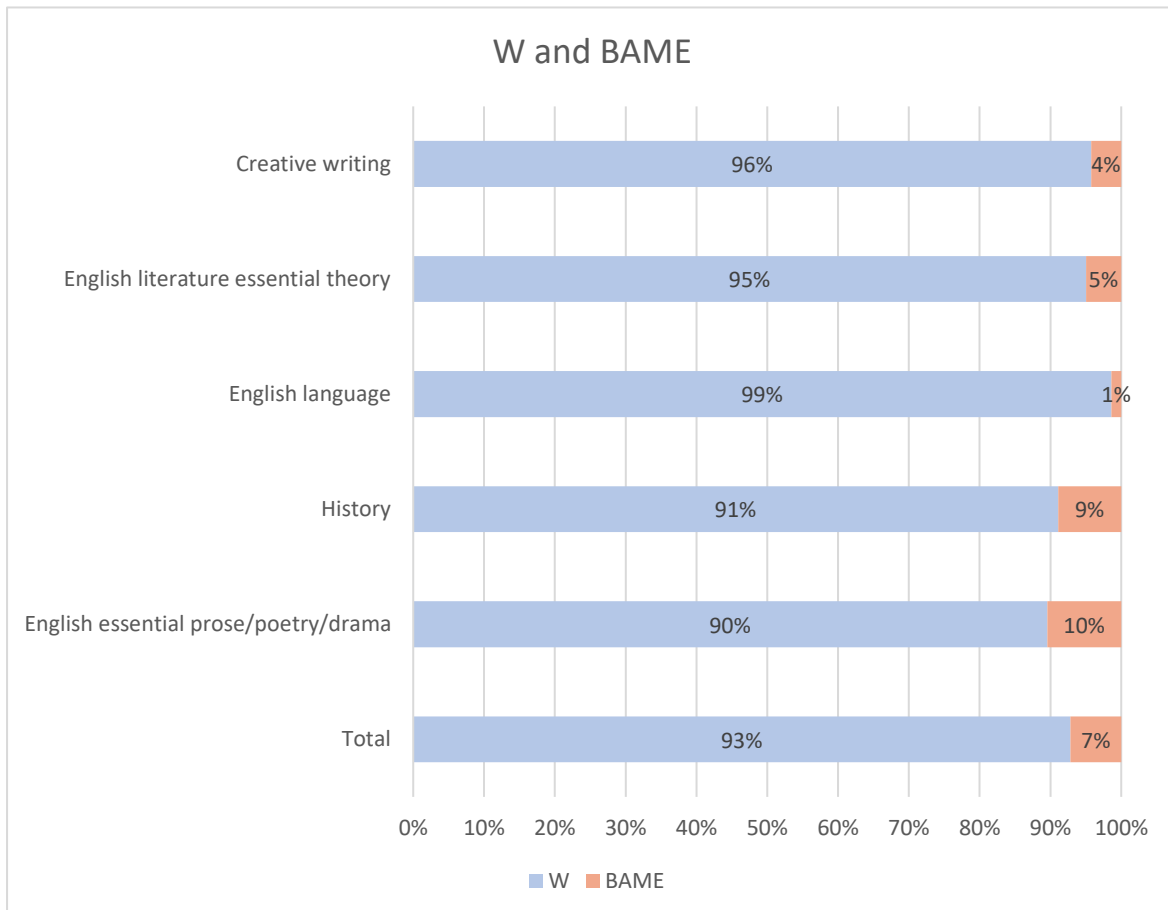
Language and Society (EL5013) is a good example of a module where this happens. This sociolinguistics module examines, amongst other things, language and ethnicity and social class and so it is an excellent example of a module that is interested in inclusion at its very core. Students read from a textbook, *Introducing Sociolinguistics* (2019) by Miriam Meyerhoff throughout the semester and this is their essential reading. However, that reading is supported

by a wealth of additional/ recommended reading such as *Language, Ethnicity and Race Reader* (2019) by Roxy Harris and Ben Rampton that introduces students to the current debates surrounding issues of language and diversity, colonialism and migration, identity and appropriation. Again, this would have been wonderful to capture for this audit on inclusive teaching but, as additional/ recommended reading it isn't counted.

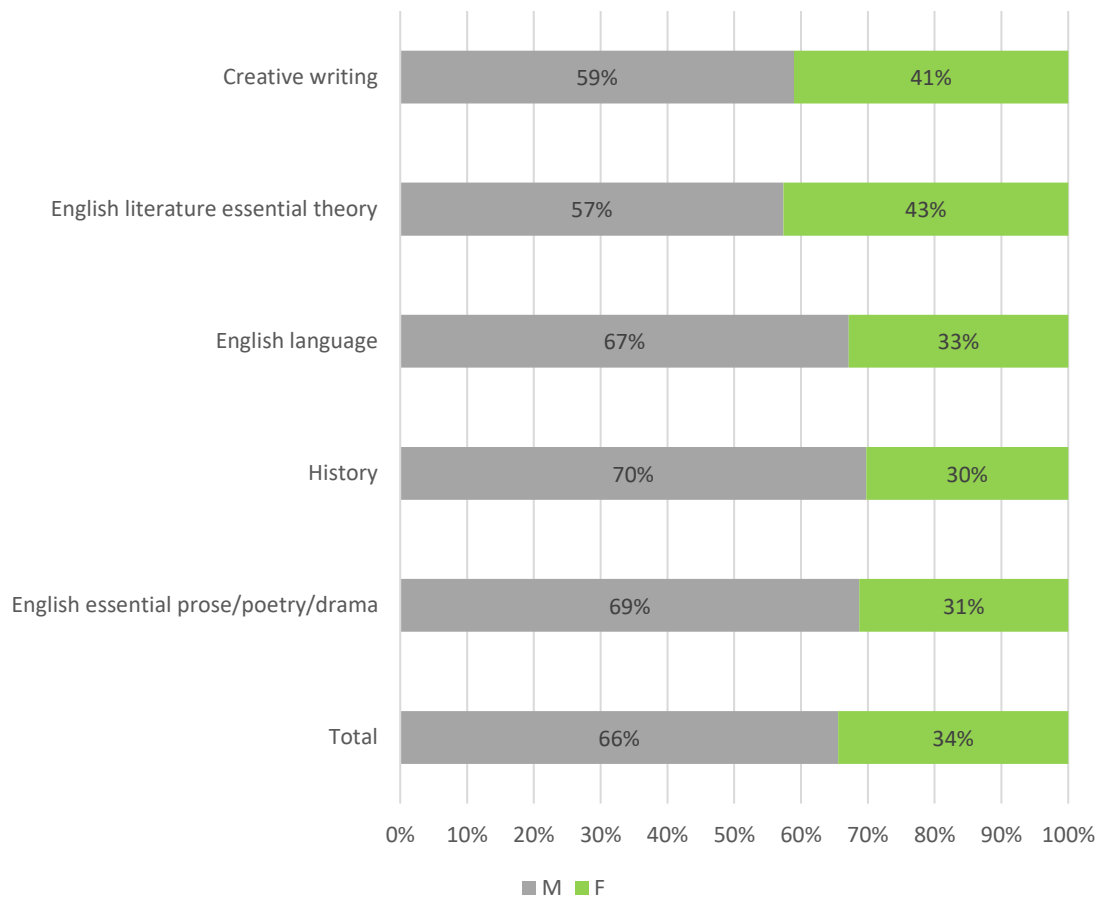
Advanced Creative Writing, Level 6, opt, EL6046 (Laura Fish) is a superb module that furthers skills in prose and/or poetry. Although the focus of the module is on students' own creative writing, the primary essential reading on the module is used for discussion on how to improve. Both pieces of essential reading on this module are by authors that I have included in the BAME statistical analysis. On a different study this module might stand out as a good example of BAME representation on reading lists. However, because Creative Writing is taught in conjunction with English Literature as part of the English Literature and Creative Writing BA Hons, the data on Laura Fish's module gets lost a little in amongst the Literature modules that I have counted as part of the Creative Writing degree provision. Again, this presents a misleading representation on ethnic diversity on the curricula. So, it is with some apologies to Linguist and Creative Writing colleagues that this data doesn't speak to the diverse, innovative, and exciting teaching that they are doing. The quantitative work raised lots of issues around measuring representation on modules. Often module leaders assign textbooks that include multiple authors but, as it wasn't clear to me what students would read from those textbooks, I wasn't able to account for gender and BAME representation in those collaborative works. Also, the room for error in a study of this kind is clear, given that race and gender is not always identifiable. The statistics here are offered as an impression of what modules in Humanities look like in terms of inclusive teaching and I hope readers will forgive any omissions.

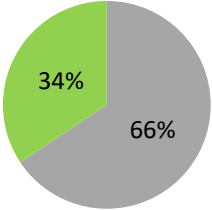
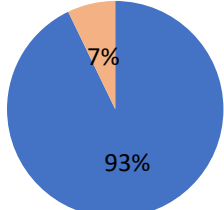
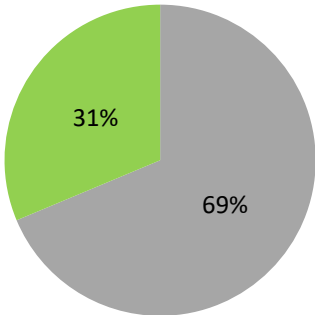
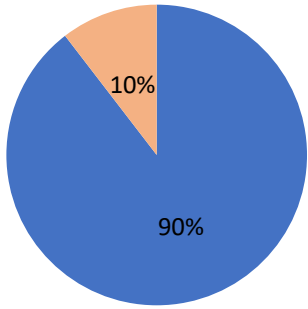
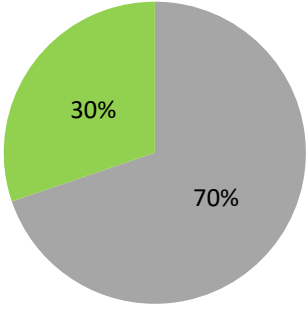
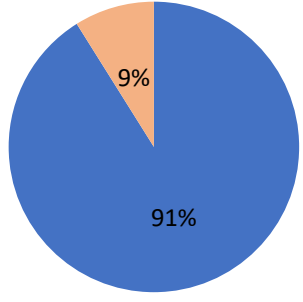
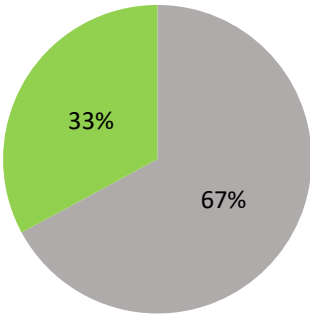
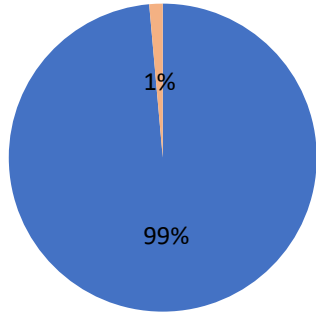
## Quantitative Findings

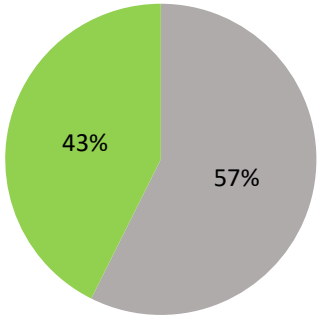
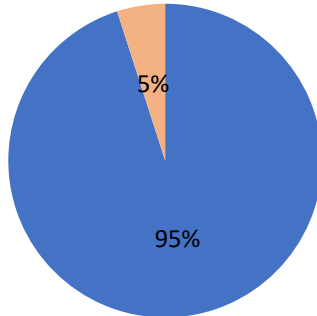
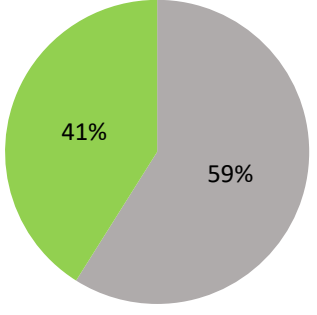
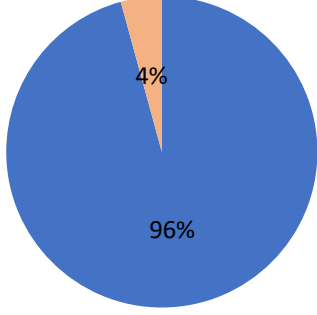
The Excel database houses the data of the sample modules evaluated. The sample was taken based on what modules were running in 2020 when the work began and a full list of these modules is in the Excel database. Below, I have provided a snapshot of representation in core/required reading across Creative Writing, English Literature, English Language and History.



## M and F



Reading	male / female	white / BAME
All subjects required reading.	 <p>66% M 34% F</p>	 <p>93% W 7% BAME</p>
English Literature essential prose/poetry/drama	 <p>69% M 31% F</p>	 <p>90% W 10% BAME</p>
History	 <p>70% M 30% F</p>	 <p>91% W 9% BAME</p>
English Lang	 <p>67% M 33% F</p>	 <p>99% W 1% BAME</p>

English Lit essential theory	 <p>A pie chart with two segments: a green segment representing 43% and a grey segment representing 57%.</p>	 <p>A pie chart with two segments: a large blue segment representing 95% and a small orange segment representing 5%.</p>
Creative Writing	 <p>A pie chart with two segments: a green segment representing 41% and a grey segment representing 59%.</p>	 <p>A pie chart with two segments: a large blue segment representing 96% and a small orange segment representing 4%.</p>

### Qualitative Findings

The difficulties that I encountered in trying to gather statistics on representation based on authors' names alone remind us of the limitations of quantitative data in a study such as this one. I would go so far as to suggest that one of the key findings of this report is that gathering quantitative data to check for representation on a teaching audit simply does not work as there are too many variables: textbooks with multiple authors that aren't included here, inability to identify characteristics based on name alone, to name two. As this report shows, the qualitative aspect of the project was more accurate in its findings and led to more meaningfully reflective practice – as noted in feedback from those colleagues involved. Statistics are good to show where we have imbalances in reading lists, but it tells only a very small, and often misleading part of the story.

## Covid-19

What makes this project valuable, I think, is the qualitative part. We need qualitative data to help us to read the statistics more clearly. We approached all colleagues across Literature, History, Linguistics, and Creative Writing. However, due to the Covid-19 outbreak, and, in part, to the cyber-attack many people could not dedicate time for this interview because of the increased number of caring responsibilities, change to online teaching, and complex working conditions. However, several colleagues did take part and I interviewed eight academics from English literature, five from History, four from Linguistics, and two Creative Writers. I am pleased that as many as nineteen colleagues were willing to give time to this project despite the disruption they faced in 2020. I have removed names of participants to ensure anonymity. When speaking to colleagues, I wanted to understand more about the following issues:

1. What considerations are made when a reading list is assembled?
2. How do you foster an inclusive atmosphere in the classroom?
3. What time is allocated to thinking about EDI issues when you teach?
4. Where does that time come from given how busy academic staff are?

Ultimately, I wanted to encourage reflections on how we choose what to teach and why we make those choices. How we put together what we might call an ‘inclusive’ reading list; or how we ‘decolonise’ teaching, and who has the time and responsibility to do that? From these areas of interest to me I devised the following interview questions and these were approved by the Faculty Director of EDI at the time, Katy Jenkins, and are given in full below:

1. What do you understand by Equality, Diversity and Inclusion?
2. To what extent do you feel it is relevant to think about EDI in relation to the curriculum?



3. Whether and how much do you think about equality and diversity issues before designing your module?
4. How easy is it in your discipline to choose resources that promote awareness of multiculturalism, gender, disability, and class issues/ When you put together a suggested reading, do you try to include male and female authors equally (also queer, trans), different ethnic background?
5. Have you left things out/ put things in your syllabus because they are relevant mostly in terms of equality and diversity issues?
6. How do you treat materials that are part of sources that for some reason have to be taught, but clearly contain racist, sexist, and/or classist elements?
7. Do you consider from whose perspective we are teaching, and to whom our teaching is aimed?
8. What practices do you use in the classroom to create a friendly and inclusive environment?
9. Do you notice an improvement in students' awareness of equality, diversity, and inclusion issues by the end of the module? Can you give some examples?
10. Have you ever made changes to modules in relation to EDI issues, and/or in response to student/staff feedback related to EDI?
11. Do you feel you have enough time dedicated to planning lessons and modules in your workload? Do you have a chance to discuss the modules and overall curriculum with your colleagues?

Two additional questions added after the spring and summer of 2020:

1. How has Covid-19 affected your teaching and students? Can you sense some of the inequalities coming up in working from home?

2. Has the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement made you think of changing your reading list/ teaching material?

## GOOD PRACTICE

Research-led teaching allows colleagues to engage in live debates and respond to EDI issues.

### Findings from the Interviews

The interviews held with colleagues were, from my perspective, very positive experiences and I hope that interviewees found the exercise fruitful. All colleagues interviewed either already work on EDI-related topics, are interested in doing more to incorporate further EDI approaches to their teaching, or a bit of both. All were enthusiastic about the project and mentioned that this study really helped them to ask the difficult but necessary questions about inclusive teaching. Everyone I interviewed was very appreciative of the project and acknowledged the need for a thorough analysis of the curricula. For confidentiality reasons, the report will not use specific quotations by specific persons. Instead, all the responses and recurring points are summarised into two main categories: examples of good practice and next steps.

### **Examples of good practice**

- Colleagues showed a willingness to think about EDI issues, either in modules with an explicit EDI focus, or in attempts to decolonise survey modules and option modules more broadly. This was particularly impressive given the demands on academic staff in 2020.
- In History, new colleagues work on updating inherited reading lists. See module HI5004 as a good example. In general, I had the impression that in History, which, traditionally, may have been male dominated, was very open and enthusiastic about rethinking the discipline from an equality perspective.

- New academic staff are encouraged to prepare and run their own third year module and this helps to allow the space to shape curricula and to think about teaching practice.
- Some colleagues encourage student participation in the classroom by treating students as co-researchers.
- One colleague gave an excellent example of how, in the first lesson, as an icebreaker, he asks students to speak in pairs and to tell each other something unique about their language/ linguistic background. This encourages diverse voices in classroom and helps to put students at ease.
- In English literature, in particular, the use of literary theory provides excellent frameworks for thinking about EDI issues. Several modules are looking closely at gender and race, for example, and students apply critical theory to help think about these issues. Students in English get an excellent introduction to literary theory in their first year on the Concepts in Criticism and Culture (EL4006) module which examines the construction of the literary canon and invites students to consider how our gender, race or class background affect how we value and understand literature and popular culture. As this module is often also taken by Language and Creative Writing students, it is also relevant for these areas. Again, this doesn't reflect in the quantitative data because the Language and Creative Writing data is specific to those subjects. But, students taking joint degrees will access this module too.
- Research-led teaching allows the academic and the student to think more thoroughly about EDI issues.

## GOOD PRACTICE

Lecturers contextualise the Black Lives Matter Movement in their teaching across Humanities.

- There were many comments about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on students and the EDI issues that the pandemic spotlighted. Although this doesn't relate to the curricula, I want to acknowledge colleagues' comments about the University's responsibility for those students particularly disadvantaged by the disparities of experience when living through the pandemic.
- Where possible and appropriate, colleagues have been referring to the efforts of the Black Lives Matter Movement 2020 in their teaching, to raise awareness and to contextualise what is going on in our own cultural moment with teaching that traces the legacies of historic race relations in the Humanities.

### **Next Steps**

- Some colleagues noticed the importance of student-led teaching. If we are teaching predominately working-class students, for example, then we can teach to their lived experience. And this makes the factor of class also pressingly relevant when thinking of intersectionality in EDI.
- Colleagues mentioned the impact of Covid on the precious resource of time. Colleagues suggested that, to recover from the pandemic, we might see more workload hours allocated to updating existing modules, especially given the added administrative tasks that online teaching presented.



### NEXT STEPS

EQUALITY TRAINING ON TALKING  
ABOUT RACE AND GENDER IN THE  
CLASSROOM WOULD BE HELPFUL.

- Some colleagues reported that our student demographic tends to be predominantly from a white working-class background, which makes them somewhat uncomfortable speaking about race. Future EDI work might include training for colleagues on how to encourage students to speak about race. One colleague gave as an example, teaching whiteness as race, not just blackness. But, it is important to note that, despite the above noted re our student demographic, colleagues in Humanities do teach using critical race theory across all subjects and all levels.
- If colleagues are to make EDI considerations to existing and new modules then a focus on teaching excellence alongside research excellent might help to foster this.
- Colleagues commented on the distribution of teaching and suggested that a good exercise going forward might be to analyse the statistics of the volume of teaching across gender and professional grade particularly.

**I have organised the findings above into three main themes:**

1. How reading lists are constructed and how much lecturers think about EDI issues when designing/ updating modules

More Good Practice


In English literature the use of literary theory provides excellent frameworks for thinking about EDI issues. Several modules are looking closely at gender and race, for example, and students apply critical theory to help think about these issues. Concepts in Criticism and Culture (EL4006) examines the construction of the literary canon and invites students to consider how our gender, race or class

MORE TIME TO IN THE WORKLOAD TO UPDATE MODULES WOULD MAKE FOR MORE INCLUSIVE TEACHING.

2. Embodied experience – who are the people teaching, and who are the students and employment conditions – equal opportunities in teaching and research among staff
3. Student representation and recruitment.

**1/ How reading lists are put together and how much do lecturers think about EDI issues when designing/ updating a modules**

Colleagues speak to their research interests in their research-led teaching, particularly in the third year of the degree. The Humanities Department is made up of colleagues who are experts in, what might be considered EDI topics: gender and feminist studies, race and civil rights, holocaust studies, and social linguistics, to name a few. Colleagues in Humanities think carefully about creating reading lists that represent many different voices.

- 
1. READING LISTS
  2. EMBODIED  
EXPERIENCE &  
EMPLOYMENT  
CONDITIONS
  3. STUDENT  
REPRESENTATION  
& RECRUITMENT

In the interview discussions it was noted that there can be a big difference in EDI representation from core modules to option modules and this reflects the teaching specialisms that are fully showcased in the third year of the degree programmes. However, despite the fact that EDI issues are represented well across Humanities modules, this project has been effective at encouraging colleagues to notice that. Some interviewees noted that before taking part in the interviews that they had not consciously thought about the reading list from EDI perspective. They noted that, going forward, they would look

MODULES HAVE BEEN  
REDESIGNED WITH EDI  
IN MIND.

LECTURES IN HUMANITIES THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT CREATING  
READING LISTS THAT REPRESENT MULTIPLE VOICES.

to reading lists (both required and recommended) for good gender balance and non-white representation. An important insight here, I think, is that where colleagues had thought about EDI when devising reading lists they hadn't necessarily considered intersectionality. Might modules on black experience include more female voices? Might modules dedicated to women's writing consider more non-white writers? It is important to note that this project looks at the student provision in the round and some modules, because of their learning outcomes, will be more suited to good EDI representation than others. For example, survey modules are helpful here as the purpose of the survey module is to offer a range of reading across periods and, so, gender and racial representation will be easier to allow for than in a single author study, for example. It is clear that some modules across Humanities have been redesigned in recent years to account for, in one case, African American writing, Native American writing and writing by female authors and intersections across race and gender. The content of research-led teaching is dependant, of course, on academics' areas of research expertise.

## 2/ Embodied Experience and Employment Conditions

Most academics who took part in the interviews said that, with increasing demands on their time, thinking about research-led teaching, renewing reading lists, and talking to colleagues to ensure modules correspond to one another, was difficult. It was also felt that teaching responsibilities are often unequally divided, overburdening some junior colleagues with too

WHO IS IN THE  
CLASSROOM?

much teaching. This reflects again the market economy model to which universities are increasingly subjected, and which focuses heavily on research excellence and being 'marketable' for students, not on actual teaching content. And it highlights the structural inequalities within university hierarchies, which are also matters of EDI. There seems to be

a general feeling that academics are too heavily loaded with administrative tasks and too little time is left for research and teaching. In particular, research is highly valued, and there is this pressure to produce research. This, accordingly, makes it harder to introduce this research into teaching, and it also makes it harder to think about EDI issues within teaching. In short, academics interviewed indicated that an inclusive curriculum cannot exist when there are other inequalities

WHO HAS TIME TO  
AUDIT READING  
LISTS?

within people's workload. The very fact that this project can only run thanks to additional, albeit internal, funding to pay for my hours, shows that there is little time in the workload allocation to allow for reflections such as these. And, of course, to employ a research assistant on a casual contract to do this work speaks to further inequalities.





ONE STUDENT SAID OF A HUMANITIES  
MODULE: “THE READING ON THIS  
MODULE MADE ME FEEL SEEN.”

### **Representation and Recruitment**

I have prepared a recorded presentation on diverse voices in the curriculum to offer as a recruitment tool. I think that this might be helpful to first generation students and students of colour in particular. Some colleagues in the interviews spoke about students, when they engage with critical race theory, speaking about their racial identities. Non-white students have fed back to colleagues on the importance of representation on modules and the positive difference that made to their experiences on the degree programme. Perhaps, hearing a short presentation on the diversity of voices that one can study on Humanities programmes will help all prospective students to feel represented. This, of course, is important for student retention too.

### **Data Snapshot: Some Modules at a Glance**

See the ‘methodological reflections’ section in this report for more details on the limitations of this study and why English Literature and History modules appear to be more suited to a data-driven study than English Language and Creative Writing modules where much of the reading that students rely on is kept in recommended reading that this report doesn’t cover. As such, the modules at a glance are given from two of the four disciplines only but full data on all subjects and modules covered is in the Excel database that you have.

**HI 5004, Affluence and Anxiety, optional**

8	47% male	14	88% white
9	53% female	2	13% BAME

**The Female Experience in Pre-Industrial Europe, L5, opt.** This module is a great example of the presence of women in history. However, it is an optional module which creates the problem that only some students will get to know this side of history. Although women are clearly represented here, the module is *about female experience*, it creates the problem of women being separated to optional modules rather than integrated into the core modules. Also, from representational perspective, the module seems to be entirely white.

3	10% male	31	100% white
28	90% female	0	0% BAME

**HI4008, Making Sense of Historical Concepts, Level 4 Core, 2019**

20	74% male	23	88% white
7	26% female	3	12% BAME

**HI4009, Cultures, Empires, Ideas: Power, Ideology, L5, Core. 2020**

21	88% male	18	78% white
3	13% female	5	22% BAME

HI4008 and HI4009 are connected – the former was redesigned as the latter, with decolonialising aspects in focus. The BAME representation indeed gets stronger, but the representation of women however falls.

**HI6036, Holocaust memory and culture**

9	53% male	13	72% white
8	47% female	5	28% BAME

**EL6044, Writing Fantasy & Science Fiction, Level 6, opt**

23	61% male	34	92% white
15	39% female	3	8% BAME

**EL6013, Violent Femmes, Level 6, opt**

1	6% male	14	88% white
15	94% female	2	13% BAME

**EL6004, Vamps and Virgins, Level 6, optional**

12	55% male	22	100% white
10	45% female	0	0% BAME

**EL4003, Representing the US: From Slavery to Terrorism, Level 4 Core – primary text**

**list**

7	78% male	6	67% white
2	22% female	3	33% BAME

**EL5026, Literary Revolutions, Level 5 Core – primary text**

22	73% male	29	97% white
8	27% female	1	3% BAME

**EL5004, Modernism and Modernity Level 5 Core – primary text list**

8	62% male	11	85% white
5	38% female	2	15% BAME

**EL6018, The Black Atlantic: Literature, Slavery and Race, Level 6 optional – fiction list**

3	33% male	3	33% white
6	67% female	6	67% BAME

**EL6007 Sin, Sex, and Violence: Marlowe in Context, L6, optional – criticism**

10	63% male	16	100% white
6	38% female	0	0% BAME

An excellent module that looks at women's writing in the 17<sup>th</sup> century will be introduced 2021 or 2022 on Aphra Behn. **Writing Women: Aphra Behn in Context (L6) EL6053, to run from the academic year 2022-2023.**

For more information see the Excel table with a detailed information.

## Recommendations

From these points it can be concluded that decolonizing curricula and teaching inclusively is not about simply adding names to reading lists in order to ‘diversify’. Rather, decolonizing begins by looking at who is employed and on what conditions. It is then a long, slow, and difficult process that involves deconstructing the ways in which we think, create reading lists, and teach. It is about noticing our own bodies in the classroom with that body’s background, and the bodies we teach. It is not enough to simply add a few non-white authors to the reading list; it is important to explain why they have not been there before, and why they should be. It is also important that they do not only appear in an optional module on African-American writing, but that they appear at a core module introducing literature. Black Lives Matter (BLM), or rather, the ongoing violence and systematic racism that initiated the movement, shows that these questions continue to be pressing and important. I hope that this project will make a resourceful starting point for the ‘Decolonising the Curriculum Project’ that Dr Edward Anderson will run with a student researcher as part of the ongoing work that the Decolonising Northumbria Network is doing around terminology and decolonising. One of the Athena Swan principles is a commitment to ‘tackling the discriminatory treatment often experienced by trans people’ and I would suggest that this work acts as a starting point to reflect on how we might extend that principle into our teaching content and delivery. I recommend to that the Department invites Dr Kit Heyam to deliver Trans Awareness Training to Humanities to help colleagues inform their teaching delivery: <https://kitheyam.com/training/>. Finally, I recommend, for future work like this, that additional/ recommended reading is considered to provide a more accurate representation of English Language and Creative Writing provision and that studies be limited to one subject at a time to allow for broader strictures that paint a more accurate picture of the inclusive teaching ongoing in the Department.

## Further Reading

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- Brookfield, S. (2017). *Becoming a critically reflective teacher*, (2nd ed.) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
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- Turner, C.S.V., González, J.C., Wood, J.L. (2008, September). 'Faculty of color in academe: What 20 Years of Literature Tells Us.' *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 1 (3), 139-168.

## LIST OF MODULES CONSULTED

### HISTORY

The Making of Contemporary Europe, Level 4 Core, HI4003

A Disunited Kingdom? Level 4 Core, HI4004

From Sea to Shining Sea: US History, Level 4 Core, HI4005

Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe, Level 4 Core, HI4006

Making History, Level 4 Core, HI4007

Making Sense of Historical Concepts, Level 4 Core, 2019, HI4008

Debating History, Level 5, Core, HI5030

Affluence and Anxiety, 2019 Level 5 Optional, HI5004/ Affluence and Anxiety, 2017 Level 5 Optional HI5004  
– I did these to see how after a revision the list is more inclusive

Holocaust, Level 5 Optional, HI5022

Holocaust memory and cultural testimony Lev 5, opt., HI6036

Enlightenment to Empire: France in an Age of Rev, L5, opt, HI5027

Cultures, Empires, Ideas: Power, Ideology, L5, Core. 2020, HI4009

Peace, Love, Understanding, L6, optional, HI6018

The Female Experience in Pre-Industrial Europe, L6, opt., HI5011

African American Freedom Struggle, Level 6, opt, HI6004

Origins of Middle East, Level 5, opt, HI5045

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Understanding English Grammar, Level 4, core, EL4007

Introduction to English Language and Lit, Level 4, core, EL4008

Introduction to Literary Studies, Level 4, core, EL4001

Approaches to Language Study, Level 4, core, EL4009

Language and Society, Level 5, core, EL5013

History of English, Level 5, core, EL5014

English Language Dissertation, Level 6, optional, EL6024

Forensic Linguistics, Level 6, opt, EL6052

Language and Literature, Level 5, core, EL5015

### ENGLISH LITERATURE

Concepts in Criticism and Culture, Level 4, Core, EL4006



Talking Texts, Level 4, Core, EL4016  
Modernism and Modernity, Level 5 Core, EL5004  
Geneses of English Literature, Level 5 optional, EL5005  
Vamps and Virgins, Level 6, optional, EL6004  
Sin, Sex, and Violence: Marlowe in Context, L6, optional, EL6007  
Entertaining Satan, Level 6, optional, EL6023  
21st Century Literature: Writing the Present, Level 6, opt, EL6047  
Violent Femmes, Level 6, opt, EL6013  
Representing the US: From Slavery to Terrorism, Level 4 Core, EL4003  
Introduction to Literary Studies, L4, core, EL4001  
Reading Poetry, Level 4 Core, EL4004  
Gothic Stories: Nineteenth Century to the Present, Level 4 Core, EL4017  
Early Modern Cultures, Level 5 Core, EL5003  
Literary Revolutions, Level 5 Core, EL5026  
The Black Atlantic: Literature, Slavery and Race, Level 6 optional, EL6018

CREATIVE WRITING (many overlap with English Lit, and some with English language)

Story, Level 4, Core, EL4014  
Creative and Critical Practice, Level 4, Core, EL4014  
Creative Reflection, Level 5, Core, EL5021  
Thinking About Voice, Level 5, Core, EL5022  
Working with Structure, Level 5, Core, EL5023  
Writing Fantasy & Science Fiction, Level 6, opt, EL6044  
Advanced Creative Writing, Level 6, opt, EL6046