Broaden my Bookshelf: working with the University of Huddersfield SU to tackle the attainment gap

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What is Broaden My Bookshelf?
How did it come about?
The story so far: 2018/9
The publicity
The challenges
What next?
What is Broaden my Bookshelf?

• Inspired by “Why is my Curriculum White?” movement
• An initiative to increase the range of authors represented in the University of Huddersfield Library
• Delivered in collaboration with the Students’ Union
• Supported by the SU’s BAME Ambassadors
How did Broaden my Bookshelf come about?

- 2017: Establishment of the University of Huddersfield’s BAME Ambassador Scheme
- Reading list audit: average reading list had between 3% - 6% of authors from a BAME background
- 2018: SU and the Library started working together to diversify library collections
- Broaden My Bookshelf launched in October 2018
Who’s who in the SU?
Closing the Gap

“It’s important to know that BAME attainment is not solely a BAME issue. It’s a university-wide problem, and it shouldn’t just be left to the BAME community to fix.”

Adesewa, University of Huddersfield

Universities UK (2019)
The story so far - 2018

- Asked staff and students to suggest new books for the library
- Initially focussed on BAME authors
- Director of CLS promised us £20,000 to spend!
- Shared reading lists with BAME ambassadors
Planned a week of activities in October 2018 (Black History Month)

- Daily readings at lunchtime (BAME Ambassadors and library staff)
- Black HERstory feature: Dr. Shola Mos-Shogbamimu
- Panel debate: why is my curriculum white and how do I change it?
- Black History Month themed Wikipedia Editathon
- BAME Ambassadors: developing diverse reading lists
Broaden My Bookshelf Request Form

Book title…………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Author………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Do you think this book should be added to any of your reading lists? If so, add the module code

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Your name……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Student number……………………………………………………………………………………………..

Your course……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

We may use your details to contact you about this later on. Is that ok?

Yes / No

https://library.hud.ac.uk/pages/broadenmybookshelf/
The story so far - 2019

- Relaunch in February 2019 (LGBT History Month) to encompass books by and about LGBT+ people
- New publicity and postcard launched
- Black History Month activities
  - Panel debate: Tackling the BAME attainment gap together
  - Outreach stands in all seven schools of the university
  - Inclusive Curriculum Forum for lecturers
Does your science course teach you about diseases that are more common in people of African descent like sickle cell anaemia?

What diverse topics would you like to learn about?

Give us your ideas on what can be done to diversify the curriculum and remove the BAME attainment gap...
Publicity

Panel Debate

Tackling the BAME attainment gap together

Like most UK universities, the University of Huddersfield has a BAME student attainment gap. Steps have been taken to reduce this gap, e.g. the creation of a volunteer BAME Ambassadors Scheme, the reading list audit, campaigns such as Broaden My Bookshelf, but it is just a drop in the ocean and there is still much work to be done to diversify the curriculum and help students to feel represented within their course.

Attend this debate and hear the answers to challenging questions as to how we can reduce the gap, diversify the curriculum, plus have a wider range of texts by BAME authors in reading lists. If you have a question you would like the panel to answer, email us at su.campaigns@hud.ac.uk
Challenges

- Poor turnout:
  - Wikipedia Editathon
  - Developing diverse reading list sessions
- Publicity hiccups
- Communication with SU
- Working with the BAME Ambassadors
- Whose responsibility is it to diversify reading lists?
Successes

- Keynote – inspired us to be activists in whatever we do
- Panel question time – great questions and contributions from BAME students
- Great response from students and staff in terms of book suggestions
- 251 books bought to date, of which 93 have been borrowed more than once
- The most popular book (Milk and Honey by Rupi Kaur) has already been borrowed 13 times
What next for Broaden my Bookshelf?

- Keep the momentum going with reminding students and staff to keep suggesting books
- Continuing advocacy with lecturers to broaden their reading lists
- Author reading and Q&A session in February/March
- LGBT poetry event
- Sub group of UTLC looking at diversity in curriculum
Any questions?

- Email: a.sharman@hud.ac.uk
- Tel: 01484 472700


McGuinn, K. (2020) Broaden My Bookshelf: working with the University of Huddersfield SU to tackle the attainment gap. *ALISS Quarterly*(15)2, 3-5.

• Williams, L (2019, August 12). Broaden My Bookshelf – Diversifying the Library. https://cla.co.uk/blog/higher-education/broaden-my-bookshelf