

Piecing Together the Puzzle of Learning: A Reflective Step Forward for Inclusive Medical Education

How one Student Success session inspired over 200 GP educators to think differently about student success, equity, cultural sensitivity, and compassionate teaching

“What does it mean to educate for the future?”

That’s the question Dr Yetunde Kolajo invited more than 200 GP educators to explore during her interactive session at the 2025 Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS) and Primary Care Training Hub Educators’ Conference. Her talk, *“Piecing Together the Puzzle of Learning - Educating For The Future”* didn’t just resonate; it inspired a collective shift in thinking.

Held at the Ashford International Hotel on 3rd April 2024, the conference focused on *Empowering the Multi-Professional Workforce of the Future*. For Student Success at the University of Kent, it was an ideal opportunity to contribute meaningfully to conversations about student success, inclusion, equity, and educational transformation in clinical settings.

Dr Kolajo, a Research Associate for Student Success, delivered a session that combined research, reflection, and real-world relevance. Through reflective thinking and questions, she helped educators consider how diverse learner experiences, particularly those of International Medical Graduates (IMGs) can be better understood, supported, and included in learning environments.

The session wasn’t just timely, it was strategic. It directly supports the University of Kent’s **Access and Participation Plan (APP)**, which sets out bold commitments to closing equity gaps in higher education. Student Success plays a key role in delivering this plan, translating institutional goals into teaching practice.

Dr Kolajo’s talk embodies the Student Success ethos: bridging research and pedagogy and translating insight into impact. By working with GP educators, she helps extend the university’s commitment to a student-centric agenda and equity well beyond the classroom.

From Reflection to Action: What Educators Took Away

Educators engaged deeply with a model of reflective practice grounded in the *Pre-action, In-action, and Post-action* reflection framework (Schön, 1983; Ghaye, 2011). This gave them practical tools to become more self-aware and learner-focused in their teaching.

Here's what participants said they learned:

- Greater awareness of the **unique challenges faced by IMGs**
- The importance of **compassionate and culturally responsive teaching**
- How to **balance pastoral and academic roles** in busy clinical environments
- Understanding **cultural differences** and how they shape learning behaviours
- The power of **reflecting during and after teaching interactions**

One educator shared, when asked about the *‘three significant insights gained that could meaningfully shape their future approach as a GP educator*, they said:

“1. Understand the social and personal challenges 2. To give them equal opportunities 3. Be empathetic.”

Looking Ahead

Student Success will continue to support cross-sector partnerships that amplify student success and inclusive practice. As Dr. Kolajo's session shows, when we combine theory, reflection, and lived experience, we can create profound change, one learning encounter at a time.

“The puzzle of learning is complex, but when we listen deeply, reflect honestly, and teach inclusively, we begin to see how the pieces fit.”

– Dr Yetunde Kolajo

Want to Learn More?

Explore the University of Kent's [Access and Participation Plan](#) or get involved in Student Success initiatives by contacting studentsuccess@kent.ac.uk.



Focus Topic 2: Piecing Together The Puzzle of Learning - Educating For The Future

At this conference, Dr. Kolajo will deliver an engaging and thought-provoking session on EDI in healthcare education, exploring systemic challenges, barriers to learning, and innovative approaches to fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment for students and trainees. Her session will incorporate interactive elements, case studies, and insights from recent research to challenge and inspire educators to rethink inclusivity in healthcare training programs.

Speaker Bio: Dr. Yetunde Kolajo

Dr. Yetunde Kolajo is a dedicated educator, researcher, and advocate for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in higher education. As a Research Associate at the University of Kent, she plays a pivotal role in shaping institutional policies and strategies that promote student success, with a particular focus on addressing disparities faced by Black and minoritised students. Dr. Kolajo leads initiatives that explore the intersection of teaching practices and student engagement, examining sector-wide and institutional barriers to equitable attainment, progression, and continuation.

Her research spans science education, pedagogical innovation, and inclusive teaching practices, with a strong emphasis on self-regulated learning, active learning, and student engagement in assessment and feedback. She is particularly interested in how educators' pedagogical choices influence critical thinking and student success. Her ongoing research investigates the impact of visual representation in lecture slide images on student engagement, particularly for racially minoritised students in STEM disciplines. She is also involved in research on diversifying and decolonising the physics undergraduate curriculum.



15