



Diversify your cohort using digital avatars

House Keeping

- Follow the slides on a second device/screen using the code at the top of your screen
- Heart if I make you laugh
- Thumbs up if it is interesting
- Thumbs down if you can't hear me
- Questions in the chat please
- You will need somewhere to take notes



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Session Outcomes

- The AA avatars, their creation and deployment
- How to develop your own avatars
- Ideas for deployment in other scenarios
- How these 'Avatars' can increase inclusion and diversity



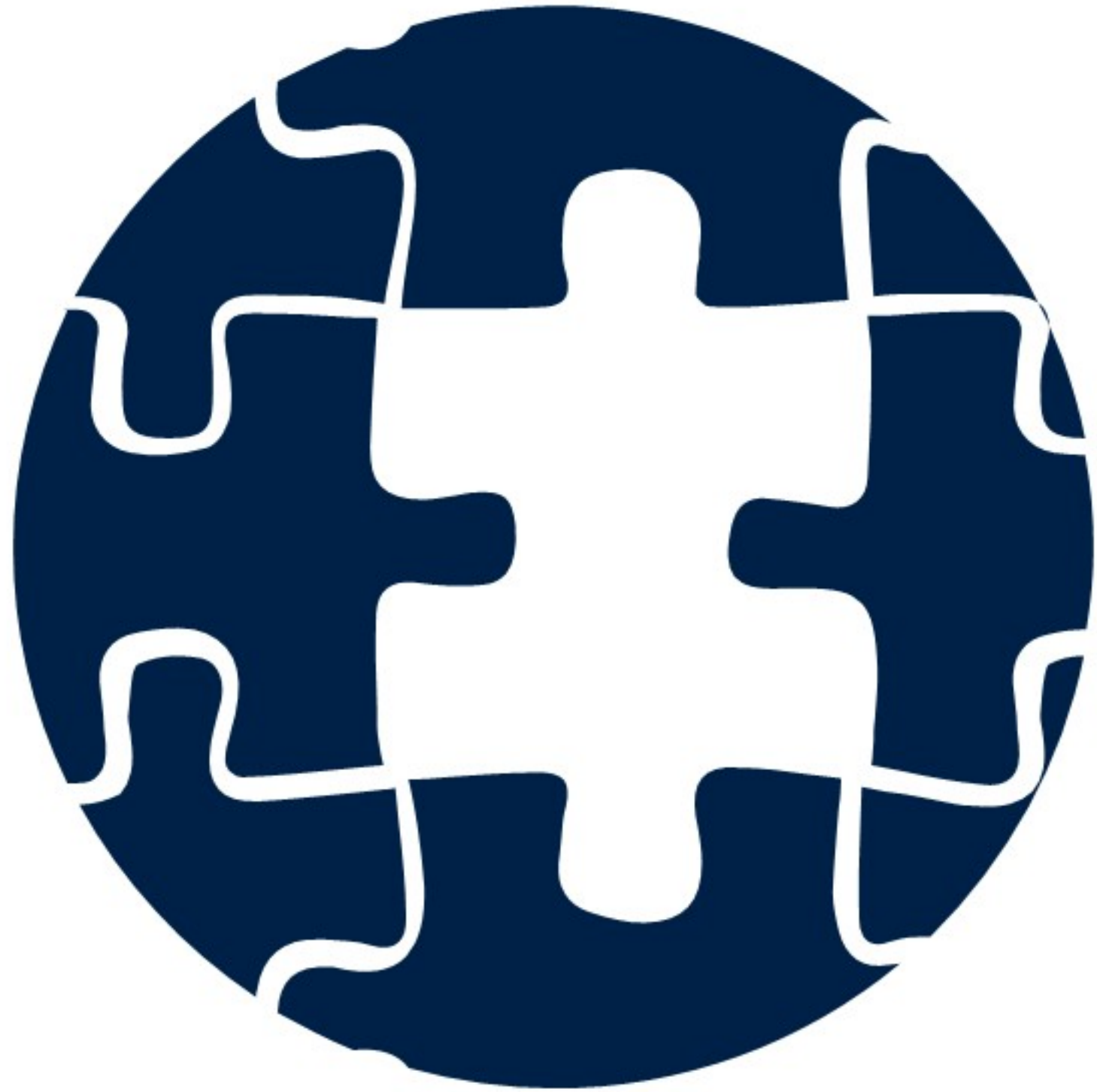
Focus on
Your Future



What is AA?

- AA is a non-credit bearing short course
- Supports students to decide on, and plan for their professional future
- Bespoke for different faculties.





What does inclusion mean to you?

Take a second to think about that – and write it down.



"Widening participation in medicine in the UK can be seen as actively recruiting under-represented students into a system in which they are likely to face discrimination, harassment, and systematic educational disadvantage."



“the intersections of race and gender only highlights the need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed.”



"significant benefit is derived from the presence of people who identify as LGBTQ+ . Not by explicit teaching, but by the inherent challenge to homophobia their inclusion facilitates"





Imperial College Council



Are we diverse?

1
Yes

5
No



Scientist



Careers
consultant



Teacher/learning
designer



Linguist/project
manager



Project manager

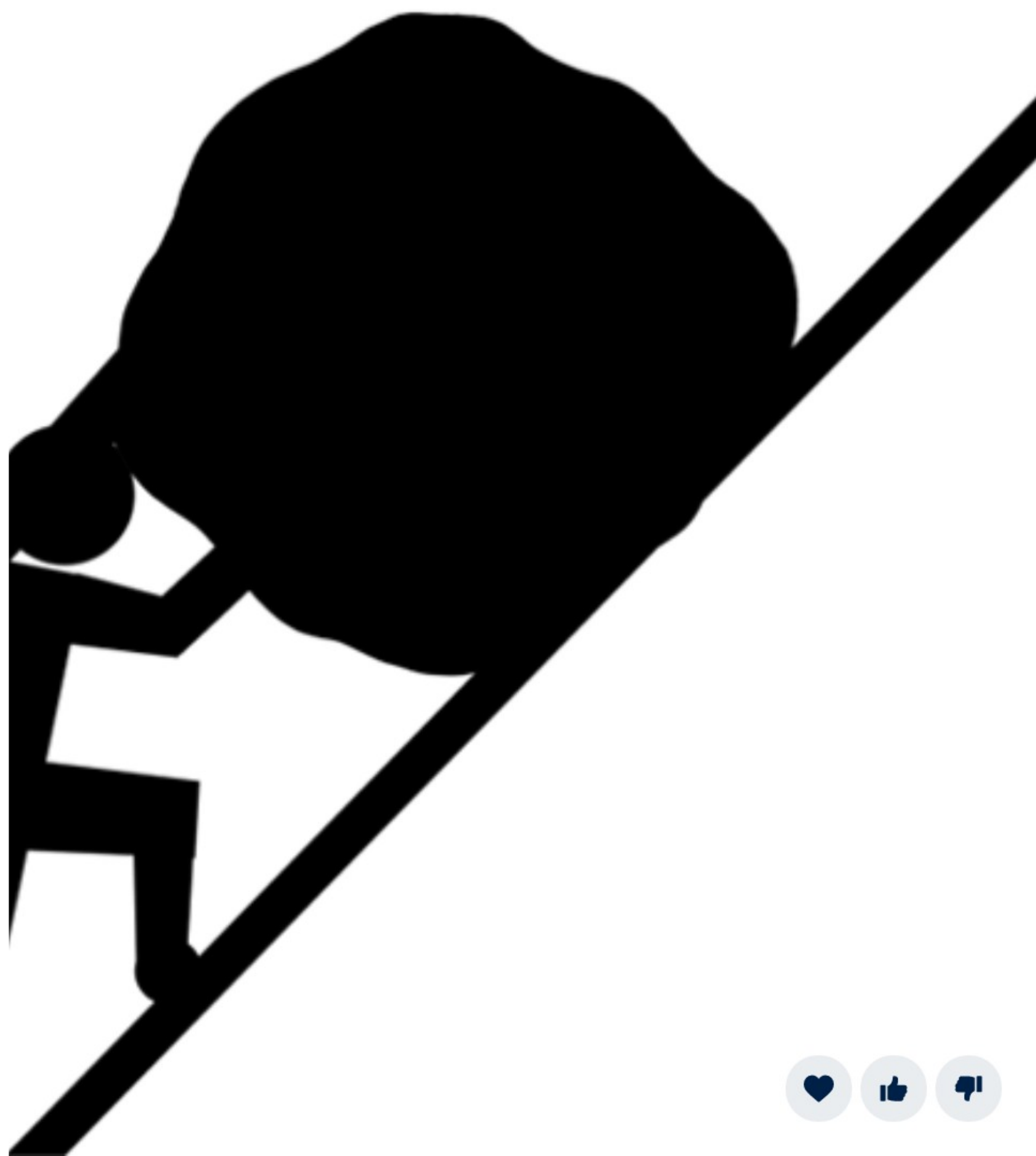
AWKWARD!

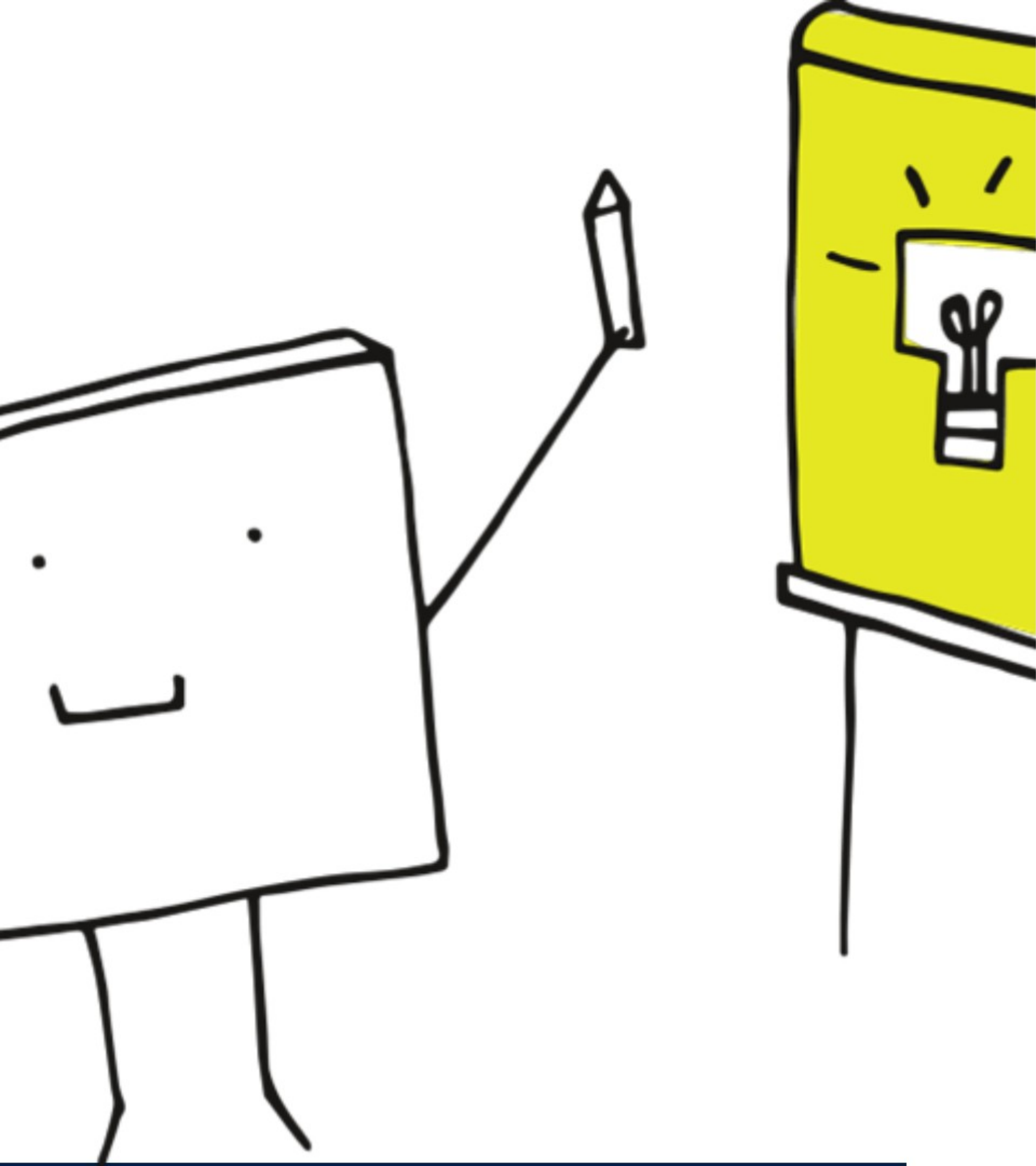
That was not a comfortable question to answer was it?



We can't change any of this

- Most of us have limited ability to affect change at a high level
- But we can check our privilege





**We can change the
content we deliver**



What is a persona?

- Typical in UX design
- Based on existing users and how they interact
- Context specific





Student diversity at Imperial

- Total student body – 40% female : 60% male
- Postgraduate medicine – 64% female : 36% male
- Nationality
 - Total student body – 34% UK : 16% Chinese
 - Postgraduate medicine – 50% UK : 12% Chinese (87 countries represented)

Is this enough data to make decisions?



0
yes

13
no

What diversity should be included?

ethnicity

gender

Neurodiversity

Gender

class

Cultural background

Whatever they feel helps to identify them

Nationality

LGBTQ

What diversity should be included?

caring responsibilities

learning style

Disability

Learning styles

Age

age

do they work

Socio-economic background

Age, ethnicity, class etc NOT learning style

What diversity should be included?

Preferences

First Language

NOT learnign style

Not sure they have typical backgrounds and what makes them different varies. If we produce a 'mean' student then some will still feel excluded

Can the avatar be a an animal or an object rather than a person

Uncertainty and they are looking for clarity

Can we give them a name that isn't a real name

Creating a physical representation of the course - a spokesperson (or thing) maybe a rainbow unicorn (I teach advertising)



Your Avatar

- How old are they?
- What course are they studying? (PG, UG, FT, PT)
- Where are they? Online, face-to-face, blended, on campus, commuting, workplace based etc
- Family situation - just left home, first in family, caring responsibilities, international



Persona development

This is where we started from:
Who are they – age, background, etc

Goals

Frustrations

Motivations

Expectations

Preferences

BIO: Name: Alan Age: 22/23 - Alan "thinks" he wants to study for a PhD. - He particularly enjoys his subject matter and is academically inclined. - Beyond studying for a PhD, Alan has no concrete ideas of other options that may be available to him. - Alan moved directly from UG study to a MRes at the University of Essex but was unsatisfied with course so has transferred to IC. - Alan is both excited and anxious about joining IC. - Some days Alan is fully confident in his decision making about his future path but on other days, much less so. - There is a potential risk of difficulties with research requirements becoming overbearing and anxiety inducing.																			
GOALS: To achieve a PhD – but no goals beyond that.	FRUSTRATIONS: - That he has "wasted time" studying an MRes at University of Essex - Funding challenges - Lack of time																		
MOTIVATIONS: <table><tr><th></th><th>LOW</th><th>HIGH</th></tr><tr><td>Incentive</td><td></td><td>X</td></tr><tr><td>Fear</td><td></td><td>X</td></tr><tr><td>Growth</td><td>X</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Confidence</td><td>X</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Social</td><td></td><td>X</td></tr></table>			LOW	HIGH	Incentive		X	Fear		X	Growth	X		Confidence	X		Social		X
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EXPECTATIONS: <table><tr><td>Digital</td><td>X</td><td>Non-Digital</td></tr></table>		Digital	X	Non-Digital															
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PREFERENCES: <table><tr><td>Guidance</td><td>X</td><td>Autonomy</td></tr><tr><td>Personal Devel</td><td>X</td><td>Award</td></tr></table>		Guidance	X	Autonomy	Personal Devel	X	Award												
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Personal Devel	X	Award																	





Your Avatar

- What does your student want to achieve?
- What frustrates them?
- What motivates them?
- What are their expectations?





Then there were 4

Well three actually – Alan, Rumi and Chris
Then we decided to use them as part of the course and they
became the AA Avatars!





Now there are 8



“
52% of students said studying helped
with their sense of confidence and
identity.

– Katie Lister - Open University



Your turn

Share the persona you've created with your group. Discuss ideas for expanding them, including what their motivations are, their concerns and any other challenges they may face.

5 minutes





Name: Chris Deaks

Age: 26

Course: MSc Immunology

Bio

After graduation, Chris joined a Graduate Scheme in a large organisation but realised the organisation did not align with this values and has decided to return to study.

He is reasonably effective at decision making but thinks he is better than he actually is.

Chris is anxious about returning to education.

Goals

- To secure employment or a better position, potentially on a different, still unknown, career path

Frustrations

- Concern re. loss of salary
- Lack of time especially with additional commitments

Motivations

	Low	-----	High
Knowing exactly what sort of job he'd like to do (confidence)		-----X-----	
Concern about what comes after university studies (fear)		-----X-----	
Seeking opportunities to develop and learn (growth)		-----X-----	

Back Story

- Careers content made it easy - you can write a history into a CV
- The avatars narrate our content
- The provide 'exemplars'
- They ask our students questions

What's in a name?

Chris, Chris, Charlie, Rumi, Fola, Lydia, Jarod, Theo, Alan, Adrian



How can they be utilised?

For our degree it would be useful as practice of interpersonal skills

Using them for decolonising the curriculum

Ask students to create their own avatar to recognise privilege

For sessions I run with staff on curriculum design

EDI in the curriculum

Also with COVID it would allow social contact outside of their bubbles

What did you enjoy most about creating an avatar?



What did you find most challenging?



Conclusions

- These are just ideas
- Every course – like every student is different so you will need to adapt
- You can use them just for planning, they don't need to be embedded
- Let me know how you get on and tell me about your personas

And if you get to the point we have with wanting to go out drinking with these imaginary people... seek help.

