



# Promoting Cohesion, Challenging Expectations

Educating the teachers of tomorrow for race  
equality and diversity in 21st century schools

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# ESCalate Themed Funding: Teacher Educators for the 21st Century Grant Project Final Report

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## HEADLINE SUMMARY

Survey evidence suggests that newly qualified teachers tend to feel relatively ill-prepared to engage with pupils of BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) heritage or to respond to potentially challenging issues related to race equality in schools. Of key concern is how the teaching work force - predominantly white, monolingual, female and middle class - can be enabled to be more effective and culturally competent in teaching an increasingly diverse pupil population in terms of ethnicity, culture, language and economics. Preparing teachers to support schools' role in promoting social cohesion remains of vital relevance in a period of increasing austerity and social change.

A research team from the University of Edinburgh and Manchester Metropolitan University interviewed 31 lecturers involved in teacher education in Scotland and England, to find out how they are dealing with race equality issues. The findings echo previous research in this field and carry some important lessons for the future:

- i. There remains a need to pursue measures to increase the recruitment and retention of BME students and lecturers in ITE (Initial Teacher Education);
- ii. Lecturer awareness and confidence to engage with race equality issues can vary significantly between individuals, partly in relation to experience;
- iii. Labour constraints operating in teacher education restrict the capacity of lecturers to engage with race equality issues in sufficient depth;
- iv. Staff development should provide opportunities for lecturers to reflect with colleagues on complex issues of race in/equality and their intersectionality with social class, gender, cultural and linguistic diversity and disability;
- v. Race equality should be embedded across the ITE curriculum, rather than focused on discrete units or elements of programmes;
- vi. Policy makers and HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) providing ITE and CPD (Continuing Professional Development) should review their policies and practices in relation to promoting race equality in teacher education.

*It's a very tip-toe subject and we all tip-toe around it, I'm sure that probably is part of it and Ofsted, I'm sure, tip-toe around it, a load of mainly white people tip-toeing around a race issue... (Female lecturer, Primary)*

*[Student teachers are] not prepared, or even empowered to challenge the implicit assumptions which constitute passive, institutional racism and how it impacts on the educational opportunities of the Black youngsters in their schools. (Lander 2011: 362)<sup>1</sup>*

## BACKGROUND

The 2010 TDA (Training and Development Agency for Schools) survey of Newly Qualified Teachers<sup>2</sup> in England, reported that in response to the question: 'How good was your training in preparing you to teach learners from minority ethnic backgrounds?', 43% of primary and 44% of secondary NQTs (Newly Qualified Teachers) answered 'good or very good'. There are number of important caveats about the interpretation of this data - for example around how the question is understood in relation to experience, the response rate, and variations between types of course and training provider – nevertheless they are often seen as representing a broad indicator of expressions of NQT confidence in their training. Whilst these ratings have improved from 29% for primary and 32% for secondary in 2003, they remain relatively low in comparison to other aspects of teacher training. For example, 84% of primary NQTs and 87% of secondary NQTs rated the overall quality of their training as good or very good in 2010.

### Previous research

There have been a few studies of race and ethnicity which have explored teacher attitudes, and the impact of these attitudes on teacher behaviour in the classroom (Pearce 2003 and 2006<sup>3</sup>; Gaine 2001<sup>4</sup>) together with some more general studies of teacher educators' perceptions of social justice (Arshad *et al* 2008<sup>5</sup>). While there is new data emerging on how teacher education courses are addressing issues of race, there is a need for greater knowledge of teacher educators' understanding of issues of race; and how race and race equality are being embedded into teacher education. Previous studies have shown that race equality is addressed in a minimalist way (Wilkins and Lall, 2010)<sup>6</sup> and that many teacher education

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courses generally devote only a single session to race equality issues (op cit). Bhopal, Harris and Rhamie (2009)<sup>7</sup> suggest that lack of knowledge and expertise in relation to race, diversity and inclusion may be an issue for teacher educators.

Other research suggests that teacher attitudes can be critical in influencing how they work with diverse pupil populations and deal with issues such as race, sexual orientation or class differences within their pedagogy and practice of teaching and learning (Cline *et al*, 2002<sup>8</sup>; Cooper, 2003<sup>9</sup>; Arshad *et al*, 2005<sup>10</sup>).

Lander's (2008<sup>11</sup>) exploration of the racialised perceptions of white students teachers who are preparing to teach in secondary schools, revealed the tendency of the students in her study to 'other' Black and minority ethnic pupils. Data from student and tutor interviews showed the inadequacy of their initial preparation to deal with the 'scary' situations associated with race issues in school. Davies and Crozier (2006)<sup>12</sup> surveyed ITE providers and found that most institutions responding to the survey had policies relating to equality and diversity, but there was inconsistency in how these related to ITE. The study pointed to variations in how diversity - in terms of race, class, cultural and linguistic diversity etc - was addressed. There was a limited focus on the impact of racism or what it meant to work in predominantly white contexts; whilst race and ethnicity was often considered in terms of EAL (English as an Additional Language) provision for pupils. Perceived constraints to tackling diversity issues included lack of time and school-based mentors limited expertise, or the nature of the geographic context. Davies and Crozier make a number of recommendations including the need to give a higher profile to diversity issues; to avoid tokenism; and for trainees to be enabled to see the relevance of race and ethnicity to them, regardless of where they will be teaching.

Flintoff *et al* (2008<sup>13</sup>) studied the experiences of minority ethnic Physical Education trainee students. They assert the need for research that addresses white trainees' experiences of race and ethnicity issues as part of their training, as they recognise the importance of both white and minority ethnic teachers' ability to challenge stereotyping and discrimination. This issue was also highlighted in research by Roberts, where data showed evidence of unwitting racism amongst white trainees;

and data from an evaluation of a pilot project to support trainees to work in challenging schools, showed that white trainees did not feel they had adequate input in dealing with diversity issues (Roberts, 2005; Basit, Kenward and Roberts, 2005; Basit, Roberts *et al* 2006<sup>14</sup>).

The implication of this for HEIs and other teacher education programmes is that they should review their provision in relation to diversity and equality issues. A key starting point remains the need to recognise the reality and persistence of racism in education:

*There is a substantial corpus of evidence to indicate that discrimination on an individual and institutional level is still experienced in the teaching profession, and that the perceptions and realities of this impacts on the recruitment and retention of BME trainees (McNamara et al, 2009:19)<sup>15</sup>*

There is considerable support in the literature for the view that promoting race equality in teacher education requires further progress in the recruitment and retention of BME lecturers and student teachers (Zeichner, 2009<sup>16</sup>; Siraj-Blatchford 1993<sup>17</sup>). Wilkins and Lall (2011)<sup>18</sup> point to the importance of peer support networks for BME students in achieving this. A number of authors have highlighted the significance of lecturer ethnicity, for example in recognising the value of the contributions of BME lecturers and the importance of enabling white student teachers to reflect on their own racial positioning (Kohli 2009<sup>19</sup>, Housee 2008<sup>20</sup>, Smith and Lander 2011<sup>21</sup>). Christine Sleeter (2004<sup>22</sup>) has argued strongly that better education for white teachers is an insufficient response to racism, and that strategies to recruit more BME teachers are essential to progress. In part this can be seen as a response to a perceived failure of the notion of 'permeation', where race equality is assumed to be promoted across the ITE curriculum, in the absence of a sufficiently rigorous approach to support this:

*Permeation as a strategy for understanding race issues needs to be written out of course aims (if it ever existed). There needs to be planned, frank yet sensitive discussion around the issues of multiculturalism and antiracism which allows students in schools and universities to explore their own attitudes and beliefs ... Jones (1999: 153)<sup>23</sup>*

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A number of authors drawing on insights from critical race theory have framed the issues in terms of a study of 'whiteness'. Picower (2009)<sup>24</sup> for example, found that white student teachers employed a range of strategies to resist change or protect themselves against challenges:

*Understanding how these tools of Whiteness protect dominant and stereotypical understandings of race can advise teacher education programs how to better organize to transform the ideologies of White teachers.*

Writing in a US context, Ullucci and Battey (2011: 1207)<sup>25</sup> propose the following goals for teacher education activities aimed at developing 'colour consciousness' in white pre-service teachers:

- (1) *Challenging neutrality on the part of White teachers by racializing Whiteness;*
- (2) *Validating the experiences and perspectives of people of color;*
- (3) *Naming racist educational practices and developing a race-conscious repertoire;*
- (4) *Challenging neutrality in policy and seeing institutional racism.*

However, working within a mainly white English teacher education setting, Vini Lander (2011:364)<sup>26</sup> has proposed a focus on exploring identities as a way into these issues:

*Perhaps a starting point may be to examine the notion of identity and how this influences opportunities and achievements. This may be a more 'palatable' and less contentious way to examine race and other issues related to identity. Teacher education needs to develop a framework for supporting student teachers beyond their initial training and into their first and subsequent years as teachers to revisit and analyse issues related to race, culture and ethnicity.*

The present study draws on critical multiculturalism, whiteness studies and critical race theory (May 1999<sup>27</sup>; Howard 2004<sup>28</sup>; Leonardo 2005)<sup>29</sup>. The research team were cognisant of the need to avoid assumptions that homogenise BME or white teacher educators' experiences. McCarthy (2003)<sup>30</sup> signals the dangers of whiteness studies where the operationalization of whiteness does not take

account of issues of class, gender and sexuality; one does not gain an insight into how the social world feeds into the educational context:

*...you cannot understand race by studying race alone. You cannot understand the social, cultural, or political behaviour (sic) of any group by looking at the putative racial location to the exclusion of a more complex examination of their social biographies and the complex and constantly changing social context of the modern world in which we live.*  
(McCarthy, 2003:132)

Our approach therefore takes account of intersectionality in teacher educators' (and their trainees') multiple identities.

### **The Scottish Context**

The profile of the Scottish teaching force in relation to ethnicity has remained fairly constant for several years, with approximately 2.3% of teachers from non-UK white backgrounds and 1.6% from other minority ethnic groups covering UK and non UK.<sup>31</sup> Visible minority ethnic teachers represent 0.6 per cent of the workforce.<sup>32</sup> The reason offered for this low percentage is that minority ethnic teachers have not, on average, been in service as long as white Scots.

In contrast, the diversity of the Scottish pupil population has increased. In 2007, there were 138 different languages reported as being the main home language from pupils attending Scottish schools with 15,411 pupils identified as having English as an Additional Language. This figure rose to 22,740 in 2010,<sup>33</sup> when 5.4% of pupils were recorded as minority ethnic. However minority ethnic pupils are unevenly spread throughout the country with some areas and some schools having a considerably higher percentage of minority ethnic pupils.

Research in Scotland to date (Arshad and Diniz 1999<sup>34</sup>; Arshad *et al* 2005<sup>35</sup>) has shown that a considerable number of teachers in Scotland remain uncomfortable with engaging with issues related to racial differences and racism; and that pupils find that teachers have an under-appreciation of the impact of everyday racism on pupils (Caulfield, Hill and Shelton 2005)<sup>36</sup>. Research elsewhere within the UK paints a similar picture (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland 2003<sup>37</sup>).

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## The Policy Context: England

Initial teacher education for BME students should be considered partly in relation to the broader undergraduate experience of BME students. In 2010 a Hefce study<sup>38</sup> reported:

*a large difference between the different ethnic groups in the proportion of young final-year students awarded a first or upper second class degree. White finalists had a rate 25 percentage points higher than the rate for Black finalists, and 20 percentage points higher than Pakistani and Bangladeshi finalists. Some, but not all, of these differences can be explained by the differing profiles of the students.*

Despite recent increases in recruitment of teachers from minority ethnic groups, the teaching profession continues to be predominantly white. The 2011 DfE (Department for Education) School Workforce Survey<sup>39</sup> showed that 24% of compulsory school age pupils were of BME heritage (in January 2010), compared to 11% of classroom teachers in publicly funded schools in England (in November 2010); and concluded that:

*the key issue surrounding BME teachers was one of under-representation compared with the pupils they taught, irrespective of school sector or teacher grade (p43)*

In England the BME population tends to be more concentrated in certain urban areas, with the effect that the term 'minority ethnic' does not adequately reflect the complexity of current demographic trends. These trends were highlighted in a recent news report<sup>40</sup>:

*London as a whole now has an ethnic minority dominated secondary school system... and the figure reaches 67% in inner London. This is also true of a small number of other towns and cities with large ethnic minorities, notably Slough (64%), Leicester (58%), Birmingham (52%) and Luton (51%). Manchester and Bradford are not far behind with 43%.*

In some respects, issues of diversity and equality arguably took a greater prominence in political and education contexts under the Blair government, with key policy drivers requiring schools to address discrimination and community cohesion. In a highly publicised government curriculum review, Ajegbo, Kiwant and Sharma (DfES 2007: 29)<sup>41</sup> argued that:

*Exploring and understanding their own and others' identities is fundamental to education for diversity, essential as pupils construct their own interpretations of the world around them and their place within that world. All pupils need to feel engaged and committed to a wider multiethnic society; they need also to feel included and respected.*

Schools do have a duty to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different groups, under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002, introducing a duty on the governing bodies of maintained schools to promote community cohesion. Official guidance on community cohesion included within the definition provided, the goal of (DCSF, 2007)<sup>42</sup>: '...working toward... a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all'.

However under the Coalition government from May 2010, there has been a noticeable reversal of this policy trend, and a 'persistent absence' of race in government discourse on education (Tomlinson, 2011)<sup>43</sup>. For example, Ofsted's 'Framework for the inspection of initial teacher education 2008–11'<sup>44</sup> included an evaluation of how well ITE providers met recruitment targets for specific groups; and how well the provider 'promotes equality of access and opportunity, eliminates any harassment and unlawful discrimination'. However in October 2010, the Coalition government announced a review of Ofsted's remit, explicitly excluding the duty to inspect schools performance in promoting community cohesion (Guardian, 2010)<sup>45</sup>. (It remains to be seen whether a similar change in their inspection regime for ITE will follow). Also in October 2010 the Training and Development Agency for Schools announced that funding for initiatives to increase recruitment of BME teachers would cease and that ITE providers were no longer required to meet specific targets for BME recruitment. An article in the TES<sup>46</sup> reported that:

*The percentage of new trainees in England from BME backgrounds slipped to 11.2 per cent in 2009/10, down from 11.6 per cent in 2008/09, and the TDA has previously promised to "make progress" to reverse this.*

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The cessation of funding for the excellent Multiverse website is also unfortunate in this context. To take another example, the Core Standards for Qualified Teacher Status that all Newly Qualified Teachers in England must meet by the end of their Induction period, have since 2007 included a reference to ethnicity, diversity and equality<sup>47</sup>:

*Q18: Understand how children and young people develop and that the progress and well-being of learners are affected by a range of developmental, social, religious, ethnic, cultural and linguistic influences.*

*Q19: Know how to make effective personalised provision for those they teach, including those for whom English is an additional language or who have special educational needs or disabilities, and how to take practical account of diversity and promote equality and inclusion in their teaching.*

However, in March 2011 the DfE announced a review of the core standards for teachers, and a new set of standards were published in October 2011 which will take effect from September 2012. These new standards make no mention of ethnicity, diversity and equality, referring instead to promoting the achievement of ‘pupils of all backgrounds’ and ‘those with English as an additional language’; alongside ‘tolerance of those with different faiths’.

### **Project Background: a concluding comment**

It is therefore critical that those who educate future teachers have an appreciation of equality issues in general, but also the specifics as related to diversities in ethnicity, colour, language, religion and belief. To effectively assist student teachers to consider, understand and embed issues of racial equality and racism, teacher educators need to be pro-active in raising the critical awareness of future teachers to the salience of racial equality in contemporary England and Scotland within any discussions of diversity or inclusion. The NUT for example has acknowledged the importance of race equality in initial teacher education (NUT, 2007: 8)<sup>48</sup>, calling for:

*preparation for teaching a diverse school population... that enables them to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills and competences necessary for tackling racism in its institutional and individual manifestations.*

## METHODOLOGY

The project aimed to:

1. Explore teacher educators’ understandings of race in/equality issues within education
2. Explore how teacher educators are addressing issues of race in/equality within their practice
3. Identify ways of supporting teacher educators to embed race equality into their work

We focused on four research questions:

1. How do teacher educators understand themselves and their roles, in relation to race in/equality issues in general within the context of England and Scotland?
2. How do teacher educators see race in/equality issues located within initial teacher education?
3. In what ways are the issues of race in/equality addressed within the practice of initial teacher education?
4. What kinds of knowledge, experiences and resources do teacher educators identify as supportive in enabling them to develop greater confidence in addressing issues of race in/equality in their practice?

This project focused on two Initial Teacher Education providers, one English and one Scottish. These two settings offered contrasting and complementary contexts. In the Scottish city, the school population is overwhelmingly white; whereas in the English city, schools are more often ethnically mixed. This offered the opportunity to explore whether factors such as the demographic context impacted on colleagues’ understandings and engagement with race and ethnicity; and if so, how. Race equality issues are currently addressed on the Scottish programme through one lecture and an assumed permeative approach; and on the English programme, through a discrete Unit entitled ‘Identity and Diversity’. These differences in approach provided a further element of contrast.

Our intention was to use the research questions as a hermeneutic framework to engage in thoughtful discussions with colleagues, on their understandings of what race equality means in general and more particularly for the training of teachers. The method chosen favours

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a symmetrical model of power between researcher and respondent, with interviews as the main source of obtaining information. This involves a discursive style of engagement, where as teacher educators ourselves the researchers are partially located within the research, a conversant rather than just a listener (Harding 1987<sup>49</sup>; Brayton 1997<sup>50</sup>). As the colleague respondents were not seen as epistemologically passive, the questions formed a framework for prompts and supplementary questions as required, to assist colleagues to draw on their own interpretive capacities.

The study was conducted between August and December 2010. A total of 16 interviews were conducted face to face with staff in Scotland and 15 in England. To ensure a spread, purposive sampling was adopted which ensured there was diversity in the interview cohort covering primary/secondary, gender, age, subject mix and where people trained. In the English HEI a group of staff teaching the same 'Identity and Diversity' Unit was included in the sample. Consideration was also given to those who had a clear lead role such as programme directors or course organizers. Individuals were contacted by e-mail and invited to participate in an interview lasting no more than an hour; in some cases this was preceded by a briefing given at a team or departmental meeting. A leaflet explaining the project was also sent out at the same time. Interviews largely took place in the office of the member of staff and all were taped and transcribed.

The interviews took the form of a conversation and started with an open question to seek the views of the member of staff about what they perceive to be the key equality and social justice issues. This was then followed with questions that sought specific views on race equality, the issues of race equality in initial teacher education and how these were being addressed or embedded in the individual's practice.

Due to the small numbers of staff and institutions involved, all quotes utilized will not be attributed other than via gender and sector. The study did not ask interviewees to fill in an equality monitoring form. However the profile of interviewees was as follows:

*In Scotland, interviews took place with 16 staff, eight men and eight women. Of the eight men, five were from secondary and three from primary. Of the eight women, three were from secondary and five from primary. None of the interviewees belonged to a visible minority ethnic group though at least four interviewees belonged to a white minority ethnic group.*

*In England, interviews took place with 15 staff, 3 men and twelve women. Of the three men, two were from primary and one worked across primary and secondary. Of the twelve women, two were from secondary, 9 were from primary, and 1 worked across primary and secondary. 2 interviewees belonged to a visible minority ethnic group.*

The research team communicated through regular conference calls and met on three occasions to frame the interviews and to analyse the data. Our initial thinking was informed by our collective reading of the literature, a brief summary of which is given earlier. In approaching the interview data we found the four question framework drawn up by Hollway and Jefferson (2000)<sup>51</sup> useful, in suggesting that transcripts were read with these questions in mind:

- What do we notice?
- Why do we notice what we notice?
- How can we interpret what we notice?
- How can we know that our interpretation is the right one?

The project findings are presented in the form of key themes and emerging points for reflection, developed within and across the Scottish and English contexts, supported by quotes from the interviews.

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# FINDINGS

## Theme (i)

### Homogeneity and Representation

Lecturers were often very much aware of the under-representation of BME groups within initial teacher education. Homogeneity in terms of race and ethnicity in the staff and student cohort did concern many interviewees, for example:

*I think that the...the general population of our teaching courses is not what I would consider to be a very diverse group. I think we're getting better at that, but I still think we don't reflect society... (Female, primary)*

*We have a ludicrous student cohort in many ways. Yet, there are issues they cannot avoid such as having to learn about pupils with second language. We could do more, I mean just the sheer, the whiteness of our, of people like me. (Female, secondary)*

*We don't tend to have a lot of students from diverse backgrounds applying for teacher training – which is a real tragedy and we need to get out there or the government needs to get out there and look at how to engage people of different diverse backgrounds into education. (Female, secondary)*

One interviewee expressed the view a majority of BME students that do apply are young women of Asian descent, with very few applications from the African-Caribbean heritage community. In terms of employment when compared to their white peers, those BME trainees who successfully completed their training can nevertheless be faced with difficulties in gaining employment:

*I have two 4<sup>th</sup> year Asian brilliant students who left last year and they haven't got jobs... out of all my group of ten students I wrote references for, the two that haven't been employed are the Asian students. One of them especially is an outstanding student, I mean I would hire her. She tried supply and everything and she wears not the full hijab, but she wears a headscarf and it does make you wonder... (Female, secondary)*

The small numbers of visible BME staff and students seemed to allow race equality issues to become hidden at times, to become less discussed. The presence of

white minority ethnic people has also become hidden in a general silence about race issues.

*I was supervising a ... student project ... earlier this year ... And she said ... there was no ethnicity in the school ... and I said that surely there was ethnicity in the school and she said "oh no, there wasn't" and I said 'how do you know?' and she said "well I could tell". ... I said "... are you trying to tell me there wasn't one single kid in the school whose mum and dad ran the Chinese restaurant or the Italian shop or whose mum and dad were Polish?" And once I'd sort of put it to her like that she actually stopped and said "oh yes, there were".... Because we are not very diverse is in itself a problem because ... we think we don't need to do much. (Male, Primary)*

There was clear evidence from the interviews of how the absence of the presence of BME lecturers and students served to constrain both the understandings of students and the confidence of lecturers in engaging with race equality issues:

*I suppose we're getting into that old chestnut of "no problem here". And I think it's harder to identify [racism] and harder for [students] to grasp some of the concepts that we are trying to get across to them.' (Male, Primary)*

## Theme (ii)

### Building on Awareness of Race Equality Issues

*What I've found when I've talked with other staff who are from non-minority ethnic background on 'race' and ethnicity is that everybody is on the defensive. People are on the defensive often because they think you are suggesting that they are not working sensitively with students, or [if] they are not aware of the issues they are racist. (Female, secondary)*

The levels of knowledge and understanding of race equality issues claimed by interviewees, and the confidence they expressed in their capacity to engage with these issues in their practice as teacher educators, varied considerably. While there was an overwhelming consensus that it is important to include race equality within the initial teacher education curriculum, it was seen as a complex and difficult area. In part this reflects some of the conceptual difficulties in the field: for example, culture, ethnicity, religion, nationality and skin colour are

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each characteristics that could signify some connection with the concept of race; and the intersections of race with class, gender and disability add further dimensions of complexity. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there were varied understandings about what race equality means and how to approach it within teacher education, together with a feeling that it may be difficult for teacher educators who have not studied or engaged with race issues to confidently work in this area. Overall there was clear evidence of how teacher educators can draw on their own experiences to support their engagement with race equality and to mediate their students' investment in social justice concerns.

However, the views expressed ranged from well informed and perceptive analysis of detailed race issues in the practice of teacher educators; to forms of avoidance and even denial of the relevance of race equality. Some interviewees preferred to focus on culture as a more comfortable alternative to racism, for example:

*...I wouldn't call it racism myself. I think it's more a cultural thing. And it's getting used to cultures and I think it's, I think culture, I think culture's a lovely thing and I think that's something where I love to go. (Female, secondary)*

One interviewee acknowledged that race inequality was prevalent, but so embedded into the fabric of society that it can go unnoticed. In some cases an assumed or perceived absence of overt racism or racist activity appeared to inform a rationale for denying the relevance of race. For others, it was simply a matter of just not knowing enough about race or struggling with conceptual ambiguities about race equality. One interviewee had previously thought of race and equality separately without seeing the connections between them; and referred to a practice of avoiding discussions about race with students, due to a lack of confidence with these issues. While others grappled with their own values and thinking about how this related to practice:

*There was a young woman... who always wore the headscarf... I don't know if it makes me a racist or what have you but I was intrigued at the time because the Head of Department at that time took a very strong view of, you know, the right to do, go around any way you like...as a kind of inalienable right.... But I, I think it's an inalienable right*

*of a three year old to see the face of the person with whom they are communicating with in a nursery.' (Male, secondary)*

Interviewees described their experiences of ITE students' responses to race equality, as reflecting their own concerns with conceptual clarity:

*And I find that students generally... two things that they don't like talking about are race and class... Race definitely, class some people will talk about but they don't talk about race. (Female lecturer, secondary)*

*For them, race, culture, religion all go into one big pot and they find it very difficult to separate it... (Female, primary)*

One interviewee offered a possible explanation for an element of this:

*The vast majority of people who come into teaching were successful in learning at school and they find it quite difficult to empathise or look at children who find learning unpleasant, unsuccessful, unwanted... and that's quite a difficult thing for them. They can be very, very stuck in their own experiences.*

Many interviewees focused on issues of intersectionality of race with class, gender, religion or disability, in aiming to address the complexities of social reality. However in some cases these dimensions of intersectionality in in/equality were counterposed to race, or prioritized hierarchically against it, in ways which served to downgrade the importance of race:

*Well I think in the current context where we're looking at possible savage cuts to all sorts ...I think poverty and it's intersections with various indices of power are going to be the big issues coming up. So poverty intersects with race and ethnicity and that we know certain ethnic groups are over represented amongst those at the bottom of the material equality pile. And the intersection there with gender I think is a really important one. Given that... there is still a gender pay gap... [and] single parents are disproportionately women. (Female, primary)*

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*I think the inequalities here are economically based, then racial and then religious. (Male, secondary)*

Some indicated that of all the equality areas, disability was the issue that had received greatest attention within initial teacher education. There was also some degree of conflation between the coverage of inclusion and diversity on courses and addressing disability. Religious sectarianism was an issue which some interviewees saw as having a particular significance in the Scottish context. One respondent discussed how, when issues of racial equality were raised, students were swift to point out to him that a more pressing issue was that of religious divides:

*And they took me to one side and said 'X, what you've got to realise is that we don't have those (racial) issues here. We have other serious issues to do with religion. And the students alerted me to the biggest tensions they saw were those between religious groups and particularly typified by football allegiance. (Male, secondary)*

It seems that a key element is how colleagues are enabled to draw on their own experiences of equality issues, to invest in promoting social justice and in engaging their students in this.

There were a range of such personal experiences described in the interviews. Examples cited included growing up in a working class community; experiencing discrimination as a woman; experiences of living and working within diverse communities; drawing on an ideological or theoretical basis for engaging with social justice issues; responding to increasing diversity in the pupil population, in areas that were traditionally more monocultural; personal experience of exposure to instances of racial discrimination; and the influence of the media. One interviewee described an experience of travel in the USA, which enabled him to gain an insight into his own ethnicity and racial positioning as a white person:

*And gradually as people waited for the train to come back and people assembled, we were two middle aged, middle class white guys wearing shorts and tee-shirts and carrying plastic bags among two hundred black residents. And not, nobody looked sideways at us. Nobody said anything, there was absolutely no issue at all. And my companion*

*who was American didn't say anything. We got back in the centre of the city and then he looked at me and said 'did you feel uncomfortable'? And I said 'yes I did'. And he said 'why, why is that'? Not in an accusatory way. I said 'well because it's the first time in my life that I've ever been, felt myself standing out because of my ethnicity right'. Not because there was any threat... (Male, secondary)*

Interviewees often tended to view race inequality at personal and cultural levels rather than at institutional levels. The focus of teacher educator and student discussions on race issues was more likely to be around what teachers can do in the classroom, for example support for bilingual pupils, using multicultural resources, addressing overt racist incidents. Teachers' potential role in tackling institutional racism was rarely considered, however a number of interviewees pointed to the benefits of equality for all, not only for BME pupils.

### Theme (iii)

#### **Labour Constraints in Teacher Education**

Throughout this research the majority of the interviewees identified time and space as two central constraints. Participants showed plenty of goodwill in wanting to address race equality issues within ITE programmes. However a majority cited the lack of time as being a key factor in preventing the sharing of ideas and expertise. Others indicated that the sharing and communication needed to move beyond initial teacher education staff to include colleagues in the field:

*It's like when you go out to schools, you sometimes see examples of good practice .... and you think 'oh I must follow this up, you know, maybe ask this teacher'. And it just doesn't happen. But I think maybe that's where the future lies. (Male, primary)*

Lack of an appropriate teaching resource or toolkit was not regarded as so important:

*No resources can really do the job for you, but then, in a sense, it's only when you start to use them that you begin to unpick what lies behind some of the attitudes of the students that you are working with and your own attitudes as a tutor. Something that seems quite unproblematic, becomes problematic. (Female, primary)*

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Others indicated the problem lay with issues of continuity and structure. On the matter of continuity, one interviewee indicated that to embed issues in a robust and systematic way required a stable teaching team rather than teaching teams made up of associate tutors or one year secondments. It was also suggested by a few interviewees that when selecting associate tutors or new teaching staff, that the selection process should include the recruitment tutors who have an understanding of social issues:

*So as we recruit in the future, what are we...looking for? And one of the things we might be looking for is an obvious interest in research. But we might also be looking for evidence of political consciousness... Though I cannot imagine this appearing in an advert at this University! (Male, Secondary)*

Others agreed that the erosion of placement opportunities has meant student experiences are being limited. In the past students coming from fairly mono-cultural areas were offered opportunities to have placements in more diverse settings, thereby providing exposure to issues of difference. However such opportunities are becoming limited, as initial teacher education establishments in Scotland no longer arrange placements (these are organized largely by local authorities who have no knowledge of individual students). Equally choice of school places has become more limited in England, for example with the policy trend towards school-based ITE providers tending to weaken the position of university-based ITE.

*We would ensure that someone having four placement... that we would try and offer them a kind of mixed bag of experiences... in the last few years the pressure of numbers was such that it just became impossible to kind of manage that (Male, Secondary)*

The overall labour context in which teacher educators are currently operating can either facilitate or hinder progressive possibilities in embedding racial equality into the curriculum. Teacher educators work with a range of student needs, moods and abilities, but also have to fulfill external standards (teaching standards for Registration or Qualified Teacher Status) as well as internal expectations (to be research active and to publish). In the English

context in particular, centrally prescribed curriculum priorities and accountabilities were also identified as barriers to progress in this area. These tensions exist in the daily lives of the interviewees and while professional fatigue can be detected, the commitment to ensuring an agenda of 'education for all' and to mould future teachers who will be reflective, active and critical is also clearly evident.

## Theme (iv)

### **Enabling Reflection as a Priority for Staff Development**

There was clear evidence from the interview data of an appetite for staff development on race equality issues, and a feeling that a lack of suitable opportunities could serve to undermine lecturers confidence to tackle these issues within initial teacher education:

*perhaps we need to look at race and diversity as an aspect in our professional development... to have professional development sessions in race and diversity to see if we've been doing things right. (Female, secondary)*

Fear of getting it wrong and offending people through the use of incorrect terminology or by making naïve statements, were sentiments that were echoed by a few respondents:

*The race one is a thorny one because we've had centuries of difficulties around this. And I think it's also very complex. It's also one that people feel 'I won't talk about it cause I don't want to be racist'. (Male, secondary)*

*I feel I need an awful lot, and I'm sure most people [do]... even down to the basic... the correct terminology to use... which is politically correct, politically incorrect... I am aware that terminology is changing...but I'm not up to speed (Male, primary)*

However perhaps the most striking finding from the study as a whole was that what teacher educators feel they need most is time to reflect with colleagues, to discuss and digest complex issues of race equality and intersectionality, of how to articulate their own racial positioning and how to respond to issues raised by students.

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*If I was going to look specifically at race as an issue, the resource that I would need would be having the opportunity to sit down with colleagues. It's about time, not necessarily training because I think that we have lots of expertise. It's just having the time to be able to draw on it.*

*(Female, primary).*

Respondents indicated that opportunities were needed for staff to debate race equality issues, share concerns and reflect collaboratively. Many wanted more continuous professional development in this area. Some felt that the lack of opportunities to debate and engage with these issues resulted in them not having the confidence to take issues forward with students in fear of getting it wrong or just not being able to deal with comments coming back from students. Respondents largely did not wish to have further toolkits or checklists or managerial tick-box initiatives, but preferred actual discussion time led by colleagues able to facilitate deep and meaningful discussions on these complex issues.

One interviewee suggested it was important for course teams to meet and to share and agree how they might approach topics. This would then allow racial equality matters to be discussed as a whole team and for all to consider how the issue might be approached and addressed:

*Sharing meetings, where staff share and make connections through teaching they are doing is enormously important ... especially in ITE programmes where you have a very large body of staff teaching discrete ITE areas. It is very important that you verbally share what you are doing and that those connections pop up and can be made in these planning meetings. If something like social justice was just planned and taught in the social justice strand, it would be lost. (Female, primary)*

## Theme (v)

### Embedding Equality Across the ITE Curriculum

*Do we actually give them enough tools to deal with race in the classroom? I don't think we do. We tell them this is what you should do in the classroom as far as teaching materials are concerned but how to deal with it in the classroom I don't think we do that at all.*

*(Female, secondary)*

Thus in response to the question as to the role that teacher education can play in addressing issues of race and inequality, another respondent said:

*I think it is saying to students no matter which school you are working in, either now whilst you are a student or when you are fully qualified, you have a responsibility to prepare those children to live and work in a diverse society*

*(Female, primary)*

Emerging findings from Arshad and Mitchell's work (current research on student perception of social justice in teacher education courses, ongoing) suggest that student teachers do want greater tutor-led input on discussions about social justice issues as well as ideas on how to embed equality issues into the various areas of the curriculum and as part of the craft of learning and teaching. However interviewees were not confident that racial equality issues were addressed in a systematic and robust way in all programmes or courses. Most did not see having one off lectures on race or any other social justice related issues as being effective.

*The secondary course is, is getting better in one way. Previously it used to have sort of a lecture for every possible issue. That became a kind of, you know, you were just, today we're doing dyslexia, tomorrow we're doing race, the day after that we're doing sexuality or whatever. And I think that's the underlying possibilities of all those things. We're not...connected. (Female, secondary)*

There was concern that if lecturers did not embed the equality and difference dimensions there would be a disparate experience for the majority of students. The lack of consistency in the way issues are re-visited means students are unlikely to make those connections themselves:

*I think students and some staff see social justice as something you do in Education [courses]... I think there are [tutors] who feel uncomfortable about issues like this. I think there's people who might think this is for a particular specialist in a particular area... That this isn't what they're expected to do. (Male, primary)*

The structure of the primary programmes is typically such that there are general education courses, which explore

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the theories of learning, child development and social justice issues and these are complemented with specific courses that assist the student teacher become familiar with curriculum areas such as expressive arts, health and well-being, English language and so on. These specific courses also address the 'craft' side of teaching such as classroom management, lesson planning and assessment methods. Concerns were expressed by a number of interviewees, that unless lecturers are confident about assisting students to create links between courses, then only a handful of students would make the connection from what is learnt in generic education courses, which contain discrete lectures and tutorials on race equality, to more specific curriculum areas.

*One would hope that what students learn, the awareness that they gain about race and race equality issues in, for example, Education 2, that they in some ways bring that to bear on the curriculum courses, or the way that they think about the curriculum .... I think it is probably left to the students to make the connection .... I do think that issues about race and issues about social justice more broadly are perhaps not at the forefront of people's minds when they are teaching on curriculum courses. (Female, primary)*

However there were some positive examples where lecturers talked about attempting to embed race equality issues within subject-specific areas of the curriculum, for example in languages:

*Within the language course we look at it from the point of view of language, so the whole issue of how Standard English became the language of power .... or get students to address the idea of things like Afro Caribbean or non-standard varieties of English (Scots for example)... They do think that certain children are thick because of the way they talk or the way they look or the cultural or racial background they come from.... [Our response has to be] explicit, but it can't be preachy. It's got to be linked to real issues .... and fairly rigorous arguments with sources. (Male, primary)*

Or again in maths:

*I think it is important that political issues come into thinking about how we should teach mathematics, but I don't think we do enough of it... In maths you can be choosing to do mathematical things that also have other messages associated... Data handling gives potential for handling whatever data on whatever issue. (Female, secondary)*

Overall our data clearly supports the view that there is a need for a much stronger mainstreaming of race equality issues across the teacher education curriculum as a whole.

## Theme (vi)

### Issues for Policy Makers and ITE Providers

A recent OECD study of teacher education for diversity across Europe highlighted the need to embed equality issues holistically across the curriculum (OECD, 2010)<sup>52</sup>:

*There is ample evidence that one-off modules on a topic - any topic - do not suffice to make lasting behavioural change. Rather, there is a need for ongoing and continuous support for planning, development and practice in order to break old habits and create new ones. Although most initial teacher education programmes include some form of diversity training it is often in the form of a single module or elective, which is unlikely to have a major lasting impact throughout teachers' careers. There is a need to holistically integrate the coverage of diversity throughout the programme. The question thus becomes: what is the best way to design a systematic approach to elements that should be covered in initial and in-service teacher education, and how should they be linked in order to create a true continuum between these two stages that, currently, are quite discrete?*

The patchy addressing of race equality issues has had more to do with the lack of time rather than a lack of goodwill. The intensive nature of the teacher education programmes meant a lot had to be covered in a short time and this was particularly so in the post-graduate programmes. It became clear in the study that interviewees did not fully grasp the concept of 'embedding' in relation to race equality matters. For example, when respondents were asked if they embedded race issues in their subject areas or programme themes, examples offered were limited. There are a number of excellent resources for race equality in teacher education, many of them were available through the Multiverse website.<sup>53</sup>

Though race was covered, this was alongside a whole range of other diversity or social justice related areas such as gender, disability, sexual orientation, social class, religion, language and so on. This meant no particular area was covered in any meaningful depth leaving students to develop their knowledge and understanding of specific areas themselves.

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The level of confidence of individual staff on the issues impacted on their ability and willingness to engage with race related issues. Those who were more confident were more comfortable to raise issues for discussion in tutorial groups, were more able to stimulate discussion on the issue and were more prepared to pick up on issues raised by students. The raising of race equality issues, however, is no indicator that the issues were then engaged with in a critical and robust manner. Due to the lack of opportunities to discuss race issues as indicated above, staff confidence and awareness of race issues remains low. For many, their knowledge and understanding of race related matters are gleaned from what is read in the press rather than from personal experience or social realities.

Race issues are often included in the curriculum as related to language needs of English as an additional language pupils or as part of anti-bullying initiatives. Doing 'race equality' would appear to be perceived by many lecturers, and initial teacher education students, as being about benefiting black and minority ethnic people, rather than being about the benefits for all people and the need to address institutional racism. Where race is engaged with, it tends to focus on the celebration of difference with students (e.g. learning about festivals and cultures, or reading black writers), but racism as a topic is less discussed, if at all. Lecturers are aware of possible resistance that might arise from students and for some this has resulted in them engaging with race related matters in a gentle and non-challenging or critical way. The silence, possible nervousness (fear of offending) and the marginalisation of race to matters of cultural difference by teacher education staff, has the potential of sending subliminal messages out to students, who then replicate these silences in their own practice.

Short, one-off lectures to whole groups, were not viewed by most interviewees as an effective way to engage students on topics like race equality and racism. Interviewees largely felt that tutorials and the use of problem-solving approaches, using more interactive methods and drawing from students' own experiences of difference or discrimination, provided greater opportunities to engage student interest and future engagement with the issues.

The homogeneity of the student body was commented on by a significant number of interviewees and a few also commented on the lack of diversity within the staff profile. This led to some interviewees discussing the value of experiential learning both for themselves and for the students. Opportunities where students had workshops led by people from minority groups discussing their experiences of discrimination in schools, were felt to have been very effective but insufficient in time and number on any of the programmes.

It was noticeable in a number of interviews that colleagues with leadership roles or management responsibilities were sometimes amongst those with the clearest understanding of race equality issues. Yet at the same time they rarely appeared to feel empowered to implement the embedding of race equality across the ITE curriculum. This was an intriguing if indicative finding that would merit further investigation in future research.

Overall, interviewees welcomed the opportunity to discuss issues of race equality and were keen to look at ways of improving their own knowledge and understanding and find routes to assist all initial teacher educators to consistently address these issues and embed race equality and other social justice and equality concerns into their own teaching.

In summary, there are a number of points for action that arise from this study that have relevance for policy makers, HEIs and other ITE providers:

### **Reviewing policies and practices in ITE programmes**

The implication of this and other studies is that there is a need for ITE providers to review policies and practices on diversity and equality, to ensure that real and continuing progress is made towards achieving greater race equality. For example, policy statements could include an aim of changing attitudes, so that all graduates from initial teacher education are expected to understand racism and be committed to promoting social justice in their classrooms.

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## **Enabling reflective staff development**

There is a clear need to provide space and time for lecturers in teacher education to reflect collaboratively on complex issues of race equality and intersectionality and to share good practice in embedding race equality across the ITE curriculum. In addition to providing opportunities for informed shared learning between staff and between students (both formal and informal), there is also a need to 'upskill' staff to support minority ethnic students.

## **Addressing under-representation in recruitment**

There is a continuing need for HEIs to develop a proactive strategy to recruit and retain minority ethnic students and staff. Despite the cessation of TDA funding for BME recruitment, HEIs could review their own targets in this area. ITE providers can draw on the guidance available and learn from successful practice to set their own priorities for recruitment.<sup>54</sup>

## **Embedding race equality across the ITE curriculum**

There is a need for sustained collaborative development and clear leadership in embedding race equality across the ITE curriculum. This could be achieved in part by planning programmes of learning that engage students in discussing and challenging racism across all curriculum areas regardless of school demographics.

## **Resourcing race equality**

In the present climate of reduced resourcing for University-based ITE, there are clearly additional challenges. However not all progress is dependent on funding, the will to take action is also important and even relatively modest funding by ITE providers would be helpful in this area. A comparison of the allocation of government resources within the area of inclusion, diversity and equality for teacher education would also be instructive here, as there seems to have been much greater funding for special educational needs than for race equality.

# PROJECT IMPACT, OUTPUTS AND DISSEMINATION

## **Project Impact**

In the short-term, impact has been via dissemination events. Consultative events took place in June 2011 in Edinburgh and in Manchester, attended by colleagues from a range of initial teacher education institutions. Publicity for these seminars attracted interest from a range of researchers, ITE managers and policy makers who will each receive a copy of the Final Report.

Within both the School of Education at the University of Edinburgh, and Institute of Education at Manchester Metropolitan University, project team members will work with programme and course leaders to consider ways of embedding race equality issues through formal and information course development mechanisms e.g. course programme planning meetings. The project team at MMU have been invited to present the findings to an Institute-wide staff development conference event on equalities issues, in July 2012.

## **Outputs**

Copies of the following outputs are downloadable from the Project Webpage: <http://escalate.ac.uk/6915>

1. Interim Report, available on ESCalate website
2. ESCalate Newsletter Article
3. Presentation at ECER 2011, available on ESCalate website
4. Final Report, to be circulated to colleagues who participated in interviews, seminars, and conference symposia and presentations.

## **Dissemination Activities**

A presentation of the findings was given in an international symposium at the European Conference on Educational Research in Berlin in September 2011. A further symposium presentation was given at the Scottish Education Research Association annual conference in November 2011 at the University of Stirling. In addition to research symposia, a workshop was

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presented for practitioners and policy makers at the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers annual conference in Leicestershire in November 2011. A further workshop presentation was given at the British Educational Research Association Race, Ethnicity and Education Special Interest Group conference at the University of Chichester in October 2011.

Research findings will be communicated to a range of key stakeholders in Scotland, e.g. Scottish Teacher Education Committee (representing all seven ITE providers in Scotland as well as the Scottish Government), the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS), an article in the Times Higher Education and briefing paper to be distributed at the ESRC sponsored seminar *Diverse Teachers for Diverse Learners* to be held on October 1<sup>st</sup> at the GTCS offices in Edinburgh.

Two articles are currently in preparation for academic journals, including a special issue of *Race, Ethnicity and Education* focusing on teacher education.

## NEWSLETTER BRIEFING

How well are new teachers prepared to deal with race equality issues in schools? Not very well, to judge by surveys of New Qualified Teachers. Yet at a time when the Black and Minority Ethnic heritage school-age population is increasing in our schools – and is in fact already a majority in some major cities – race equality needs to be given greater priority in teacher education.

There have been a number of studies of race equality issues in teacher education in the UK, for example investigating the experiences of BME students or of white students, or presenting case studies of practice in particular institutions or curriculum areas. However this study is one of the first to look at teacher educators themselves, how they feel race equality is dealt with in teacher education and how it could be developed.

Researchers from the University of Edinburgh and Manchester Metropolitan University interviewed 31 lecturers in teacher education in Scotland and England. This collaboration offered contrasting contexts of relatively monocultural and more diverse settings.

The data supported previous research in this field in highlighting the need to embed race equality throughout the curriculum in Initial Teacher Education. A particular finding from this project is that teacher educators need time to discuss and reflect together on the complexities of race, and its intersection with other equality issues such as class and gender. Such opportunities were prioritised over the provision of information through websites or resource 'toolkits'.

The project team discussed their findings with colleagues at seminars in Edinburgh and Manchester, and presented their findings at several national and international research conferences and policy and practitioner forums.

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## THE RESEARCH TEAM

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Peter Hick is a Senior Lecturer in Inclusive Education with publications on inclusion, diversity and race equality and has organized related conferences.

Lorna Roberts is a Research Fellow at the Education and Social Research Institute, with substantial experience and publications on researching the experiences of Black and minority ethnic trainee teachers.

Diane Watt is a Senior Lecturer in Youth and Community Studies with substantial experience of race equality issues in education and community settings.

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