# 'Infused with multicultural education': Teaching preparedness for the contemporary secondary school classroom

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Clare Lawrence, Sheine Peart and Hadiza Kere Abdulrahman
Bishop Grosseteste University

**Abstract**
There is a growing need to rethink ways to teach both Black and White pupils in multicultural and diverse societies. This paper reports on a study that examined the impact that preparing multicultural resources had on student teachers' perceived preparedness to represent the diversity of UK secondary school pupils. It explores the creation of teaching materials reflecting the contributions of the African diaspora undertaken by student secondary school teachers at a university in the East Midlands, UK. Consideration of the effect of this on the students' attitudes was collected via an online survey (n=30) and the findings from this analysed thematically. Findings reflect that, given 'permission' and through developing an understanding of their own agency, the students – all of whom identified as 'White' – were enthusiastic about developing resources that challenge the marginalisation of Black people in their subjects. The findings implied a need for organisations to support students to find creative ways of teaching in diverse communities and the paper explores how understandings and respectful representations of race need to infuse every aspect of contemporary curricula.

**Keywords**
Teaching-preparedness; Black History Month; Student-teachers; Multicultural; Agency; Black; Preparedness; Race and Student.

## Introduction

> It's not just an add-on or an afterthought. Curriculums infused with multicultural education boost academic success and prepare students for roles as productive citizens
> Gay (2004, p. 30).

For multicultural and diverse societies such as the United Kingdom, there is a need to rethink the ways we teach both Black and White children in our schools. With a growing profile of pupils from diverse racial and cultural groups, more teachers will be teaching pupils from racial and cultural groups different from their own. From this perspective, it makes sense to explore the issues of teachers' preparedness for these changing classrooms. Teaching-preparedness needs to be about an education that enables teachers to recognise the importance and the effect of multicultural knowledge and education.

This project, undertaken by four researchers working at a university in the East Midlands, UK, explores the creation of teaching materials by Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) student secondary school teachers enrolled at the university. Two of the researchers identify at Black and two as White. The demography of the locale is largely White; the non-White population of the area at 2.4% in 2011 (ONS, 2016) is well below the national non-White secondary school population of 35.7% (DfE, 2023). This ethnic profile is reflected in the demography of the student teachers, many of whom themselves attended schools locally in an area which, in 2001, included a mere 1.4% of non-White secondary school pupils (ONS 2016). These student teachers, therefore, may not have experienced multicultural classrooms during their own education, nor have access to them for the majority of their teacher education placement time.

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In response, the East Midlands university hosting the PGCE course has created a targeted Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) component to the course (for details of this initiative, see Puttick et al., 2021). Specific to this study is an element introduced in 2021 where students across all subjects produced teaching materials to support curriculum delivery in secondary schools during Black History Month (October). This initiative was supported by *Museumand,* the National Caribbean Heritage Museum and by the Black History Month UK magazine, which published the resources for distribution to schools throughout the UK.

This paper examines the impact that preparing these multicultural resources has had on the student teachers' perceived preparedness to represent the diversity of UK secondary school pupils (aged 11 - 18), and their confidence to challenge historic and continuing (mis)representation of the African diaspora. The paper discusses some of the wealth of literature around the subject of multicultural education, describes the method undertaken in this investigation and the analytical approach used to interrogate the data collected, and reports and discusses findings. It concludes by identifying why this research topic is important, and what we can learn from the study moving forward as teacher educators.

**Literature Review**

While the concept of 'multicultural education' lacks a single universally agreed definition, and terminology has been used in varied ways, there is a general acceptance in teacher education that multicultural education is an essential facet of the curriculum and that it is important that student teachers develop an appropriate skill set which effectively equips them to work with diverse pupil populations (Race, 2011). As claimed by Gay (2004), multicultural education is suggested as important in improving the academic success of pupils of colour and in preparing all youths for democratic citizenship in a pluralistic society. Gay goes on to add that even though some theorists (for example, Banks and Banks, 2002) have argued that multicultural education is a necessary ingredient of quality education, in practice educators most often perceive it either as an addendum prompted by some crisis, or as a luxury. Multicultural education has not yet become a central part of the curriculum regularly offered to all pupils (DfE, 2014); instead, educators have relegated it primarily to social studies, language arts, and the fine arts and have generally targeted instruction for pupils of colour (Gay, 2004). These attitudes, says Gay, distort multicultural education and make it susceptible to sporadic and superficial implementation. In consequence, pre-service teachers may enter the field lacking the knowledge, skills and dispositions to effectively instruct culturally diverse pupils (Gay, 2004). This lack of knowledge continues to come at a huge cost to pupils of colour, with Abdulrahman (2020) suggesting, based on her academic study observations and lived experience, that the way that educators respond to changes in racial and cultural diversity may have significant impact on the happiness, self-esteem, well-being and academic success of Black children and young people.

There is a tension evident here between confidence regarding the teaching of a 'multicultural' curriculum and the teaching of racially and culturally diverse pupils. Ogay and Edelmann (2016) stress a secondary tension that exists within each of these, between adherence to the concept of equality and adherence to the concept of diversity. Many students taking up teaching posts in schools still report low confidence and believe themselves lacking the skills needed to effectively engage with diverse pupil populations (Brownsword, 2019). Effective preparation of teachers needs to include recognition of the importance of culture and its impact on teaching and learning. The increasing diversity of UK classrooms has profound implications for teacher education including what Wahid *et al*. (2018) identify as the need to ensure that teachers are able to teach and interact efficiently with a diverse audience. Allen et al. (2017) also observe that, although teacher education programmes are charged with the daunting task of preparing the next generation of teachers, the extant literature has documented that these programmes have struggled to effectively arm teacher candidates with

pedagogies to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse pupil population. With this awareness and recognition comes the need for a revisiting of common classroom pedagogies to include culturally relevant teaching of culturally relevant resources in teacher preparation, with Wahid *et al*. (2018) again highlighting that the ability to teach a diverse population of pupils is an essential component of being a competent teacher in today's classroom.

In various settings in the UK, while pupil demographics may be becoming more diverse the teacher population can still be predominantly White (DfE, 2023). The challenge for teacher preparation programmes arising from this mismatch, therefore, becomes to facilitate inter-racial and cultural sensitivity and learning among prospective teachers, especially around special aspects of the curriculum such as the subject of Black History Month, which for this research, was used as an anchor to develop new teaching materials which celebrated the positive contributions made by Black people to different fields. Exploring the integration of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) into teacher education programmes allows for what Wasonga (2005) identifies as opportunities to learn how to teach children from diverse backgrounds. CRP is a social justice framework posited to support academic achievement, cultural competence, and critical consciousness for all learners. Within this field of multicultural education, there is a recognition of the need to address both theory and practice throughout the curriculum in a comprehensive manner. This should support student teachers to acquire the knowledge and confidence necessary to deal with racial and cultural issues in education with intelligence, professionalism and understanding. Davidman and Davidman (1994) suggest some key goals of multicultural education which include valuing cultural pluralism and inter-cultural/inter-ethnic/inter-group understanding, an expanded knowledge of various cultures and groups, and the development of pupils, parents, and practitioners whose thoughts and actions are guided by an informed and inquisitive perspective.

However, even with this evolving teacher education, Gay (2004) warns against sporadic and superficial implementation of multicultural education, with Allen et al. (2017) adding that a teacher preparation programme that does not critically interrogate race, power, and privilege in the context of schools does not maintain a social justice mission and consequently does not meet the tenets of CRP.

Similarly, in the North American context, King (2019) argues for the teaching of Black history in particular. King states that this knowledge in teacher education is an important endeavour because history is a mechanism to begin to understand the identities of groups of people. He states that the close examination of pre-service teachers' Black history knowledge is needed to improve curricular and instructional approaches to Black education. This knowledge, King adds, is foundational and influences actions, frameworks and interpretations that teachers will bring into the classroom. He further observes that research often focuses on promoting teacher preparedness, with approaches such as multicultural education, CRP and Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings and Tate,1995) each seeking to promote the idea of a more holistic form of education. He observes the utility of Black History teaching to include the development of racial literacy, and the altering of preservice teachers' ideological trajectories and racial imagery of Black pupils. King, however, cautions that although efforts at diversity education in teacher preparation are expanding, little research explains what training provision is available to help preservice teachers understand the nuances of culture and racism. Using the American context as an example, and comparing this with the emerging UK context, the need to explore the teaching of Black History for student teachers becomes even more imperative.

To translate theoretical conceptions into practice, educators must systematically weave multicultural education into the central core of curriculum, instruction, school leadership, policymaking, counselling, classroom climate, and performance assessment (Gay, 2004). Building on the literature reviewed, this study explores how teachers might embed multi-racial and culturally relevant content, perspectives, and experiences throughout their teaching. It is the belief of the authors of this paper

that CRPs are not an add-on but are intrinsic to every aspect of the curriculum. It is this lens that informs this study.

**Methodology**

This research studied the impact that creation of new teaching resources, formally requested by *Black History Month UK* and *Museumand* (the National Caribbean Heritage Museum) had on the knowledge, understanding and attitudes of the trainee teachers taking part. These organisations both celebrate the contributions of Black peoples to wider society and the resources requested were intended for national distribution to UK schools. This study aimed to determine how this work influenced the students' understanding, confidence and perceived competence when working with multi- and mono-ethnic pupil groups.

In particular, the study was designed to explore:

- What were students' understanding of Black History Month (BHM) at the start and end of the project?
- What were students' knowledge bases regarding Black peoples' contributions to events at the start and end of the project?
- How confident did students feel teaching about the contributions of Black peoples at the start and end of the project?
- How did engaging with the project affect them?

Using BHM as a central organising theme, and utilising opportunities built into the PGCE programme, students were initially invited to take part in a three-day resource development project as part of the University's annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion week. This opportunity was announced to all students who were part of the secondary school student teacher cohort. While it is acknowledged that this method of recruitment was likely to produce a biased sample in that only interested volunteers would be recruited, the necessity of having to produce resource packages for external organisations required working with a committed group of students who could adhere to and meet strict deadlines. After the students had been recruited, they were supervised by the project lead who advised on matters of cultural relevance, and by subject tutors who supported students on curriculum issues. Students were notified at the start of the project that the work they had engaged with may be used for further research purposes.

30 students from across the secondary school subjects offered at the University engaged with the project. Working in subject specific groups from two to six members, students were given the brief of developing lesson plans, together with a pack of supporting materials which included everything needed to deliver at least one lesson. Several groups went further and produced resources for a series of lessons. Students were not directed to produce specified types of resources, rather this was left to each groups' creativity and the only absolute requirement was students needed to specify how the lesson pack they had produced fulfilled the subject specific requirements of the national curriculum at Key Stage 3 (11-14 year olds). Such resources included but were not limited to, for example, poems, images, raps, drama, and song. At the conclusion of the project the students were asked to participate in an online survey, which specifically asked students about their experience of this work, their assessment on the relevance and value of the work and whether or not engagement with the project had impacted on their attitudes and practice in any way. 10 students chose to complete this. All participants identified as White.

The research project recognised the students as experts in understanding their own lived experience as all held the 'personal attribute(s) that [were] relevant to the purposes of the research' (Denscombe 2010, p.182) in their role as student teachers. While there was no ambition 'to generalise findings'

(Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2004, p.102), the findings of the research were intended to inform future planning and delivery of PGCE courses at the University.

Ethical approval for the study was granted by the University Ethics Committee in 2019.

**Process of analysis**

The qualitative data generated in the surveys was analysed thematically (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This approach consisted of a number of phases. During the first phase, all responses to the questionnaire were combined into a single document. The four members of the research team, working collegiately, familiarised themselves with the data, reading it multiple times, line by line, in order to develop familiarity with the breadth of its content. This reading was conducted actively as the researchers searched for meanings and patterns, and a reciprocal peer-review process occurred to critique and promote consistency. During phase two, initial codes were produced collectively for different features of the data. During phase three, these codes were collected into themes by the researchers working together, and a hand-written thematic map was produced by one member of the team to reflect these. In phase four, theme names were reviewed and refined. At this stage some candidate themes were merged together. For instance, 'Using resources to enact change' and 'desire to create pedagogical change' merged into the first theme, 'Motivation to enact change.' In phase five, theme names were reviewed to ensure that they captured the essence of the phenomenon they were being used to describe. Finally, in phase six, the report was produced.

A latent approach to the method was adopted so that the researchers were able to 'examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies – that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.84). In adopting this approach, the researchers continually returned to the data to ensure that assumptions were valid. Throughout the analytic process, data were shared between researchers to increase reliability and validity. As numbers of participants were small, no attempt to compare the outcomes of the project by teaching subject was made, rather a holistic approach was adopted across all findings.

**Findings**

Three main themes emerged from the data under scrutiny: 'Motivation to enact change', 'Building confidence in teaching, planning and having difficult conversations' and 'Development of knowledge and awareness.'

*Theme one: Motivation to enact change*

The data in this theme illustrate how the project increased students' awareness of Black History Month (BHM) and the limitations of the curriculum within their subject areas (DfE, 2014). They illustrated, in particular, how the students creating those resources exhibited an active desire to use their status as teachers to enact change within their classrooms and schools after taking part in the project to address these limitations.

Respondents reported that they were keen to begin to use the resources produced as part of the week and were 'looking forward to being able to implement the resources into lessons' and 'put into practice positive and inclusive teaching'. Responses showed that students were aware of the impact the resources may have on other teachers and pupils and the potential role these resources played in building positive, inclusive experiences in other settings. As one participant stated, 'I'm really excited to think that someone might be teaching my lesson somewhere in the country'.

Other students explained how the project provoked a powerful emotional response. One student explained how the project 'made me want to redesign the entire curriculum'. They expressed how working on the project made them 'angry' at the lack of diversity in the English curriculum and made

them 'want to change it'. For another student, the project was 'really valuable in terms of thinking about how we can begin to break down the restrictive and bias[ed] curriculum'. Another response said:

> Was I an anti-racist before? ...No, I am ashamed to say. I didn't do anything about it. I wasn't active in bringing about change. I didn't really appreciate how much I do not know or have an understanding of the world from an unbiased Black perspective. This project and the conversations surrounding it have ignited a passion in me (that cynicism and a defeatist attitude had quashed) to bring about change; to make our classroom practice truly equal, equitable, diverse and representative. If we as teachers on the ground aren't putting the effort in who will? I will be that change. That is the teacher I want to be.

This student had decided by the end of the project that they wanted 'to enact positive change' and that they had 'the power to do so'. Similarly, another response noted how the project helped them reflect on 'my own privilege, my own prejudice and [gave] me a renewed sense of vigour to do better, to be better and be the change that is needed'.

*Theme two: Building confidence in teaching, planning, and having difficult conversations*

The consensus among the students was that the project helped them to build confidence in both teaching and planning, but also in discussing difficult subject matter such as racism within the classroom. There was an acceptance that, if they were going to be effective teachers, they needed to be able to broach subjects such as these with confidence. One respondent stated that prior to the project they may 'have been hesitant and even scared [to discuss racism in the classroom] because of my lack of knowledge and understanding'. A student indicated that at the end of the project they felt 'prepared' to discuss racism within their teaching but, before the project started, they were 'not confident in how I would deal with a conversation about racism'. Another response was that, not only did they now feel confident enough to tackle racism but had also considered how they could 'teach particular topics without making pupils of colour feel like they were being singled out'. For another student the project 'boosted my confidence dramatically'. They added that the experience helped them prove to themselves 'that I can produce meaningful, supportive resources that approach the topic in a sensitive manner'.

The collaborative aspect of the way the project was structured contributed to the development of students' confidence. The students acknowledged that learning to teach in their specific local authority will have limited their experience of teaching diverse communities and, subsequently, engaging in the project allowed them to work with their peers to develop resources and their confidence. One response noted how working with other students made them 'feel much more confident in developing resources for diverse pupil groups now at the end of the project'. Another student said:

> As my teaching experience so far has only been teaching White pupils, I was not 100% confident in teaching a diverse ethnic group base - not for a lack of want, but just in terms of a lack of experience to do [it] correctly.

This initial lack of experience was echoed by another student who was worried about the impact such a deficit might have on their students. They stated that at the beginning of the project they 'felt a little nervous about teaching diverse ethnic groups as I didn't want to accidentally offend or make individuals feel uncomfortable'. Whilst this project may not have been a direct substitute for actually teaching in ethnically diverse settings, it appears that it allowed students the opportunity to develop their confidence when such first-hand experiences are demographically unavailable. Similarly, another

student was aware of the limitations that training to teach in a predominantly White local authority had placed on their experience but, nevertheless, found the project beneficial:

> I cannot claim to fully understand or indeed profess to be an expert but I know where to look for resources and have the confidence to examine my [W]hiteness, identify my unconscious bias and deliver content from a more transparent and honest point of view.

*Theme three: Development of Knowledge and Awareness*

The data in this theme indicates how the project helped students to develop their knowledge base about the African diaspora. They acknowledged that they had *some* knowledge, mostly that gained through 'osmosis' and absorbing that which is presented regularly in the media. However, the project allowed some to become consciously aware of their knowledge gaps with one student describing themselves as 'hideously uneducated'.

A number of students described their knowledge base at the start of the project as 'Americanised'. One participant explained how they 'had very little knowledge of the contributions of people of colour from Britain or other countries that were not America'. This implies that the project was effective in both broadening their wider knowledge of Black peoples' contributions and allowing them to develop knowledge specific to the country in which they are planning to teach. As one student explained, 'I knew little, or nothing, about British people of colour'. In addition to the 'Americanised' knowledge of Black peoples' contributions, a number of students explained how they were aware of the figures in Black history who were 'covered the most often by the mainstream media'. One student explained how they:

> learnt more about events in the [Black Lives Matters] BLM movements and notable events regarding the progression of Black Rights, such as, through watching the Small Axe series, learning about The Mangrove 9 and the schools for the 'educationally subnormal'

This acknowledgement of a deficit understanding suggests that the project was effective in helping the students to understand both the limitations of their existing knowledge and giving them access to knowledge specific to a context other than that of North America. Such a realisation suggests that these students will be willing to extend their own knowledge and, simultaneously, to help the young people they work with to extend their knowledge and develop their understanding. This recognition was evident across other responses with another student asserting that 'I have developed my research capability even further as I am now more aware/experienced in knowing where to find good information/resources from more diverse sources'.

The students working on resources to support the teaching of Jackie Kay's poetry explained how they became aware of the lack of diversity in the English subject curriculum (DfE, 2014). A number were concerned about how a limited curriculum would impact the experiences of pupils across the UK. One student said:

> It is now extremely clear that the English being taught in UK classrooms is not diverse enough and does not give teachers many opportunities to fulfil their legal responsibilities of promoting equality in the public sector … While I did not study a range of individuals this week, I feel that knowledge of Kay has really opened my eyes to the blend of inequalities some individuals face.

One student said that the opportunity to study Jackie Kay was particularly important as she is part of 'the LGBTQ+ community, Black and Scottish and she is all of those things all of the time'.

A number of responses articulated a genuine appreciation for the opportunity to be involved in the development of the BHM resources and to expand the students' knowledge base. As one student said:

> It has allowed me to see things from a different perspective and has been very eye opening. It has been incredibly emotive to learn about the struggles yet also the pride/achievements of people of colour - this is something I will take with me going forward. I have thoroughly enjoyed taking part, and it's been a very affirming experience.

**Discussion**

The four principal questions that this study aimed to explore were addressed in the data that emerged. Students' understanding and knowledge bases regarding Black peoples' contributions were clearly developed, and their confidence in discussing this element of pupils' learning was certainly boosted. As noted above, students reported that engagement with the project made them 'bolder' and 'more courageous'.

Interestingly, the study also highlighted what Ogay and Edelmann (2016) identify as the continuing 'positive and constructive tension' (p. 391) between concepts of equality and diversity as understood in terms of sameness versus difference. Participant responses to this study echo this tension. Many students expressed that they felt a hesitancy to 'notice' racial diversity, as if to identify this diversity could 'other' those diverse populations. Students repeatedly acknowledged previous reluctance to engage with concepts of race, their rationale being a perceived lack of knowledge and understanding.

To an extent this disposition suggests a personal fragility which foregrounds the needs of the student teacher above those of the diverse pupil populations they may encounter. It ignores the histories and on-going contemporary experiences of those diverse student populations while simultaneously promoting privileges that may reinforce racist disadvantage (Anderson, 2019). In addition, students may have recognised consciously or subconsciously how embedded structures of White privilege may have negative 'implications on [their] quality of life' (Eddo-Lodge, 2020, p.92) or career progression and in the early stages of their career and may therefore have been unwilling to take this risk. Further, through failing to recognise the unique, situated histories of groups different from themselves, the students' attitudes potentially acted to minimise the importance of race as a defining feature of identity and to recognise that 'race matters' (Lacy, 2004, p.913) in all aspects of society.

There is also an impression given of their understanding of their responsibility as teachers to 'see all pupils as equal'. Yet, as Robertson (2004) indicates, 'it is one of the paradoxes of life that treating everyone the same is to treat them unequally' (p.27). Further, Robertson suggests that 'colour-blindness' (a presented position of not noticing a person's colour) is a privilege only available to those who are White and promotes 'the myth of neutrality' (Anderson, 2010, p.239). While 'some individuals are generally invested in ending discrimination based on race' (Anderson, 2010, p.240) this attitude does not recognise contemporary realities of people of colour and therefore does not encourage action or support challenging unequal and discriminatory attitudes and systems; or as April Whitworth eloquently states, 'pretending to be colour-blind isn't woke' (Whitworth, 2020 n.p). We assert that, at best, colour-blindness represents apathy and, at worst, is a dereliction of professional responsibilities. This study helped students to recognise the way this approach, however well meant, negated Black pupils' identities (Ogay and Edelman, 2016) and did nothing to help promote and achieve equality.

One of the unexpected outcomes of this study seems to have been that the White student teachers felt that they had been 'given permission' to explore concepts of race which were otherwise out of bounds or inappropriate and felt empowered to have what they saw as difficult conversations. If, as suggested by Abdulrahman from her work undertaken in 2020, the happiness and well-being of pupils from diverse backgrounds can be profoundly influenced by the way teachers discuss racial, cultural, religious and linguistic issues, the first step may be this 'permission' to discuss, to learn and to challenge. Recognising the context of the environment from which many of the students had originated and were working (a rural UK Midlands county with low populations of minority ethnic groups), this represented a significant and for some a bold step. The approaches adopted in this project may suggest possible actions for other teacher educators working in similar largely monocultural environments.

A further unforeseen outcome of this project was that by actively considering their own positionality and 'multicultural concerns and power imbalances in society' (Stanwood, 2017, p. 23) and by recognising their professional position and emerging responsibilities, the students (even if unwittingly) started to position themselves as allies working with and for diverse groups to achieve equality. Through this realisation, most of the students made commitments to examine their practices to provide optimal educational services to diverse pupil populations (Stanwood, 2017) and to challenge the 'overt and subtle racism' (Peart, 2018, p.545) routinely experienced by Black pupils,

The findings report an increase in confidence in the students' development of knowledge and awareness regarding the teaching, planning and delivering of a more diverse curriculum. The activity of creating teaching resources positioned the content of this study within an area where they were confident, as writing lesson plans is a core component of their teaching education year. Investigating this content seems to have increased the participants' confidence in engaging with more diverse materials. They report that they have "learnt more", feel "quite knowledgeable" and are now "more aware/experienced" regarding diverse lesson content. The rationale for the project supported them to seek out a more diverse curriculum, and to challenge the lack of diversity in the curricula they experienced at their placement schools. They expressed enthusiasm and seemed to have developed "enough courage [to] stand up for somebody else" (Angelou, n.d. in Douglas, 2019) and to 'put into practice positive and inclusive teaching', at least with reference to the content of what they will teach.

The findings further suggest an increase in the students' confidence in themselves regarding this more diverse curriculum. They report that they feel more able to 'identify … unconscious bias and deliver content from a more transparent and honest point of view' and to 'see things from a different perspective'. This increased confidence in their own knowledge about the curricula they have created suggests a corresponding confidence regarding their behaviour in the classroom. They report increased readiness to have 'difficult conversations', to 'tackle racism' and even to examine their own Whiteness within a classroom context. They exhibit a desire expressed thematically in their responses to be agents of change in their classrooms, to challenge the status quo as it exists in received curricula, and to be actively anti-racist teachers.

There appears to have been less impact, however, on the students' confidence to teach pupils from more diverse backgrounds, beyond a tentative perception that this is something that they should be considering. There remains a perhaps unconscious impression that these resources were produced for teaching by White teachers to White pupils; only one participant indicated that they felt more confident since the study to 'teach particular topics without making pupils of colour feel like they were being singled out', with the phrase 'singled out' suggesting that Ogay and Edelmann's (2016) 'tension' between sameness and difference remains strong for this student.

**Conclusion**

There is much that is encouraging in the findings from this study. Given 'permission' and through developing an understanding of their own agency, these White student teachers were enthusiastic about challenging the lack of diversity in their various subjects and were enthusiastic about developing resources for use in Black History Month to challenge the marginalisation of Black people in the content within those subjects. Through an appreciation of 'systematic and incidental racism' (Peart, 2018, p.545) the students began to show the confidence needed to discuss issues of race as they occur 'out there', and to have conversations regarding discriminatory concepts within the curriculum.

The students' understanding of equality also clearly evolved. Their initial perception that they should treat all pupils the same and ignore the impact of their ethnicity and cultural heritage was disrupted as they worked through this project. The students all showed an emerging willingness to wrestle with the embedded euro-centric cultural biases, that were 'depriving them[selves] of the means to really understand their pupils as social beings' (Ogay and Edelmann, 2016 p. 393). They recognised that they had been at risk of replicating the behaviours of White teachers who neither listened to nor understood the needs of racially diverse pupils (London Development Agency, 2004).

Linked to this is the issue of more diverse recruitment to the teacher training course in this settled, White geographical area and how students who come from and work in monocultural areas develop the attributes, skills and attitudes required to produce the 'positive, professional relationships' (Anderson and Peart, 2016, p. 209) needed to teach in diverse communities and to work in education in twenty-first century Britain.

Research is clear (for example, Perry, 2020; Dee, 2004; Gershenson et al., 2018) that having a more diverse teaching population benefits both pupils from minority backgrounds and all other pupils. It may be that having a more diverse cohort within students who are training to be teachers, supported by a more diverse cohort within the academic institutions delivering that training, is a way to benefit all. Although recruiting diverse cohorts may hold inherent geographical challenges in some parts of the UK, organisations who recognise that 'teaching now transcends geographical barriers' (Cooker, Cotton and Toft, 2018, p.3) and that 'teaching is a global profession' (Cooker, Cotton and Toft, 2018, p.6) must also recognise the need to prepare and equip students to work with diverse populations in any part of the UK or the world. Ultimately, regardless of where or to whom teacher training programmes are delivered, all organisations and students need to acknowledge that race is not 'something that will eventually go away' (Pitcher, 2014, p.1) and therefore the onus lies on organisations to support students to teach in diverse communities.

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