

Confronting The Difference: Ethnicity And Patterns Of Achievement In Initial Teacher Education For The Further Education And Skills Sector

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Abstract

In Higher Education (HE), an ongoing and incompletely understood achievement gap in degree classification has been identified between white and Black and Minority Ethnic¹ (BME) students. BME students have been found to achieve less well than their white counterparts, even when initial A Level grades are the same. This paper examines a related issue, which has received scant attention; ethnicity and differential achievement in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) for the Further Education (FE) and Skills Sector. At the University which provides the focus for this paper, BME students are well-represented overall, and specifically well-represented on ITE provision for the sector. The introduction of a teaching observation grading pilot during 2010-11 made possible a detailed analysis of an aspect of ITE trainee progression and achievement. This paper presents the findings of further analyses of grading for the overall University trainee cohort, where differential achievement by ethnicity has been revealed. Strategies designed to promote the achievement of all trainees will be discussed.

Key words

Further Education and Skills Sector; Initial Teacher Education; Ethnicity; Grading; Differential Achievement.

Introduction

A recent article in the Observer drew attention to '*damning statistics*' exposing differential acceptance rates in terms of ethnicity onto postgraduate teacher training provision for the schools sector during 2013 (Boffey, 2014: p.16). The annual statistical report of the Graduate Teacher Training Registry (GTTR) shows that in 2013, whereas only 17.2% of black African applicants and 29.5% of Pakistani applicants were accepted onto teacher training courses, the figure was 46.7% for white applicants (UCAS, 2014). No ethnic group, of the 13 others identified, achieved a higher acceptance rate. This is of concern. As the Observer article notes: '*nationally, while 17% of pupils in the UK are from black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds, only about 7% of teachers are*' (Boffey, 2014: p. 16).

A healthy representation of BME trainees intending to teach in the FE and Skills Sector is also crucial. Over ten years ago, the Commission for Black Staff in Further Education (2002) drew attention to the proportion of FE teachers from minority ethnic groups as 7% of the total, with the majority of FE colleges then employing less than 5%. This was under-representative of the BME population of England at the time. The 2011 census identifies the BME population of England and Wales as 14% (ONS, 2012); however, the percentage of BME teachers in the sector for 2011-12 was 8.2% (LSIS, 2013). Young people from several minority ethnic communities continue to underachieve, and are more likely to remain unemployed (Tackey et al, 2011). The report of the Commission argued for '*tackling the under-representation of black staff in further education, which is key to raising*

¹ The analysis presented in this paper makes use of the term BME as used by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), and in common with the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), the body which works '*...to further and support equality and diversity for staff and students in higher education across ... the UK*', and for the same reasons, whilst accepting the limitations of the term (see: <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/>).

achievement for all learners' (p. 50). Role models for young BME learners are central in this regard. Equitable admission to ITE training provision is a crucial starting point and remains a relevant aim for today. Equally important in terms of race equality and HE is understanding and confronting the ongoing differential achievement gap which has been identified across HE between white and BME students.

Despite their greater representation in HE, no minority ethnic group achieves as well as their white counterparts in degree classification. In 2004, research undertaken by Connor et al found that *'Even when background and other variables known to affect class of degree are taken account of, they still do less well overall'* (Connor et al, 2004: p. xiv). A later analysis (Broeke and Nicholls, 2007) examined a range of factors in relation to achievement *'prior attainment, subject of study, age, gender, disability, deprivation, type of HE institution attended, type of Level 3 qualifications, mode of study, term time accommodation and ethnicity'* (p. 3). They concluded that *'...there is still an unexplained difference between students from minority ethnic communities and students from white (UK and Irish) when we look at a subset of qualifiers who entered with Level 3 qualifications'* (p. 19). Richardson (2008) reported *'the odds of an Asian student being awarded a good degree were half those of a white student ... whereas the odds of a black student being awarded a good degree were a third of those of a white student'* (p. 10).

Analysis by the UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) for 2011-12 again highlighted differential achievement (ECU, 2012). More white students gained a first or a 2:1 than BME students; the attainment gap was highest in England, where 69.9% of white students obtained a first or a 2:1 compared with 50.9% of BME trainees, a 19.0% gap. More recently, a detailed study published by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) drew attention to:

'In all, 72 per cent of White students who entered higher education with A-level grades of BBB gained a first or upper second class degree. This compares with 56 per cent for Asian students, and 53% per cent for Black students, entering with the same A-level grades'.

(HEFCE, 2014: p. 3)

Little is known about ethnicity, differential achievement and ITE for the FE and Skills Sector. This paper reports results from an ongoing monitoring, review and evaluation exercise examining achievement and ethnicity on the ITE programme at a UK university based in the North West of England. Analysis of grades by ethnicity for both theory and practice for the academic year 2012-13 drew attention to significant differences, although very little difference in overall success. The paper will outline strategies identified to address the achievement gap revealed and discuss implications for future practice. Reference is made to both quantitative and qualitative research findings.

Background

The teacher training programmes discussed are delivered at a small university of approximately 13,000 students in the North West of England. The University does not deliver compulsory sector ITE qualifications; however, it is one of the largest providers in the country of full-time pre-service provision for the post-compulsory sector. The University currently works in partnership with four colleges of FE and one private training provider to offer one-year full-time pre-service and two-year part-time pre-service and in-service programmes. The partnership provides ITE leading to the Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) at Levels 6 or 7 (M Level) or the Professional Diploma in Education (PDE) at Level 5. Approximately 150 trainees cross-partnership study on full-time courses leading to generic qualifications and about 90 trainees follow full-time courses leading to

specialist Skills for Life (SfL) qualifications (Numeracy, Literacy or English for Speakers of Other Languages). A new route was introduced in September 2012: 'Teaching Learners with Additional Needs' (TLAN). This route is offered at all levels. The programme is currently being updated.

Throughout a period of change, the ITE team at the University has continued to analyse its own practice and to investigate further ways of improving the programmes to 'stretch' trainees and improve trainee outcomes. The introduction of graded observations was an issue debated at great length by the cross partnership team and was initially met with considerable resistance from some members. The pilot grading scheme in 2010-11 had been commented on negatively by Ofsted as 'underdeveloped'; nevertheless, the pilot in fact created a solid approach to cross partnership grading and gave the team very clear indicators of how to structure a process that would be beneficial to the development of trainees. Furthermore, it allowed for the development of systems and training that would ensure consistency across provision. The introduction of grading and the subsequent detailed analyses of findings have enabled the team to use data to identify clear patterns and implement action for programme improvement designed to impact on the quality of training and outcomes for trainees. A particular area of interest and development has been the tracking and monitoring of trainee achievement by ethnicity.

The University has one of the most socially inclusive student populations in England and in relation to admissions is achieving its widening participation mission, with BME students well-represented overall and particularly so on full-time ITE programmes (see Table 1 below).

Resident population from a non-white background (North-West)	Resident population from a non-white background (Local Authority)	BME students overall at the University	BME students on the University F/T ITE programme
8.8%	18%	29%	31%
<i>2011 Census (ONS, 2012)</i>	<i>2011 Census (ONS, 2012)</i>	<i>Student profile, 2012-13</i>	<i>ITE data analysis, 2013</i>

Table 1. Comparative minority ethnic populations

The University has been commended by researchers for the Higher Education Academy (HEA) for its '*description of activity to be taken in relation to students' achievements and progress*' (Willott and Stevenson, 2008: p. 8). With regard to diversity and achievement, the University aims to achieve student outcomes that are comparable across all students irrespective of their racial or ethnic backgrounds. It is in part fulfilment of this aim, in relation to BME achievement, that the teacher training team continues to interrogate its own practice and to work to identify strategies for improvement where differential achievement is found. Some years ago, a small-scale examination of the module results of white and minority ethnic trainees had drawn attention to differential achievement. A similar pattern was indicated again the following year. Therefore in recent years the analysis of grading has included scrutiny of results by ethnicity, alongside the comparison of results for different cohorts within the partnership. In 2012-13, the analysis also examined grades in terms of other diversity characteristics: gender, disability, age and course level. The purpose of each line of enquiry in the grading analysis was to identify any area of possible concern so as to be able to work towards the development of strategies to support overall improvement for all trainees.

The grading process has been ongoing and 2012-13 was the third year that graded observations were subject to analysis. The grading process was extended during 2012-13. In addition to the four grades given for observations 5-8, and an overall grade for practice, trainees are now awarded an overall grade for theory. As the overall grade for practice relates to achievement on Work-Based Experience (WBE) placements, so the overall grade for theory relates to achievement in assignment work. For this year, the overall grade for theory involved full-time trainees only and not part-time second year trainees, who were therefore excluded from this part of the analysis; trainees, who had been given mitigating circumstances, where grades were incomplete, were also excluded.

Initially, grades awarded for observations of practice had been numerical, ranging from 1 to 4, with 1 being 'outstanding' and 4 indicating 'inadequate'. They were based upon the criteria identified by Ofsted for use in the inspection of FE teacher training (Ofsted, 2009). However, the grades awarded for assignment work and thus the overall grades for theory were: Distinction, Merit, Pass and Fail. In the present year, 2013-4, all grades are now recorded in this way, thus avoiding any potential confusion with the use of numerical grading systems, which in FE colleges are used during inspections and in connection with quality systems, both of which relate to employment rather than trainee development and involve different criteria.

Not all providers of ITE for the sector grade lesson observations. Other providers who do use some form of grading system, whether for observations and/or theory, will apply differently-worded criteria and terminology, and the results of ITE grading analyses are not easily available, if at all, in the public domain. For these reasons, direct comparisons of differential achievement and diversity between ITE providers are not possible. However, reference to differential achievement and diversity in the wider UK HE sector can be informative in revealing national trends, as opposed to patterns discernible only within an individual institution. Therefore, brief reference has been made to the most recent analysis of student degree classification data for ethnicity from HESA for the academic year 2011/12, published by the Equality Challenge Unit (2012).

The analysis of grading by ethnicity presented here is based primarily upon quantitative data. A limited piece of related qualitative research was undertaken during 2011, and reference is made to findings from this and to the earlier examination of module results. However, where differential achievement has been identified any explanation suggested in this paper is tentative only and for corroboration would need further exploration using comprehensive qualitative research methods.

Ethnicity and findings from the analysis of grading (2012-13)

The analysis for the year 2012-13 included an examination of grades by gender, ethnicity, disability, age and course level. For each of these aspects of diversity, the analysis involved the trainee body as a whole and was not broken down further into the specific cohorts at the University and within the partnership. This is because for many of the diversity characteristics examined numbers in specific cohorts were too small to allow for meaningful analysis. Findings, and the discussion that follows, relate only to ethnicity.

In 2012-13, the ITE partnership involved a total of 14 different ethnic groups. All but one trainee chose to provide information about their ethnicity. The number of trainees in specific sub-groups who chose to identify themselves as BME, i.e. not white, were also often insufficiently sizeable to support robust analysis. For instance, there was only one Chinese trainee, two Bangladeshi trainees and other groupings with very small numbers. However, reference has been made to significant findings where appropriate.

Overall success rates for both full and part-time generic ITE cohorts at the University are consistently high, in 2012-13 at 95% and 90% respectively. Similar success rates were recorded for SfL cohorts, both full and part-time, at 92% and 90% respectively. When disaggregated in terms of ethnicity, the success rates for BME trainees were not found to be significantly different; for full-time BME trainees (31% of the total) the overall success rate in 2012-13 was 92%. For part-time BME trainees (n=20, 13% of the total) the overall success rate was 85%; this result reflects one poor success rate, very much out of line, from one organisation only within the partnership. Nevertheless, BME success rates had improved considerably from the previous year, when only 80% of full-time and 75% of part-time BME trainees achieved overall success. Measures implemented to support enhanced success for all trainees following previous grading analyses may have had an impact on overall improvement. These measures will be outlined later in the paper.

What the analysis of observation results by ethnicity for the academic year 2012-13 did reveal was that significant differences in *ongoing* achievement persist. The analysis of grading draws attention to the *extent* to which BME and white trainees have achieved; as noted above, it reveals very little failure to achieve at all. As in previous years' analyses of graded observations, there was clearly overall trainee progression from observation 5 to observation 8 for both BME and white trainees (see Figures 1 and 2).

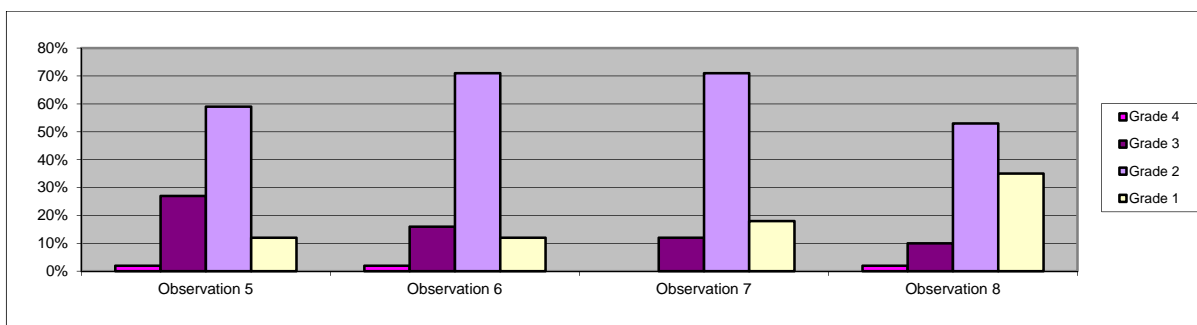


Figure 1. Progressive teaching observation grades achieved by trainees (BME)

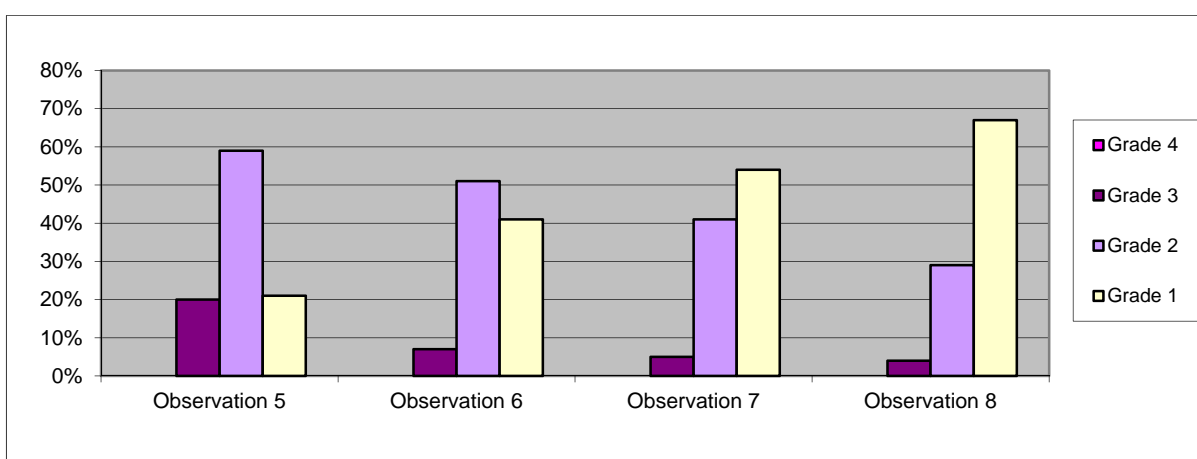


Figure 2. Progressive teaching observation grades achieved by trainees (White)

As can be seen, although overall both BME and white trainees progressed in terms of the percentage receiving a Grade 1 by their final observation, throughout the grading period, a higher proportion of white trainees received Grade 1s than their BME peers. BME trainees were generally assessed as achieving less well than their white colleagues. Differences are most evident in relation to observations 6, 7 and 8 where there were gaps of around 30

percentage points in the award of Grade 1. By the final observation, 67% of white trainees achieved a Grade 1 in contrast to 35% of BME trainees. In overall grades for both practice and theory, white trainees were more than twice as likely to gain a Grade 1 and/or a distinction. As noted, although numbers are small (n=15), no black African trainee received a Grade 1 for observations 5 and 7, and only one (6%) received a Grade 1 for overall practice. This was in contrast to 47% of white trainees.

Grades for observation 8 (final observation of assessed teaching practice)				
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
BME	35%	53%	10%	2%
White	67%	29%	4%	
Totals for overall cohort	60%	35%	5%	

Trainees' final grades: Practice				
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
BME	18%	63%	18%	
White	47%	46%	7%	
Totals for overall cohort	40%	50%	10%	

Trainees' final grades: Theory				
	Distinction	Merit	Pass	Fail
BME	14%	39%	39%	8%
White	34%	38%	26%	2%
Totals for overall cohort	28%	39%	30%	4%

Note: All percentages rounded to the nearest whole


 A gap of more than 10%, drawing attention to higher achievement by white trainees

Table 2. Grading by ethnicity (2012-13): University full and part-time cohorts (PGDE/PDE)

The UK HESA analysis for 2011-12 (ECU, 2012) also draws attention to differential achievement. A higher proportion of white students achieved good degrees compared to BME students. In terms of the subject area education, 62.4% of white students gained a first or a 2:1 in comparison with 42.7% of BME trainees (ibid). This reveals a significant achievement gap of almost 20%. It is clear that factors influencing differential achievement in terms of ethnicity are not confined to practice at individual institutions of HE.

Qualitative research findings and discussion

In 2008, before the introduction of grading, qualitative research had been undertaken into differential achievement in ITE. Research methods included focus group discussion with the teacher education team, interviews with the Head of the Library at the University – who had been involved with research into the challenges faced by international students in HE – and with student experience officers. Findings are relevant to the current discussion and reference will be made to them. In the light of the 2010-11 analysis into grading and ethnicity, where differential achievement was identified once again, a very limited additional piece of qualitative research was carried out involving interviews with a representative sample of teaching observation assessors. Interviews, which were largely unstructured, were completed with seven of the assessors who had graded teaching practice observations of the lower achieving BME trainees. Assessors taught on the generic and SfL pathways at the University, and on partnership programmes. A few interviews were conducted by telephone. Assessors were asked to identify factors to account for the lower grades of the BME research trainees. These are summarised below (Table 3).

Factor identified	Percent of BME research group
Teaching is teacher rather than learner-centred	60% (n=9)
English is not the trainee's first language	33% (n=5)
Health issues	27% (n=4)
Family commitments	20% (n=3)
Managing challenging behaviour	20% (n=3)
Teaching at an inappropriate level	20% (n=3)
Plagiarism	13% (n=2)
Other	47% (n=7)

Table 3. Assessor explanations for why BME trainee observations were given lower grades

Of the 15 trainees graded at the lower end of the scale, nine were seen to employ teacher rather than learner-centred methods whilst on their WBE placements. Trahar (2007), in a discussion about working with international students in HE in the UK, draws attention to the use of adult learning theories which '*are informed by concepts that are culturally embedded, drawing on 'truths' from one culture – usually white and Western*' (p. 11). She highlights the ways in which teaching and learning may be conceptualised differently in other cultures. This is borne out by the results of a National Union of Students (NUS) survey into the experiences of black UK-domiciled and international students in HE and FE, which revealed that '*Respondents often described their difficulty in adjusting to the styles of teaching and assessment at their institution, many highlighting that their primary and secondary schooling did not prepare them sufficiently for FE and HE*' (NUS, 2011: p. 22).

There are likely to be occasions where the teaching practice of a trainee is influenced by 'other' ways in which learning has been conceptualised (for a detailed discussion of cultural influences on learning and teaching, see Trahar, 2007). Currently in the UK, participative learning is emphasised and teacher training encourages a learner-centred approach. This has not always been the case, and will not necessarily remain the favoured way of teaching. Because teaching and learning may be conceptualised differently, the teaching practice of a trainee might be influenced by the ways in which he or she has been taught. The following quote from a teacher of English as a foreign language illustrates the potential for misunderstanding:

'...at the beginning of my teaching career in Taiwan, I found it very easy to teach English, but very difficult to get the students to interact with me while I was teaching. Teaching was very easy because the students were well behaved and very attentive. The difficulties surfaced when trying to get the students to interact with me, their teacher. At the time, I did not realize that in Taiwan, it was culturally unacceptable for students to interact with their teacher ...'

(Leveridge, 2008: online)

The findings from the present research, whilst admittedly small-scale, indicate that for some BME trainees there may have been difficulty in moving towards a learner-centred approach. An assessor described how for one of her BME trainees, this was "*a long journey*". The fact that people from different cultures may have been taught in very different ways, and may have learned very effectively, is an issue that merits further exploration, and is one certainly worth discussing within the teacher training classroom and at an early stage in the programme. Tutors might then clarify course expectations about the learner-centred approach adopted in the UK. Where possible, and as appropriate, each trainee is now encouraged to arrange for one of their assessed teaching

observations to be filmed; this provides the opportunity for assessor and trainee to watch the recording together and enables very focused feedback and discussion. The strategy is particularly beneficial where a trainee is not making the progress that might be expected in their teaching practice.

The fact that English was not the trainee's first language was seen as another reason for lower grades. The earlier research undertaken for the University into ethnicity and achievement also drew attention to the standard of written English required by the course as a contributory factor in the relative underachievement of some minority ethnic trainees. Ofsted (2005) has pointed out that:

'Although English remains the most common first language for more than a third of bilingual young people nationally, it is not consistently the language spoken at home. While a significant proportion ... are fluent in English and another language, many – even those who have been in the British education system for a considerable length of time – require ongoing support to develop their academic writing and comprehension skills ...'

(Ofsted, 2005: p. 1)

Bowl (2001) provides an example of how this may be experienced. She tells of a mature student, educated from age 11 in England, whose mother tongue is Jamaican patois, describing her experience of academic writing as follows:

'I can read and understand it, but then you have to incorporate it into your own words, but in the words they want you to say it in ... The words, the proper language ... Maybe it's because I have difficulty pronouncing certain words; I avoid using them so they're not familiar to me. So when I'm writing, I find that because I'm not familiar with the words it's hard to write them'.

(Bowl, 2001: p. 149)

Differences in achievement have been found to be less evident within the Skills for Life cohort. This finding provides support to the notion that English language skill may be a factor in underachievement. Entry requirements for the ESOL and Literacy courses include possession of a Level 3 qualification in English (or equivalent). Applicants who do not possess this must work through a pre-course booklet where skill at this level is assessed. Although seven of the BME research group were identified as using English as a second language, for two of them this was not judged to be an issue. However, assessors felt that for five of the trainees, language was causing some difficulty:

'didn't always appear to understand nuances in language/non-verbal communication'

'some difficulty with pronunciation and written English'

'spoken English quite accented'

'trainee's accent could be difficult to understand'

'trainee needed support with written English'

Previously, trainees had been directed towards support and some had taken advantage of this. However, the earlier research had revealed that some BME trainees might be reluctant to seek out support. Similarly, a National Union of Students (NUS) survey had found that black students *'were often reluctant to approach anyone for academic support because of their perceived bias in feedback and assessment'* (NUS, 2011: p. 25). A formal

'twinning' arrangement has now been established at the University following the marking of PTLLS assignments, whereby SfL trainees provide support with written English and/or ESOL for any trainee identified as needing it, and this is proving effective. An assessor explained how one of her trainees, through working on her English with an ESOL trainee, had improved – not only in terms of her English – but also in relation to a growth in confidence. Support provided is included as part of the WBE hours of the SfL trainees involved.

As identified in the earlier research, a small number of BME women were thought to lack support from their families. One assessor commented on the dual role of one of her trainees, both as a student and as the person responsible for a young family. However, minority ethnic women – including those from the same communities and sharing the same religion – are not a homogenous group, and there are likely to be women from every background who are unsupported in their pursuit of HE. Teacher Educators are well placed to provide encouragement, and where possible, to demonstrate understanding and flexibility, for example, in response to trainees' childcare commitments.

Three trainees appeared to find the challenging behaviour of their students difficult to manage, and their assessors identified this as one of the reasons for their lower grades. These are very small numbers from which to draw conclusions and experience would indicate that behaviour management is likely to be an issue for a number of white trainees. Two of the assessors separately identified a possible contributory factor relating to some seeming BME difficulty with classroom management. One felt that it was an apparent difficulty in understanding nuances in language and non-verbal communication that had made managing challenging behaviour an issue for her trainee. Another assessor expressed the view that because in some cultures to give eye-contact to someone in authority would be found disrespectful, some BME trainees might misread the non-verbal signals of their students as a sign of challenge to their authority. Whether or not this is the case, an exploration of cultural difference and non-verbal communication is of obvious value for inclusion in the ITT curriculum.

There was no evidence to suggest that health issues constitute a factor with specific relevance for BME differential achievement. Neither was there evidence to conclude that judging the appropriate level at which to pitch teaching was a significant factor. Many trainees initially misjudge this.

Two assessors described an early misunderstanding about how to reference on the part of two BME trainees. Both felt that this could have suggested that the trainee was plagiarising. However, this was quickly addressed. It is easier to detect plagiarism in the work of someone who uses English as a second language; however there was no clear evidence to suggest that plagiarism was a factor with special relevance here. All trainees need to be provided with precise advice about correct referencing from the outset, backed by clear examples of what would constitute plagiarism.

The two pieces of qualitative research were limited in scope and neither sought the views of BME trainees themselves. This was because in both instances interviews took place at the end of the academic year when trainees had left the University. In seeking to understand differential achievement, Connor et al (2004) asked about the occurrence of racism and discrimination through their student survey and follow-up interviews. They wanted to know whether minority ethnic students found themselves subject to stereotyping, whether they suffered from '*particular assumptions and behaviour by staff (e.g. "not very bright", "hardworking", etc)*' (p. 69). They found the incidence of racial

discrimination relatively low, with 7% of their sample reporting discrimination. However, they caution that numbers were too small to support generalisations, and that under-reporting may mask the real extent of racism experienced. A 2008 report of the Higher Education Academy into ethnicity, gender and degree attainment highlights findings from consecutive National Student Surveys that reveal discrepancy about assessment in the perceptions of white and minority ethnic students. Whilst 74% of white students agreed that assessment and marking arrangements had been fair, only 64% of Asian students and 66% of black students agreed with the statement. The authors suggest that *'what students think is happening can have a bearing on their study behaviour'* (HEA, 2008: p. 16). The more recent survey conducted for the National Union of Students into the experiences of black students in FE and HE found that *'many respondents commented on the existence of institutional racism and gave examples of black students being given lower grades for assignments'* (NUS, 2011: p. 39). The survey report notes that *'in every National Student Survey since it began in 2005, students from minority ethnic groups are less positive about their course than other students, this includes areas such as teaching quality, assessment and feedback and personal development'* (NUS, 2011: p. 62).

This is indeed delicate territory. Trahar (2007) draws attention to the inherent difficulty within HE of raising the issue of discrimination:

'Most academics would balk at the suggestion that their attitude or behaviour might, in any way, be discriminatory. Such a suggestion is not only provocative but also it does not fit with the liberal values traditionally embraced by higher education. Unfortunately though this can mean that it is difficult to initiate reasoned debate (Back, 2004) about the complexities of the multicultural higher education environment and the opportunities for increased understanding can, therefore, remain subordinated discourses (Koehne, 2006).'

(Trahar, 2007: p. 4)

Certainly, it has been found that people are not always aware of their own implicit attitudes towards, and stereotyping of, different social groups (see Nosek, Banaji and Greenwald, 2002; Crombie, 2003).

What is missing from the analyses reported here are the 'voices' of BME ITE trainees themselves. In order to address discrepancy in achievement and in order to identify the most appropriate support, we also need to understand their experience; we need to hear from them.

Nonetheless, following the analyses, it has been possible to identify a number of strategies designed to promote the achievement of all trainees. Attention has been drawn to the formal 'twinning' arrangements whereby SfL trainees support those who need it; the filming of teaching practice, providing the opportunity for focused assessor and trainee discussion, and an early clarification of course expectations about the learner-centred approach encouraged on the programme. In addition, a re-design of the programme includes a more explicit focus upon the development of trainees' personal English skills for teaching and professional life, and upon the skills involved in promoting positive behaviour in the learning environment. The ongoing monitoring of achievement by ethnicity should enable an evaluation of the efficacy of such strategies in addressing differential achievement.

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