Original Paper

Cultural Diversity: Primary Trainee Teachers' Understandings and Views about Their Preparedness

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to explore primary trainee teachers' views about cultural diversity and their sense of preparedness towards teaching in culturally diverse classrooms, through their teacher training programme. The contribution to knowledge of this study is that still today, trainee teachers continue to be underprepared to teach in culturally diverse classrooms. Moreover, they have limited understandings about cultural diversity, intercultural education and equality in education, which have been mostly developed based on the colourblind approach. Trainee teachers were not satisfied with the preparation they had received and they wished to receive more training in certain areas. However, their willingness and desire to get appropriately prepared were not taken into consideration by the faculty and by their tutors. The type of the course attended does not make a difference to trainee teachers' views and understandings. The prior experience on the other hand seems to influence both factors.

Keywords

cultural diversity, equality, equity, intercultural education, trainee teachers, critical race theory, mixed methods

1. Introduction

Appropriately preparing trainee teachers towards teaching in culturally diverse classrooms might be a big challenge (Lim & Able-Boone, 2005; Sobel, Gutierrez, Zion, & Blanchett, 2011), however, the rapid changes in demographics worldwide, have made trainee teachers preparation for today's increasing diverse classrooms a necessity.

For more than 30 years now, many authors have highlighted the need to appropriately prepare trainee teachers towards teaching in culturally diverse classrooms (Allard & Santoro, 2006; Burstein & Cabello, 1989; Lim & Able-Boone, 2005; Lim, Maxwell, Able-Boone, & Zimmer, 2008; Miller &

Fuller, 2006; Mills & Ballantyne, 2009; Smith, 2009; Zeichner, 1992). In the past many schools were found unfamiliar with cultural diversity and the teaching practices that teachers adopted, failed to address the needs of students from minority backgrounds (Burstein & Cabello, 1989). More recent studies have revealed that teaching practices have not significantly improved and educators still struggle to teach in culturally diverse classrooms (Goodwin, 2017). The lack of skills and knowledge teachers have towards teaching in culturally diverse classrooms, might have negative effects on the learning outcomes of students from minority backgrounds (Cartledge, Gardner, & Ford, 2009 as cited in Sobel et al., 2011). For example, it has been revealed that due to the lack of knowledge regarding intercultural education teachers had, they made students from minority backgrounds abandon their own cultural habits and adopt the cultural habits of the mainstream culture (Zotou, 2017).

The need to prepare trainee teachers for culturally diverse classrooms has been widely highlighted in the literature (Goodwin, 2017; Smith, 2009; Stephenson, Anderson, Rio, & Millward, 2009) and is an important step as teachers' preparation is one of the key issues for the education of minority students (Miller & Fuller, 2006; Mills & Ballantyne, 2009; Smith, 2009; Sobel et al., 2011). However, it is still not clear whether universities appropriately prepare trainee teachers for culturally diverse classrooms.

After researching the literature around trainee teachers' understandings about terms relevant to cultural diversity and their preparedness towards teaching in culturally diverse classrooms, it is not clear if trainee teachers feel prepared to teach in culturally diverse classrooms, if they anticipate working in culturally diverse classrooms and, therefore, if they wish and are willing to receive training and knowledge about it. Moreover, it is not clear whether trainee teachers have developed an understanding about terms relevant to diversity, equality and equity, and whether the course trainee teachers attend (undergraduate course in primary education with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) or Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course in primary education) influences their understandings about terms relevant to cultural diversity as well as their sense of preparedness towards teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. This research aims to provide additional evidence and data towards these points. The term cultural diversity will be used to focus on minority students including any form of minority (ethnic minorities, linguistic minorities, cultural minorities, people of colour etc.). However, students from the dominant and the minority backgrounds will be both taken into consideration when looking on trainee teachers' preparation to teach in culturally diverse classrooms.

2. Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology

For this research the Critical Race Theory (CRT) was adopted for data analysis. CRT is a useful tool in the field of education to understand education inequity, and it is a framework that centres students from minority backgrounds by challenging superficial treatments and manifestations of diversity and by criticising the different approaches to education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

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Moreover, a Case Study-Mixed Methods (CS-MM) approach was adopted. Specifically, a case study was carried out and by using a mixed methods approach, both quantitative and qualitative data from different sources were collected to critically examine trainee teachers' preparedness towards teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. Specifically, a questionnaire and interviews with trainee teachers from both primary PGCE and primary undergraduate courses and interviews with trainee teachers' educators from both courses were carried out.

In order to develop the questionnaire, the Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI) was taken as a basis, which was developed to explore trainee teachers' attitudes regarding multiculturalism and diversity (Henry, 1986) and it has been used in other studies which were seeking to address the preservice teachers' awareness of cultural diversity (Barry & Lechner, 1995; Brown 2004a, 2004b; Castro, 2010). Also, other questionnaires that were used in several studies which were also looking on trainee teachers' attitudes, views, perceptions and awareness about diversity as well as, about teaching in culturally diverse classrooms were taken into consideration. Therefore, on the basis of the literature of the CDAI (Brown 2004a, 2004b; Hagan & McGlynn, 2004; Lander, 2011; Wasonga, 2005), and on questions previously used for similar researches (Barry & Lechner, 1995; Taylor & Sobel, 2001; Tsigilis, Tsioumis & Gregoriadis, 2006), a 16-item closed questionnaire was developed. For this research, semi-structured interviews were carried out, which means that there were some sample questions and then more questions were developed during the interview with each participant.

Research indicates that the location of the university is an important factor for trainee teachers' preparation to teach in culturally diverse classrooms in terms of the course content that they are offered (e.g., Lander, 2011). Therefore, in order to find out whether the findings of this research confirm (or not) existing findings regarding trainee teachers' understandings of terms relevant to cultural diversity and their views about their preparation to teach in culturally diverse classrooms, a British university that is located in a geographical area with relatively low diversity was selected, however, the diversity has been rapidly increasing for the last 20 years.

3. Participants

A total of 101 trainee teachers attending either an undergraduate course in primary education with QTS (N=45) or a PGCE course in primary education (N=56), completed the questionnaire. Four teacher educators and three trainee teachers who were attending the undergraduate course participated in the face to face interview, while one more trainee teacher from the same course and seven trainee teachers from the PGCE course participated in the interviews through an online platform due to their limited time to participate in the face to face interviews. Randomly selected pseudonyms were selected for all participants (Table 1).

Table 1. The Participants

Name	Position	Course
Tony	Teacher educator	PGCE
Simon	Teacher educator	PGCE
Miranda	Teacher educator	PGCE
Margaret	Teacher educator	Undergraduate
Peter	Trainee teacher	Undergraduate
Jessica	Trainee teacher	Undergraduate
Bill	Trainee teacher	Undergraduate
Oscar	Trainee teacher	Undergraduate
Rachel	Trainee teacher	PGCE
Eleanor	Trainee teacher	PGCE
Jenny	Trainee teacher	PGCE
Laura	Trainee teacher	PGCE
Lisa	Trainee teacher	PGCE
Nicky	Trainee teacher	PGCE
Susan	Trainee teacher	PGCE

4. Results

The CRT framework was adopted to guide this research. Therefore, the comments being made in this article were made based on CRT.

4.1 Cultural Diversity, Intercultural Education, Equality and Equity Education: Trainee Teachers'
Understandings and Programme Preparation

4.1.1 Cultural Diversity

In contrast to other researchers who have found that trainee teachers were fully aware of terms relevant to diversity (Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014), in this research, it is disputable whether trainee teachers had developed an understanding about cultural diversity. As shown in Figure 1 the responses of trainee teachers of whether they felt they had a clear understanding about cultural diversity (Q1) varied.
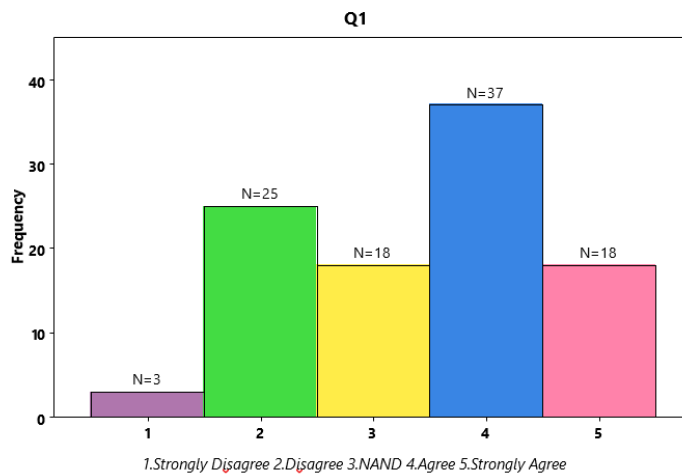
Figure 1. Trainee Teachers' Responses to Q1 (I feel I have a clear understanding about cultural diversity)

The one-way ANOVA, revealed that prior experience had an impact on trainee teachers' understanding about cultural diversity (Q1), and those with enough and high prior experience in diverse contexts felt that they had a clear understanding about cultural diversity contrary to trainee teachers with no or low prior experience in diverse contexts (p=0.001) (Figure 2). In this research, prior experience in diverse contexts involves trainee teachers as students going to diverse schools or living in diverse neighbourhoods, having friends from culturally diverse backgrounds, having working experience as teachers in diverse classrooms or having working experience in a diverse environment in any profession.
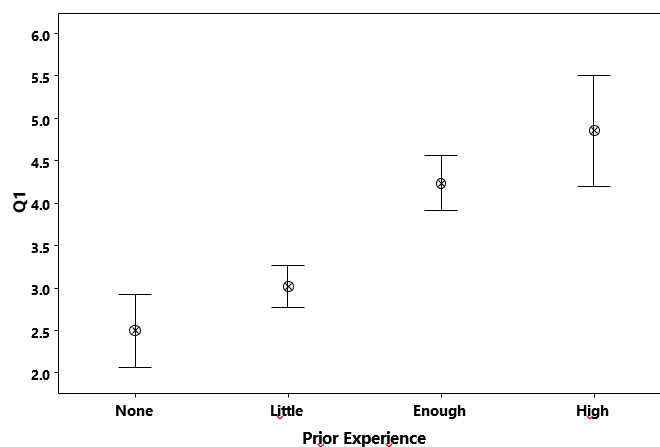

Figure 2. One-way ANOVA for Statistically Significant Question Q1 (I feel I have a clear understanding about cultural diversity) (p ≤0.05) per Prior Experience in Diverse Contexts

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In the interviews, when asked about opportunities and modules available for trainee teachers to develop their understanding about terms relevant to diversity, cultural diversity and equality in education, and about teaching in culturally diverse classrooms, all PGCE trainee teachers referred to only one module about EAL students. All undergraduate trainee teachers mentioned that there was nothing offered. In contrast, in the same question, teacher educators, like Miranda said that they "*run a module called reflections on teaching and learning and this is linked to SEN and those sorts of subjects*". Quite similarly, Tony said that they "*do a fair amount of work around working with children with SEN*" and he also mentioned they "*do some work around EAL there are fair number of children in the schools that our students going to who will have EAL and we do have some outside speakers who come in, who work with children with EAL as well*". The fact that both Tony and Miranda referred to modules for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) when they were asked about trainee teachers' opportunities to develop their understanding about cultural diversity might indicate a tendency to associate students from minority backgrounds with students with SEN. This is in line with previous research, where participants were found to associate ethnic minorities with students with "sensory or physical handicaps" (Moliner Garcia & Garcia Lopez, 2005, p. 436). Hence, it seems that both tutors had a deficit understanding of diversity.

Another tutor, Margaret, in the same question said that "*cultures are woven into all the things that we are teaching, so they will have awareness of that. They'll have their music module, they'll have you know presumably an awareness of different cultural influences on the music*".

Quite often in the literature, people were found to produce an "exotism" by referring to "different food", "different music", "different customs" to refer to diversity and to people from minority backgrounds, which has been found to be a form of "othering". Similarly, here the fact that Margaret referred to music modules and awareness of different cultural influences on music, when asked if trainee teachers had the chance to learn about cultural diversity, indicates the usage of the "othering" language.

4.1.2 Intercultural Education

Trainee teachers felt that they did not have a clear understanding of intercultural education.

In the questionnaire trainee teachers felt uncertain of whether they feel they have a clear understanding of intercultural education (Q2) (Figure 3).
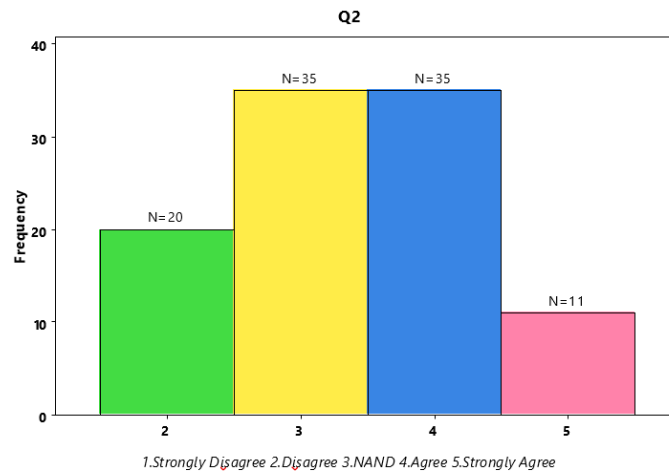
Figure 3. Trainee Teachers' Responses to Q2 (I feel I have a clear understanding about intercultural education)

The one-way ANOVA test, demonstrated that trainee teachers with high prior experience in diverse contexts felt that they had a clear understanding about intercultural education (p=0.036) (Figure 4).
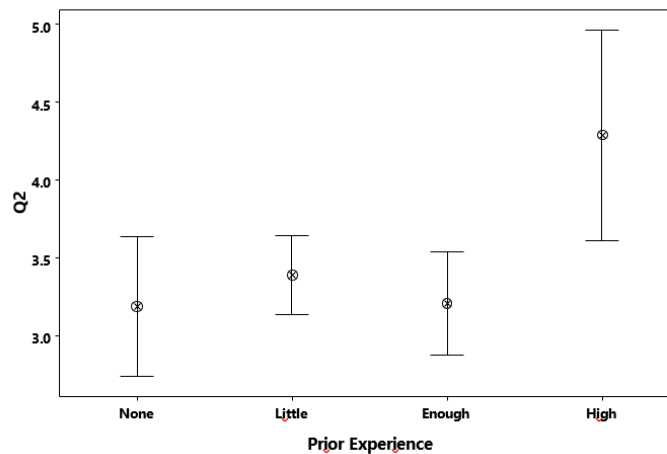

Figure 4. One-way ANOVA for Statistically Significant Question Q2 (I feel I have a clear understanding about intercultural education) (p ≤0.05), per Prior Experience in Diverse Contexts

The limited understandings of intercultural education became evident through the open question in the questionnaire asking trainee teachers about the key issues of intercultural education, where their responses were quite vague. Specifically, 45 trainee teachers did not provide an answer at all, while 13 indicated that they did not know what intercultural education entails.

It is noteworthy to mention one response that some trainee teachers provided as the key issues of intercultural education: "*Maintaining the identity of the UK, whilst catering for other children's needs*".

This finding seems to be in line with the research of Elton-Chalcraft, Lander, Revell, Warner and Whitworth (2017), in which trainee teachers referred to the importance of retaining the British identity and were worried about Britain losing its identity on the grounds that "it became more ethnically diverse" (p. 39). Similarly, some trainee teachers in the current research referred to the importance of retaining the British identity as one of the key issues of intercultural education, which might indicate that some trainee teachers held an assimilationist approach in their teaching, according to which, minority students are obliged to abandon their own cultures and languages and become identical with the majority of students (Tomlinson, 2008; Zotou, 2017). Thus, by adopting the assimilationist approach, minority students have to be absorbed in the 'dominant' culture (Borooah & Mangan, 2009) by ignoring not only the needs of students from minority backgrounds but also the students per se (Watt, 2006). This does not indicate that trainee teachers had negative attitudes or views towards intercultural education and cultural diversity, but it indicates that they probably did not receive appropriate training through their course to appropriately teach in culturally diverse classrooms, and to adopt the most appropriate approach in their teaching. Hence, it is disputable which approach (assimilation, colourblind, integration etc.) trainee teachers were encouraged to adopt in their training programmes.

4.1.3 Equality and Equity in Education

In contrast to Q1 and Q2, the majority of trainee teachers felt that they had a clear understanding of equality (Q3) and equity in education (Q4) (Figure 5).
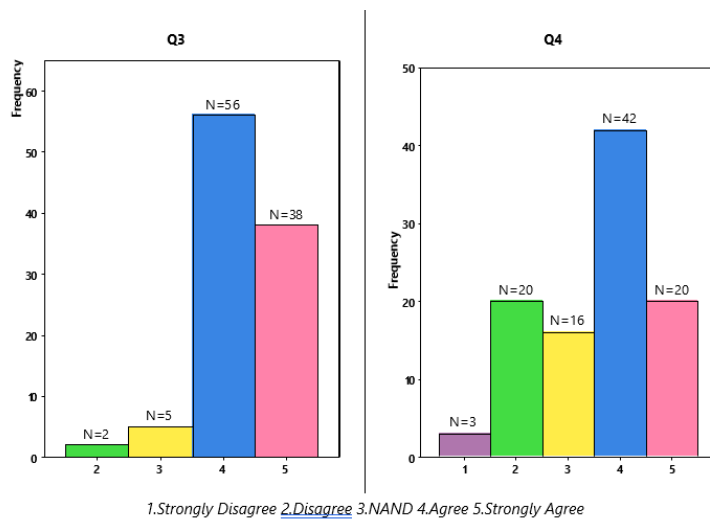

1.Strongly Disagree 2.Disagree 3.NAND 4.Agree 5.Strongly Agree

Figure 5. Trainee Teachers' Responses to Q3 (I feel I have a clear understanding about equality in education) and Q4 (I feel I have a clear understanding about equity in education)

While 94 out of 101 trainee teachers felt that they had an understanding about equality in education, in the open question that was included in the questionnaire, when asked to provide their key issues about equality in education, 30 out of 101 trainee teachers did not provide an answer, and 8 mentioned that

they did not know what the term equality entails. Other trainee teachers defined the term as equal opportunities and inclusion, while other trainee teachers defined it as "*giving all children the same*" and some others as "*disadvantaged children are not making as much progress*". The fact that some trainee teachers cited "*all children the same*" as the key issue of equality in education, alongside the fact that some trainee teachers were either unsure or felt that they did not have an understanding about equity in education indicates that they may tended to adopt a colourblind approach in their teaching, by seeing no differences between children. When adopting a colourblind approach, the ways the inequalities enact are ignored too (Winant, 2006). Specifically, the colourblind approach maintains that all students, regardless of their background, should be treated and educated equally, and all differences between children should be ignored, encouraging teachers to "see only children". However, when teachers have such an attitude of seeing only children, and treating all children similarly, in reality such an attitude conceals a "dysconscious racism" (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Moreover, by ignoring the differences between children, the different needs children have are also ignored and, therefore, the concept of equity does not exist in the colourblind approach. In order for trainee teachers to be prepared to teach in culturally diverse classrooms, they should be able not only to acknowledge and understand but also to address the different needs that all students have, because if trainee teachers are not prepared to provide the support each student from minority backgrounds needs, can lead to systematic discrimination (Hachfeld, Hahn, Schroeder, Anders, & Kunter, 2015).

Moreover, the fact that some trainee teachers defined the term as "*disadvantaged children are not making as much progress*", indicates that some trainee teachers tended to have lower expectations of minority students, which could be partially explained by the cultural deficit model, according to which, students from minority backgrounds are viewed as disadvantaged and their cultures are perceived as deficient, as their cultural backgrounds are different to the dominant majority students' culture (Banks, 2014; Song & Mary Pyon, 2008).

4.1.4 Importance of Teaching about Issues of Diversity and Equality in Education

Tony, a teacher educator, when he was asked about the importance of modules relevant to cultural diversity, amongst everything else, said that "*the sort of ideal module we put forward to students, is that you treat all children as children and that you need to be effectively colourblind, race-blind, gender-blind, disability-blind, but also recognising that there is a naivety inside of that and that it's not as simple as just saying we treat all children the same, it must be ideally giving all children the same opportunities to succeed*".

Previously, concerns were raised regarding which approach trainee teachers were encouraged to adopt through their training programmes, as some trainee teachers were found to have assimilationist and colourblind attitudes, and the majority were found to have a limited understanding of intercultural education. However, through the interview with Tony it became clear that trainee teachers were encouraged to adopt a colourblind approach in their teaching, seeing "*only children*" and seeing all

children as being the same. Tony said that they tried to make trainee teachers colourblind, and he also referred to equity in education. However, the concept of equity almost does not exist when adopting the colourblind approach, as this approach ignores the differences between students and therefore it ignores the different needs they might have. Although he said that he did not mean treating all children the same but giving all children the same opportunities, this is still a sign of ignoring the different needs of students. Providing the same opportunities to all students while the needs and difficulties they have, and the support they require, would be different, means that opportunities would not be appropriately deployed so that all students achieve their full learning potential. Another teacher educator, Margaret, when asked what she thought about trainee teachers' preparation towards cultural diversity, replied: "*I don't know, I don't know what you do in a multicultural classroom, that's much different from teaching in a classroom that's good instruction*".

When asked whether the educational standards are lower in schools where there is high cultural diversity (Q5), trainee teachers' responses were not very clear (Figure 6). This result is in contrast with Barry and Lechner's (1995) study, where the results were clearer and the majority of the trainee teachers in that research (71.3%) disagreed, with a similar statement of whether "too much diversity lowers the educational standards" (Barry & Lechner, 1995, p. 159).
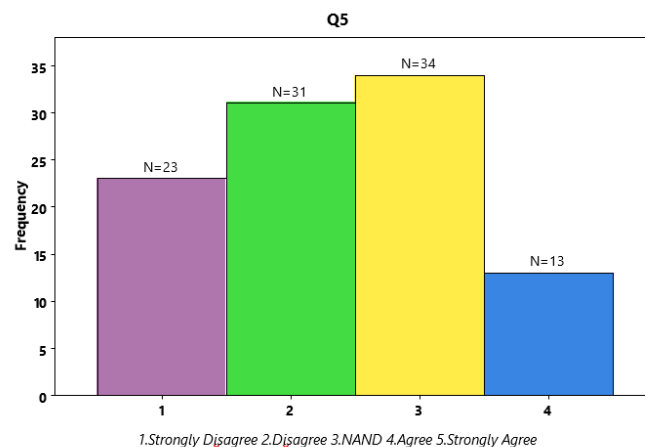

1.Strongly Disagree 2.Disagree 3.NAND 4.Agree 5.Strongly Agree

Figure 6. Trainee Teachers' Responses to Q5 (In schools where there is high cultural diversity the educational standards are lower for all students)

4.2 Modules and Programme Preparation towards Teaching in Culturally Diverse Classrooms and Developing an Understanding about Cultural Diversity: Trainee Teachers' Views

As shown in Figure 7, it is not quite clear whether trainee teachers felt well prepared to teach in culturally diverse classrooms (Q6) as their views varied. Similarly, it is not quite clear whether trainee teachers felt confident addressing a racist incident in their classroom (Q7) (Figure 7).

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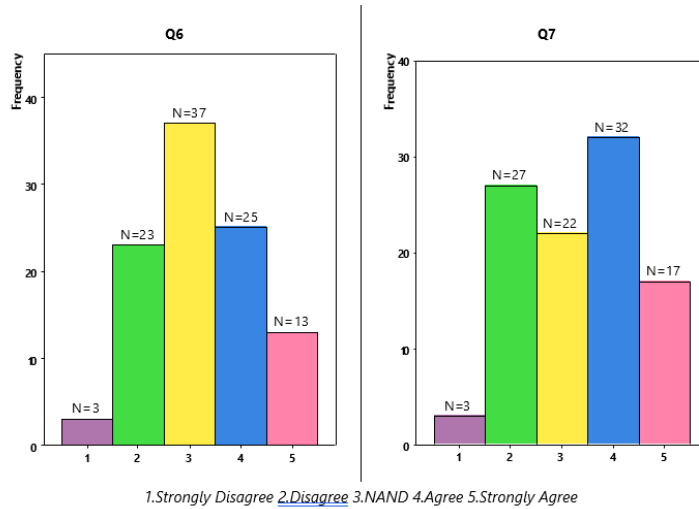*1.Strongly Disagree 2.Disagree 3.NAND 4.Agree 5.Strongly Agree*

Figure 7. Trainee Teachers' Responses to Q6 (I feel well prepared to teach in culturally diverse classrooms) and Q7 (I feel confident to address a racist incident in my classroom)

Q6 had a correlation (p=0.023) with trainee teachers' prior experience in diverse contexts. Specifically, trainee teachers with high prior experience felt well prepared to teach in culturally diverse classrooms, while trainee teachers with enough and little prior experience were found to be mostly unsure. Trainee teachers with low prior experience in diverse contexts were either unsure or disagreed with the statement (Figure 8).
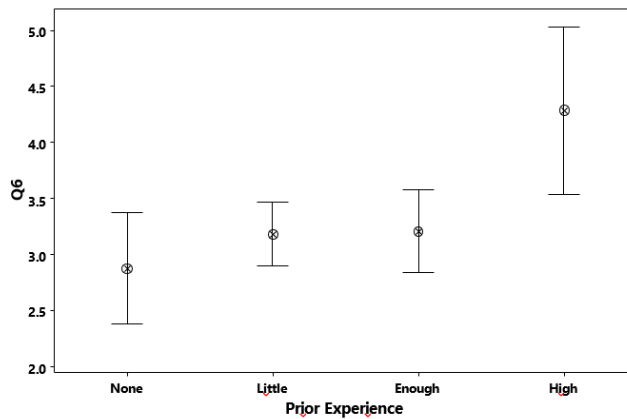

Figure 8. One-way ANOVA for Statistically Significant Question Q6 (I feel well prepared to teach in culturally diverse classrooms)

Trainee teachers and teacher educators teaching on teacher training programmes were asked in the interviews how their training programmes had prepared trainee teachers to deal with racist incidents. Teacher educators believed that trainee teachers got sufficient training towards addressing racism in

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their classrooms through training about bullying or child protection. In contrast, all trainee teachers said that their training programmes had not prepared them to deal with racism in their classroom.

As shown in Figure 9, 38 trainee teachers either disagreed (N= 31) or strongly disagreed (N=7) when asked whether they felt that their teacher training programmes had equipped them with techniques for effectively teaching children whose cultural backgrounds are different from theirs (Q8), 30 trainee teachers either agreed (N=25) or strongly agreed (N=5) with the same statement, while 33 trainee teachers were unsure. This result is quite similar to Barry and Lechner's (1995), in which trainee teachers' responses varied and specifically, 39.7% of the trainee teachers in their research disagreed with the statement, 30.1% were undecided and 30.2% agreed that their training programme had equipped them with techniques for effectively teaching children whose cultural backgrounds are different to theirs.

In Q9 of whether trainee teachers felt that their training programmes had taught them different communication styles which will help them to communicate with students from minority backgrounds, 41 trainee teachers either agreed (N=37) or strongly agreed (N=4), 38 trainee teachers either disagreed (N=32) or strongly disagreed (N=6) and 22 trainee teachers were unsure (Figure 9). This finding is again similar to Barry and Lechner's (1995), where 35.4% of the trainee teachers felt that their training programme did not help them to communicate with students from minority backgrounds, 24.7% were undecided and 39,7% felt that their training programme had prepared them for communicating with students from minority backgrounds.

In Q10, which asked whether trainee teachers felt that their teacher training programmes had taught them different communication styles which will help them to communicate with the families of students from minority backgrounds, 45 trainee teachers either disagreed (N=38) or strongly disagreed (N=7), while 36 trainee teachers neither agreed nor disagreed, and only 20 out of 101 either agreed (N=18) or strongly agreed (N=2) (Figure 9). While the statement in Q10 was quite similar to the statement in Q9, there was a difference in trainee teachers' responses who were found to feel more unprepared or undecided when asked about their preparation regarding communication styles in order to communicate with the families of students from minority backgrounds. Once again, this result is consistent with Barry and Lechner (1995) and interestingly in this research there were also differences in these two questions. Specifically, in this research, 60.3% of the trainee teachers did not feel that their training programme prepared them towards communicating with families of students from minority backgrounds. 24.7% were undecided and 15.1% felt that they were trained for that through their training programme.

1.Strongly Disagree 2.Disagree 3.NAND 4.Agree 5.Strongly Agree
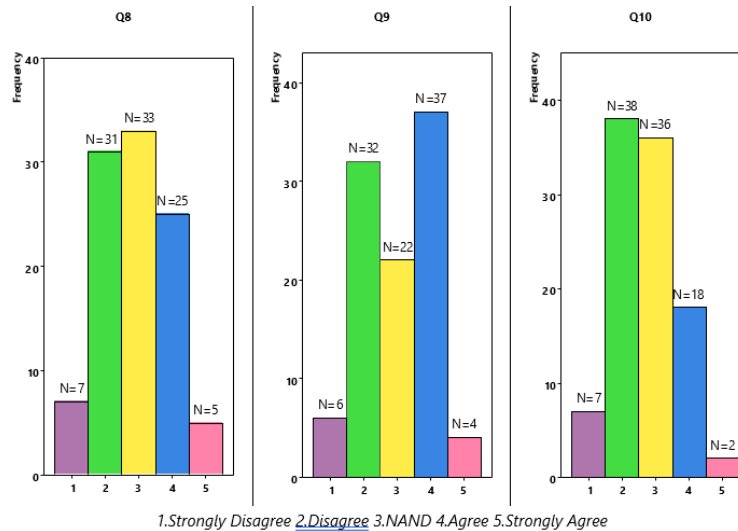
Figure 9. Trainee Teachers' Responses to Q8 (My teacher training programme has equipped me with techniques for effectively teaching children whose cultural backgrounds are different from my own), Q9 (My teacher training programme has taught me different communication styles which will help me to communicate with students from minority backgrounds) and Q10 (My teacher training programme has taught me different communication styles which will help me to communicate with the families of students from minority backgrounds)

Trainee teachers' views about whether they felt that after completing their training programmes they would be sufficiently prepared to meet the educational needs of students from minority backgrounds (Q11) varied. Moreover, they were found to feel that lectures in their training programmes were not sufficient to prepare them for teaching in culturally diverse classrooms (Q12) (Figure 10).

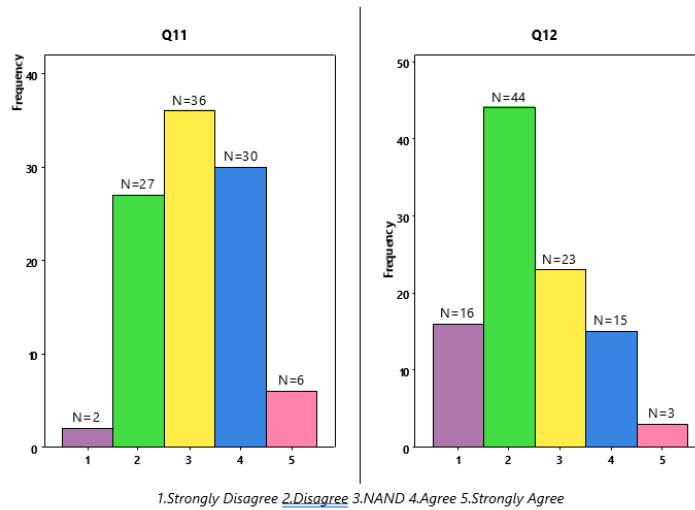1.Strongly Disagree 2.Disagree 3.NAND 4.Agree 5.Strongly Agree

Figure 10. Trainee Teachers' Responses to Q11 (When I complete my training programme, I will be sufficiently prepared to meet the educational needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds) and Q12 (Lectures on my training programme are sufficient in order to prepare me for teaching in culturally diverse classrooms)

4.3 Areas for Improvement/Additional Training

The majority of trainee teachers felt that they would like to receive more training in ways of creating effective learning environments for every student (Q13) (Figure 11).

1.Strongly Disagree 2.Disagree 3.NAND 4.Agree 5.Strongly Agree
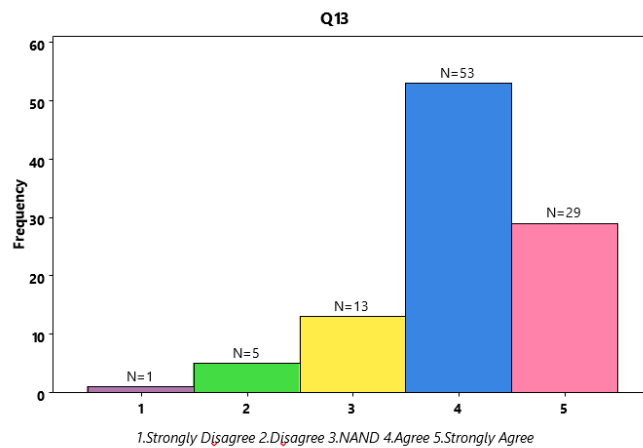
Figure 11. Trainee Teachers' Responses to Q13 (I would like to receive more training in ways of creating an effective learning environment for every student)

Trainee teachers were also asked if they wished to receive more training in all of those areas mentioned in Q8-Q10 (Q14), where the vast majority of trainee teaches agreed. Moreover, the majority of trainee

teachers felt that their training programmes needed to be reformed in order to better prepare them to teach in culturally diverse classrooms (Q15) (Figure 12). These findings indicate, apart from the lack of available modules, that the few modules offered to trainee teachers might lack conceptual depth. This is in line with previous research where it was found that while trainee teachers were offered modules relevant to diversity, the modules were either lacking conceptual depth (Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014) or they defined diversity very broadly (Garmon, 2004).

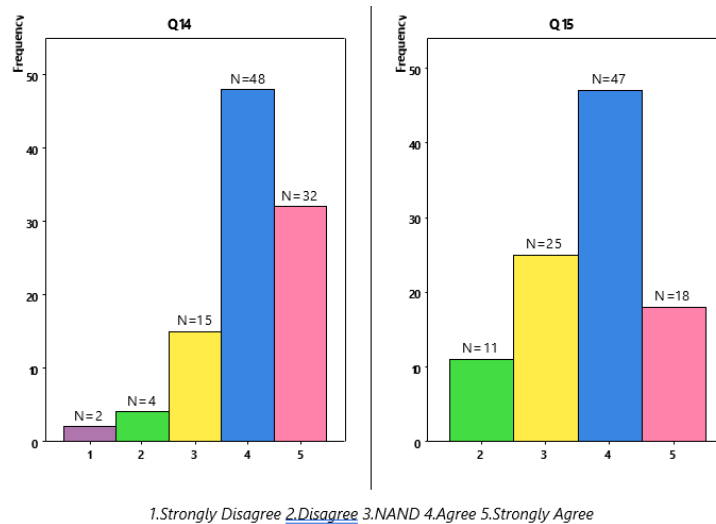1.Strongly Disagree 2.Disagree 3.NAND 4.Agree 5.Strongly Agree

Figure 12. Trainee Teachers' Responses to Q14 (I would like to receive more training in all the aforementioned issues (Q8- Q10) and Q15 (The current program needs to be reformed in order to equip me with the appropriate knowledge and skills to teach in culturally diverse classrooms)

In the interviews, all trainee teachers from both courses mentioned certain areas that they felt that needed to be improved in their training programmes and many areas in which they wished to receive additional training, which would enhance their preparation towards teaching in culturally diverse classrooms, such as: parental involvement; school selection; teaching strategies; addressing bullying and racist incidents. In contrast, teacher educators were mostly satisfied with the teacher training programmes towards teaching in culturally diverse classrooms saying that they "*can always do more*", while Margaret said that she did not know "*what the answer is for that*".

All participants were asked whether trainee teachers had the opportunity to express their thoughts about receiving additional training towards working in culturally diverse classrooms. Some trainee teachers said that they had this chance through the evaluation of every module in the end of every module. Some of teacher educators said that trainee teachers did not expresses their thoughts to them while others like Miranda said that "*when they answered the questions at the end of the programme and we asked them about how they felt equipped to work with children to whom English is an Additional Language, how they felt about you know working within that diverse societies, often they would put*

quite low score".

Similarly, Tony said: "*if we look back at our NQT feedback data although that is quite sketchy data, we do our own active surveys, certainly our students talk about they wanted to have more opportunities to work with EAL students during their training I certainly know they picked up on*".

Previously, when asked about the opportunities trainee teachers have to develop their understandings about cultural diversity, amongst everything else Tony said that they made efforts and he was certain that trainee teachers received appropriate preparation to teach EAL students. However, here, he said that trainee teachers claimed that they wanted to have more opportunities to work with EAL students. Both trainee teachers from the PGCE course and teacher educators in the interviews said that they had a module about teaching EAL students when they were asked about the modules available to trainee teachers. However, here, Miranda said that trainee teachers scored low in the question of how far they felt prepared to teach EAL students and Tony said that trainee teachers felt that they needed more opportunities to teach EAL students. This is further evidence for what was argued earlier, that trainee teachers might be offered some modules about teaching in diverse classrooms, but these modules are very few, broad and seem to lack conceptual depth. Further evidence for this is the fact that teacher educators said that they covered the area of addressing racism in their classrooms through modules about bullying but trainee teachers mentioned that they wished to receive additional training in order to address racist incidents and bullying in their classrooms.

4.4 Placements/Location

The majority of trainee teachers agreed that conducting placements in a wide range of schools would enhance their preparedness to teach in culturally diverse classrooms (Q16) (Figure 13). This result is consistent with Hagan and McGlynn (2004) who found the majority of trainee teachers in their study (85%) felt that their preparation would be enhanced if their placements were conducted in a wide range of schools.
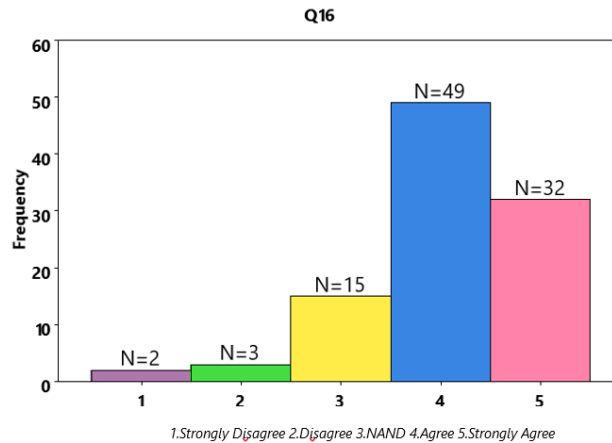
Figure 13. Trainee Teachers' Responses to Q19 (Conducting teaching practice in a wide range of schools, would enhance my preparedness to teach in culturally diverse classrooms)

In the interviews, both trainee teachers and teacher educators were asked about trainee teachers᾽ placements. Specifically, they were asked how important they considered conducting placements in a range of schools to be for their preparation, and whether all trainee teachers had the opportunity to conduct placements in culturally diverse classrooms. While both trainee teachers and teacher educators agreed that it is very important to conduct placements in a range of schools, their views contradicted each other in terms of the opportunities trainee teachers had to conduct their placements in a range of schools.

Specifically, all PGCE trainee teachers mentioned that they did not have the chance to conduct placements in diverse classrooms, and that they did not have any experience towards teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. Jessica, an undergraduate trainee teacher, said that she did have some experience in one of her placements. Bill and Peter from the undergraduate course said that they did not have the chance to conduct placements in diverse classrooms. Oscar also said that he did not have the chance to conduct placements in diverse schools but gained that experience, while working in the country that he was born in.

Contrary to what trainee teachers said, Simon said that they made efforts to make a balance so that all trainee teachers were getting some experience and so that there were no trainee teachers whose placements were only in non-diverse classrooms. However, he said that it was very difficult to make sure that all trainee teachers had such an experience.

Tony, who also was a teacher educator said that they tried to place trainee teachers in a range of schools, but not because of diversity, but mainly due to differences in socioeconomic status. Specifically, he said: "*So they might have one school in east end of the city where is more socially deprived, there are children with lower socioeconomics.... Now those schools will have different kinds of populations and certainly not want to overgeneralise but generally are more diverse populations are lower*

socioeconomic areas".

The fact that Tony assumed that students from minority backgrounds would belong to low socioeconomic groups seems to be consistent with what was argued in the literature, where middle-class people were assumed to have a White background, while Black people where assumed to be working class (Rollock et al., 2015 as cited in Gillborn, 2015).

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The aim of this research was to explore primary trainee teachers' views about cultural diversity and their sense of preparedness towards teaching in culturally diverse classrooms and to provide additional evidence and data towards certain points that were found ambiguous in the literature (if trainee teachers feel prepared to teach and if they anticipate working in culturally diverse classrooms; if they wish and are willing to receive training and knowledge about it; if they have developed an understanding about terms relevant to diversity, equality and equity; whether the course trainee teachers attend influences their understandings about terms relevant to cultural diversity as well as on their sense of preparedness towards teaching in culturally diverse classrooms).

The findings of this research indicate that the type of course (PGCE or BA with QTS) that trainee teachers attend does not make a difference to trainee teachers' feeling of preparedness or their understandings of key terms, including cultural diversity, equality and equity in education and intercultural education. In contrast, it seems that the trainee teachers' prior experience in diverse contexts had an impact on their understanding about issues relevant to cultural diversity and on their sense of preparedness towards teaching in diverse classrooms. Contrary to previous researches (Acquah & Commins, 2013; Bodur, 2012), in this research it was revealed that the stage of the programme or the year trainee teachers were in, did not influence their views about cultural diversity. Hence, despite the fact that the research took place near the end of the academic year, so that trainee teachers would have already completed most of their training programme, and undergraduate trainee teachers were all in their last year, so that they would have more experience and potentially had attended more modules about cultural diversity, it was found that the majority of trainee teachers in this research did not develop a clear understanding through their training programmes, and they had quite broad and vague understandings about cultural diversity.

The findings of this research, seem to be consistent or to contradict with quite old researches in many cases which raises concerns about the improvements that have been made in teacher training programmes towards teaching in diverse classrooms. Such examples are: the fact that majority of trainee teachers had a limited understanding of intercultural education which is in line with Vassilchenko and Traberg (2000), where trainee teachers were also found to have a limited understanding of intercultural education; the research findings in Q8, Q9 and Q10 which are consistent with Barry and Lechner (1995); the fact that the research findings in Q5 of whether the educational

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standards are lower in schools where there is high cultural diversity are in contrast with Barry and Lechner's (1995) study, where the results were clearer.

Regardless of the course they were attending and their prior experience in diverse contexts, the vast majority of trainee teachers felt they needed to be better prepared in many areas through their training programmes. Moreover, the fact that the majority of trainee teachers felt that they needed more training through their course in order to teach in culturally diverse classrooms, indicates that they felt that they needed to learn more about diversity, and that they anticipated teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. This is a positive outcome as in the literature, trainee teachers were found to view learning about diversity not important as they were going to work in "monocultural" schools (Hagan & McGlynn, 2004). Similarly, the fact that trainee teachers recognised that there were areas in which they needed to be better prepared is a positive outcome, as in other researches, while trainee teachers realised that they were not offered enough modules and appropriate preparation towards teaching in diverse classroom, they did not wish to receive further training about it (Goodwin, 1994).

Participants found to have deficit notions about diversity, which might operate in a manner that suggests that the "other" culture is weak and deficient, while the "target" culture is strong (Holliday, 2011). These notions create the binary perspective of othering, of "us" and "them", which was also noticeable through the "othering" language that was used from some of the participants. This usage of othering language which is a result of the deficit notions, could be explained by the colourblind approach that trainee teachers were encouraged to adopt, which apart from ignoring different forms of racism, also fails to consider the construction of minority students as "other" (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Both the othering language and the deficit model that quite often happen unconsciously, consist forms of microaggression which are also enacted unconsciously as they are transmitted to people through society and are perceived to be "normal" to most people (Gillborn, 2009). However, they are hidden forms of racism which can cause harm to people (Kohli & Solórzano, 2012). Through these comments it is not implied that participants in this research were being racist, but these are examples of how societies create hierarchies and produce them in hidden forms, which are perceived and reproduced by people unconsciously. These comments also indicate that trainee teachers probably did not receive appropriate training in their course to teach in culturally diverse classrooms. Teachers should believe that all children can succeed, and they should provide the appropriate support to each child in order to achieve this (Ladson-Billings, 2009). They should also be able to acknowledge, recognise and challenge both the obvious but also the hidden forms of racism (Gillborn, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2004).

Certain contradictions were revealed between trainee teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions about many aspects of trainee teachers' preparation towards teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. Specifically, contradictions were found about the modules offered to trainee teachers that would help them to develop their understandings about cultural diversity; trainee teachers' preparation to address

racist incidents in their classrooms; trainee teachers' opportunities to conduct placements in diverse classrooms and their satisfaction regarding the overall preparation towards teaching in diverse classrooms. Hence, while trainee teachers were found to be unsatisfied with all of the aforementioned areas, teacher educators were found to be satisfied. These contradictions might indicate that the few modules available to trainee teachers lack conceptual depth (Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014). Alternatively, these contradictions might also indicate that teacher educators themselves may not be knowledgeable enough about cultural diversity and teaching in culturally diverse classrooms to confidently support trainee teachers or evaluate the effectiveness of the course, which is consistent with previous findings (Hicks, Smigiel, Wilson, & Luzekyj, 2010; Lucas, 2011). The latter is also evident through a number of examples. Firstly, Tony's reference to both the importance of being colourblind and the importance of equity; secondly Margaret's comment that she did not know what to do in a multicultural classroom; thirdly, the fact that some teacher educators did not indicate any areas for improvement, simply saying that they could always do more; finally, Margaret's answer in the same question that she did not know what the answer was for that. This suspected lack of knowledge among teacher educators might be partially explained by reference to the training they themselves were offered when studying at the university. Issues of teaching in diverse classrooms apparently were not crucial at that time and so were excluded from their curriculum. However, as Lucas (2011) has argued, before teaching trainee teachers, teacher educators need to develop their own knowledge and skills about teaching in diverse classrooms so that they can appropriately modify the curriculum. Trainee teachers in this research anticipated to work in diverse classrooms, were positive about receiving additional support and training to be able to teach in culturally diverse classrooms and had the opportunity to express their thoughts that they felt that they were not being appropriately prepared to teach in culturally diverse classrooms. However, it seems that trainee teachers' willingness and desire to get appropriately prepared towards teaching in culturally diverse classrooms were not taken into consideration by the tutors and by the faculty. Therefore, it seems that both the courses need to be reformed to equip trainee teachers with the appropriate skills, techniques, strategies to effectively teach in culturally diverse classrooms. In order to achieve this, issues of diversity, equality and equity in education, should be central to the whole curriculum of teacher training programmes, rather than offering single courses or courses as "add-on" (Bhopal, 2015; Goodwin, 2017; Kumar & Lauermann, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2009). While it might be difficult for teacher educators to reform the trainee teachers' curriculum, it is not impossible to make amendments in order to involve aspects of preparing teachers for culturally diverse classrooms. Instead of reforming the whole curriculum, the faculty could extend the depth of the modules offered and make sure that issues of teaching in culturally diverse classrooms are integrated in the whole training programme. Teacher training programmes should appropriately prepare trainee teachers in order to develop an understanding and show respect for minority students' culture, while trying to implement the historical, cultural and scientific contributions of minority students' ancestors in the classroom

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(Ladson-Billings, 2009). Moreover, trainee teachers should be prepared to create classroom environments in which students' needs will be met, students from minority backgrounds will feel welcomed (Achinstein & Athanases, 2005), cultural beliefs will be shared, and the relationship between teachers and students will be humane and equitable (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Trainee teachers should also be prepared to include students from minority backgrounds in the curriculum, and they should be able to create curricula that are meaningful for the children (Morrison, Robbins, & Rose, 2008) and use students' personal experiences and issues that have a meaning for them (Padron, Waxman, & Rivera, 2002). In addition, trainee teachers should have knowledge about the different communication styles of minority students in order to effectively communicate with them and with their families (Gay, 2002).

The fact that trainee teachers' programmes need to improve continuously so as to meet the demands of today's changing world, has been widely acknowledged. The fact that trainee teachers in this research recognised the need to be prepared to teach in diverse classrooms, indicate that this is a crucial time for radical changes in the trainee teachers' curriculum, where issues of teaching in diverse classrooms would be central rather than peripheral and woven throughout teacher preparation programmes.

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Appendix

Course:	PGCE ☐		Undergraduate with QTS ☐	
Gender:	Female ☐		Male ☐	
Age:				

Prior experience to diverse context: None ☐   Little ☐   Enough ☐   Very ☐

Questionnaire

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I feel I have a clear understanding about cultural diversity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I feel I have a clear understanding about intercultural education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I feel I have a clear understanding about equality in education (in terms of equal access, equal opportunities and equal outcome)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I feel I have a clear understanding about equity in education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

For me the key issues of equality in education are: 🖉

For me the key issue of intercultural education are: 🖉

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
5. In schools where there is high cultural diversity the educational standards are lower for all students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I feel well prepared to teach in culturally diverse classrooms	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I feel confident to address a racist incident in my classroom	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. My teacher training programme has equipped me with techniques for effectively teaching children whose cultural backgrounds are different from my own	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. My teacher training programme has taught me different communication styles which will help me to communicate with students from minority backgrounds.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. My teacher training programme has taught me different communication styles which will help me to communicate with the families of students from minority backgrounds	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. When I complete my training programme, I will be sufficiently prepared to meet the educational needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Lectures on my training programme are sufficient in order to prepare me for teaching in culturally diverse classrooms	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. I would like to receive more training in ways of creating an effective learning environment for every student	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. I would like to receive more training in all the aforementioned issues (Q8- Q10).   ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

15. The current program needs to be reformed in order to equip me with the appropriate knowledge and skills to teach in culturally diverse classrooms.   ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

16. Conducting teaching practice in a wide range of schools, would enhance my preparedness to teach in culturally diverse classrooms   ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Thank you very much for your time and you cooperation!!