

NIACE Development and Research



Key Findings



Photos © NIACE

Non-completers and Initial Teacher Training: Black and Minority Ethnic Student Teachers

Abstract

This project was a result of responding to a request from Focus Consultancy which was looking for an organisation to sub-contract to do a small piece of work around BME Initial Teacher Training (ITT) non-completers. This work was one of two small subcontracted pieces of work, the other focusing on disability and access to ITT institutions.

Both subcontracted pieces were to filter into a much larger piece of work (carried out by two consultant organisations) which was the production a race and disability equality scheme for the Teacher Development Agency (TDA)

Research methodology:

A number of research methodologies were used on this project including:

- Desk-based research and literature review
- Questionnaire dissemination exercise (to a limited number of Initial Teacher Training (ITT))
- Telephone interviews with a small cohort of BME adults.

Key Findings

The main conclusions of the project are:

- ❖ The biggest challenge for ITT institutions is not in ensuring that BME students complete their courses, it is in attracting such students in the first place.
- ❖ The proportion of BME females participating in ITT is three times greater than males.
- ❖ BME students fail to complete their ITT courses for a number of reasons. These can be financial, related to family pressures, or related to the content and lack of support during the course.
- ❖ There is no uniformity between ITT institutions with regard to the role that cultural diversity plays in curriculum terms. Some institutions embed issues around race and culture within the curriculum, whilst others pay it scant regards.

- ❖ There are limited numbers of BME staff working in ITTs. ITT institutions could be more pro-active in taking advantage of legislation to reduce imbalances in staffing terms, the RRAA2000 being the most obvious.

Recommendations

Students are better prepared for ITT courses when lecturers and tutors have a greater understanding of their cultural background and the challenges that they are likely to face as teachers. This being the case, more foundation course should be supported.

Support groups and networks for students once in ITT have shown to be effective, though these function more effectively in institutions where there are enough students to form such networks. In situations where students don't form significant numbers, virtual networks and regional support groups are effective.

Positive Action

- The TDA and the DFES need to support more detailed research into programmes aimed at attracting BME adults into teaching. Various Local Authorities and HE institutions have done this through positive promotion and recruitment campaigns, but detailed sign-posting arrangements need to be put into place thereafter for those interested in pursuing a career in teaching.
- In general terms, and where students are under-represented, ITTs should be more pro-active in taking advantage of the law as it stands with regard to race relations. This would create the possibility of taking a range of initiative to recruit and retain BME student teachers.

Student experience

- As an abstract from the population of student teachers as a whole, BME student teachers differ in a number of fundamental ways, these relate to age, social class culture and motivations for entering into teaching in the first place.
- In relation to the age of the learner, such learners often have a range of additional demands; they may for example have a family and not be able to afford to finish work to be able to train as a teacher. When devising new recruitment and retention initiatives the TDA and ITTs would need to bear this in mind.
- The financial responsibilities associated with age mean that many BME trainees may have to work part time whilst training. The prospect of hardship whilst training to become a fully qualified teacher is one that may well affect levels of participation from BME communities.

Output

- ❖ Report produced as part of a larger piece of work, i.e. Race Equality and Disability Scheme for the Teacher Development Agency.

Funder: TDA, sub-contracted through Focus Consultancy

Duration: September 2006 – February 2007

Project Manager: Lenford White

Email: lenford.white@niace.org.uk

Requests for 'Key Findings' in other formats, such as large print, are welcome. We would be pleased to consider your request.

niace
promoting adult learning

21 De Montfort Street
Leicester LE1 7GE

Tel: +44 (0)116 204 4200/1
Fax: +44 (0)116 2854514
Website: www.niace.org.uk

A company limited by guarantee.
Registered no. 2603322
Registered Charity no. 1002775