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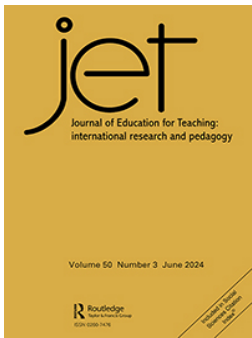
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Published online: 28 Dec 2023.

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Breaking the cycle of couscous pedagogy: Are future teachers empowered to teach in multicultural societies?

Vini Lander[a], Laura Nicholson[b] and Cristina Goenechea[c]

[a]Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds, United Kingdom; [b]Department of Psychology, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; [c]Faculty of Education, Universidad de Cadiz, Cadiz, Spain

ABSTRACT

Despite the increasing racial diversity within British and Spanish societies, teacher education and school curricula continue to be Eurocentric and taught by predominantly White teachers. This quantitative research sought to explore the perceptions of student teachers in relation to their attitudes and preparedness to teach in ethnically diverse school contexts. Data were gathered at two universities, one in Southern Spain and the other in Northwest England. The article employs critical race theory and critical whiteness studies as frames to understand outcomes of an online questionnaire. The majority White student teacher sample across both countries register an acceptance of racial diversity and report the need for better preservice teacher education in this respect. Despite preservice teachers' positive responses to racial diversity, teacher education in both countries fails to equip them for increasingly diverse classrooms. This failure serves to replicate the enactment of whiteness and, does not develop student teachers' stated commitment to racial diversity.

Introduction

This research explores the attitudes of student teachers in England and Spain towards racial and ethnic diversity, their learning about diversity during pre-service teacher preparation and personal perceptions of readiness to teach in multicultural classrooms. Additionally, we investigated whether there were any differences in the responses of student teachers attending universities in England and Spain. Student teachers in England may be more amenable to racial and ethnic diversity given the established history of multiculturalism in Britain whereas it is a more recent phenomenon in Spain. Previous research has revealed that compared to education students in England and America, students in Spain hold more negative attitudes towards racial diversity (Glock, Kovacs, and Pit-ten Cate 2019; Moltó et al. 2010). A more recent exploration of current attitudes is warranted to ascertain changes in attitudes and how this informs initial teacher education (ITE) curricula given the persistent racial inequalities in education.

In Britain, multiculturalism is a consequence of its colonial history and the migrations over decades. Britain has been a multicultural nation since Roman times (Olusoga 2017). The most significant period of migration occurred after World War Two. The shortage of labour led to invitations to British citizens in the colonies to migrate to Britain to fill this shortage. People from the Caribbean, India and Pakistan arrived hoping to build new lives in the 'mother country'. The welcome which awaited them was less than hospitable as they encountered overt racism in housing, education and employment. Nevertheless, they built their lives in Britain and raised the next generation of Black and Brown British citizens. The England and Wales 2021 census indicated 81.7% of the population identified as White British; 9.3% as Asian, British Asian or Welsh Asian; 6.2% as White other; 4% as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African; 2.9% as Mixed or with multiple ethnic group origins and 2.1% identified themselves from an Other ethnic group. The ethnic diversity of the population continues to increase with the fastest increasing group as those with mixed or multiple heritages. It is worth noting that 10.1% of households in England and Wales consisted of members who identified with two or more different ethnic groups (ONS 2021). 34.5% of pupils in England are from minority ethnic backgrounds (Department of Education (DfE) 2022).

In Spain, the multicultural imprint of the colonial past faded over time and its remnants were erased by Franco's dictatorship. For decades, Spain was a country of emigrants due to poverty and lack of opportunities. Since the 1990s, Spain, as a prosperous member of the EU, has become a destination for immigrants from other countries. At present, Spanish people's awareness of the multicultural nature of society is low, particularly in areas with fewer immigrants. It is also an invisible reality as censuses only record nationality, not ethnicity. According to the National Institute of Statistics, Spain has just over 47 million inhabitants, of whom 5 million are categorised as foreign.

Teachers in Spain are getting used to having immigrant children in their classrooms (Moltó et al. 2010). Terms immigrant or foreign, are commonly used in Spain to describe migrants and refers to pupils who do not have Spanish nationality. In 2018–2019 there were 795.525 immigrant pupils in the Spanish education system, but in 2000–2001 there were 141.916, an increase from 2% to 92% (Ministerio de Educación 2021) Gómez Hurtado, González-Falcón, and Coronel (2018, 441–442). comment the, 'presence of immigrant children in the education system has been one of the most significant events to take place over the past 20 years'.

87% teachers in England are White British which is not represented within the pupil population (Department of Education 2016a, 2016b). Such racial disparity and cultural dissonance (Chiu et al. 2017) between the pupil and teacher populations is also present in Spain (Keane and Heinz 2016). Lander and Santoro (2017, 2) argue a teacher workforce 'predominantly white and drawn from the dominant majority is potentially of concern'. The term White signifies people racialised as White. It is not intended to convey homogeneity and we are aware of the complexities of using this term and the large variety of identities it encompasses. Teachers from the dominant White majority share norms, values and dispositions which affect curriculum and pedagogical choices likely to reinforce 'white world views which deny or mask racism' (Sleeter 2017, 162). This has implications for preparing teachers to teach ethnically diverse pupils whose needs are often not met by an education system based on hegemonic interests. To disrupt the perpetuation of race-based educational inequalities 'targeted training' is required for

teachers to understand the impact of their own cultural perspectives in ethnically diverse classrooms (Gillborn 2013, Farrell and Lander 2018).

This paper outlines the literature and the conceptual frameworks of critical race theory (CRT) and critical whiteness studies (CWS). The findings show how teacher education curricula inadequately prepare student teachers in each country to teach in multicultural societies, and how this serves to replicate whiteness and maintain structural racism (Delgado and Stefancic 2001; Gillborn 2010).

Teacher education responses to cultural diversity in Spain and England

Preservice teachers possess 'fragile and tentative professional identities' when starting their teaching journey with a 'thin base of knowledge' (Clarke and Drudy (2006, 383) about their own culture and values which may serve to hinder their understanding of how race and racism can affect the educational outcomes of some Black and Global Majority (BGM) pupils. Preservice teachers' belief in an 'optimistic individualism' (Clarke and Drudy 2006, 283), or the belief in an 'ideology of hope' (Hamovitch 1996), or in the notion of meritocracy (Castro 2010), that hard work and individual merit can overcome structural inequalities based on race, class and gender, or stereotypical views about pupils' cultures and the lack of understanding about how their own ethnicity forms teacher identities merely serve to embed racial inequalities (Miles, Hu, and Dotson 2013; Moltó et al. 2010; Santoro 2009).

In England, the Teachers' Standards (Department of Education 2012) (are statutory and have to be met to gain qualified teacher status), make no reference to teaching in ethnically diverse contexts. Little time is devoted to developing preservice teachers' critical race consciousness, so teachers enter the profession unprepared to negotiate systems which perpetuate the discourse of whiteness (Bhopal and Rhamie 2014; Cochran-Smith et al. 2015; Kohli et al. 2019, Lander 2014; Moltó et al. 2010; Smith 2013). The majority of teachers entering the profession are from the hegemonic majority and attempts to provide critical racial justice education are resisted, deemed unimportant and conversations about racism shut down by some pre-service teachers (Cochran-Smith et al. 2015; Kohli et al. 2019, Marx 2006; Smith and Lander, 2012). There is a 'persistent gap between the intention to educate teachers for multicultural classrooms and the failure to meet the reality … ' (Kohli et al. 2019, 25). This gap is evident in Spain and England (Lander, 2014; Moltó et al. 2010).

There is dissonance between teachers valuing diversity but stating that minority languages, cultures and religion are hinderances to assimilation and educational attainment (Clycq 2017). Teachers in Spain believe students from culturally diverse backgrounds are a problem (Coronel and Gómez-Hurtado 2015, Rodriguez-Izquierdo, Falcon and Permisan 2020) and teachers lack 'professional knowledge' about working in multicultural contexts (Coronel and Gómez-Hurtado 2015, 4). Teachers state a commitment to diversity, affirming racism is bad but stress tolerance can be taken too far (Clarke and Drudy 2006; Pezzetti 2017). Preservice teachers indicate a commitment to multicultural education but hold colour-blind attitudes to promoting student achievement which they believe is an individual problem not associated with skin colour (Yang and Montgomery 2013). Thereby, exemplifying a gap between an ideologically liberal position which assumes a non-racist disposition towards ethnic diversity, whilst considering it a challenge

to address structural racism (Castro 2010; Pezzetti 2017). Such contradictory beliefs are manifestations of whiteness highlighting how it tolerates contradictions (Leonardo 2002; Levine-Rasky 2000). Teachers in both countries are from the White majority and many student teachers enter with a 'thin base of knowledge' regarding their own racialised positions and history (Clarke and Drudy 2006, 374). This coupled with the paucity of their preparation to teach in multicultural contexts sustains racial educational inequalities despite the liberal rhetoric.

The shortcomings of ITE in both countries undergirds existing racial hierarchies, ethnocentrism and white dominance which can be compounded by White student teachers' lack of understanding about their own racialised identity and limited contact or experience with people from different ethnic groups (Keane and Heinz 2016, Lander 2011; Moltó et al. 2010). Castro (2010) contends millennial preservice teachers may well have a greater acceptance of diversity which requires development into critical conscious-ness of structural racism and white privilege. Therefore, an understanding of race and racism should be integrated within Spanish and English ITE (Acquah and Commins 2013; Coronel and Gómez-Hurtado 2015; Davies and Crozier 2006; Flores and Ferreira 2016, Garcia and Lopez 2005, Lander 2014). The reality in each country meets minimum requirements, one lecture and one seminar on race and education (Lander 2011; Lander 2014; Moltó et al. 2010). Increasing the core content on race and racism in ITE curricula through compulsory subjects, mandates this training for all preservice teachers and is preferable to confining it to elective modules (Rubio Gómez, Martínez Chicón, and Olmos Alcaraz 2019; Peñalva and Soriano 2010).

Conceptual frameworks

Critical Race Theory (CRT) forms the epistemological lens that enables the analysis of how racism is embedded and enacted in social processes, specifically in this work to initial teacher education (ITE) in England and Spain. CRT views race as a social construct (Delgado and Stefancic 2001) and recognises structural links between race, power and inequality. It defines racism as not only overt acts of deliberate name-calling, violence or violation, but draws attention to everyday practices that have a racist impact (whether intended or not). A major premise of CRT is that, 'society is fundamentally racially stratified and unequal' (Hylton 2012, 24). It encourages and facilitates an analysis of why racism frequently remains invisible and thereby appears to go unchallenged (Duncan 2002; Ladson-Billings 1998; Rollock and Gillborn 2011). CRT challenges dominant ideologies such as liberalism, neutrality, meritocracy and colour blindness as each encompasses rules or processes which fail to recognise the salience of race and racism and how each contributes to racial inequity within society. These constructs deny racial hierarchies, overlook and perpetuate experiences of inequality (Gillborn 2008; Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995). CRT seeks to expose the 'business-as-usual' (Delgado and Stefancic 2000, xvi) and structural racism premised on racialised assumptions which marginalise those racia-lised as BGM, whilst those racialised as White are assumed neutral or normal.

Whiteness is a social and political discourse referring to attitudes and processes that constitute 'whiteness' as a norm, conferring associated taken for granted privileges and power on dominant groups racialised as White (Frankenberg 1993; Leonardo 2002; McIntosh 1997). Whiteness underpins structural racism and explains the persistence and

perpetuation of structural and everyday racism (Garner 2010). Leonardo (2009, 169). explains, 'whiteness is a racial discourse, whereas the category "white people" represents a socially constructed identity, usually based on skin colour'. White is a racialised identity arising from colonisation and subjugation of those not racialised as White (Bonnett 2000; Dyer 1997). Thus, constituting a racial hierarchy sustained through the maintenance and manipulation of power to advantage those racialised as White. This power results in racism and constitutes 'races' (Bonilla-Silva 2015). Strategies to retain power are deployed at national and institutional level and through individual interactions to maintain whiteness (Bonilla-Silva 2015; Gillborn 2014; Leonardo 2009). Strategies include colour-blind racism which is

> based on the superficial extension of the principles of liberalism
> to racial matters that result in 'raceless' explanations for all sort of
> race-related affairs (Bonilla-Silva 2015, 1364).

Whiteness represents a 'contradictory consciousness' simultaneously presenting an innocence in race-related matters which in itself is, 'contingent upon involvement in racial oppression' (Levine-Rasky 2000, 277). White teachers are normalised into whiteness unaware of their role in the perpetuation of racist structures and practices. The construction of whiteness as the 'norm' within ITE remains unacknowledged and unrecognised maintained through notions of the non-racist, 'ethical good self', niceness, colour-blindness, defensiveness and silence(s) (Picower 2009; Srivastava 2009) as a means to protect white innocence; a strategy used to abrogate responsibility for structural and everyday racism in education.

The study

This study investigated the beliefs of preservice teachers in England and Spain about racial and ethnic diversity in society and to ascertain how well ITE prepares them to teach in diverse contexts. We hypothesised that student teachers studying at the university in England would be more positive towards ethnic diversity than their Spanish counterparts and feel more prepared to teach in ethnically diverse classrooms since Britain has been a multicultural society for longer and students may be more attuned to multiculturalism. We also explored if there were any differences between the perceptions of male and female students. The intake of preservice teachers, within the early years and primary courses, are predominantly female in both contexts. The participants were 154 final year student teachers attending either a university in North-West England or Southern Spain and training across all age phases. See Table 1 for participant details.

Twenty-two questionnaire items were developed specifically for this study to explore preservice teachers' conceptions and attitudes towards ethnic diversity in society and in the education system, in England and Spain as a result of their preparation in their respective universities. Items were based on the literature in the field and the current research objectives. The questionnaire was piloted with eight Year 2 student teachers in England to detect possible areas of ambiguity and to identify any incongruities. It was translated into Spanish and also piloted with eight Year 2 students. This resulted in minor changes to the item wording which were made prior to the main study. Participants rated the 22 statements on a four-point forced choice Likert-type scale, in which 1 = strongly

Table 1. Participant Information.

	English University	Spanish University
Number of participants	58	96
Male	10 (17%)	21 (22%)
Female	48 (83%)	75 (78%)
Age: 20–25	37 (64%)	69 (72%)
Age: 26–30	8 (14%)	18 (19%)
Age: Over 30	13 (22%)	9 (9%)
Ethnicity White British	88%	
British Pakistani	5%	
White Irish	2%	
Black African	2%	
Black Caribbean	2%	
Mixed heritage	2%	
White Spanish		97%
Gypsy		2%
Latin American		1%
Religion: Christian/Catholic	47%	74%
Muslim	5%	-
No religion	48%	26%
Training age phase Early Years (3–7)	5%	39%
Training age phase Primary (5–11)	33%	38%
Training age phase Secondary (11–16)	62%	24%

disagree, 4 = strongly agree, so that a higher score represented a more positive attitude towards race and ethnic diversity. Eleven of the items were worded negatively to avoid response bias and promote deeper thinking (these were reverse-scored). It should be noted, however, that some of the items did not aim to capture a straightforward positive/negative aspect of attitude but instead captured other features, such as opinions on the current situation in society/education.

Ethical approval was gained from both universities. Participants were invited to engage in the research via email. The online link for the questionnaire was emailed to approximately 500 and 600 student teachers at the universities in England and Spain, respectively. The link remained 'live' for a four-month period. The low response rates (11.6%/16%) were mainly due to students being on school practice placements over this period. A participant information sheet placed at the beginning of the survey included full details of the study. It informed the student teachers that participation was voluntary, and that all data would be stored securely and confidentially and reported anonymously. Participants provided informed consent at the start of the survey before proceeding to the questionnaire.

Findings

Development of reliable questionnaire items

Rather than looking at data from single items (of which reliability and validity cannot be estimated), we focussed on examining groups of items students answered in a similar way that might reflect a particular aspect of attitudes (i.e. factor) towards cultural diversity. To do this, we explored the factor structure of the questionnaire items using principal

components analyses. Based on the results of these preliminary analyses, we focused on 10 questionnaire items from which four factors emerged. The items underlying each factor showed conceptual similarity and we labelled the factors: 'Learning about diversity in ITE' (comprising three items), 'Readiness for teaching in a diverse classroom' (two items), 'Diversity in society' (three items) and 'Equality in the education system' (two items). To confirm this factor structure, further principal components analyses were conducted on the data from the two university samples separately. Identical results were obtained. This cross-validated the factor structure and provided evidence for the cross-cultural universality of these four core dimensions of attitudes towards race and ethnic diversity in student teachers (Moltó et al. 2010).

The items within each factor are presented in Table 2, together with the internal reliabilities of the scales and descriptive statistics for the two university samples and for male and female student teachers separately. Three of the factors displayed acceptable-good internal consistency, with the diversity in society factor falling slightly short ($\alpha > .60$ is considered acceptable for exploratory research, Hair et al. 1998; see Table 2). Responses for items comprising each of the four factors were averaged to create composite scores.

Attitudes and perceptions of student teachers towards cultural diversity

Except for one item from the equality in the education system factor ('The UK/Spanish educational system gives the same opportunities to everybody'), the means for all items were above the scale midpoint of 2.5 (where 1 = strongly disagree and 4 = strongly agree). This indicated all students, regardless of the country, or their gender, desired more training on ethnic and cultural diversity; held relatively positive attitudes towards diversity

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of questionnaire items comprising each factor.

Factor/ Questionnaire Item	England		Spain		Males		Females	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Learning about diversity in ITE (α = .71)								
ITE should pay more attention to preparing teachers to teach in an ethnically and culturally diverse society	3.00	0.77	3.57	0.66	3.42	0.56	3.34	0.80
I think it would be helpful to have more lectures on race and ethnicity in university	2.78	0.99	2.91	0.85	2.87	0.92	2.85	0.90
I think it would be helpful to have more practical workshops on race and ethnicity in university	3.10	0.89	3.14	0.83	3.13	0.76	3.12	0.87
Readiness for teaching in diverse classroom (ρ = .76)								
I feel well prepared to work in a diverse classroom, with BAME pupils	2.86	1.03	2.93	0.94	3.32	0.83	2.80	0.98
I feel comfortable working with BAME pupils	3.41	0.82	3.36	0.81	3.52	0.77	3.35	0.82
Diversity in society (α = .54)								
I think it is good for us to live in an ethnically diverse society	3.81	0.55	3.71	0.63	3.61	0.84	3.78	0.52
I think as a society, we have more problems if we have foreigners living here[a]	3.52	0.73	3.44	0.82	3.35	0.95	3.50	0.74
BAME people just need to assimilate into British/ Spanish society and leave their culture at home[a]	3.66	0.55	3.31	0.83	3.03	0.91	3.54	0.67
Equality in the education system (ρ = .69)								
The UK/ Spanish educational system gives the same opportunities to everybody	2.60	0.95	2.18	1.15	2.52	1.18	2.29	1.08
BME pupils receive the same treatment as any other pupil	2.81	0.95	2.54	0.92	2.84	0.90	2.59	0.94

[a]Reverse-scored (therefore can be interpreted as 1 = strongly agree and 4 = strongly disagree).

in society and felt fairly ready to teach in diverse classrooms. Means for the two items reflecting equality in the education system were more centred around the midpoint, which suggests student teachers were more hesitant to agree that the current education system reflected equal opportunities for all. The highest means were found for the item, 'I think it is good for us to live in an ethnically diverse society'. The student teachers, irrespective of their country or gender, were likely to strongly agree with this statement indicating positive acceptance of ethnic and cultural diversity.

The effects of university and gender on attitudes towards cultural diversity

After the removal of one multivariate outlier, MANOVA was used to examine the effects of university (England versus Spain) and gender (males versus females) on the four factors of attitudes towards ethnic diversity captured by our questionnaire. As we did not hypothesise an interaction between university and gender, a custom model was built in which only the main effects of university and gender were tested. Lack of fit tests confirmed a good model fit (all ps > .05), and Box's test showed that the assumption of similarity of variance-covariance matrices was met ($M = 35.63$, $p = .38$). Descriptive and inferential statistics for attitudes towards ethnic diversity as a function of university and gender are reported in Table 3.

There was a statistically significant multivariate effect of university on attitudes towards ethnic diversity. The effect size was medium. Follow-up univariate analyses revealed student teachers from the English university scored significantly lower on learning about diversity in ITE, and significantly higher on diversity in society and equality in the education system, than their Spanish counterparts. Readiness for teaching in a diverse classroom did not significantly differ between the English and Spanish students. Therefore, student teachers from the university in Spain desired more training on race and ethnicity within ITE than those in England, while those from the English university demonstrated more positive attitudes towards diversity in society and were more likely to believe the current educational system was equal, compared to their Spanish counterparts. Effect sizes for the univariate results were in the small to medium range.

Gender also exerted a statistically significant multivariate effect on attitudes towards ethnic diversity, of medium magnitude. Male student teachers scored significantly higher on readiness for teaching in a diverse classroom, but significantly lower on diversity in society, than females. There were no differences in the responses of males and females for learning about diversity in ITE and equality in the education system. Male student teachers declared they were more prepared to work in a diverse classroom, but female student teachers reported more positive attitudes towards diversity in society. Again, univariate effect sizes were small to medium.

Discussion

Student teachers in both countries, were positive about living in a diverse society (Castro 2010; Moltó et al. 2010). They felt prepared to teach in diverse classrooms. But indicated a need for more training and felt comfortable to work with minority ethnic pupils. At this early stage of teacher development their reported beliefs may reflect a social desirability towards diversity reflected in positive professional attitudes and tolerance of cultural

Table 3. Attitudes towards ethnic diversity as a function of university location and gender.

	Learning about diversity in ITE		Readiness for teaching in diverse classroom		Diversity in society		Equality in the education system	
University location $F(4, 146) = 3.69,$ $p < .01; V = .09$	$F(1, 149) = 4.26,$ $p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03$		$F(1, 149) = 0.01$ $p = .94, \eta_p^2 = .00$		$F(1, 149) = 5.61,$ $p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .04$		$F(1, 149) = 5.39,$ $p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .04$	
	n							
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
England	57	2.97	0.77	3.12	0.86	3.70	0.40	2.68	0.83
Spain	95	3.20	0.59	3.15	0.76	3.49	0.53	2.36	0.90
Gender $F(4, 146) = 3.64,$ $p < .01; V = .09$	$F(1, 149) = 0.09$ $p = .76, \eta_p^2 = .00$		$F(1, 149) = 3.93,$ $p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03$		$F(1, 149) = 4.34,$ $p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03$		$F(1, 149) = 1.56,$ $p = .21, \eta_p^2 = .01$	
	n							
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Males	30	3.17	0.58	3.40	0.65	3.39	0.54	2.63	0.92
Females	122	3.10	0.69	3.08	0.82	3.61	0.48	2.44	0.88

diversity but conceal less desirable personal beliefs (Wassell, Reid Kerrigan, and Fernàndez Hawrylak 2018). Through a CRT lens, given the majority of participants were White, their positivity towards cultural diversity could be an expression of white professional liberalism which casts them as non-racist people but reveals a thin white knowledge base about their own cultural power and heritage (Castro 2010; Clarke and Drudy 2006; Pezzetti 2017). If this position is maintained throughout their career the failure to understand the power associated with their own white cultural history maintains disadvantage for those with 'other(ed)' histories.

As hypothesised, the English students reported more positive attitudes towards diversity in society, believed more strongly their educational system was equal and were less likely to desire more training on ethnic diversity, compared to Spanish students (Moltó et al. 2010). The positive attitudes of the English students may be due to acceptance of cultural diversity in England compared to the recent immigration by visible minorities to Spain.

There was no difference in students' readiness to teach in diverse classrooms, therefore our hypothesis can only be partially accepted. These students' readiness may be premised on notions of whiteness within the construct of the ethical, good, non-racist teacher self (Picower 2009; Srivastava 2009) who is tolerant of cultural diversity but uncritical about their own white identities and thus simultaneous positive attitudes to diversity are countered by inaction within classrooms, thereby maintaining the dominant discourse of whiteness (Castro 2010).

Preservice teachers in both countries reported ITE should prepare them to teach in culturally diverse societies. This need for more training may be construed as a desire to be more knowledgeable and more effective as a teacher, or it may be associated with the participants' limited teaching experience and the need for more training in other areas of professional development. A survey of English newly qualified teachers (NQTs) has shown, training to teach pupils from Black and global majority, BGM backgrounds (considered a proxy for teaching in diverse contexts) has been one of the lowest rated of all items since 2003 (Department of Education 2016c). ITE in both countries seems to fail student teachers in this respect. A CRT analysis of this curricula omission reveals how structural racism is embedded within ITE through policy and practice (Gillborn 2005, 2008).

Such is the persuasive and pervasive nature of whiteness that our predominantly White participants from their naïve novice positions, maintained in the absence of critically reflective teaching about race and racism, assume a sense of uncritical comfort about teaching in diverse contexts. The need for more training is juxtaposed with a sense of comfort in working with BGM pupils. Whiteness tolerates such contradictions (Levine-Rasky 2000; Pezzetti 2017). In the absence of qualitative data, we would cautiously contend this comfort maybe an expression of their non-racist teacher self (Srivastava 2009) which Picower (2009) identifies as a tool of whiteness utilised to avert the gaze of scrutiny when discussions of race and racism arise.

We explored gender differences in attitudes towards diversity and readiness to teach in diverse classrooms. Male students held less positive attitudes towards diversity in society but reported being more prepared to work in a diverse classroom, compared to females. Yang and Montgomery (2013) noted female teachers' acceptance of cultural diversity but they operated colour-blind positions with respect to students of colour. That male students reported a greater personal readiness to teach in diverse classrooms suggests they may

have greater confidence and feel more practically prepared than females. Male student teachers display higher self-confidence as teachers in general, compared to females (Kalaian and Freeman 1994). Nevertheless, this is an interesting intersectional finding which illustrates how CRT is linked to the data. Intersectionality is a key aspect of CRT which enables understanding about how race (whiteness) and gender (masculinity) might be coming together in a particularly negative way. We are left asking are females more favourably disposed, and more tolerant of cultural diversity than males? Or is there a toxic white masculinity among male student teachers, that is less positive about diversity and less open to the idea they need to learn more? Without additional data it is difficult to surmise further.

Limitations of the study

This was an exploratory study which devised a new questionnaire specifically to meet the aims of the study. The intention was not to validate a questionnaire for use in future research. However, in our preliminary analyses, we did attempt to ensure our measurement of attitudes in this sample of student teachers was reliable and valid by measuring particular aspects (i.e. factors) of attitudes towards cultural diversity. Four factors were identified that performed relatively well within the limitations of an exploratory study. The diversity in society factor did not meet the accepted threshold of internal consistency, however, this is not uncommon for a newly developed scale (e.g. Opfer and Pedder 2011, used scales with $\alpha = .40$), especially as it comprised only three items (Hair et al. 1998). We also considered it more reliable than a single-item measure. Moreover, as unreliability attenuates effect sizes and reduces statistical power (e.g. Knapp and Daly 2011), the fact that this factor was the only one out of the four to exhibit statistically significant differences for both university and gender renders these results even more remarkable (Wuensch 2006). Future research may wish to further refine and validate the questionnaire with larger, more diverse samples using sophisticated analytical techniques such as confirmatory factor analyses.

It is noted that although only two of the items which were retained for the main analyses were worded negatively, there were an equal number of positively and negatively-worded statements in the total item set completed by respondents, which reduces response bias and increases the potential for highly considered responses. It is possible; however, the student teachers may have given socially desirable answers based on their preconceptions of socially accepted attitudes towards ethnic diversity, which would threaten the validity of the data. Finally, findings for gender must be treated tentatively as group sizes were unequal; four times as many female students than males participated.

In a further qualitative study we aim to gather more data on how well student teachers perceive their respective universities prepare them to teach in an ethnically diverse society in England and Spain and if there any differences between the English and Spanish students' perceptions.

Recommendations for ITE practice

It is clear that deep change needs to occur to embed anti-racism within ITE/ITT to develop student teachers' racial literacy, not just from a cognitive point of view but from an emotional perspective. This includes critical self-reflection on whiteness and systems that

work to promote the interests of whiteness (e.g. Hobson and Wingham 2018, in Arday and Mirza, 2018) and as a first step to support student teachers' learning to enable them to begin to understand how racism manifests itself in multiple ways and gives rise to racial inequities within education and society. It is also necessary to encourage and locate time and space, or if you will 'pockets of possibilities' within ITE courses 'for critical and informed reflections upon race, racism, and anti-racism countering, for example, narratives of colour-blindness, meritocracy and assumptions/discourses of deficit as explanatory factors for education disparities. We hope it [anti-racism framework for ITE/T] will act to prompt initial teacher educators not only to alert student teachers to wider societal and institutional explanations for successes or failures within the schooling system, and to supplement generalisations with lived experiences as exemplifications, but also to understand how not doing so could impact future teachers' behaviour towards pupils and families, with potential serious long-term negative ramifications for pupils' (Smith & Lander 2023, p.39). ITE must work to dispel deficit perceptions student teachers may have of learners' ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Bhopal & Rhamie 2014) because such perceptions can lead to low teacher expectations of Black and Global Majority (BGM) pupils and the repetition of low attainment amongst some BGM learners. Such changes obviously rely on the development of racial literacy among ITE/ITT course providers. The anti-racist framework developed by Smith and Lander (2023) provides guidance on how systemic change in leadership, curriculum and pedagogy in ITE can be instigated and sustained.

Concluding remarks

This study highlights the need for better training for preservice teachers in Spain and England who feel insufficiently well prepared to teach in ethnically diverse contexts. Whilst student teachers are well disposed to cultural diversity in society refusing to accept the media tropes of foreigners and immigrants, they reported a need for more training to teach in diverse contexts. ITE needs to equip them with professional confidence which embeds lasting understanding of how race and racism operate in multiracial societies. It is important for individual providers of ITE in both countries to address this curricula gap. Drawing on CRT and whiteness the desire for more training to teach in diverse societies constitutes a failure of ITE to meet the needs of novice teachers to navigate diverse classrooms with critical race consciousness. ITE fails to disrupt and maintains the hegemony of whiteness in educational discourse from university to the school room. CRT claims such discourses produce racial injustice and sustain white hegemony.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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