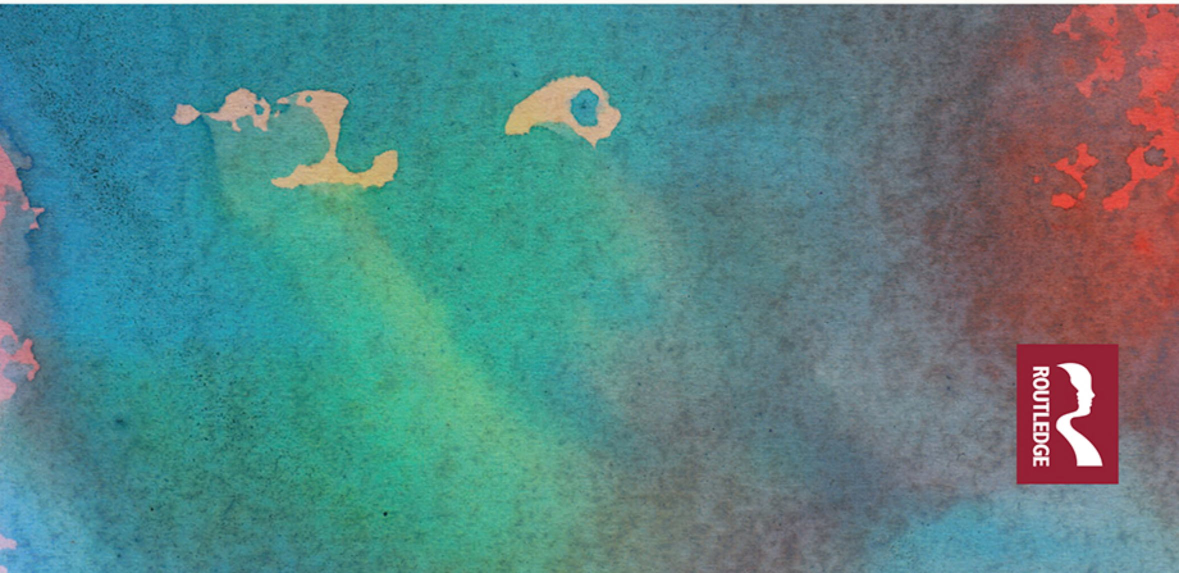
Routledge Research in Educational Equality and Diversity

DIVERSIFYING THE TEACHING PROFESSION

DIMENSIONS, DILEMMAS AND DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Edited by
Elaine Keane, Manuela Heinz and Rory Mc Daid



ROUTLEDGE

This provocative book has much to offer to all those in the international community who are interested in issues related to the diversification of the teaching profession and in issues of diversity and equity in teacher education and schooling. I enthusiastically recommend this book to readers all over the world.

Professor Marilyn Cochran-Smith, *Boston College, USA*

The international and Irish research and policy explored here should be essential reading not only for all initial teacher education students but also for teacher educators, educational leaders, policy-makers and anyone interested in social justice and solidarity. The research-informed principles and their policy and practice implications should also be embedded in the debates of parent organisations, teacher unions and management bodies.

Emeritus Professor Sheelagh Drudy, *University College Dublin*

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Diversifying the Teaching Profession

This edited volume is about diversifying the teaching profession. It is unique in its inclusion of multiple dimensions of diversity; its chapters focus on a wide range of under-represented groups, including those from lower socio-economic groups, Black and minority ethnic groups, migrants, the Travelling community, the Deaf community, the LGBTQI+ community and those of mature age.

The book includes contributions from Australia, England, Iceland, Portugal and Scotland, as well as a number of chapters from the Irish context, mostly emanating from projects funded under Ireland's Higher Education Authority's *Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH): Strand 1—Equity of Access to Initial Teacher Education*.

The book also critically engages the rationale for diversifying the profession, arguing not only that representation still matters, but also that ultimately teacher diversity work needs to encompass system transformation to achieve a diverse, equitable and inclusive teaching profession.

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Diversifying the Teaching Profession

Dimensions, Dilemmas and Directions for the Future

Edited by Elaine Keane, Manuela Heinz and Rory Mc Daid

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For our children
Amalia, Clara, Emilie, Leah, Louisa, Pádraig and Róisín

And partners
Cath, Eoin and Liam

In Memory of Helen M. Keane, who died on 20th August 2021.
Rest in Peace

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Foreword

This is a powerful, provocative and enlightening book about diversifying the teaching profession, a topic that is of great interest in many places around the world. Given the relatively long history of interest in this topic and the fact that failure to diversify the teacher workforce continues to be a problem internationally, *Diversifying the Teaching Profession* will undoubtedly be enthusiastically received. The book's three editors, Elaine Keane (University of Galway), Manuela Heinz (University of Galway) and Rory Mc Daid (Marino Institute of Education, Dublin), have been leaders in research, policy and practice related to diversifying the teaching profession in Ireland for more than a decade. Their book will stand out among others related to this topic for many reasons, two of which are particularly noteworthy. First, as the editors point out explicitly and the chapters in the book collectively demonstrate, the book is based on an unusually broad and rich definition of teacher diversity as a multi-dimensional concept. Each of its dimensions is connected to its own literature and scholarly traditions, which makes the book especially ambitious and complex. Second, the book combines a close look at government-funded efforts to diversify the teaching profession in Ireland with a deep and broad analysis that not only acknowledges that Ireland is somewhat of an outlier internationally in terms of how teacher diversity has been defined, but also situates these efforts within larger aspects of the international problem of teacher diversification.

The editors invited me to write the foreword for this book because of my own scholarship and practice focused on diversity, equity and social justice in teacher education, nationally and internationally. I accepted the invitation primarily because I was so impressed by the rich theoretical constructs and research traditions the editors used to conceptualize the book and because I found the book's architecture, including the titles and topics laid out for each section and each chapter, quite compelling. More personally, I accepted the editors' invitation because Ireland has a special place in my heart, beginning with the rich experiences I had many years ago working with teacher educators, education researchers and doctoral students at St. Patrick's College (now part of Dublin City University). Over the years, I have also had the privilege of presenting keynotes for conferences organized by the Colleges of Education Research Consortium (CERC), the Irish Teaching Council and the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South (SCoTENS), and I have given invited addresses at a number of colleges and universities in Ireland and Northern Ireland. In addition, for a number of years I led seminars about diversity in education under the auspices of Boston College's Irish Institute for groups of academics and educators from Ireland and Northern Ireland. It was at one of these seminars that I had the opportunity to meet Elaine Keane.

Next I highlight two important arguments from the book, connecting them to broader issues in the field and to some of my related work. Here, I do not aim to be comprehensive. In fact, I knowingly leave out many important ideas, confident that the book's excellent foundational chapters—especially the first three and the last two—thoroughly capture both the general essence and the rich particulars of this book.

Representation Matters

In 2004–2005, I had the honour of serving as the President of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and of working closely with my colleague, Ana Maria Villegas, as the national Program Chair for AERA's annual meeting. Based on our shared commitments and our different, but related, research interests, we selected "demography and democracy in the era of accountability" as the annual meeting theme because we wanted to highlight the sharp differences between the demographics of the nation's schoolchildren and the demographics of the teaching force in the United States and, increasingly, in other countries around the world. We wanted to use the AERA conference theme to raise questions about demographic differences and persistent inequities between the learning opportunities and outcomes of students from minoritised and majoritised communities, and we wanted to create a forum within the AERA annual meeting for consideration of what this meant for the future of democracies.

As we were planning presidential sessions, we learned about new work from economist Thomas Dee (2004), who had conducted a re-analysis of data from the well-known randomised Tennessee class size experiment (Word et al., 1990), based on pairings of students and teachers according to race. Dee found that racial pairings were unrelated to other student traits and that there was consistent evidence that assignment to an own-race teacher significantly increased the reading and math achievement of both Black and White students. We were very excited about this provocative and important work, and we invited Dee to be part of an AERA presidential symposium. But we also had many private conversations about the symposium. We were not concerned about Dee's research, which was meticulous, and Dee very carefully argued that the major contribution of his study was to point to the importance of racial dynamics between students and teachers and to make it clear that much more research was needed about what drove the phenomenon identified in the study. But we worried about whether and how the ideas in the symposium might be construed, or misconstrued, for policy and practice: Just 1 year after the 50th anniversary of the *Brown v Board of Education* landmark case, what did this new research mean? Could research like Dee's be used by some to support the idea of segregated classrooms or schools? Did efforts to match teachers and students demographically essentialise race? Did prioritising the recruitment of more teachers of colour also function to get White people off the hook of challenging the structures and systems that reproduce inequities?

Diversifying the Teaching Profession offers a sophisticated, complex and highly useful way to think about the questions we had almost 20 years ago, questions that—in a variety of new forms and using new sophisticated theoretical frameworks—have continued to drive research in this area over the last four decades. The book emphasises that representation does indeed matter in the teaching force, but that this must be understood in ways that go far beyond demographic matching of teachers and students and far beyond providing role models for students. Particularly helpful here is the book's trenchant analysis of "four waves" in the rationales behind the international research on the diversification of the teaching profession: from emphasis on the general benefits of a diverse teacher force for an equitable society writ large (late 1970s–early 1980s) to highlighting discourses of representation, including role model arguments and the benefits of demographic matching (late 1980s–early 2000s), to critical rejection of the demographic matching rationale as tokenistic and peripheralising attention to the underlying causes of inequity and injustice (roughly 2010–2015), to research over the last decade that has significantly complexified and partially re-embraced the demographic matching rationale, with multi-layered arguments that there needs to be recognition of the benefits of the diversification of the teacher force with simultaneous emphasis on transformation and challenging injustices in education and society more broadly (2015–present).

The chapters of this book, taken collectively, fit squarely into the fourth wave of the research identified earlier. Together the chapters make the very strong case that although diversity of the teacher workforce is essential, diversity itself does not necessarily carry a social justice agenda and does not itself create justice. In fact many of the chapters in the book, particularly those that examine aspects of diversity in other contexts as well as the chapters in Part II that examine research supported by the Irish Higher Education Authority's PATH1 initiative, document significant barriers, obstacles and problematic conditions that currently act against diversification by negatively impacting the experiences of under-represented teachers. Taken as a whole, the book provides a theoretically rich and highly useful "both-and" rationale for the diversification of the teacher workforce in Ireland and more broadly—in short, the book argues *both* that representation matters *and* that representation is not enough. That is, the book makes it clear that greater representation in the teaching profession of under-represented groups—with the definition of under-represented groups very broadly construed—has the potential to bring multiple positive benefits for students, teachers, schools and society. At the same time, however, the book also makes it very clear that greater representation alone is not enough given the extremely complex issues related to teacher recruitment for diversity (e.g., essentialising, role entrapment, removing the burden from others of challenging current systems and structures). The book argues that what is needed are simultaneous efforts to recruit for diversity *and* to engage in multiple local, national and larger efforts to challenge and transform the systems and institutional cultures that produce and reproduce inequity and serve as barriers to fuller representation.

Multiple Dimensions Matter

As the editors of this book suggest, one of the major strengths of this volume—and something that sets it apart from many other contributions to the literature—is its incredibly broad notion of teacher diversity. The book works from a definition of "under-representation" in the teaching profession that includes, but is not limited to, membership in a minoritised ethnic group, gender, socio-economic background, immigration status and history, language background, age/maturity, disability status and sexual orientation. My guess is that it was not a simple or straightforward task to produce an edited book that uses such a broad definition, given the fact that policies set by Ireland's National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education identified a fairly narrow range of initial teacher education entrants as the groups targeted by funded diversification efforts—those from lower socio-economic groups, entrants with disabilities, entrants who were from first generation to college mature groups, part-time learners, further education awardees and Irish Travellers. This definition, which determined the focus of the PATH1 diversification projects in initial teacher education that are featured in Part II of the book, excluded from consideration ethnic minorities other than Irish Travellers, as well as LGBTQ+, male, migrant or refugee entrants *unless* they were a subgroup of one of the targeted groups (e.g., lower socio-economic migrant entrants).

The book's editors point out that many members of the educational research community in Ireland, themselves included, argued that it was highly problematic not to include non-Traveller minority ethnic groups and immigrants among those targeted in the funding initiatives, with some scholars arguing that this narrow definition of under-representation could be seen in and of itself as an exclusionary or foreclosing strategy rather than one aimed at inclusion. Notwithstanding the definitions set out in Ireland's National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education, the editors of this book managed to achieve a very rich, multi-dimensional view of the diversification of the teaching profession, as spelled out earlier. They did so by drawing on and linking the Irish work to a very rich body of international theory and research on teacher diversification, especially research from Australia, Canada and the United States, which concentrates on minoritised ethnicities and gender. They also incorporated in the volume a number of chapters that consider locales beyond Ireland, including the impact of a race equality framework in Scotland, the role of teachers and leaders with immigrant backgrounds in the Nordic context, and the experiences of teachers with physical disabilities in Portugal, as well as chapters on the experiences of male teachers, LGBTQ+ teachers, ethnic minority teachers and migrant teachers.

The chapters that focus on the PATH1 projects examine many different dimensions of the under-representation of teachers in ITE. Despite their important differences, however, across these studies, there is compelling evidence about the general dilemmas and barriers that shape the experiences of ITE entrants from under-represented groups. For example, from these chapters, we learn that there are both systemic barriers and critical aspects of the cultures of schools that discourage and disillusion rather than motivate teachers from under-represented groups—student teachers from working class backgrounds are dismayed by the deficit perspectives about working class students and their families that are expressed by experienced teachers in their schools; middle class teachers see working class parents as deficient and/or indifferent about their children's schooling, while working class teachers take personal responsibility for the education of students who are "like them"; although committed to making a difference in their own and others' lives, Irish Travellers are counseled away from teaching toward more "realistic" careers. Some of these chapters provide fine-grained analyses of the experiences of particular under-represented groups in teaching, including LGBTQ+ teachers in Ireland, mature teachers who are first generation to college, ITE students who are Deaf and users of sign language and migrant teachers who face difficulties with teacher registration requirements. Together these chapters suggest that there are many access barriers to ITE for under-represented teachers, but as importantly or perhaps even more importantly, there are also many challenges across the career trajectory for teachers from under-represented groups. These chapters and the book as a whole argue that these challenges are deeply embedded, and sometimes invisible, within the majority-group normativity and privilege that pervade the institutional cultures of schools. The book suggests that although research on the experiences of under-represented ITE and experienced teachers is needed, real change depends upon transformation of systems and cultures.

Related to this point is one of many powerful constructs used in this book to talk about diversification efforts in initial teacher education—Childs et al.'s (2011) notion of "double equity," or *equity in admissions* coupled with *equity through admissions*. The editors tell us that the key argument here is that it is not enough to recruit diverse teachers *into* teacher preparation programs through increased access for traditionally under-represented groups *unless* there are also adaptations in programmes and institutions themselves enabling a more diverse group of entrants to actually graduate and enter the teaching force, prepared and supported to be authentically present and responsive to all students. If that were to happen, these teachers would then go on to contribute to, but not be a panacea for, solving the problems of inequity in schools and society, problems that affect all students at all schools. In a sense, the book uses the double equity notion to "talk to" the serious limitations it identifies in the demographic matching approach, noted earlier. That is, the book makes the point that equity of access to ITE is important, but limited, unless programme changes occur and systemic barriers are torn down. Likewise, demographic matching of teachers and students can be important, but limited, unless it is coupled with programme efforts to support the development of teachers who are "authentically present" in terms of multiple aspects of their identities and unless there is system-wide transformation in the experiences of teachers from under-represented groups once they are in schools.

These arguments are not unlike the difference my colleagues and I have conceptualized between *thin* and *strong equity* in teacher education and teacher quality policy and practice primarily in the United States (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Cochran-Smith and Stringer Keefe, 2022). We have suggested that when it comes to teacher quality, policies based on a notion of *thin equity* assume that school students' equal access to teacher quality can be achieved through policies that redistribute qualified teachers without addressing the systems and structures of power and privilege that produce and reproduce inequity in the first place and without accounting for the multiple, complex in- and out-of-school factors (in addition to teacher quality) that perpetuate inequity for students, families and minoritized communities. *Strong equity* policies and practices, on the other hand, are designed to unmask the structural and systemic barriers that perpetuate inequality. Strong equity policies and practices are based on the assumption that equity can only be achieved when there is redistribution of education resources, including access to teacher quality for all students, *as well as:* redistribution of resources well beyond education; recognition of differences across learners and communities; authentic representation of the voices and identities of minoritised groups; and a reframing of the issues with the goal of transformation.

This provocative book has much to offer to all those in the international community who are interested in issues related to the diversification of the teaching profession and in issues of diversity and equity in teacher education and schooling. I enthusiastically recommend this book to readers all over the world.

Marilyn Cochran-Smith
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Acknowledgements

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We would like to acknowledge the ongoing work of the Higher Education Authority and the Department of Education in relation to teacher diversity in Ireland. We are aware that our critique of teacher diversity policy and related initiatives may be uncomfortable for educational policy-makers and, in this context, we wish to emphasise our appreciation for their continued commitment to, and investment in, diversification projects.

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Section I

Introduction, Rationale and International Perspectives

1 Diversifying the Teaching Profession

Representation Matters

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1.1 Introduction

In this edited volume on diversifying the teaching profession, we examine numerous issues relating to the representation of different socio-demographic groups in the teaching profession internationally, with a particular focus on Ireland. Our core argument is that *representation matters*, and in this first chapter, and throughout the volume, we and our contributing authors provide a rationale for why this is the case. We also argue that, while critically important, representation does not go far enough, and teacher diversity work must simultaneously encompass system transformation to achieve a diverse, equitable and inclusive teaching profession.

Internationally, discussions about diversifying the teaching profession primarily[1] concern the primary and post-primary teaching sectors, and these sectors are our point of focus throughout the volume. In terms of specific groups, we include all those who are under-represented in teaching in comparison to their representation in the general population, as well as groups who may have felt the need to be 'less visible', for example, LGBTQI+ teachers, and from an intersectionality perspective, working class men. Thus, for our purposes in this book, we are including the dimensions of social class, 'race' and ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and gender, including along intersectional lines. Our broad range of inclusion sets quite a wide scene. Indeed, in bringing this book together, and especially in writing Chapters 1, 2 and 3, we were continually reminded of the challenges presented by the scope of our enterprise. In including so many 'dimensions' of diversity, each with its own scholarship, research tradition and distinct philosophical underpinnings, we do not claim to address each aspect in depth but rather aim to capture key debates in the various subfields over time. Indeed, we are bound to have missed some important empirical contributions, in addition to alternative ways of conceptualising diversity and difference. Furthermore, we are aware of the problematic English language bias in relation to the literature upon which we draw in this volume. In not expanding our interrogation of literature to include research reported in languages other than English, we are contributing to the colonial project that solidifies English as a *lingua franca*. While addressing this significant lacuna lies outside the scope of what was achievable in this book, further work in the field would do well to include such literature. Building on our work on teacher diversity over the last 12 years,[2] the genesis of this book was an international research symposium on diversifying the teaching profession that we

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hosted in the School of Education at the University of Galway (formerly, National University of Ireland, Galway) in November 2019. The Higher Education Authority's (HEA) *Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH): Strand 1—Equity of Access to the Initial Teacher Education* (2017–2023) (hereafter, PATH1[3]) constituted a major landmark in teacher diversity policy in Ireland and has provided funding for a range of innovative projects led by the Centres for Teacher Education throughout Ireland. The 2019 symposium showcased research findings from many of the projects implemented as part of the PATH1 initiative, along with a number of other relevant national and international projects. While Section I of the book sets out introductory arguments and offers chapters from a range of international contributors, most of the chapters in Section II present the key findings to date from PATH1 projects (see Section 1.5 for an overview of the volume).

In this introductory chapter, we commence by situating the diversification of the teaching profession within the wider policy context of widening participation in higher education (HE) and into the professions. Employing Childs et al.'s (2011) concept of 'double equity' (in and through admissions), we explicate why patterns of homogeneity in the teaching profession are problematic and posit our rationale for diversification. Next, we consider teacher diversity policies and initiatives internationally, considering the groups who are prioritised, and problematising exclusionary approaches. In Section 1.4 of this chapter, we briefly explore the main foci of teacher diversity-related research internationally, noting the emphasis on minority ethnic groups. Finally, in the last section, we preview the edited volume.

1.2 Representation Matters: Equity in and through Admissions to Teacher Education

Drives to diversify the teaching profession can be understood in the wider policy context of widening participation in HE in general and into the professions. Widening participation in HE has been an international policy objective for over 20 years (Burke 2002) and has been premised on both economic and social justice grounds, contributing to the development of all citizens' skills, key for economic competitiveness, as well as a means of tackling inequality and creating a more egalitarian society (Thomas and Quinn 2007; Keane 2009). Particularly in the United Kingdom (UK), widening participation has included a focus on the professions, as it has been noted that access to certain professions has become less socially representative over time (Stuart 2012) and is highly class related, particularly for 'elite' or 'high prestige' professional careers (Government of Ireland 2007; National Access Office 2013; Social Mobility Commission 2016) such as, *inter alia*, medicine, law and veterinary science. Research on barriers (and enablers) to access to certain professions is quite limited (MacMillan et al. 2015).

Further, while research on *motivations* for various careers is not uncommon, it is rarely differentiated by socio-demographic positionality, and hence we know very little about its impact on aspirations for specific professions, particularly in a context of increasing competition for graduate jobs (Brown et al. 2011; Brooks 2017). The very small amount of research that exists in the area suggests that motivations for specific professions are mediated by class and ethnicity, with working class and minority ethnic students more likely to express altruistic motivations and choose associated 'low(er) status' careers (cf. Stevens et al. 2010; Keane 2016, 2017; Heinz, Keane, and Foley 2017), while more privileged students may opt for prestigious professions to maintain their 'higher' social status (Schleef 2000). Concerns about risk, 'fitting in', and a desire to remain local (in terms of geographical location) are also factors that impact working class (and likely lower middle class) students' aspirations for specific careers (cf. Allen and Hollingworth 2013). While efforts are being made in several elite professions in the UK to diversify recruitment (MacMillan et al. 2015), research about the experiences of students from diverse backgrounds accessing different careers, including in relation to professional closure (e.g., employer recruitment policies and practices, MacMillan et al. 2015), is lacking (cf. Stromme and Hansen 2017). Particularly with regard to positions of authority in professions, Puwar (2004, p. 141) observes that "over time specific bodies are associated with specific spaces … [and] spaces become marked as territories belonging to particular bodies". Puwar argues that the representation of professions as "being neutral, meritocratic and objective … is deeply engrained" (2004, p. 154) and highlights the "huge amount of resistance within the professions to making the gendered and racial nature of these environments visible" (p. 154).

Of course, teaching is not categorised as an 'elite' profession. Indeed, of the list of 20 elite jobs that Friedman and Laurison (2019) drew up as part of their national study of social mobility in the UK, school teaching did not feature. Patterns of access to the teaching profession, and issues of equity therein, are complex. The homogeneity of the teaching profession is an international phenomenon; with teaching bodies predominantly drawn from majority-group socio-demographic backgrounds (Zumwalt and Craig 2005 [United States of America (USA)]; Hartsuyker 2007 [Australia]; Schleicher 2014 [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD]; Keane and Heinz 2015; Heinz and Keane 2018 [Ireland]), which significantly contrasts with increasingly diverse societal and schooling contexts (European Commission 2021). In explicating why patterns of homogeneity in the teaching profession are problematic, we find it useful to engage Childs et al.'s (2011) concept of *double equity*, equity in and through admissions. In terms of *equity in admissions*, the focus is on equity of access, that is, ensuring that all those who wish to enter initial teacher education (ITE), and subsequently the profession, are able to do so, and in this context, particular attention is paid to the potential barriers encountered by those from traditionally under-represented groups. Importantly, access may or may not be an equity issue. Not everyone *wants* to become a teacher! In Ireland, while it remains a profession of choice, attracting highly qualified candidates (Clarke and O'Doherty 2021), from a social class perspective, traditionally, teaching has been regarded as an upwardly mobile profession, to which lower middle class groups may aspire, with those from higher social class backgrounds generally looking towards the more 'elite' professions (Coolahan 2003; Drudy et al. 2005). In contrast, in research from the USA (cf. Gordon 1994; Su 1996, 1997) with some minority ethnic individuals from lower socio-economic groups, it was found that teaching was perceived as a relatively low-status career (due to low compensation in terms of pay and conditions), particularly for those who were aspiring to be socially mobile. Such perceptions and/or related contextual factors (including ITE costs, teachers' economic status, employment conditions, and work environments) can act as significant barriers to entry to the profession (Gordon 1994; Su 1996, 1997) as they influence individuals' career motivations and decisions (Heinz 2015). Access to the profession being an equity issue or not also raises its (complex) head on the dimension of gender: while women are over-represented in teaching compared to men in OECD countries, and especially at primary level (Heinz et al. 2021), they account for only 27 percent of the post-primary teaching body in the least developed countries (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2021). Further, traditionally, women have been under-represented at management level (Drudy and Lynch 1993; Cunneen and Harford 2016). The under-representation of men in teaching is normally regarded as a non-equity issue, as it is seen as their 'choice' to pursue other professions. However, engaging an intersectional perspective and recognising gender dynamics and positionings in schools reveals the complexities involved, for example, for working class or non-heterosexual men whose under-representation is likely an equity issue (McGrath 2011; Heinz, Keane, and Davison 2017, 2021).

Remaining with Childs et al.'s (2011) *equity in admissions*, reflecting on HE institutions in the USA working to achieve affirmative action targets, Richardson and Skinner (1991) note that reactive, strategic and adaptive responses can be discerned. Reactive-type responses focus on the recruitment of students from under-represented groups and 'special' admission procedures and processes. The subsequent 'strategic' stage typically involves the development and provision of various student support strategies "designed to help a more diverse student population adapt to expectations geared to the clientele the institution has traditionally served" (p. 14). As Richardson and Skinner observe, the focus here is on changing the students, rather than institutional adaptation. As such, both the reactive and strategic responses could be defined as deficit in nature. The adaptive stage happens when "[institutions] realize that participation and graduation goals cannot be attained in a system in which students are expected to do all the changing" (1991, p. 14). In this stage, the focus for change is the curriculum, teaching and assessment, and it is acknowledged that recruitment, without significant system adaptation, is inadequate. In relation to diversifying the teaching profession, however, we argue that those early 'reactive' (Richardson and Skinner 1991) stages of identifying and acknowledging patterns of under-representation, and devising measures to address same, are not to be dismissed. This work is a necessary first step. *Representation matters*. In the USA, Banks (1995) and Cochran-Smith (2004) have argued for teacher diversity from the perspective of 'the demographic imperative', and Ladson-Billings (2015) has emphasised the importance of 'excavating' an injustice in terms of gathering required data. In this regard, Ahmed (2012, p. 36) reminds us that "numbers can be affective. It can be surprising and energising not to feel so singular". We acknowledge that equity of access ('getting people in') is not enough; indeed, more developed conceptualisations of access and widening participation have long emphasised the importance of entrants' meaningful participation and equity of outcome (Thomas 2002). For this to happen, much more transformational work (Jones and Thomas 2005) along the lines of Richardson and Skinner's 'adaptive' stage is necessary, and this requires institutional and systemic change. However, there is no reason why systems ought not develop and maintain a focus on widening access and representation while simultaneously working to transform the systems that make such work necessary.

With regard to Childs et al.'s (2011) *equity through admissions*, here the focus in teacher diversity discourse turns to the positive longer-term impact of having teachers from traditionally under-represented groups in the profession, on schools and *all* students (both majority and minority), as well as on society more generally, for example, through measures of social cohesion and equity (cf. Villegas and Clewell 1998; Larochette et al. 2010; Santoro 2015). In terms of the impact on students, for example, the mismatch, or 'diversity gap', between student and teaching populations in schools is problematic in that it gives certain messages to (all) students about who can (and cannot? should not?) be a teacher and in a position of authority. While the empirical findings are complex (see Chapter 2), there is convincing research evidence about the particular benefits of teachers from under-represented groups for students from minority ethnic and lower socio-economic groups. In this respect, diversifying the teaching profession arguably has a more significant scope of influence compared to similar initiatives in many other professions. Diversifying the teaching profession has the potential to be transformative on a societal level, as a result of the regular and sustained contact between students and teachers, and the impact that teachers have on children and young people. It is in this way, in particular, that we argue that *representation matters*. However, we do not regard the diversification of the teaching profession as a social justice panacea. Indeed, some concerning research findings have been reported about the experiences of teachers from under-represented groups, including racial tokenism in schools, the essentialisation of minority and 'working class' teachers and their high levels of stress and over-burdening (cf. Maguire 2001, 2005a, 2005b; Hopson 2013; Santoro 2015). In this regard, the continuum of teacher education needs to operate from the perspective of educating *all* student teachers—irrespective of their and their students' socio-demographic positionings—to care for and effectively support the learning and development of *all* students in *all* schools (cf. Cochran-Smith 2004; Ladson-Billings 2004) within a teaching for social justice framework (Cochran-Smith et al. 2012). Further, and despite our focus on diversifying the profession, we do not take an unproblematic view of the term 'diversity'. From a social justice perspective, we understand that the word 'diversity' does not go far enough. As noted by Deem and Ozga (1997, p. 33):

> Whereas the concepts of equity and equal opportunities imply an underlying concept of social justice for all and active endeavours to achieve this … the notion of diversity invokes the existence of difference and variety *without any necessary commitment to action or redistributive social justice.*
>
> (our emphasis)

Similarly, and in the context of her research about the work of diversity practitioners in UK higher education, Ahmed (2012) observes that institutions' use of the term 'diversity' can often involve "the departure of other (perhaps more critical) terms, including 'equality', 'equal opportunities', and 'social justice'" (p. 1), representing a lack of commitment to change, and possibly allowing institutions to "conceal the operation of systematic inequalities", with diversity thus acting "as a containment strategy" (p. 53). Notwithstanding these concerns, in the context of teacher education, our position remains that *representation matters*. It is not a zero-sum game. We can, and need to, undertake the longer-term endeavour of working to transform the system whilst simultaneously acknowledging and addressing patterns of under-representation in the profession.

1.3 Teacher Diversity Policies and Initiatives: Who Is Included and Excluded?

Diversifying the teaching profession has come to be of international concern (Schleicher 2014; Donlevy et al. 2016; Abawi and Eizadirad 2020; Ingersoll et al. 2021). In Ireland, the teaching profession has been identified as a specific focus in national widening participation policy. In the 2015–2019 National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education (Higher Education Authority [HEA] 2015, p. 26), objective 1.7 was "to increase access by students from target groups to initial teacher education" through the "development of access programmes and routes to teacher training". Since 2017, €5.4 million (2017–2023) has been invested by the Department of Education through PATH1 in a range of national projects to diversify teaching.[4] Section II of this volume presents findings from the research strands of many of these projects. In Europe, a relatively small number of generally small-scale and often short-term initiatives have resulted in some increases in minority participation in education roles (Donlevy et al. 2016). Such initiatives[5] have included career guidance for migrant second-level students (Germany), language learning programmes (Estonia) and/or initial teacher education (ITE) preparatory courses (Denmark) for refugees and migrants, specific teaching assistant programmes for members of the Roma community (Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia, Latvia), specialised ITE programmes (Finland), supplementary training (Sweden) and financial supports (various countries) for migrant and/or minority ethnic student teachers. Networks to support minority teachers have been established in various countries, and some initiatives have focused on helping minority teachers to progress into leadership positions (UK, Iceland). Initiatives in some countries provide programmes to support migrant teachers through recognition and employment processes (Canada, Germany, Austria, Ireland). In a European Commission study, it was observed that European Union (EU) countries have focused more on the support of migrant students and inclusive education policies and practices than on teacher diversity *per se* (Donlevy et al. 2016). It was argued that the lack of data, and of systematic data collection, in many countries about teacher diversity and teacher backgrounds (sometimes related to difficulties associated with the collection of personal data and data protection concerns) was significantly hampering the development and monitoring of measures aimed at diversifying teaching populations (Donlevy et al. 2016). In the USA, differences in student-teacher demographics have received national attention since the mid-1980s (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy 1986). In 1990, the Education Commission of the State called for a comprehensive policy approach to recruit and support people of colour in/to teaching, to which US states have since responded. In 2012, 31 states were implementing minority teacher recruitment initiatives, most commonly comprising financial incentives, government mandates, specialised recruitment programmes and alternative teacher qualification programmes. While these developments supporting minority teacher recruitment improved minority teacher participation in the USA, it has not kept pace with the much more striking growth of the minority student population (Villegas et al. 2012; Ingersoll et al. 2021). Similarly, Australia's teaching population is more diverse than teaching bodies in EU countries, especially with regard to country of origin and home language, yet it is far from mirroring their increasingly diverse student population in schools (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL] 2018).

Who is included (and excluded) in policies, initiatives and discussions about teacher diversity is a vital consideration. In terms of specific groups focused upon within primary and post-primary teaching, an analysis of international trends demonstrates that while gender concerns remain strong in places, there is a heavy emphasis on migrants and minority ethnic groups in most national contexts, although Ireland is a significant outlier here. Schneider and Schmidt (2016) identify a range of different (not necessarily mutually exclusive) groups targeted across transnational contexts, including immigrating teachers, immigrants becoming teachers, teachers of immigrant origin, teachers with a migration background or immigration history, ethnic/'racial' minority teachers, teachers of colour and native American/First Nation teachers. At EU level (Donlevy et al. 2016), and in many national contexts (USA [Sleeter et al. 2014]), in Australia [Santoro 2015]), in England [Lander and Zaheerali 2016]) and in Canada [Schmidt 2015]), the focus has been those from minority ethnic backgrounds, including indigenous minority ethnic groups. Contrastingly, in Ireland, because of the framing of teacher diversity policy within the National Access Plan for HE in general, the target groups specified in the PATH1 initiative were: ITE entrants from lower socio-economic groups, first-time mature entrants, students with disabilities, part-time/flexible learners, further education award holders,[6] and Irish Travellers[7] (HEA 2015, p. 34), with minority ethnic groups other than Travellers not featuring. The absence of minority ethnic groups for PATH1 was regarded as highly problematic by the educational community, given their significant under-representation in the teaching profession (Keane and Heinz 2016; also highlighted in the EU study by Donlevy et al. 2016), the diversification of Ireland's schooling population over the previous 10–15 years (Tickner 2017), and the core focus on minority ethnic groups in international teacher diversity work. It was also considered to be a missed opportunity to include a focus on the LGBTQI+ community, given the challenges they experience in the teaching profession in Ireland (Neary 2013), and on gender, given the under-representation of men, especially at primary level (Drudy et al. 2005). Arguments were made to the HEA by members of the educational community that, from an evidence-based policy perspective, cognisance ought to be taken of the research evidence in determining the appropriate target groups *for the ITE sector*, rather than basing them on the groups identified for the HE sector in general. Subsequently, the HEA confirmed that 'other' groups (e.g., minority ethnic groups and males) could be included in PATH1 initiatives if they were *also* part of one of the target groups, for example, males or individuals from minority ethnic groups who were *also* from a lower socio-economic group.[8] While we do not disagree that, for example, minority ethnic groups who are *also* of lower socio-economic status are *particularly* negatively positioned in terms of access to the teaching profession, it is indisputable that minority ethnic groups, irrespective of socio-economic status or any other dimension of diversity, encounter significant barriers in a predominantly white and majority ethnic society and education system (Bhopal 2018). In this context, an apparent prioritisation of socio-economic status (or other dimension of diversity) is problematic in that it ignores, for example, the impact of experiences of racism (Kitching 2014) and linguicism (Mc Daid 2011) as minority ethnic students reflect on whether or not they belong in education in general, and in teaching more specifically. Further, in the context of teacher diversity, research is clear that minority ethnic groups, irrespective of their socio-economic status, for example, are significantly under-represented in primary and post-primary teaching in Ireland (cf. Keane and Heinz 2016). If priority target groups in the National Access Plan remain largely unchanged, and if teacher diversity policy continues to be framed within the context of the Plan, the access and participation of minority ethnic groups in/to the teaching profession in Ireland will remain under-addressed, as related projects may be constrained in terms of *which* minority ethnic students they can recruit and support. In line with initiatives in other jurisdictions (Arshad, this volume), teacher diversity policy needs to be far more refined than what is currently provided for in Ireland, and, as such, it may need to be decoupled from the National Access Plan.

Different models of policy-making exist with respect to the relative value and use of, for example, evidence via research versus other inputs. Marston and Watts (2003, p. 145) argue that in the political model of policy-making, research is "just one input in the policy process". Amongst a range of other inputs to the policy process are "the demands of patronage" (du Toit 2012, p. 5) and "external vested interests [which] may drive the undermining of sound science to forestall the policy implications that would necessarily follow …" (Marston and Watts 2003, p. 146). From a political model of policy-making perspective, the role of vested interests, including patronage, needs to be considered in the development of Ireland's policy to diversify the teaching profession. The exclusion of non-Traveller minority ethnic groups from policy to diversify teaching in Ireland is suggestive of a form of *gatekeeping and/or professional closure*. Weber's (1968) concept of 'social closure' posited that on a particular attribute (e.g., social origin, religion, or language), a group seeks to monopolise social and economic opportunities and resources, thereby closing these off to those outside the group. In the context of teaching, the exclusion of certain groups (as target groups) could be understood as a type of exclusionary closure strategy (cf. Parkin 1979, see also Keane 2011) through which vested interests may guard access to the profession. In this respect, interestingly, almost 20 years ago, Drudy and Lynch (1993), drawing on Lynch

(1989), argued that teachers, being of the "propertyless middle class", were invested in the maintenance of the *status quo* of the profession in terms of its social profile:

> … teachers are very much part of the propertyless middle classes and may well have a specific class interest in maintaining aspects of the *status quo*, especially those concerning traditional hierarchical distinctions between mental and manual labour. If intellectual labour were no longer defined as superior to manual labour, then the whole basis of teachers' differentials, which distance them from manual workers, would not be legitimated. In a profession that recruits on such a small scale from among working-class young people and that is so important for the articulation and preservation of middle-class values and culture, it would hardly be surprising that this would be so.
>
> (Drudy and Lynch 1993, p. 95)

While working class young people are now being encouraged to access the teaching profession in Ireland (by virtue of their inclusion as a priority target group), the lack of a priority focus on minority ethnic groups suggests that teacher diversity policy is possibly being approached from the perspective of *containment* (Ahmed 2012) in that a certain 'amount' of diversity, is allowed, but not more, or perhaps 'others'. In the same way, in the HE context, Bhopal (2016) points to how diversification strategies (e.g., the Athena SWAN[9] initiative and its focus on the lack of women in senior roles in academia) have resulted in the needs of *white middle class* women being addressed, while initiatives to address the under-representation of Black and minority ethnic groups are lacking in relative terms. Indeed, Ahmed (2012, p. 23) argues that "having an institutional aim to make diversity a goal can even be a sign that diversity is *not* an institutional goal", while Bhopal (2018, p. 54) points out that "… the mere existence of equality and diversity policies does not suggest that good practice is taking place and many universities may simply confirm to a tick box exercise which gives the illusion that they are tackling racial inequality". Given that "race equity has to constantly fight for legitimacy as a significant topic for educational policy-makers" and has always been "on the margins of education policy" (Gillborn 2005, p. 493), it could be argued that the exclusion of most minority ethnic groups in Ireland's teacher diversity policy (as a separate target group) is somewhat unsurprising. While offering some possible explanations for the marginalisation of race equity on a policy level (for example, not being seen as important enough to address, or being seen as dangerous electorally), it is of note that Gillborn specifically observes that diversifying the teaching profession "would be a good start" in "eradicating race injustice in education" (2005, p. 499).

1.4 The Foci of Teacher Diversity Research[10]

Teacher diversity research has focused on the recruitment and retention of under-represented groups in ITE and the profession; their experiences in the profession, including of barriers; their motivations for and approaches to teaching; and the impact of diversity in the teaching profession on (especially minority) students, schools, and society.

Gender has long been a focus of teacher diversity research internationally, including debates about the 'feminisation' of teaching (cf. Mills et al. 2004; Drudy et al. 2005; Davison 2007; McGrath 2011). Typically, the under-representation of men has not been viewed as an equity issue, although Heinz et al. (2021), taking an intersectional perspective, have argued for the importance of a focus on working class men in teaching. A very strong focus of teacher diversity research in the international context is that of ethnicity and the representation, or lack thereof, of teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds in the profession. This is particularly the case in the USA, where teacher diversity work focuses strongly on recruiting and (the challenges in) retaining 'Teachers of Color' (cf. Villegas et al. 2012; Carver-Thomas 2018; Carter Andrews et al. 2019), narrowing 'the demographic gap' between teaching and student populations (cf. Sleeter et al. 2014; Ingersoll et al. 2021), and the 'impact', particularly on minority students. In Canada, the focus is on the recruitment and certification of immigrant teachers, 'indigenizing' the teaching profession (cf. Schmidt 2015; Schneider and Schmidt 2016), and some research has explored biased educational hiring practices (Abawi and Eizadirad 2020). Australia has examined teacher preparation for immigrant teachers (Cruickshank 2004), the construction of culturally diverse teachers (Santoro 2015) and ways of supporting greater diversity in school leadership (AITSL 2018). Across the (then) 28 countries of the EU, Donlevy et al. (2016) examined the evidence base regarding teacher diversity, with a particular focus on migrant and/or minority background, noting that different minority groups were prioritised in different national contexts. They concluded that people with a migrant and/or minority background were under-represented among student teachers in nearly all of the eight countries for which data were available (Austria, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Sweden, the UK) with the exception of the Netherlands and Lithuania, where diversity amongst *both* the student and teaching populations was very low (Donlevy et al. 2016, pp. 38–41). In the UK, teacher diversity research has examined Black and minority ethnic teacher recruitment and retention and their experiences, including of overt racism, during ITE programmes and school placement (in England, cf. Siraj-Blatchford 1991; Jones 1997; Jones et al. 1997; Jones and Maguire 1998; Basit et al. 2006; Wilkins and Lall 2011; Lander and Zaheerali 2016; Tereshchenko et al. 2020) and in the profession (Bradbury et al. 2022), as well as their pronounced under-representation at senior leadership levels (Worth et al. 2022).

Research on teacher diversity has also included a focus on social class, though to a much lesser extent than that of ethnicity (e.g., in England, Maguire 1999, 2001, 2005a, 2005b; Burn 2001; Raffo and Hall 2006; Hall and Jones 2013; in Ireland, Keane et al. 2018, 2020; in Australia, Lampert et al. 2016; in the USA, Van Galen 2008). This body of research has largely examined the highly classed experiences and motivations of student teachers and teachers from diverse social class backgrounds in the profession. Disability has also garnered some attention; a small number of studies have examined the experiences of student teachers and teachers with disabilities (Duquette 2000), particularly those with dyslexia (in the UK) or learning disabilities (in the USA) (Wertheim et al. 1998; Morgan and Burn 2000; Riddick 2003; Riddick and English 2006; Burns and Bell 2011; Griffiths 2012; Glazzard 2013). Other dimensions of diversity, such as sexual orientation, and the experiences of gay and lesbian teachers, have not been neglected (in the USA, Canada, Australia and Ireland, cf. King 2004; Ferfolja and Hopkins 2013; Neary, 2013 (see also this volume); Linebeck et al. 2016), but relative to the focus on ethnicity, there is a dearth of research on these 'other' under-represented groups. Finally, a core focus of teacher diversity research is, of course, its perceived (beneficial) impact on students, particularly minority students, and this has been explicated through the large body of research on role-modelling and ethnic 'matching'.[11]

A central contribution of this volume to the research literature on teacher diversity is our *breadth of focus*. Given the concentration in the field to date on ethnicity and gender, this volume makes a unique contribution to the literature through its inclusion of many 'dimensions' of diversity—across social class, age, sexuality and disability lines as well as gender and 'race' and ethnicity—in relation to the diversification of the teaching profession.

1.5 Previewing this Volume

Following this introductory chapter, in Chapter 2 of Section I, Goodwin and Keane examine the rationale for diversifying the teaching profession employed in the literature, drawing on over 40 years of research in the field, and focusing in particular on the 'demographic-matching' rationale and its critical interrogation. In Chapter 3, Keane et al. explore the history and development of diversity in teaching research and policy in Ireland, with a particular focus on the PATH1 programme. Next, we turn to the Scottish context; in Chapter 4, Arshad charts the work of the Scottish Government's *Working Group on Diversifying the Teaching Profession* in recent years, in the context of the government's commitment to increasing the representation of teachers from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds to at least 4 percent by 2030. In Chapter 5, we turn to the Nordic context, where Ragnarsdóttir examines the role of teachers and leaders with immigrant backgrounds in implementing inclusive and culturally responsive practices in schools. McGrath, in Chapter 6, focuses on gender, masculinities and debates about the shortages of male teachers and identifies socio-economic conditions that limit male participation in the profession. In Chapter 7, Neca et al. drawing on the findings of their study about the experiences of teachers with physical, visual and hearing disabilities in Portugal, emphasise the importance of centring teachers with disabilities within the inclusive education research agenda. Finally, in Chapter 8, Thomas and Hovdhaugen examine the role of professional passion and identity in improving diversity and success in professional education, including teaching.

Section II of this volume showcases research findings from PATH1 and other relevant projects in Ireland that are working to diversify the teaching profession. In the first chapter of this section, Keane et al. (Chapter 9) consider 'working class' student teachers' constructions of teaching as a 'powerful role' and their perspectives on encountering deficit-based 'teacher talk' during placement.

In Chapter 10, drawing on Bourdieu's concept of habitus, Burns and O'Sullivan examine the differential attitudes and engagement of teachers from a range of socio-economic backgrounds with regard to parents in disadvantaged schools. Next, in Chapter 11, Kelly-Blakeney and Kennedy discuss the perspectives and experiences of students who participated in their Further Education (FE) route to ITE project, but who ultimately decided *not* to progress to ITE. In Chapter 12, Mc Daid examines the case of migrant teachers, with a particular focus on the barriers they experience in attempting to secure work as teachers in Ireland. Chapter 13, by Burns et al., concerns the experiences of five Irish Travellers on two programmes supporting teacher diversity in Ireland, emphasising their desire to 'make a difference' through the teacher role and the structural, institutional and financial barriers they experienced on their journeys towards teaching. In Chapter 14, Sala Rothen and Mc Daid explore 33 minority ethnic young people's perspectives on the need for minority ethnic teachers in schools, reporting a general lack of, and desire for more, such teachers in their schools and the young people's emphasis on the need for good teachers in general. In Chapter 15, Mathews and Ryan present the results of an evaluation into a programme of capacity-building at university level in preparation for a group of Deaf students who use Irish Sign Language in an ITE programme, emphasising the importance of the university community being committed to direct communication with Deaf students in their first language and to validating the Deaf lived-experience. In Chapter 16, Neary presents key themes from her research on LGBTQI+ teachers in Ireland, based on a meta-analysis of four qualitative studies, and argues for careful attention to the lived daily experiences of LGBTQI+ teachers in order to appropriately engage with issues of gender and sexuality in schools. Finally, Ryan, in Chapter 17, presents her findings from her research with mature-aged, first-generation, entrants to primary ITE and, drawing on the work of Tronto and Noddings, emphasises the importance of operating out of a framework of care in terms of the provision of relevant supports for this cohort.

Section III of this volume draws together key learning from the chapters and charts potential next steps for the field. In Chapter 18, Mc Daid et al. summarise and synthesise core ideas, arguments and research findings from the volume and interrogate areas of tension. Finally, in Chapter 19, Heinz et al. reflect on the implications of and opportunities arising from the various insights highlighted throughout the volume; pose critical questions for teachers, teacher educators and education policy-makers to consider; and, through a number of key principles and associated actions, imagine pathways towards a more diverse, inclusive and equitable teaching profession.

Notes

1 Very little attention has been paid to this issue in the Early Childhood Care and Education sector. While diversity in the academic staff population in higher education has been examined in some countries for some time, it has only recently become a topic of focus in Ireland (Kempny and Michael 2021).

2 By Keane and Heinz at the University of Galway through the *Diversity in Initial Teacher Education* (DITE) project, funded by the Irish Research Council, and the *Access to Post-primary Teaching* (APT) project, funded by the Higher Education Authority, and by Mc Daid at Marino Institute of Education in Dublin through the *Migrant Teacher Project* (MTP), currently co-financed by the European Commission under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2014–2020, through the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and by the Department of Education.

3 See Chapter 3 for further information about the development and implementation of this initiative.

4 Further information on the development and implementation of the PATH1 initiative is provided in Chapter 3.

5 For an overview, see Donlevy et al. (2016).

6 Further education in Ireland comprises education and training that takes place after post-primary schooling but that is not part of the higher education system.

7 Irish Travellers are Ireland's indigenous ethnic minority group. They were identified as a target group for higher education participation for the first time in the National Access Plan 2015–2019 (HEA 2015).

8 In this context, it is of note that Ireland's first Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris, TD, specifically mentioned (in 2020) the need to "encourage members from migrant and minority backgrounds into the teaching profession" (Merrion Street 2020). As we point out in Chapter 3, it is also of note that the *Migrant Integration Strategy* (Department of Justice and Equality 2017) and the current *Programme for Government* (Department of the Taoiseach 2020) specifically target the recruitment of teachers from the migrant community living in Ireland, without mention of socio-economic status. See Chapter 3 for further discussion.

9 The Athena SWAN (Scientific Women's Academic Network) charter was established in 2005 to recognise good practice with respect to gender equality in higher education.

10 This brief section aims to give a flavour of contemporary concerns in the field and is not exhaustive.

11 Chapter 2 provides a detailed discussion of this theme in the research literature.

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2 The Rationale for Diversifying the Teaching Profession

Social Justice, Ethnic-Matching and Recent Trends

Devon Goodwin and Elaine Keane

2.1 Introduction

Drawing on over 40 years of research on diversity in teaching, this chapter considers the developing rationale for diversification employed in the literature. The premises underpinning the various arguments advocating for a more diverse teaching population are complex and have changed over time. This chapter does not aim to be exhaustive in its scope, rather it aims to capture and illustrate key developments in debates about the diversification of teaching. Additionally, in terms of the focus and 'geography' of the scholarship, most research has focused on race and ethnicity,[1] particularly in the United States of America (USA), and the discussion in this chapter reflects this.[2] In the last 10–15 years, research on the subject has extended internationally and has included attention to additional dimensions of diversity, including, *inter alia*, social class and sexualities.

In the context of teacher education in Canada, Childs et al. (2011) engage the concept of 'double equity'; equity *in* and *through* admissions. Equity *in* admissions concerns equitable access to the teaching profession for those from under-represented groups who previously were unable to access the profession due to the existence of various barriers. Equity *through* admissions relates to the benefits for schools and students (both minority and majority group), and for society more generally in terms of social cohesion, of a more diverse teaching force. The idea of equity *through* admissions, and expected benefits for schools and students, is the basis of the demographic-matching rationale, a core focus of this chapter, for diversifying the teaching profession.

Utilising a modified chronological approach, this chapter maps research about diversifying the teaching profession since the 1980s and the rationale employed therein, identifying 'waves' to highlight central concerns of different time periods. We trace the development of the rationale from the first 'wave' (late 1970s to early 1980s), which emphasised the benefits of a diverse teaching body for an equitable society, as well as concerns about messages about power and authority resulting from a teaching population dominated by the majority ethnic group. The rationale underpinning the second 'wave' (late 1980s to early 2000s) of research changed significantly, drawing on a growing evidence-base demonstrating the benefits of minority teachers for minority learners (the 'demographic-matching' rationale). The third 'wave' of research (circa 2010 to 2015) critically interrogated this

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rationale, and arguments at the time more closely resembled the original, more critical rationale of the 1980s. More recently (in the last decade) in 'wave' four, we have seen a resurgence of research documenting the benefits of minority teachers for minority students, with some research clearly aligning with a demographic-matching rationale. Along with identifying a number of other trends in the recent teacher diversity research, we end by noting the complex picture resulting from research relating to the demographic-matching rationale and emphasise that we can simultaneously recognise the potential benefits (e.g., of minority teachers for minority students), whilst also recognising its limitations, that is, that on social justice grounds, *it does not go far enough.*

2.2 Wave I: Original Impetus and the Equality Rationale

England et al. (1989) note that one of the earliest statements in relation to diversifying the teaching profession in America was the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights' (1976, p. 222) observation that "minorities in positions of responsibility help to dispel myths of racial inferiority and incompetence". However, the sources most widely cited as the first explicit calls to increase diversity in teaching are the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) and Mercer and Mercer (1986). The distinctive quality of these early publications is their focus on the messages about power that the demographic composition of those in authority positions in schools sent to children (Villegas and Irvine 2010). The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986, p. 79) commented that:

> … The race and background of their teachers tells [students] something about authority and power in contemporary America. These messages influence children's attitudes toward school, their academic accomplishments, and their views of their own and others' intrinsic worth. The views they form in school about justice and fairness so influence their future citizenship.

In this quote, we see that the concern was the moral and social education of *all* students for an equitable and democratic society, not just minority students. In their 1986 article, Mercer and Mercer claimed that "[operating] a public school system without Black teachers is [like teaching] white supremacy without saying a word" (p. 105). Reflecting on their claim, Villegas and Irvine (2010, p. 177) point out that school students "… implicitly learned that White people are better suited than people of color to hold positions of authority in society" where they "failed to see adults of color in professional roles in schools and instead saw them over-represented in non-professional positions". These early teacher diversity statements exhibit cognisance of the multiple roles played by schools in society, not just as purveyors of academic learning, but also of the formation of children's values and beliefs about an equitable society.

2.3 Wave II: Ethnic-Matching and Role Modelling

Research in the field of teacher diversity soon moved away from a critical understanding of the benefits of teacher diversity for all of society towards the *discourse of* *representation* (Martino and Rezai-Rashti 2012). This argument holds that underachieving minority students need to be taught by minority teachers, as only they can understand minority students' needs (Hopson 2013b). In order to justify why diversification was required, research at this time focused upon establishing the academic, social and emotional gains for minority students resulting from having minority teachers.

The 1980s was a time of educational reform in the USA, with values of the day "more quantitative than qualitative, more concerned about excellence than equity" (Cole 1986, p. 328). In relation to measuring teacher competence at the time, emphasis was placed on evidence of student progress (Cole 1986) in general and in arguing for diversity in the teaching profession. From the late 1980s to the early 2000s, an impressive body of work was produced that aimed to establish improved educational outcomes of minority students when under the tutelage of minority teachers. Studies included minority students' gains in reading and mathematics scores on standardized tests (Evans 1992; Hanushek and Pace 1995; Dee 2004), increased high school graduation and college matriculation (Hess and Leal 1997; Pitts 2007), increased enrolment in challenging classes (Klopfenstein 2005), reduced placement in special needs classes (Meier et al. 1989) and reduced absenteeism (Farkas et al. 1990).

A related body of research at this time, and into the 1990s and 2000s, tried to explain the link between the academic gains of minority students who were taught by a minority teacher. Findings from this research were categorised by Villegas and Irvine (2010) into five reasons: in comparison to the approaches of majority group teachers, minority teachers tended to (a) hold higher expectations of minority students, (b) engage in more culturally appropriate pedagogical approaches, (c) confront issues of racism as they arose in their classrooms and schools, (d) invest in the development of caring and trusting student–teacher relationships and (e) advocate for the interests of minority students to a greater degree. The reaction to these research findings was most often to call for an increase in minority teachers, rather than for professional development work with *all* teachers with respect to teaching minority students. A significant element of this body of research is the prominent role model argument, which holds that when teachers are present that look like or have similar backgrounds to students, those students will be inspired by these 'role models' to engage with school (Cole 1986; England et al. 1989; Evans 1992; Hess and Leal 1997; Klopfenstein 2005). This argument is still particularly popular amongst policy-makers and the media (e.g., European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture 2017; O'Shea 2017; O'Brien 2018). The desire to be a 'role model' is also commonly cited by beginning teachers, including those from minority communities (cf. Brown 2014; Colum and Collins 2021), in explaining their motivation for being a teacher. This is linked to wider research about motivations for teaching, which has shown that teachers from minority and other under-represented groups express altruistic motivations and the desire to 'give back' (Heinz et al. 2017; Hennessy and Lynch 2017). Despite the popularity of the role model rationale, however, criticisms of the basic argument have been offered, and research suggests that the area is complex and requires careful consideration.

2.4 Wave III: Recognising Racial Tokenism, and a Return to the Original Equality Rationale

By the end of the 2000s, tolerance for ethnic-matching and cultural-compatibility arguments had been waning. Applying perspectives from Critical Race Theory, cognitive science, and ecological models to the issue of teacher diversity, scholars including Hopson (2013b), Brown (2014) and Santoro (2015) critiqued the ethnic-matching rationale and challenged the discourse of "racial tokenism" (Brown 2014, p. 338) and the view that more diversity was sufficient in and of itself. Significant criticisms of the role model argument were put forward; it was argued that it hinges on a fallacious, and potentially racist, assumption that the colour of someone's skin means having certain characteristics (Martino and Rezai-Rashti 2012; Hopson 2013b). This flawed essentialism can also be considered in relation to other demographic dimensions; that because of someone's ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social class, disability or language, they will have certain characteristics and perform in certain (stereotypical) ways.

Brown's (2014, p. 335) work also found that minority student teachers felt forced to "disavow cultural aspects of their identities" in order to meet peer and instructor expectations, and reported experiencing racism within initial teacher education (ITE) programmes. Hopson highlighted the same, speaking of the "tension that exists between the importance of having racialized bodies [in teaching] and the naivety of always expecting specific behaviours from these individuals" (2013a, p. 126). Santoro (2013, 2015) argued that minority teachers are often seen and constructed primarily as ethnic/racial teachers, undermining recognition of their full value, both externally and in their own teacher identities; that is, many minority teachers end up feeling as if they are "professional ethnics" (Santoro 2013, p. 10), rather than professional teachers. Additionally, it is understood that minority teachers can be pigeonholed and burdened by an expectation that they will inhabit and perform a specific role for minority students and/or be burdened by 'diversity work' in which it is assumed they will engage as a result of their identity (Santoro 2013, 2015), contributing not only to excessive workload, but identity-related job dissatisfaction and professional attrition (for similar concerns with regard to working class teachers, see Maguire 2005). Some research at this time also argued for the need for an intersectional (Crenshaw 1989) approach. For example, Martino and Rezai-Rashti (2010), through their examination of the perspectives of Black male teachers about the shortage of male teachers, cautioned about the limitations of "an explanatory framework that foregrounds the singularity of gender" (p. 247).

In this wave, then, scholars emphasised the dangers of an essentialising rationale and pointed to the need for ITE to better prepare both minority *and* majority student teachers to teach for social justice. The overall direction of the field was reminiscent of the original impetus and rationale presented in the early 1980s, but with an added emphasis on the importance of critical pedagogy within ITE. In the vein of this wave, relevant research included Larochette et al. (2010), who tried to measure whole school positive gains, rather than minority student gains, and

Milner (2006, p. 91), who asked "what can we learn about Black teachers and their teaching of Black students to benefit all teachers, regardless of their ethnic, cultural, and racial background?" This third wave constituted an important step forward in its problematisation of the essentialism underpinning arguments about the rationale for diversifying the teaching profession.

2.5 Wave IV: The Re-emergence of Demographic-Matching and Its Complexification

Examining the literature about the rationale for diversifying teaching in the last several years (2015–2021), a number of points stand out. The arguments of Trainor et al. (2019) and Dandala (2020) hark back to the original rationale, with Trainor et al. (2019, p. 196) emphasising that the under-representation of certain groups in teaching "… communicates a forceful message to students about power in American society", and Dandala (2020, p. 651) arguing that "schools need to be held publicly accountable for their level and quality of teacher diversity because they are supposed to be examples of multicultural integration and harmony". There is also an occasional focus on a more diverse teaching body benefitting all students (Pluhowsky 2019), and research has increased on how to improve ITE based on learning from teachers from under-represented groups (Bristol and Goings 2019; Sharp et al. 2019; Bristol et al. 2020; Faison and McArthur 2020). More generally, however, there is little evidence of the critical work of Hopson, Brown, and Santoro being taken up by researchers in the field, even amongst those who claim to take, for example, a Critical Race Theory perspective on diversifying teaching (Marrun et al. 2019), although Pizarro and Kohli (2020) are an exception.

The most notable trend in recent research has been a resurgence of studies demonstrating the positive impact of minority teachers, in terms of improved academic, social and emotional outcomes for minority students, and the higher expectations and more positive attitudes of minority teachers in relation to minority students (cf. Gershenson et al. 2016; Banerjee 2018; Egalite and Kisida 2018; Gershenson et al. 2018; Yarnell and Bohrnstedt 2018; Glock and Kleen 2019; Redding 2019; Glock and Schuchart 2020; Lim and Meer 2020; Markowitz et al. 2020; Rasheed et al. 2020). Research on the benefits of 'ethnic-matching' has also found: increased minority student enrolment in advanced classes (Hart 2020); increases in Black students' high school graduation, college aspirations and outcomes (Gershenson et al. 2018); enhanced minority parental engagement and decreased student absences (Markowitz et al. 2020); enhanced linguistic responsiveness of minority teachers (Haddix 2015; Martin and Strom 2016); and reductions in disciplinary action against minority students (Blake et al. 2016; Lindsay and Hart 2017; Kozleski and Proffitt 2020; Williams et al. 2020). Further, in a study with students and teachers in a low-income area in the USA, Brown and Ritter (2017, p. 5773) found that "students perceive that teachers of the same race are more effective and have more positive relationships with them".

In the last 5–6 years, there has also been an increase in research citing 'demographic-matching' as the primary rationale for diversifying teaching (Jackson and

Kohli 2016; Carver-Thomas 2018; Bristol and Martin-Fernandez 2019; Marrun et al. 2019; Dandala 2020). While some commentators more formally structure their discussion around the benefits of diverse teachers (i.e., Ingersoll et al. 2019; Nevarez et al. 2019), and some try to theorize demographic-matching arguments (see Gershenson et al. 2018; Bristol and Martin-Fernandez 2019; Glock and Kleen 2019), the substance is ultimately the same: promoting teacher diversity due to the benefits of minority teachers for minority students.

Recent research relating to (but not necessarily arguing for) aspects of demographic-matching has also been reported with respect to other dimensions of diversity, including social class (Keane et al. 2018, 2020; Scott and Vinopal 2020), and gender (Egalite and Kisida 2018; Xu and Li 2018; Lim and Meer 2020; Heinz et al. 2021), including in the virtual learning environment (Makransky et al. 2019). However, the arguments underpinning this body of research are complex, and some of the research adopts more critical and nuanced perspectives. For example, in a paper about 'working class' student teachers' expressed desire to be relatable and inclusive teachers, Keane et al. (2020) considered classed teacher self-disclosure, whereby 'working class' teachers shared information about their (classed) selves with their (working class) students, viewing it as a potentially powerful, albeit risky, relational strategy that impacted positively on their students. However, like Santoro (2015) in relation to minority ethnic teachers, Keane et al. warn about the potential burden on 'working class' teachers and emphasise the need for ITE to engender the desire and ability to be relatable and inclusive amongst *all* student teachers. Similarly, in terms of the burden on minority teachers, Pizarro and Kohli (2020), employing the concept of 'racial battle fatigue', report on the cumulative impact of racism on teachers of colour in their professional contexts, and the detrimental impact on their well-being and retention in the profession. From a gender perspective, demographic-matching arguments (e.g., in terms of having more male teachers as role models for boys) have long been made and critiqued (cf. Martino and Rezai-Rashti 2012). However, Heinz et al. (2021), employing a dialectic rationale and from an intersectional perspective, support the case for more men in teaching, and for more diverse masculinities "not as simplistic role models for boys, but to demonstrate the diversity amongst men and the possibility of caring masculinities to positively impact children, teaching, schools and society" (p. 15) (see also McGrath et al. 2020; McGrath, this volume). Indeed, in this period, an emerging focus on intersectionality has been apparent; for example, Rizzi (2016) explored the experiences of gay, male, immigrant educators, noting they occupied a "multiple-marginalised position based on their language, ethnicity, and sexuality differences, and yet, hold a position of power by way of their gender and professional status" (p. 115). In a review of empirical research in the USA on social justice in teacher education, Pugach et al. (2019) advocate the use of an intersectional framework in relation to identity considerations in teacher education and related research.

Interestingly, the research on LGBTQI+ teachers (Gowran 2004; Neary 2013; Lineback et al. 2016; Lundin 2016; Lee 2019; Callaghan and Esterhuizen 2020; Moore 2020; Saxey 2021) does not attend significantly to arguments for the benefits of having LGBTQ+ teachers in the classroom. Rather, the research focuses on "understandings of the conflicts LGBTQ teachers negotiate … between their personal and professional identities" (Bracho and Hayes 2020, p. 586), and associated legal challenges of being LGBTQI+ teachers in employment, including in England (Lee 2019), Canada (Grace 2017), Australia (Ferfolja 2005; Jones et al. 2014), Ireland (Fahie 2016) and the USA (Callaghan and Esterhuizen 2020). While Bower-Phipps (2020) explores the desires of some LGBTQI+ teachers to "be out, be role models, and create safe spaces", her participants "felt unable to achieve this vision in what they perceived as heteronormative school climates" (p. 1). In the context of the traditional expectation of the teaching profession to maintain a "puritanical lifestyle" (Dressler 1977, p. 399) and the history of oppression of lesbian and gay sexualities (Gowran 2004) in education, there is a question about the 'readiness' of the field to argue for the benefits of having more LGBTQI+ teachers in schools, perhaps, in part, because LGBTQI+ youth do not constitute a 'group of concern' with regard to academic engagement and success.

Another recent trend in the literature on teacher diversity is consideration of the applicability of the concept of 'representative bureaucracy' (cf. Grissom et al. 2015; Nicholson-Crotty et al. 2016; Vinopal 2018; Vinopal and Holt 2019). From the field of political science, representative bureaucracy considers how diversity amongst those hired into publicly funded positions (including teaching) affects the impact of policy outputs on different groups in society. Echoing perhaps some elements of the demographic-matching rationale,

> scholars in this tradition have suggested a number of mechanisms whereby descriptive representation produces substantive benefits for minority client populations, including both direct exercise of power by minority bureaucrats and indirect effects … on the behaviours of their colleagues or the client population itself.
>
> (Grissom et al. 2015, p. 186)

Relatedly, in the Canadian context, Dandala (2020) suggests the use of the concept of *public accountability* as a rationale for diversification that could be palatable on a political level.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has traced the history and development of the rationale for the diversification of the teaching profession through four 'waves' of research from the 1980s to the present time. Diversity in the teaching profession is of significant policy concern in many national contexts. Attention to the rationale is important in order not to lose sight of the original impetus to contribute to a more equitable society. The continued prominence of the demographic-matching rationale, and of related research, is of note. While the core assumptions underpinning this rationale have been problematised because of their essentialist basis, the area is complex and nuanced, and the evidence of positive impacts of minority teachers, especially on minority students, cannot be ignored.

It could be argued that it is not a 'zero-sum' game; it is possible (and important) to recognise the significant potential benefits evidenced by demographic-matching-related research, whilst also recognising its limitations, that is, that on social justice grounds, *it does not go far enough*. Into the future, along with acknowledging the benefits of having minority teachers for minority students, the rationale for diversifying the teaching profession needs to emphasise the importance of teachers from under-represented groups for *all* students (perhaps even particularly for privileged and majority group pupils, in terms of the importance of anti-racist education, for example), while also continuing to work to transform teacher education to better prepare and support *all* teachers to effectively teach and support *all* students.

Notes

1 Gender, of course, has long been a focus of research and debate internationally in relation to diversity in the teaching profession (cf. Drudy et al. 2005; Martino and Kehler 2006; Coulter and Greig 2008, Moreau 2020) but this is not a core focus in this chapter, given that an equity rationale has not traditionally been associated with debates about gender in teaching. Teachers with disabilities have also received attention in the research literature, but the voiced rationale for the need for increased representation of teachers with disabilities has remained quite stable over time. Key studies from the 1990s to the present day have emphasised the importance of the representation of these teachers in (a) conveying positive representations of disability to others, (b) fostering a more inclusive culture in schools and (c) acting as role models for all students, including students with disabilities, and thereby playing a role in addressing the low expectations of the latter. These key emphases have been present in the rationale underpinning research in the area over time (cf. Knight and Wadsworth 1996; Duquette 2000; Ferri et al. 2001; Pritchard 2010; Grenier et al. 2014; Neca et al. 2020).

2 Different national concerns and priorities throughout a country's history also influence specific reasons for diversifying the teaching profession over time. For example, Ireland's post-colonial status after 1922 led to a very strong focus on the recruitment of competent Irish language speakers and teachers (see Chapter 3).

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3 Diversity in the Teaching Profession in Ireland

Tracing Research and Policy Development

Elaine Keane, Manuela Heinz and Rory Mc Daid

3.1 Introduction

Ireland has 3,421 primary and 730 second-level schools, employing 69,221 teachers (Department of Education [DE] 2021a). Just over 88 percent of primary schools (DE 2021b) and over half of second-level schools (Coolahan et al. 2012) are Catholic. As Ireland's first official language, Irish is a compulsory subject in schools, although exemptions are available for students with certain learning difficulties and for certain migrant students. State-funded initial teacher education (ITE) is provided by six centres for teacher education for both primary and post-primary teaching, and programmes are offered at undergraduate (4 years) and postgraduate (2 years) levels by a range of institutions. ITE programmes, all of which are accredited by the Irish Teaching Council, encompass academic, placement and research elements. ITE is high-status in Ireland (O'Doherty and Harford 2018), and entry is highly competitive; at undergraduate level, selection is based upon applicants' Leaving Certificate[1] performance, and, for primary teaching, applicants have to reach specified minimum standards in Irish, English and mathematics, with a high standard for Irish (Department of Education and Skills (DES) 2020). At postgraduate level, points obtained for undergraduate degree performance are combined with points for relevant experience and/or further qualifications (Heinz 2008, 2013b).

In this chapter, we explore policy development and previous empirical research about diversity in ITE and the teaching profession over the last century in Ireland. First, we trace the journey from a primarily religious teaching population in the early decades of the Republic, to a predominantly 'lay' (non-religious) teaching body following the expansion of post-primary education in the 1960s, to the current day, where we continue to observe a lack of diversity in the teaching population. Through our discussion, we highlight important research findings and key developments in policy, culminating in the landmark development in teacher diversity policy through the Higher Education Authority's (HEA) *Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH): Strand 1 (Equity of Access to Initial Teacher Education)* (PATH1). In the final two sections, we briefly consider recent teacher diversity research and relevant research currently underway, before ending with a summary overview of current PATH1 projects in Ireland.

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3.2 Diversifying the Teaching Profession in Ireland: Research and Policy

Research and policy about diversity in the teaching profession has a long tradition in Ireland and they are significantly intertwined. As we will demonstrate in this section, the conduct and publication of key empirical studies over time led to an increasing awareness of the homogeneity of the teaching profession in Ireland and served as an impetus to the development of national policy in the area.

Walsh and Mc Daid (2019) have argued that entry to the teaching profession in Ireland was "hotly contested" (p. 89) by the state and dominant churches since the foundation of the national system of education in 1831 until the achievement of political independence in 1921. For example, the Catholic Church objected to the principle of mixed denominational teacher training[2] colleges and model[3] schools, preferring that teachers remain untrained rather than train in mixed denominational and mixed sex colleges. Though there were significant tensions, there was general agreement that teachers should be conservative, law-abiding, moralistic and obedient (Walsh and Mc Daid 2019). In post-independent Ireland, "the twin sieves of religious and Irish language requirements had a profound effect on the selection and recruitment" (Walsh and Mc Daid 2019, p. 89) of teachers. The Catholic Church, for example, was clear about its expectation for complete control over education, stating that "… the only satisfactory system of education for Catholics is one wherein Catholic children are taught in Catholic schools by Catholic teachers under Catholic control" (Times Educational Supplement 1921, p. 323). During the 1920s, the church gained control over entry into teacher training through management of the preparatory colleges, which provided education through the medium of Irish for prospective entrants into the teacher training colleges (An Roinn Oideachais 1926). Teacher supply demands can constrict or expand possibilities for teacher diversification. During a period of teacher oversupply in the 1930s, teachers from Northern Ireland and Great Britain were no longer eligible for recognition to teach in Ireland (Department of Education 1935), and preparatory colleges became the only route for entry into the profession. This served to narrow the pool of teachers in the country. Following 1966, when 'free'[4] post-primary education was introduced in Ireland, the sector significantly expanded, with the number of post-primary teachers doubling between 1967 and 1974 (O'Sullivan 2005). Simultaneously, entry to the clergy and religious orders declined rapidly, resulting in a predominantly 'lay' teaching population by the 1990s (Drudy and Lynch 1993). While prior to 1960, most full-time teachers in Ireland were members of religious orders or clergy (Coolahan 1984), this had dropped to 20 percent by 1979 (O'Sullivan 2005). This first diversification of the teaching base in Ireland was followed by an expansion of the numbers of lay teachers appointed as principals in schools controlled by religious orders (O'Sullivan 2005).

The Irish government's 1965 *Investment in Education* report (Ireland 1965) highlighted the high proportion of entrants to primary teacher education who came from farming backgrounds and from rural locations, particularly on the west coast. A number of important studies in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s reported similar findings, that entrants to primary teacher education from middle class and farming backgrounds were over-represented, and entrants from lower socio-economic groups were under-represented (Kelly 1970; O'Sullivan 1980; Greaney et al. 1987; Killeavy 1993). Greaney et al. (1987) also found that female entrants outnumbered males by a ratio of 6:1, while Killeavy's (1993) study noted the high levels of academic ability among entrants, a trend of increasing representation of entrants from urban areas, the predominance of females over males, as well as "the self-perpetuating nature of the profession itself" (p. 280). In the same year, observing the homogeneity of the teaching profession in Ireland in line with the aforementioned indicators, Drudy and Lynch (1993) highlighted *the implications of* the "difference in the social origins of teachers and a sizable proportion of their pupils" (p. 95). They pointed to the impact on the learning process and interactions between students and teachers, arguing that "in particular, it may aggravate cultural differences between teachers and disadvantaged working-class children" (p. 95).

Almost a decade later, in 2002, the Department of Education and Science's (DES) *Advisory Group on Post-primary Teacher Education* recommended that the selection criteria for National University of Ireland (NUI)[5] ITE programmes be extended "to accommodate a greater diversity of entrants" (DES 2002, p. 16) in order to successfully "adapt to the challenge of an increasingly diverse and rapidly changing professional environment" (DES 2002, p. 101). Their recommendations paid particular attention to the importance of increasing the participation rates of mature students, students from disadvantaged backgrounds, students with special needs, and candidates from ethnic minorities. Additionally, the Advisory Group raised the issue of the desirability of ensuring a "reasonable gender balance" (DES 2002, p. 101). In 2003, remarking on the ITE population being "decidedly of Irish ethnic origin" and observing the lack of individuals from minority ethnic groups, including Travellers, entering ITE, Coolahan (2003, p. 30) felt that "this is likely to change as … the relatively new immigrant population settles down and integrates with the general society". Coolahan also felt that "there are no formal barriers to members of any ethnic or religious minority entering teacher education courses. It is more a matter of time, opportunity and familiarisation within the society" (2003, p. 30). While it could be argued that what constitutes a 'formal barrier' is a matter of interpretation, it is likely that Irish language, and to a lesser extent the Religion certificate, requirements act as formal barriers for many at primary ITE level (O'Donoghue and Harford 2011; O'Doherty and Harford 2018). Coolahan also reflected on trends in the social class composition of the teaching population in Ireland over time and stated that there was a greater social class mix in the backgrounds of teachers in Ireland (at the time—2003) than had hitherto been the case. Interestingly, he also reflected on teaching as a career being not encouraged in "many well-off and professional families":

> … It is still the case, that among many well-off and professional families, teaching is not promoted as a career for their children, and many of the very poor in society do not aspire to teaching careers [and] … in recent years, in the context of a buoyant economy involving a greater diversification of careers, with a certain glamour associated with them, a trend was in evidence

> that parents with rising social aspirations, including teachers, tended to advise their children to consider careers which would be more remunerative, and enjoy a greater social caché.
>
> (Coolahan 2003, p. 30)

Acknowledging the role of institutions' admission policies in promoting equality in education, in 2004, Lynch and Lodge recommended that "colleges and faculties of education and teacher education … be proactive in encouraging people with disabilities, Black and minority ethnic people (including Travellers), both genders and lesbian, gay and bisexual people into the teaching profession in Ireland" (2004, p. 109). Around this time, Leavy (2005) questioned the possibility of a culturally diverse teaching population in the context of "the lack of provision of alternative routes of access to elementary education programmes for people of non-Irish ethnicity, and the restrictive entry criteria to such programmes" (p. 160).

With respect to gender and the teaching profession, Drudy (2006) illustrated the influence of differential (prior) academic performance on the gender composition of student teacher bodies historically in Ireland. Prior to 1975, applications from males and females to primary teacher education colleges were assessed separately, and males could gain places in all-male courses requiring lower Leaving Certificate achievement than was the case for female applicants entering all-female colleges. When colleges became coeducational in 1975, cut-off 'points' levels became the same for all applicants, from which time, "the decline in male entrants … was immediate, rapid, dramatic and (with some fluctuations) continuous […] and accompanied by a slow, but steady, decline in the proportion of males in the primary teaching sector" (Drudy 2006, p. 265). In a highly significant contribution to the empirical basis of research about diversifying the teaching profession, Drudy et al.'s (2005) large-scale study with school leavers and primary-level student teachers examined gender differences and related 'imbalances' in teaching. Amongst a range of important findings, they reported that the top two (professional) social class categories predominated in terms of student teachers' backgrounds and that many students' third-level course choices followed gender stereotypes. Significantly more female than male school leavers were interested in teaching careers. Primary teaching was perceived as a woman's job, and male participants felt that there would be less support from significant others for a decision to go into the profession at this level (Drudy et al. 2005).[6] Drudy et al. identified three complex issues resulting from a lack of men in teaching: equality in the labour market, the socialisation of pupils and issues related to the 'hidden curriculum' of schooling, in terms of the "unintended pupil learning from occupational hierarchies [that] may be observed in the educational system" (2005, p. 154).

In 2008, Heinz examined patterns in the composition of applicants and entrants to postgraduate post-primary teacher education programmes in the four NUI colleges, reporting that 97.8 percent (of both applicants and entrants) were of Irish nationality, 75 percent of entrants were female, and that the number of mature-aged[7] applicants and entrants had significantly increased between 1999 and 2005. In the same year (2008), Moran considered challenges in the field of widening participation in ITE in Northern Ireland and emphasised the need for more inclusive selection processes in order to achieve a more representative teaching force. Clarke (2009) reported on some socio-demographic characteristics of a sample of post-primary ITE entrants from the four NUI institutions and Trinity College Dublin (TCD). In terms of social class,[8] Clarke's highest represented group (at 17.1 percent) was 'Other in receipt of social welfare, loans or dependent', with 16.4 percent of participants coming from farming families, giving a participation ratio of 1.56. Clarke concluded that "this profile in post-primary teaching represents a much broader spread of socio-economic background than that of the primary sector" (2009, p. 174).

At this point in time, the Irish Teaching Council (ITC) included the task of considering "how to attract people who are underrepresented in the profession, e.g., men, people from areas designated as disadvantaged and members of the new Irish community" in its Strategic Plan 2008–2011 (2008, p. 10). Similar concerns were expressed by Conway et al. (2009, p. 114), who also noted that such under-representations "… will need to be addressed". The following year, the *Intercultural Education Strategy 2010–2015* (DES 2010) explicitly stated that "migrants should be encouraged to become teachers" (p. 40). Arguing that "the teaching profession in Ireland, especially at primary school level, is less culturally and ethnically diverse than in other OECD countries", Hyland (2012, p. 10; see also, Devine 2005) and O'Donoghue and Harford (2011) identified the Catholic-based tradition of education in Ireland and, in particular Irish-language requirements (at primary level), as likely reasons (see also Walsh and Mc Daid 2019). Disability was also included in considerations about teacher diversity at the time; for example, in 2009, the Advisory Group on Candidates with Disabilities made recommendations regarding the recruitment of students with disabilities into primary ITE (Treanor 2012).

Building on her previous work, Heinz's (2011) research involved a detailed analysis of ITE application and selection criteria and processes, application data from applicants to the postgraduate post-primary ITE programmes in the NUI institutions between 1999 and 2006, and a survey of 2006 entrants (see also, Heinz 2013a, 2013b). Key findings confirmed that teaching remained a popular career choice in Ireland, attracting high-quality applicants who were mainly Irish (97.8 percent), female (73.1 percent), Catholic (88 percent), and Arts graduates (66.6 percent) from rural areas (59.6 percent). Student teachers with parents from non-manual and professional backgrounds (Social Classes 1, 2 and 3) predominated (69.8 percent) and were over-represented when compared to the whole population. Throughout her work, Heinz (2008 2011, 2013a, 2013b) emphasised the need for ongoing data collection and for a critical review of entry procedures and criteria to ITE programmes as key steps towards greater teacher diversity.

To better capture empirical patterns on national and cross-sectoral levels, in 2013, Keane and Heinz at the University of Galway established the *Diversity in Initial Teacher Education* (DITE) national research project, funded by the Irish Research Council (cf. Keane and Heinz 2015, 2016; Heinz, Keane, and Davison 2017; Heinz, Keane, and Foley, 2017; Heinz and Keane, 2018; Heinz et al. 2018; Keane et al. 2018; Heinz et al. 2021). This project established Ireland's most comprehensive national evidence base with respect to the socio-demographic characteristics and motivations of applicants and entrants to state-funded primary and post-primary, undergraduate and postgraduate, ITE programmes. DITE's key findings in relation to undergraduate primary, undergraduate post-primary, and postgraduate post-primary, ITE entrants are summarised in Table 3.1.[9]

Table 3.1 Summary Socio-demographics of 2014 Entrants to State-funded ITE Programmes

	Undergraduate Primary ITE Entrants	*Undergraduate Post-primary ITE Entrants*	*Postgraduate Post-primary ITE Entrants*
Sex	Female: 85.8% Male: 14.0% Intersex: 0.2%	Female: 64.1% Male: 35.2% Intersex: 0.7%	Female: 60.2% Male: 39.5% Intersex: 0.3%
Socio-Economic Group	Highest Represented Groups: 1. Employers and Managers: 25.1% 2. Manual Skilled: 18.7%	Highest Represented Groups: 1. Manual Skilled: 22.5% 2. Employers and Managers: 18.3%	Highest Represented Groups: 1. Manual Skilled: 22.8% 2. Employers and Managers: 20.0%
Age	Mean age: 18.35 (SD = 2.10) Mature-aged (23+): 2.7%	Mean age: 19.46 (SD = 4.48) Mature-aged (23+): 11.3%	Mean age: 24.89 (SD = 5.94) Mature-aged (25+): 32.4%
Nationality	Irish Nationality *Only*: 96.2% Irish + Other: 3.8% Other (single or mixed, not including Irish): 0%	Irish Nationality *Only*: 93.8% Irish + Other: 4.8% Other (single or mixed, not including Irish): 1.4%	Irish Nationality *Only*: 95.8% Irish + Other: 3.9% Other (single or mixed, not including Irish): 0.3%
Ethnicity	White Irish Settled: 99.0%	White Irish Settled: 98.2%	White Irish Settled: 98.3%
Disability	Yes: 4.8%	Yes: 13.8%	Yes: 8.9%
Religion	Highest Represented Groups: Roman Catholic: 90.4% Church of Ireland: 3.7% None: 4.8%	Highest Represented Groups: Roman Catholic: 86.5% Church of Ireland: 2.2% None: 9.4%	Highest Represented Groups: Roman Catholic: 85.8% Church of Ireland: 1.9% None: 9.7%
First Language	English: 96.9% Irish: 3.1% Other: 0%	English: 98.6% Irish: 1.4% Other: 0%	English: 93.1% Irish: 6.6% Other: 0.3%
Sexual Orientation	No data	No data	No response: 20.2% Of respondents: 94.8% Heterosexual

Table 3.1 highlights the ongoing homogeneity of ITE entrant populations in Ireland, with respect to sex, socio-economic group, age, nationality, ethnicity, disability, religion, first language and sexual orientation. In the same time frame, research by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) (Darmody and Smyth 2016) about entry to ITE programmes nationally confirmed the high academic calibre of entrants to primary ITE and the predominance of female

entrants, especially at primary level, but noted the slightly more diverse profile of entrants at post-primary ITE level, in terms of entry via further education or mature student routes, receipt of higher education grant, and parental socio-economic group. Darmody and Smyth (2016) also confirmed the ongoing under-representation of ITE entrants from non-Irish nationalities and of those who had formerly attended a DEIS[10] school. Throughout their publications, Keane and Heinz call for critical discussion about the rationale for and benefits of a more diverse teaching body in Ireland, ongoing tracking of the socio-demographic profile of applicants and entrants to ITE programmes, as well as further research about the experiences of under-represented groups in ITE and into the profession, particularly in relation to barriers to entry and progression (cf. Heinz and Keane 2018, p. 537). They also identify the need for attention to potential programme adaptations necessitated by a more diverse ITE population "… in relation to pedagogy, assessment, student support, and cultural practices [and at] school placement level" (p. 538).

The major step forward in national policy development in Ireland occurred in 2015, when the aim to diversify the teaching profession was first pronounced on a policy level in the 2015–2019 National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education (hereafter, National Access Plan) (HEA 2015). Under Goal 1, objective 1.7 was "to increase access by students from target groups to initial teacher education" through the "development of access programmes and routes to teacher training" (HEA 2015, p. 26). Further, the Plan emphasised the critical role of the teacher in shaping and raising students' academic aspirations and the important role played by teacher education in this regard:

> Students who have successfully participated in higher education often reflect on the role an individual teacher played in providing them with the support they needed to realise their educational aspirations. Because teachers play such a critical role in shaping student expectations, it is vital to ensure that the value of that role is understood during initial teacher education and in continuing professional development (CPD) programmes.
>
> (HEA 2015, p. 17)

Following the publication of the National Access Plan and DITE (Keane and Heinz 2015, 2016) and ESRI research (Darmody and Smyth 2016), the Department of Education and Skills established the *Working Group on Teacher Education 2016–2017* whose work informed the development of the call for proposals to diversify ITE announced in September 2016. As part of PATH (Programme for Access to HE): Strand 1 (Equity of Access to Initial Teacher Education), €2.7 million was made available on a competitive basis to Centres for Teacher Education to support projects to diversify the teaching profession, from 2017–2020. Importantly, the target groups for the PATH1 initiative were those identified in the 2015–2019 National Access Plan (HEA 2015) for access to higher education in Ireland in general, namely: (1) entrants from socio-economic groups that have low participation in higher education; (2) first-time, mature student entrants; (3) students with disabilities; (4) part-time/flexible learners; (5) further education award holders; and (6) Irish Travellers. As can be seen from this list, entrants from minority ethnic groups other than Travellers were not identified as a target group, which meant that they were also absent from the list of target groups for PATH1 projects to diversify teaching. Further, the target groups remained the same when PATH1 projects were awarded continuation funding for Phase 2 (2020–2023). As we explained in Chapter 1, this has been regarded as problematic, given the evidenced patterns of under-representation of minority ethnic groups in ITE in Ireland. Further, it is of note that the *Migrant Integration Strategy* (Department of Justice and Equality 2017) specifically targets the recruitment of teachers from the migrant community living in Ireland. Following a competitive process, six Centres of Teacher Education, at regional cluster level, were awarded funding for projects to diversify the teaching profession. The main focus of the various PATH1 projects is presented in Section 3.3.

Another important step forward occurred in 2017, when the *Migrant Teacher Project* (MTP) was established by Marino Institute of Education with the aim of increasing the participation of Immigrant Internationally Educated Teachers (IIETs) in Irish primary and post-primary schools. The project provides information, advice, and training to migrant teachers who have qualified outside of Ireland to help them to continue their profession in Ireland. Key project activities include the Bridging Programme, *Being a Teacher in Ireland,* the development of a teacher and schools' network, and a portal for support with teacher registration. Funding for the project has been provided through the National Integration Fund, the European Commission Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2014–2020, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and by the Department of Education. MTP research has identified significant structural barriers faced by many migrant teachers in terms of getting registered with the ITC in Ireland and after entering the profession (see Schmidt and Mc Daid 2015; Mc Daid and Walsh 2016; Walsh and Mc Daid 2019; Mc Daid and Nowlan 2022; Mc Daid, this volume; Schmidt et al. 2022).

In terms of more recent policy developments, the current Programme for Government, *Our Shared Future*, commits to introducing a "positive action programme to overcome barriers and increase the number of teachers from our migrant communities" and notes that this will be "in conjunction with the Teaching Council and Further Education authorities" (Department of the Taoiseach 2020, p. 96). In this regard, the Teaching Council's (2022) latest *Strategic Plan 2022–2027* includes, under Goal 1—Teacher Registration and Supply, two significant objectives; it commits firstly (under objective 1.5.) to increasing efficiencies in the assessment process of overseas teaching qualifications for the purpose of registration and, secondly (under objective 1.10), to promoting diversity in the teaching profession through continued collaboration with stakeholders and the Department of Education (p. 8). While at the time of writing the anticipated National Access Plan 2022–2026 has not been published, it is expected that there will be a continued focus on teacher diversity. Given the breadth and scope of the National Plan with respect to access and participation in the higher education sector in general, however, it may lack the capacity to be adequately nuanced to address the specific issues impacting teacher diversity. As previously argued, if minority ethnic groups do not feature as a priority group, their access to and participation in the teaching profession will remain under-addressed, as related teacher diversity projects will be constrained in terms of *which* minority ethnic students they can recruit and support. In this context, teacher diversity policy may need to be decoupled from the National Access Plan.

In the last few years, research about diversity in the teaching profession in Ireland has included more qualitative work about the experiences of student teachers and teachers from under-represented groups. This has included Neary's (2013, 2017, Neary, Gray, and O'Sullivan 2018) critical qualitative research with LGBTQI+ teachers, which has, for example, examined their experiences in schools of 'coming out' (see Chapter 16, this volume). Keane et al.'s (2018, 2020) research with 'working class' student teachers has examined their frequently negative past schooling experiences, their strong desire to be relatable and inclusive teachers and how 'classed teacher self-disclosure' could facilitate the enactment of this teacher identity (see also Chapter 9, this volume). Goodwin's (2019) qualitative research also focused on social class in (post-primary) ITE and into the profession; her study demonstrated how class-based experiences of education interacted with financial and social factors in shaping what middle and working class student teachers considered possible and experienced with regard to teaching as a career. Naughton's (2020) mixed methods study examined the perspectives of post-primary minority ethnic students about teaching as a career. It identified five factors deterring minority ethnic students from entering teaching: (1) the influence of family members; (2) encouragement from others to consider alternative careers; (3) teacher salary and the 'hard work' associated with teaching; (4) the level of Irish required for primary ITE; and (5) the diversity gap (between teaching and student populations). While most recent work in the field has been qualitative in nature, an exception is Quirke-Bolt and Purcell's (2021) quantitative investigation of the profile of entrants to concurrent (post-primary) ITE programmes in Ireland between 2009 and 2020. This research confirmed the homogeneity of ITE students on concurrent programmes in terms of their nationality, but indicated a diversification with regard to their socio-economic backgrounds based on an increase in the percentage of students on these programmes receiving means-tested financial supports (44 percent in receipt of SUSI[11] grants). The study also showed that the representation of students from schools with disadvantaged status (12 percent of entrants from DEIS schools) is marginally above the national average of 10 percent.

At the time of writing, there are a number of relevant doctoral research projects underway nationally, examining issues relevant to mature-aged, minority ethnic and 'working class' ITE entrants. A recent important development (2021) is the *Reasonable Accommodations and Professional Placements (RAPP)* project, undertaken by the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD) and supported by the HEA. The project involves the examination of national competency standards and reasonable accommodations in professional courses, including teaching. The project's research strand explores the barriers experienced by students with disabilities on professional placements, as well as highlighting good practice, in order to support students with disabilities in achieving competency standards.

3.3 Projects to Diversify Teaching in Ireland

Funded by the HEA under PATH1, a range of teacher diversity projects are currently underway, run by the various Centres for Teacher Education. In addition, the *Migrant Teacher Project*, outlined in Section 3.2, is run by Marino Institute of Education and is separately funded. Table 3.2 provides a summary overview of the PATH1 projects, many of which also feature in Section II of this edited volume.

Table 3.2 Summary of PATH1 Teacher Diversity Projects in Ireland

Institution(s) and Overall Aim	*Title of Project(s)*	*Level*	*Core Activities*
Dublin City University Institute of Education *The aim of the projects delivered in DCU is to increase the number of entrants from those traditionally under-represented in initial teacher education by providing pre-entry outreach and/or post-entry supports and by improving the overall campus climate for marginalised groups.*	Bachelor of Education—Irish Sign Language Entry Route for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People	ITE primary under-graduate	The Bachelor of Education Irish Sign Language Entry Route is a dedicated pathway into primary teaching for Deaf Irish Sign Language users, which addresses the hard and soft barriers deaf students may encounter accessing and/or remaining in the programme.
	Teacher Experience Programme	ITE primary and post-primary	The Teacher Experience Programme is a bespoke series of lessons aimed at students in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 of Junior Cycle, enabling learners to explore career trajectories and pathways, using teaching as a focus.
	Educational Disadvantage Centre's Community Outreach Hubs to Promote Access to the Teaching Profession	ITE primary	This project consists of community outreach to provide local hubs (Darndale, Coolock, Kilbarrack and Finglas) for classes to support and motivate second-level students and adults to undertake primary teaching.
I Can Teach Project (Trinity College Dublin [TCD]; Marino Institute of Education [MIE]; University College Dublin [UCD]; and National College for Art and Design [NCAD] *The overarching aim is collaborative action for widening access and participation (WAP) to ITE for under-represented groups in the TCD–UCD–MIE–NCAD Centre for Teacher Education.*	TCD	Post-primary	TCD focuses on increasing the participation of mature students and students with disabilities in the School of Education's Professional Master of Education (PME) programme (post-primary). Core activities include: mentoring, 'taster' lessons, service learning, bursaries and information and guidance seminars.
	Tobar (MIE)	ITE primary and post-primary	Tobar has a singular focus on supporting Irish Travellers to and through ITE programmes. Activities include: open days, 'taster' lectures, academic supports, information seminars, family engagement, mentoring, personal tutoring and community engagement.

(*Continued*)

Table 3.2 (Continued)

Institution(s) and Overall Aim	*Title of Project(s)*	*Level*	*Core Activities*
	Teach(er) Me (UCD)	Post-primary	The focus of Teach(er) Me is to increase the number of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds enrolling on the UCD Professional Master of Education (PME) and BSc/MSc Maths/Science programmes. The outreach programme comprises raising aspirations activities, mentoring and bursaries.
	I Can Teach (NCAD) (Art teachers)	Post-primary	NCAD focuses on students from under-represented groups who attend Post-Leaving Cert (PLC) portfolio-preparation programmes and/or have completed their post-primary education within an FE setting. Students who meet 'Access criteria' are encouraged to avail of supports, including: workshops (portfolio-preparation, practical art; ITE induction), community outreach, promotion activities, enhanced access to student support services, materials bursaries and liaison with admissions.
Maynooth University (MU) *Turn to Teaching aims to promote diversity in teacher education and the teaching profession through a series of social justice-oriented widening participation initiatives.*	Turn to Teaching (TtT)	ITE primary, post-primary and further education	TtT has developed into a rich and diverse community of participants, staff, schools and community partners, which is committed to widening participation in education and teaching. TtT adopts a lifelong, continuum approach, supporting students from diverse and under-represented groups into (via Foundation Cert and Outreach work), through (undergraduate and postgraduate) and beyond ITE (i.e., early career). At the heart of the work is a Level 6 *Think about Teaching Foundation Certificate,* which provides a critically reflexive space for a diverse student group to contemplate, identify, and embark on defined pathways towards careers as teachers in a range of educational sectors.

(*Continued*)

Table 3.2 (Continued)

Institution(s) and Overall Aim	*Title of Project(s)*	*Level*	*Core Activities*
National Institute for Studies in Education (NISE)[a] *The overarching goal of the NISE projects is to work collaboratively to embed supports for students from 'non-traditional' teaching backgrounds, in all programmes of ITE, across the NISE institutions, in a sustainable way.*	1. Thinking of Teaching?	ITE primary and post-primary	*Thinking of Teaching?* engages with primary schools, secondary schools, the FE sector and community-based organisations to support potential entrants to ITE through ITE 'taster' courses, practical higher education access and financial supports information, and Gaeilge classes. This project also aims to facilitate the transition from further education (FE) to ITE (post-primary) through the creation of new pathways for QQI[b] qualified students and in particular FE mature students. (All NISE institutions)
	2. Becoming a Teacher	ITE primary and post-primary	*Becoming a Teacher: Transition and Support for Student Teachers.* This aspect aims to better prepare and support new entrant student teachers for the transition into ITE through a mentoring, pastoral and academic support framework. (All NISE institutions)
University of Galway and St. Angela's College, Sligo (STACS) *The aim of the overall Access to Post-primary Teaching (APT) project is to support the access and retention of lower socio-economic groups in/to initial teacher education.*	Access to Post-primary Teaching (APT)	ITE post-primary	At the University of Galway, bursaries and wider academic and mentoring supports are provided to final-year postgraduate post-primary student teachers (who entered higher education via Access or HEAR routes) and through their Year 2 Practitioner Research projects, we work with senior cycle pupils in DEIS schools to support their higher education planning, including re. teaching as a career. At STACS, we have developed a new Further Education (FE) entry route to concurrent post-primary ITE programmes for students taking specific QQI-FET awards at partner FE colleges in the BMW[c] region. Students engage in pre-entry 'taster' activities in St. Angela's and their FE college, and post-entry supports including bursaries, academic mentoring, and tutor support are provided.

(*Continued*)

Table 3.2 (Continued)

Institution(s) and Overall Aim	*Title of Project(s)*	*Level*	*Core Activities*
University College Cork (UCC) *The main focus of New Avenues to Teaching is to recognise and support the needs of under-represented groups in teaching as well as develop and foster a New Avenues to Teaching (NAT) student teacher community of practice.*	New Avenues to Teaching (NAT)	ITE post-primary	Phase 1 focused on the provision of scholarships and bursaries to aid students in financial need, a *Junior Teaching Outreach* programme, as well as support and guidance from a dedicated NAT Project Officer. In Phase 2, the provision of scholarships and bursaries has been continued, and outreach work has been integrated into existing outreach activities through UCC Access. This phase will focus on supporting students throughout their ITE journey from recruitment to graduation, as well as developing case studies of best practice to inform future iterations of the NAT programmes.

[a] Mary Immaculate College (MIC); University of Limerick (UL); Technological University of the Shannon (TUS): Midlands Midwest.

[b] Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is the state agency responsible for quality assurance of further and higher education and training in Ireland.

[c] Border, Midlands and Western (BMW) region of Ireland.

We would like to very gratefully acknowledge the following (and their colleagues) for sharing project information: Dr. Geraldine Brosnan and Dr. Angela Canny (Mary Immaculate College, Limerick); Professor Paul Conway and Professor Patricia Mannix McMamara (University of Limerick); Dr. Tracey Fahey (Technological University of the Shannon); Dr. Gareth Burns and Dr. Jerry O'Neill (Maynooth University); Dr. Charlotte Holland, Dr. Paul Downes, Dr. Elizabeth Mathews, Dr. Majella McSharry, and Dr. Elaine McDonald (Dublin City University); Dr. Fiona Chambers, Dr. Tara Singleton, and Ms. Kirsten Hurley (University College Cork); Dr. Eileen Kelly-Blakeney (St. Angela's College, Sligo); Miriam Colum (Marino Institute of Education, Dublin); Associate Professor Andrew Loxley (Trinity College Dublin); Dr. Declan Fahy (University College Dublin); and Dr. Nuala Hunt (National College for Art and Design).

As shown in Table 3.1, PATH1 projects address both primary and post-primary ITE, and target the dimensions of social class, ethnicity with respect to Irish Travellers (but not 'other' ethnic groups), disability in general and in terms of Deaf Irish Sign Language users, and age with regard to mature-aged students. The projects also include a focus on FE entrants to ITE. In recognition of the complex and interrelated factors that position various groups at a disadvantage with respect to HE progression in general, and in consideration of a teaching career, many of the projects include significant community outreach, and all encompass a range of integrated supports for participating students, from financial, to pastoral, and academic. This sort of work is demanding, complex, and extremely time consuming, reliant as it is upon initiating, developing, and maintaining supportive relationships, as is evidenced by the

PATH1-related chapters in Section II of this volume. In this context, the impact of these projects, now into Phase 2 (2020–2023), will be seen in the medium to longer-term in Ireland's education system.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, we explored policy development and previous empirical research about diversity in ITE and the teaching profession over the last century in Ireland, emphasising the general lack of diversity, particularly along social class, ethnicity, and disability lines. We highlighted key developments in policy and research over the last century, noting the landmark policy development of the PATH1 initiative that funds teacher diversity projects in ITE, as well as the *Migrant Teacher Project*. We ended by summarising the key foci of the PATH1 projects across Ireland. Section II of this volume showcases the research findings of many of these projects.

Notes

1. The Leaving Certificate is the national terminal examination taken by students at the end of second-level education, and performance in the examination is used for selection into higher education. An applicant's results in six subjects in the Leaving Certificate examination are converted into 'points'. Where demand for courses exceeds places available, applicants are selected in rank order based on points achieved.
2. As teacher education was called in Ireland at the time.
3. Model schools were interdenominational schools established "to promote the united education of Protestants and Roman Catholics in Common Schools; to exhibit the best examples of National Schools; and to give preparatory training to young teachers" (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education 1870, p. 427).
4. 'Free education' is the phrase used to describe the introduction in 1966 of free post-primary education (up to Intermediate Certificate level) in Ireland.
5. The National University of Ireland (NUI) is a federal University comprising four constituent Universities: University of Galway (formerly, the National University of Ireland, Galway); University College Cork; University College Dublin; and Maynooth University. It also comprises two Recognised Colleges, and five Colleges of a Constituent University. See: http://www.nui.ie/about/structure.asp
6. While similar to Drudy et al. (2005), Hyland (2012) observed that the majority of student teachers were female, Cunneen and Harford (2016) pointed out that the majority of senior (management) positions in education are occupied by men.
7. Mature-aged ITE entrants at postgraduate level are defined by Heinz (2008, 2011) as students entering their postgraduate programme at the age of 26 or older.
8. Clarke did not use the Central Statistics Office (CSO) Classification of Occupations generally employed to determine respondents' socio-economic group or social class.
9. The information in Table 3.1 has been compiled from Heinz and Keane (2015), Keane and Heinz (2015), Keane and Heinz (2016) and Heinz and Keane (2018). For more detailed information on the statistics in the table, and on related trends over time in ITE applicants' and entrants' socio-demographics, please consult the original articles.
10. DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) (DES 2005) forms part of the (then) Department of Education and Science's social inclusion strategy to support children and young people experiencing educational disadvantage in Ireland. Schools included in the DEIS programme receive additional supports.
11. Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) is Ireland's national awarding authority for all FE and HE grants.

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4 Diversifying the Teaching Profession in Scotland

The Work of the Scottish Government's Working Group on Diversifying the Teaching Profession

Rowena Arshad

4.1 The Scottish Context

Scotland is a small country with just over five million people. From the schools' census of 2020, Scotland has 357 secondary schools (24,077 secondary teachers), 2,005 primary schools (25,651 primary teachers) and 114 special schools (1,927 teachers) (Scottish Government 2020). While the number of Scottish pupils has remained relatively constant, the diversity profile of the pupil population has changed significantly. An analysis of the *Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland* 2010–20 shows that in 2010, 33,929 pupils were counted as 'not White',[1] and this figure had risen to 60,673 in 2020. The number of languages spoken in Scotland rose from 136 in 2010 to 168 in 2020. The number of pupils whose main home language was not English had more than doubled from 28,436 in 2010 to 68,025 in 2020.

The ethnic make-up of the teaching workforce has remained relatively static in the two decades since the inception of the Scottish Parliament in May 1999. Minority ethnic teachers are significantly under-represented, making up just 1.2 percent of the teaching workforce in Scottish primary schools and 1.9 percent in secondary schools. This compares with a Black and minority ethnic population of 4 percent in Scotland (Scotland Census 2011). However, this figure of 4 percent is not spread equally across the country. In Scotland's four major cities, the figure is greater; for example, in Glasgow, Black and minority ethnic people make up 12 percent of the population, in Edinburgh 8 percent, Aberdeen 8 percent and Dundee 6 percent (Table 4.1).

In 2017, the Scottish Government approved a race equality framework for Scotland—*Addressing Race Equality in Scotland: The Way Forward* (Scottish Government 2017). This framework recommended the setting up of a short-term working group to explore ways to increase the number of teachers from Black and minority ethnic groups in Scottish schools, and particularly in the area of promoted posts (such as deputy and headteacher), as minority ethnic teachers are under-represented at 0.6 percent and 0.8 percent in primary and secondary schools, respectively (Scottish Government 2020).

In November 2017, I was asked to convene this short-term teacher diversity working group. The working group's report, *Teaching in a Diverse Scotland: Increasing*

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Table 4.1 Ethnicity Composition of the Scottish Teaching Workforce (2010–2020)

Percentage	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*	*2018*	*2019*	*2020*
Primary											
White UK[a]	95	95	94	94	94	93	93	92	91	91	91
White Other[b]	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Minority Ethnic Group[c]	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Not Known/ Disclosed[d]	2	2	2	3	3	4	5	5	5	5	5
Secondary											
White UK	92	91	91	91	91	90	89	89	88	87	87
White Other	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
Minority Ethnic Group	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Not Known/ Disclosed	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7

Source: Scottish Government's Teacher Census Supplementary Statistics (https://www.gov.scot/publications/teacher-census-supplementary-statistics/).

Please note each year may not total 100 percent due to rounding of numbers.

a White UK includes those who consider themselves White and from the UK or Ireland.

b White Other includes those who consider themselves White but are not from the UK, e.g., Polish.

c Minority Ethnicity includes any person of colour, for example, African, Caribbean, Black, Asian, Chinese, Arab, or from mixed/multiple ethnic groups.

d Prior to 2019, 'not known/disclosed' were published as one category. From 2019, these categories have been presented separately. However, for consistency for this table, the two categories have been merged.

and Retaining Minority Ethnic Teachers (Scottish Government 2018), was published at the end of 2018 with 17 recommendations covering five key themes: (a) improving the racial literacy and awareness of Scottish school leaders, (b) ensuring initial teacher education (ITE) appealed to applicants from minority ethnic background, (c) ensuring university admission processes did not prevent minority ethnic applicants from being selected, (d) providing better support and guidance for minority ethnic students experiencing discrimination or harassment while on placement and (e) recognising and supporting minority ethnic teachers already in the profession, particularly in terms of applying for promotion. The Deputy First Minister for Skills and Education at that time, John Swinney, welcomed the report. He committed to doubling the number of Black and minority ethnic teachers, from 733 to 1466, by 2030, equating to 61 new Black and minority ethnic teachers to be recruited per year until 2030.

It became clear that, given the persistent nature of the issue over decades, we needed to adopt a whole system approach to meet the target agreed by the Deputy First Minister. We knew that too often, intent and aspirations are lost as different stakeholders rely on the other to be proactive or to take the lead. Action was required by all involved in Scottish education including the Scottish Government, local government, teacher education and continuous professional development providers, unions, professional associations, organisations who work with Black and minority ethnic community groups, and last but not least, the General Teaching Council in Scotland (GTCS), who sets the values and standards for the profession.

The working group reconvened in 2019 with a wider membership to include all education stakeholders that needed to be part of the implementation phase. The original lifespan of this group was 15 months, but this was later expanded to 24 months as a result of delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The working group concluded its work in March 2021 with the publication of the progress report *Teaching in a Diverse Scotland: Increasing and Retaining Minority Ethnic Teachers: Three Years On* (Scottish Government 2021a).

Throughout its work, the working group found Critical Race Theory (CRT) to be a useful intellectual framework upon which to draw. As a concept, CRT was developed by civil rights lawyers Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman from the Harvard Law School in the early 1970s (Delgado and Stefancic 1998; Ladson-Billings 1998). A CRT lens accepts that racism in various forms—personal, cultural and institutional—exists. A CRT approach provides counter-narratives by hearing the voices of those who have lived experience of racism, thereby providing 'contextual contours' (Ladson-Billings 1998). CRT focuses on institutional and structural change as a way of reducing racial inequalities and considers how the intersections of characteristics (e.g., colour, class and gender) produce specific experiences (Gillborn 2015). CRT provided a race-conscious approach to understanding the issue of the lack of diversity in the teaching profession and helped the working group to explore how education policies and structures in Scotland could further institutionalise racial equality. For example, drawing on CRT meant the existence of racism as a structural and cultural barrier was not in question. The CRT approach also meant we proactively prioritised the voices of Black and minority ethnic teachers and student teachers in shaping our recommendations. The following sections discuss the key areas identified for action in the 2018 report and the progress made in the three following years.

4.2 Key Areas for Action Identified by the Working Group in 2018

The working group called for evidence from education providers (local authorities), university ITE providers and organisations interested in school education about actions they had taken to diversify the teaching profession and received responses from 38 organisations. An analysis of published data such as the teacher census statistics and academic reports on diversity in the profession was also carried out. Consultations took place with local authorities, education organisations, teaching unions, and voluntary sector organisations working with Black and minority ethnic people. The Scottish Association of Minority Ethnic Educators (SAMEE) and teaching unions assisted by organising sessions for members of the working group to speak with Black and minority ethnic teachers and student teachers.

Two reports published during the lifetime of the working group contributed significantly to the group's work. The first report is *Ethnic Diversity in the Teaching Profession: A Glasgow Perspective* (Glasgow City Council 2018). Glasgow City Council is the local authority with the largest number of Black and minority ethnic people in Scotland (12 percent of total population according to the 2011 Census statistics). The Glasgow Council research included a number of focus groups with both teachers and pupils for whom English is an Additional Language as well as general pupil and teacher surveys. The second report is the *Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) Members' Experience of Racism Survey (Summary Report)* conducted by Scotland's largest teaching union (Educational Institute Scotland 2018). This study surveyed EIS members on their experiences of racism and Islamophobia. The data collated from these sources enabled the working group to map out priority action areas, which are discussed in the next section of the chapter.

4.2.1 Addressing the Awareness Gap and Improving the Racial Literacy of Scottish School Leaders

Both the Glasgow and EIS surveys found that at least half of Black and minority ethnic teachers who responded felt that discrimination relating to their ethnic background was a barrier to gaining promotion. In the case of Glasgow (Glasgow City Council 2018), 66 percent of Black and minority ethnic teachers noted racial discrimination to be a matter of concern compared with 11 percent of White teachers. In the EIS survey, three-quarters of Black and minority ethnic teachers felt that promoted posts were difficult to obtain for teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds while less than 10 percent of white teachers identified promotion as being an issue. Yet correspondence from some local authorities to the working group showed that senior school leaders had a different view. School leaders were of the view that:

> I have no reason to think that promotion is more difficult for teachers from a minority ethnic background.
>
> (Headteacher, Secondary)

> I don't see that promotion is any more challenging for staff from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are fewer teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds; however, from my experience I think they are proportionally represented at each level of the profession.
>
> (Headteacher, Primary)

In addition, workplace bias and racism was not acknowledged, recognised or raised in the majority of local authorities' returns to the call for evidence. Some employers remarked that they had never had to manage a race-focused complaint and would lack the knowledge or experience to recognise race-related matters.

Focus groups held with Black and minority ethnic teachers and newly qualified teachers also surfaced issues of racism and discrimination in the workplace. These ranged from the use of racist language to racist attitudes and comments from colleagues, parents and pupils. Student teachers also shared their experiences of racism while on placement and noted a lack of consistency in relation to support provided in this regard by ITE providers. Student teachers indicated that the level of seriousness expressed, and sympathy or support offered, was dependent on how their lecturers understood racial issues.

It became clear that there was a lack of awareness of the issues facing minority ethnic staff. School leaders and education managers lacked racial literacy or the confidence and lexicon around issues related to race equality, racism and anti-racism. The term 'racial literacy' is used here to mean "having the understanding and practice to recognise, respond and counter forms of everyday racism or racial microaggressions at all levels, personal, cultural and institutional" (University of Edinburgh 2019, p. 10). For educators, this would mean recognising that racism is a contemporary issue but also developing understanding of its historical origins, engaging in critical self-reflection of our own awareness of race issues, and considering how we teach about issues of race. It is about familiarising ourselves with what racial microaggressions are and how these could occur in education settings. It requires being prepared to engage with concepts like white privilege and anti-Blackness; with decolonising the curriculum and anti-racist education. Developing racial literacy is an ongoing and challenging process but is part of advancing social justice for all learners.

In the working group discussions, Black and minority ethnic teachers talked about the negative effects of racism on their self-esteem and stress levels. Their reports echoed the findings of other relevant research (Haque and Elliot 2017; Mohammad 2020), demonstrating the need for heightened awareness of the effects of discrimination in the workplace. Without such awareness, a recruiting manager could perceive a period of illness or reduced performance resulting from exposure to daily workplace racism as a failing on the part of the applicant as opposed to their reaction to unfair treatment or confronting daily micro-invalidations.

It was agreed that a key area for action resulting from the research and consultation was to ensure that all educational leadership programmes offered to future school leaders in Scotland needed to include content that developed their understanding of how everyday racism, institutional racism and racial bias impacted in the workplace. Future school leaders needed to be able to recognise how subtle and covert racism occurred and be able to have the confidence to implement racial equality in their schools. Education Scotland, a Scottish Government executive agency with responsibility for supporting quality and improvement in Scottish education, worked closely with Black and minority ethnic teachers and anti-racist experts to ensure that programmes preparing teachers to move into leadership henceforth would include sessions on anti-racism. These progammes are mandatory for anyone moving into headship roles. Further, the GTCS professional standards for Scottish teachers now leads with a section that places the professional values of social justice at the heart of what it means to be a teacher. The GTCS has also committed to including, in the next iteration of ITE accreditation documentation, a question about how ITE providers are enabling students to reflect on their societal positionality and on how their positionality and identity shapes their thinking and practice, with the aim of ensuring that this is addressed in all future ITE programmes. While the inclusion of racial literacy and anti-racist education in all courses for future teachers and school leaders is an important step forward, the matter of consistency of content remains a challenge. ITE providers have indicated that for providers who have staff knowledgeable about race equality theories, decolonising the curriculum, and culturally responsive pedagogies, progress was likely to be swifter. Such providers were able to offer more in-depth and critically challenging content, while providers with access to less knowledge worried about their ability to provide sufficiently insightful content. While it might be possible with technology to provide common lectures for all embarking on leadership courses, ITE providers are autonomous institutions with each preferring to deliver to their own specifications.

In Scotland, the avoidance of discussions about racism over the years has resulted in low confidence to engage with race-related issues (Arshad and Moskal 2016; Davidson et al. 2018). In school education, this has resulted in stilted discussions of race-related matters, and a lack of understanding and a feeling of disempowerment among many teachers and school leaders in what is a complex and evolving area (Arshad 2017). In my engagement with teachers via continuous professional development courses, I would suggest that there is a desire by teachers to engage in far more challenging discussions; however, they report having limited opportunities to meet with colleagues to engage in peer education and discussions about these matters. These limited opportunities were largely attributed to issues of workload but also to the lack of relevant continuous professional development.

Further, in order to prepare the teachers of tomorrow to be racially literate and confident to address issues of racism, those who engage in teacher preparation must also be racially literate. This is an area that requires attention, as studies have shown that such literacy and confidence may also be lacking in those who educate teachers (Hick et al. 2011; Arshad et al. 2017). Hick et al.'s study of 31 teacher educators in England and Scotland found that the absence of Black and minority ethnic staff and students constrained both the understandings of students and the confidence of lecturers in engaging with race equality issues. Teacher educators reported reluctance to talk about race due to a fear of being seen as racist, and due to concerns about the correct terminology to employ (Hick et al. 2011, p. 27).

4.2.2 Use of Data to Enable Change

The availability and accessibility of robust data is crucial to enable Scotland to address issues of under-representation and retention of Black and minority ethnic teachers and to meet the 4 percent target by 2030. When the working group started, existing data were not easily accessible. There were also gaps in data; for example, it was not possible to swiftly access data held by each local authority about Black and minority ethnic teachers in promoted posts. Three years on, the Scottish government has established a data working group that gathers and shares data relating to teacher diversity in order to inform and evaluate future work. The first annual report was published in March 2021 (Scottish Government 2021b), drawing together data from the annual Teacher Census and from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) A second report was published in May 2022 (Scottish Government 2022). HESA statistics provide a picture of how many Black and minority ethnic people apply to enter teaching each year and how many qualify. In addition, the tasks of monitoring the ethnicity of the teaching workforce and progress towards the 4 percent minority ethnic target are now embedded into the work of the *Teacher Workforce Planning Advisory Group*. This group comprises the Scottish Government, local authorities, ITE providers, education unions and associations, the GTCS, and the lead organisation for Personnel Directors in Scotland has the key role of ensuring there are sufficient teachers to meet employer demands on a yearly basis.

The evidence of systematic under-representation of Black and minority ethnic teachers in promoted posts enabled Glasgow City Council to utilise positive action measures, allowed under *The Equality Act 2010* (Scottish Government 2021c). The Council created five promoted posts, fixed-term for a year, for Black and minority ethnic teachers on a permanent contract in the Council to enable them to gain experience in a senior post and to build their curriculum vitae for future promotion applications. There are signs of early successes in that at least one teacher, at the time of writing, has now secured a permanent promoted post. The headteachers in the local authority are now all aware of this initiative and are looking with new eyes in terms of future appointments. Nevertheless, the initiative is not without its drawbacks, as it could involve a ‘demotion’ on completion of the fixed-term contract. The issue of under-representation at promoted levels has also been addressed through establishing a national mentoring network run by Black and minority ethnic teachers for Black and minority ethnic teachers, in partnership with the GTCS. The working group has proposed moving from mentoring to sponsorship as one approach to overcoming the lack of promotion and progression opportunities for Black and minority ethnic teachers. Sponsors, unlike mentors, would provide networking connections and sponsor an individual’s career for upward movement. Sponsorship moves beyond mentoring, which is largely advisory. A sponsor would pro-actively advocate for an individual, investing time to progress their career, assisting the individual to drive their vision forward, and provide contacts to enable advancement. However, care would need to be given to ensure sponsors are racially literate and will enter the sponsoring relationship with due regard to degrees of equity and parity of esteem within that relationship.

4.2.3 Focusing on ITE as a Pipeline to Diversity

In Scotland, 11 universities provide ITE. Letters were sent to every University Principal and Dean of Schools of Education asking for information regarding actions already undertaken to encourage greater student teacher diversity. A 100 percent response rate was achieved. All ITE providers affirmed the need for greater diversity within Scotland’s teaching workforce. However, the language of responses largely related to intentions for the future. Further, there was variation in the language used in the responses, with some confidently using phrases like 'anti-racism' and 'decolonisation', demonstrating a degree of awareness of phraseology shifts but the majority used terms like 'inclusion', 'diversity' and 'addressing unconscious bias'. To shift to a situation where there is improved racial literacy among ITE staff and students, there is a need for ITE staff to robustly engage with concepts like racism, anti-racism, racial microaggressions and decolonisation, the latter of which is under-interrogated in the field of teacher education at present. These developments will be monitored and followed up by the Scottish Council of Deans of Education (SCDE) to which all ITE providers belong. The SCDE recently commissioned a National Framework for Diversity, with the first iteration focusing on race equality and anti-racism and covering the various stages of the journey into teacher education from application and interviewing, to programme curriculum content and student support.

The ITE provider responses enabled the working group to list helpful examples of how institutions were taking action to diversify the teaching profession. This list (Scottish Government 2021a, Annex E) provides a useful resource, which ITE providers are now using to map out their individual action plans. Some examples of actions include: holding specific career events for under-represented groups (similar to the ones done to encourage applications to STEM[2] subject areas); promoting teaching as a career of choice; asking student teachers to include race issues as part of their reflective logs; engaging in an audit of the curriculum; working to embed culturally responsive pedagogies and anti-racist education; interrogating what decolonising the curriculum means for teacher education; and reviewing all overseas applications for ITE by academic staff to ensure relevant equivalences are recognised and taken into account.

All ITE providers are now exploring how data held by their universities can be interrogated to examine patterns in applications, offers, acceptances and degree attainment. Some have indicated that, where necessary, this analysis would progress to identifying positive actions to improve the representation of, and better support, all students from minoritised backgrounds. However, not all institutions are at the stage of having sufficient data, let alone at an adequately granular level, that would enable this.

4.2.4 Pro-action from Local Authorities as Key Partners

The 32 local authorities, who between them employ 53,400 teachers (Scottish Government 2020), have a pivotal role to play in diversifying the teaching profession. Letters were sent to all local authorities to ascertain the actions already being undertaken to diversify the teaching profession. Despite several requests, 14 local authorities did not respond. Of those who did respond, while there were examples of actions provided, the working group was disappointed with the lack of proactive engagement beyond generic compliance with equality legislation. Only two local authorities described any action to support Black and minority ethnic teachers to be successful in achieving promotion to more senior posts.

Responses suggest that, in the main, local authorities with higher numbers of Black and minority ethnic people have been more attentive to taking forward race equality issues. Examples of action include using data to monitor the composition of the workforce and setting targets to improve representation, targeting Black and minority ethnic teachers to take up authority-organised leadership courses in preparation for promotion and inclusion of Black and minority ethnic teachers in case studies and promotional materials related to education.

Authorities with much lower levels of diversity have been less forthcoming, in part because they did not perceive it as having much relevance for them. For example, the first quote[3] that follows (echoed by a few authorities) suggests that there is a perception that a diverse teaching workforce is relevant where there is ethnic diversity in the area. The second quote suggests that race matters are discussed at a personal level and relate to culture and language rather than institutional matters of curriculum and wider anti-racist education. It also places the responsibility of racial equity and the education of the white population onto Black and minority ethnic teachers:

> Population in this authority is 98 percent Caucasian. This is reflected in our teaching workforce.
>
> If teachers from an ethnic minority background are willing … encourage them to share their unique language skills and culture with all children and young people.

Similar to the ITE provider responses, the working group collated a list of helpful examples (Scottish Government 2021a, Annex G). Given that Black and minority ethnic teachers and student teachers continue to report how a lack of awareness of race issues acts as a barrier to the recruitment, promotion and retention of Black and minority ethnic staff, as employers, local authorities have an influential role in changing institutional cultures and addressing the obstacles that prevent minority teachers from obtaining their first promoted post.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the establishment and recent work of the *Scottish Government Working Group on Diversifying the Teaching Profession*. Four action areas were discussed: (a) addressing the awareness gap and improving the racial literacy of school leaders, (b) using data to enable change, (c) focusing on ITE as a pipeline to diversity and (d) pro-action from local authorities as key partners. Scotland has set itself a challenge to double the number of Black and minority ethnic teachers by 2030. To achieve this would require 61 teachers from a Black and minority ethnic background to be recruited each year from 2022.

The Black Lives Matter debates that followed the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 have assisted to galvanise action. From May into summer 2020, the Scottish Government received more than 1,000 items of correspondence relating to the teaching of Black history and racism in education (Scottish Government 2021d). Those who wrote raised a range of issues from the lack of teaching about Black history and heritage, Scotland's role in colonialism and the slave trade, to the lack of representation across the curriculum, the presence of racist bullying in schools and the lack of diversity in the teaching profession.

The working group has set in place structural changes, such as the monitoring of ethnicity in the teaching workforce, ensuring all leadership programmes now prepare Scottish headteachers to be racially literate, and increasing teacher diversity. However, to continue on this path, key stakeholders involved in Scottish education need to continue to deepen their knowledge of how racial microaggressions impact on the everyday experiences of minority ethnic teachers and to recognise that having diverse teachers is beneficial for *all* pupils, and not just for Black and minority ethnic pupils. An inclusive approach is insufficient. I interpret an inclusive approach to be one that acknowledges the diversity of learners within a learning environment, that seeks to remove or minimise barriers that hinder learning and participation and that establishes a supportive and caring ethos where learners are respected, recognised and valued in the shared learning space. However, Scottish government engagement with Black and minority ethnic young people, parents and communities post–summer 2020 has shown that if we are to have a system that is not race evasive, a clear anti-racist approach is needed. An anti-racist approach is one that understands race to be a social construction, challenges the values, structures and behaviours that perpetuate systemic racism and other forms of societal oppression. Finally, the working group reminded education stakeholders of the need to centre the voices of Black and minority ethnic teachers, young people, parents and carers so that they can be co-constructors of the journey to diversifying the teaching profession.

Notes

1 Non-white includes ethnic groups covering those of Asian, Caribbean, African, Arab and Mixed backgrounds.

2 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

3 These quotes were part of written responses to us from local authorities.

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5 The Role of Teachers and Leaders with Immigrant Backgrounds in Implementing Culturally Responsive Practices

Hanna Ragnarsdóttir

5.1 Introduction

The chapter draws on data from the Nordic research project, *Learning Spaces for Inclusion and Social Justice: Success Stories from Immigrant Students and School Communities in Four Nordic Countries*. The main objective of the project was to draw lessons from individual immigrant students and whole school communities that have succeeded in developing equitable learning environments. In the project, students' success is defined as social as well as academic. By identifying success stories and good practices, our aim was to provide guidelines for teaching and school reform. Two main aims of the study were to (1) understand and learn from the experiences of immigrant students who have succeeded academically and socially, and to (2) explore and understand how social justice is implemented in equitable and successful diverse Nordic school contexts. This chapter introduces and discusses some of the findings on three school levels (preschool, compulsory[1] school, and upper secondary school), with teachers and students from diverse linguistic, religious and ethnic backgrounds. In particular, this chapter focuses on the role of seven teachers from immigrant backgrounds in implementing culturally responsive practices in schools in Iceland.

5.2 Theoretical and Conceptual Background

Critical multiculturalism was applied as the main theoretical approach in the *Learning Spaces* project, as this approach has focused on various challenges in modern societies, such as questions of cultural rights of minority groups, and the fact that education has developed in relation to the defined needs of a particular majority or majorities (May and Sleeter 2010; Parekh 2006). Furthermore, critical multicultural education was applied in the research project to address student and teacher diversity, overcome barriers to equality and participation and ensure equal rights of participation, equal access and opportunities (Banks 2010; Gundara 2000; Nieto 2010). In these learning spaces, culturally responsive teachers working with culturally and linguistically diverse groups of children build on children's previous experiences and knowledge, believe in their abilities and emphasise developing all their potentials and competences (Gay 2010). Teachers have specialised knowledge about practices based on diverse languages, cultures and experiences of children,

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instead of an approach focusing on deficits, limitations or lack of abilities. Marom (2017) further notes that teachers of minority ethnic groups appreciate the cultural knowledge of students from minority groups and incorporate it into their teaching, have high expectations for minority students, create emotional connections and increase their achievements by using culturally based pedagogies.

A broad definition of inclusion focuses on how schools respond to and value a diverse group of students as well as other members of the school community. Inclusion is aimed at diverting attention towards inequalities and discrimination against diverse groups, including social, cultural, ethnic, religious and other characteristics of students and their families (Booth 2010). According to Robinson and Jones Díaz (2006), to make a significant difference in terms of social justice, educators and educational institutions need to actively challenge and disrupt everyday power relations that underpin the various forms of inequality. Inclusive practice is fundamentally grounded in the ideologies of democracy, social justice, human rights and full participation of all (Ainscow 2005; Florian 2008).

Findings from research have revealed a mismatch between student and teacher diversity in terms of socio-demographics of the populations (Heinz and Keane 2018; Ladson-Billings 2001; Lumby and Coleman 2007), the dilemmas this creates for children and the resulting need for diverse teachers. According to Marom (2017), many studies have shown the importance of diversifying the teaching force. While it has been argued that teachers of minority ethnic groups appreciate the cultural knowledge of students from minority groups and incorporate it into their teaching, as Marom (2017) notes, quoting Sleeter and Milner (2011), the importance of minority teachers goes beyond their impact on minority students because all students can benefit from what these teachers bring into the learning environment.

5.3 Methodology

In the *Learning Spaces* project, case studies were conducted in schools (preschools, compulsory schools and upper secondary schools) in urban and rural contexts in each of the four Nordic countries. The sampling was purposive in that all the participating schools were judged by experts and school authorities to be successful in implementing inclusive learning spaces for all children. Although a number of criteria were used for choosing these schools, the research team was aware of the challenges in identifying an 'inclusive school' and applied a critical approach in the research process. This chapter draws on data collected with seven teachers from immigrant backgrounds in schools on preschool (3), compulsory (2) and upper secondary (2) levels in Iceland, one of whom was also a preschool principal. The teachers were between 25 and 40 years old and had teaching experience of between 5 and 15 years. Their countries of origin included Albania, Austria, Canada, Poland, and the United States of America. The participating teachers were purposefully selected to ensure they all taught students from immigrant backgrounds. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to elicit the views of the participants (Flick 2008; Kvale 2007). Based on their professional experiences, the teachers were invited to share their stories. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The transcripts were read and re-read by the researchers and analysed collaboratively using content analysis, coding and comparison of data (Creswell 2014).

5.4 Findings

The findings of the study indicate that the teachers from immigrant backgrounds generally experienced equality and participated actively in decision making in their schools. They played an important role in developing and implementing culturally responsive pedagogies and received support from their principals, who generally resolved any issues in a constructive and inclusive manner. Two main themes were derived from the interviews: *the role of diverse teachers in implementing culturally responsive practices* and *the importance of leaders with immigrant backgrounds*. An examination of each enables us to see how these teachers enacted inclusion in their specific settings.

5.4.1 The Role of Diverse Teachers in Implementing Culturally Responsive Practices

The teachers generally emphasised individually based care and learning, diversity and equality. Educational practices were generally holistic, child-centred and responsive to diversity, with the aim of involving all children in active participation. Furthermore, the teachers emphasized the importance of creating a trusting learning environment for the children and youth. The seven participating teachers had a deep understanding of diversity issues and of what it meant to be an immigrant in a new country. They saw the students' linguistic and cultural diversity as a resource while also acknowledging the importance of students learning the majority language, Icelandic, to be able to actively participate in society and further their education. It was clear that these teachers shared a vision of empowering diverse students and supporting their active participation in education and society. They understood the wealth of resources that these children brought and the importance of building on the students' linguistic and cultural resources. They also emphasised developing educational partnerships with parents.

Several teachers and one principal in the *preschools* in the overall study were from immigrant backgrounds (Hellman et al. 2018) and understood culturally as well as linguistically responsive educational practices. These included the three preschool teachers referred to in this chapter. One preschool teacher (from a European country) emphasised the importance of first languages and supporting parents in speaking and teaching these to their children. She noted how, "we try to encourage parents, you know, speak your heritage language, read in your heritage language, you know if they succeed in their heritage language, they will learn Icelandic". Another preschool teacher (from a European country) felt that she had a responsibility to support immigrant parents:

> I am overwhelmed by the role that the school can take in empowering and supporting parents … so I thought, there is an opportunity to do something and reach out to parents … I want the parents to have agency and to know that … we are real partners and ready to reach out.

A preschool teacher (from the USA) showed in-depth understanding of the importance of developing educational partnerships with parents of immigrant backgrounds and the challenges related to this. For example, the teacher pointed to the language and literacy challenges that were presented for some parents, and she emphasised the importance of face-to-face discussions with parents to facilitate a more inclusive approach in this context:

> I think that with the parents, you know, it is a different partnership with parents when you have so many children with foreign backgrounds, it becomes closer, you need to speak more face-to-face with people, it is not enough to throw an ad on the board about a day off and 'yes, this is already on the board and now it is your responsibility as all the Icelandic [parents]'. First of all, many parents are illiterate, and you know, there is so much, you need to talk to people and you need to, you know, also just show this warmth although we perhaps do not understand each other and then just smile and nod in the morning, feel that they are welcome.

In the *compulsory* schools, one of the teachers with an immigrant background (from a European country) led a department for newly arrived immigrant students (Guðjónsdóttir et al. 2018). She actively encouraged her students to engage in their home languages and the other students' languages while they learned Icelandic. She described her response when a colleague commented negatively on students' lack of Icelandic language proficiency, highlighting a student's proficiency in other languages:

> I'm also trying to empower them and make them feel that they are so rich, that they know more languages, because often they know more than one language. They come here and sometimes you can hear someone say: 'Ahh, I don't know what to do with him, he can't speak'. Then I say: 'Wait, you can't say this. He is Russian, and he speaks Russian—his mother tongue. And he grew up in Lithuania and he knows Lithuanian as well. He was in a Polish school there and he knows Polish as well. Although you two can't communicate, because he doesn't speak Icelandic or English, you can't say he can't speak at all'.

While teaching the students Icelandic, this teacher used numerous methods for helping the students relate to the topics. She used videos on the topics, repeated the vocabulary, referred to different pictures, and built on the various languages of the students as well as their knowledge of their cultures and countries of origin. In this way, she drew on the students' diverse resources. Furthermore, she understood the need to address both academic and social aspects and applied a holistic approach in her teaching. Another teacher (from a European country) described how she built on the students' multiple languages in order to help them maintain their languages as well as empower them:

> When the children come to us and we begin teaching them Icelandic, then we apply bridge-building where we try to connect the first language with

> Icelandic … you know, use the first language to learn another language, at the same time strengthening it, because I know myself that if you don't use your first language and cultivate it, you will lose it, particularly as a child.

Teachers with immigrant backgrounds in the *upper secondary schools* were mostly language teachers, but also taught other subjects (Lefever et al. 2018). They built on their experiences of migrating to and living in different countries in their work with diverse groups of students. The teachers' diverse backgrounds gave them a greater understanding of what it meant to be a newcomer in a country. One of the teachers (from Canada) described his deep sense of connection with immigrant students. He noted:

> I feel something of a kinship with the foreign students simply because I am a foreigner myself… it's almost like a kinship where the possibilities are endless because we are in a new place so I do approach them and I say, I ask them questions that I have had myself for many years and I see these youngsters looking at me and saying yeah, that's exactly it…

He described how he as well as some other teachers included the various cultures of the students in the classroom:

> … if they are Filipino students, and I have a number of them, Eastern European students, American, North American students, as well as exchange students, I forget the English even sometimes, I always try to include something of their background, their culture, whatever … language or anything in our teachings and ask what it's like where you're from.

One teacher (from a European country) talked about how important it was to create learning spaces where the students were empowered to participate in class:

> Of course, we have had students of foreign origin who have graduated with top marks and things like that. But it was not only about that [academic success] but socially, students who barely dared to speak in the beginning … I have one student in mind at the moment who became so communicative, and it was so wonderful to see how she has opened up herself.

The immigrant teachers in the upper secondary schools also established a personal dialogue with their students, listened to them effectively and validated them as individuals, thus gaining their trust and increasing their engagement and learning. Many of the student participants in the upper secondary schools had experiences that illustrated that the teachers played an influential role in their lives. The teachers were seen as being supportive, caring and respectful of the students (Lefever et al. 2018).

The immigrant teachers' pedagogical practices indicated that they were guided by multicultural principles, valuing their students' languages, cultures and religions. These were seen as resources to be tapped into. The teachers emphasised flexibility and building on the students' heritage languages while teaching them Icelandic. Various approaches were applied by the teachers to facilitate learning and meet students' learning needs. These included electronic devices, play acting, dictations, board games, visuals and audio books, and storytelling to provide variation in learning materials and activities. A teacher (from the USA) explained his approach as follows: "I mean these kids don't come here just as empty vessels; we have to continue to build upon what matters most to them … we need to build upon the knowledge that is there".

One teacher (from a European country) described the teaching environment in the school as being inclusive and empowering for students. According to the teacher, the focus in the school was on the students, and there was an understanding that the school should "change with every generation of students". The teacher thought that an inclusive and multicultural school would be:

> … not only the … removal of structures and rules that divide teacher and student as well as teacher and teacher, depending on what their position is in the school, but also student from student and culture from culture. I mean a multicultural school wouldn't necessarily be a focus on multiculturalism, it would simply be a focus on school, for all cultures and embracing everything that everybody is, regardless of what that is.

5.4.2 The Importance of Leaders with Immigrant Backgrounds

One of the leaders, a preschool teacher in the study who had an immigrant background (from the USA), had a passion for her work as a principal and strived to create a multicultural learning community where parents were active partners. She claimed that "this is totally my dream job. But as a principal I miss being close to the children. I am trying to teach as much as I can … But then I need to step back into my office". She explained the importance of understanding what it was like to be an immigrant in Icelandic society and of being bilingual, noting that:

> They find it good having a principal who understands their position. I am bilingual myself but it is increasingly Icelandic we use, I feel they do not have to speak Icelandic perfectly, and the staff is really emphasizing this, we have had a number of courses about prejudice and you know, how we meet people in the middle or half-way and show patience.

Furthermore, she took on the role of fighting an equality battle for the parents from immigrant backgrounds when she thought they did not have the access to information necessary for them to be active partners in the school community. Discussing a survey on parent satisfaction that was inaccessible to many of the immigrant parents, as it was only in Icelandic, she explained:

> The survey for parents is only in Icelandic—and I get ready for battle! I try to co-operate with an institution where decisions are made … We need to reach out to the parents. I keep reminding them [the municipality], in all our

> meetings. There is a special situation … 83 percent of the children are of foreign background.

She also emphasised the importance of education in the new country for her own integration and professional development. Having studied in Iceland to become a preschool teacher, she noted:

> Adapting in Iceland was difficult. I finally felt integrated when I began my studies [preschool education]. I felt equal. This affected my professional development as a teacher.

Having started working as a preschool teacher and moving into a position of preschool principal, she explained how she had struggled to connect with her Icelandic colleagues but that this has changed since she became principal:

> I have always tried to connect with my colleagues, but I always end up with the foreigners. Now that I have risen [to become a principal] I connect better with them. They show me more respect.

At the same time she described how she felt marginalised as principal compared to other principals. She noted:

> Within the group of principals I am the first one to get guidance/mentoring for 2 years. I have the feeling this is because I am a foreigner even though they don't say this.

Furthermore, she felt that other principals lacked trust in her education and knowledge and regarded her from a deficit perspective. For example, in meetings:

> The principals often say: 'Are you sure you understand? Are you following us?' But this is becoming more rare. Perhaps because I have succeeded and I have gained experience.

The principal had also experienced a lack of trust from her colleagues and principal as a teacher:

> Before [I became principal] they did not trust me to be alone with a group of children. They always needed to check if I understood. But the literature was all in English. So I probably understood best of all of them!

5.5 Discussion and Conclusion

To summarise, the seven teachers with immigrant backgrounds played important roles in developing inclusive and empowering learning spaces for students. They were passionate about implementing culturally responsive practices and building partnerships with parents. They built on their own experiences of being immigrants in a new country and had a deeper understanding of what it meant to be an immigrant parent. They developed culturally responsive educational practices to build on the children's linguistic and cultural resources and previous experiences and knowledge (Gay 2010). Although some of the teachers had faced some challenges in their work, they all enjoyed their work in the schools, which were selected on the basis of their emphasis on inclusion and social justice, in line with the writings of Ainscow (2005) and Florian (2008).

The leaders in the *Learning Spaces* project understood the importance of involving teachers and parents and creating consensus around their visions and objectives for schools where inclusion and social justice is the norm (Winston and Patterson 2006). This included respecting and appreciating the knowledge that diverse teachers and learners bring into the learning environment. The leaders' views on inclusion and diversity gave room for the immigrant teachers to be active in implementing culturally responsive practices and building on their own diverse knowledge and languages. A leader with an immigrant background in the study had a deep understanding of the experiences of immigrant families and reached out to develop trusting partnerships with parents. However, this leader had experienced marginalisation from other leaders and felt that she was not accepted as a professional by them.

Building on the culturally responsive approaches developed by the teachers in this study can inform other schools as they work to provide better opportunities for diverse students to flourish in schools (see also Ragnarsdóttir and Kulbrandstad 2018). However, further research is necessary to explore and understand the actual practices of inclusion in schools more generally.

Note

1 According to the Compulsory School Act (No. 91, 12 June 2008), compulsory school in Iceland is 10 years in duration. As a rule, children begin compulsory school in the calendar year they reach 6 years of age and conclude their compulsory study the year they reach age 16.

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6 Teacher Gender Diversity

Uncovering a Hidden Curriculum of Masculinities

Kevin F. McGrath

6.1 Introduction

Gender diversity in the teaching profession is inhibited in many countries by a dearth of male teachers, particularly in the early years of schooling. Although occupational gender segregation (i.e., the division of men and women into different vocations and workplace positions) is a persistent phenomenon across industries, given the critical role of teachers in the lives of children, and of schools as sites for developing gendered identities among young people, it is important to understand the factors that restrict male participation in the teaching profession and the potential impacts that a lack of teacher gender diversity might have. Drawing upon international research and scholarly work from several disciplines, this chapter identifies socioeconomic conditions that limit male participation and portray teaching as an occupation better suited to women than men. To examine the merits of teacher gender diversity, a multilevel theoretical framework is summarised, situating a need for male teachers on four levels: the child, the classroom, the organisation and broader society. The chapter then considers how a shortage of male teachers may manifest as unintended lessons about gender within a hidden curriculum, and what students inadvertently learn about masculinity in the context of a lack of male teachers. Throughout this chapter, it is important that teacher gender diversity is not only thought of as the numeric representation of male and female personnel—as reported in workplace data—but also in terms of intersectionality, diversity within genders (including marginalised gender identities) and gender diversity across workplace roles. Indeed 'male teachers' are not a single, homogeneous social group, but encompass a broad range of ways of being male.

6.2 The Male Minority and Women's Work

Internationally, teaching is a female-dominated occupation. Indicative of universal trends in occupational gender segregation, in all countries participating in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) with available data, gender distribution within education labour markets is skewed by students' age. The representation of female teachers in OECD countries is greatest at the pre-primary level (96 percent) and decreases with each successive year of schooling, with women representing 83 percent of teaching

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staff at the primary level, 63 percent at the secondary level (see Figure 6.1) and 44 percent at the tertiary level (OECD 2020a).

The reasons why fewer men than women choose to work as schoolteachers can be interpreted with regards to socioeconomics (i.e., the study of social economics) as follows. Assuming vocational liberties for women and men, the interactions between social processes and economic behaviour that restrict male participation in the teaching profession can be summarised in two ways. First, with potential earnings impacting occupational choice, teaching bears greater financial incentives for women than men when compared to other occupations. On average, male teachers earn less than other men with tertiary-level qualifications, whereas female teachers earn a similar income to their tertiary-educated counterparts in other professions (OECD 2020b). Hence, male teachers incur a greater 'opportunity

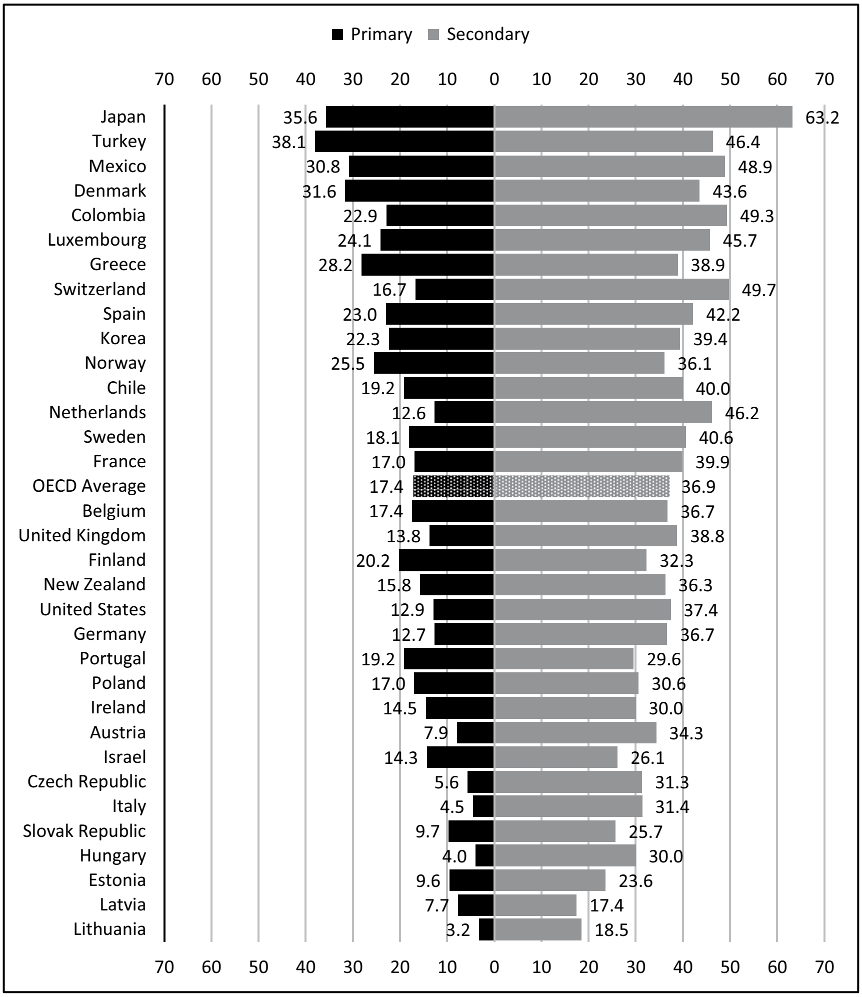

Figure 6.1 Percentage of Male Teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools by Country.

cost' than do female teachers (Carroll et al. 2021). This disparity may deter young men from considering teaching as a viable career option. Research conducted with high school students in France, for example, has identified that boys take potential income into account more than girls when making educational choices and are more likely to choose competitive career pathways than girls (Rapoport and Thibout 2018). In addition to the possibility of obtaining greater personal wealth elsewhere, lower potential income may dissuade males from the teaching profession due to gendered social repercussions attached to income. For example, research has shown that, across cultures and on average, men with high incomes have more offspring than other men, and women with high incomes have fewer offspring than other women (Nettle and Pollet 2008). An explanation for this pattern, derived from evolutionary biology, is that as income is often used as a proxy for resources, and resources tend to be a determinant of heterosexual female partner preferences, heterosexual males with low income may appear less desirable and face greater competition in intimate relationships (Trivers 1972; Whyte et al. 2019). Furthermore, given the prevalence of male-dominated occupations, broader occupational choice provides added opportunities for men to avoid particular gendered occupations (Torre 2018).

Second, as childrearing is associated more closely with women and with stereotypically feminine traits (e.g., gentleness), women receive greater social approval than men to undertake employment that requires engaging with children. Hence, teaching is often perceived as 'women's work', or work better suited to women. In comparison, men gain greater social approval to pursue competitive and hazardous careers than do women. By choosing a profession associated with childrearing and perceived to be better suited to women, male teachers deviate from social norms—provoking social sanctions attached to gender-inappropriate behaviour, thus placing themselves at risk of scrutiny and ridicule. Such scrutiny appears to commence during teacher education, where men, particularly those wishing to teach primary school-aged children, have described encountering negative perceptions held by loved ones, students' parents, female teachers and the media, that perpetuate an 'othering' of men who work with children (e.g., Pollitt and Oldfield 2017). These negative perceptions, which range from being wrongly perceived as feminised men through to potential paedophiles (Moosa and Bhana 2020), serve two social functions: acting as a gatekeeping mechanism to deter unwanted men from the profession, and reinforcing the heteronormative position of males in society by pressuring men to conform to dominant masculine ideals (McGrath 2021). Such pressures may lead some male teachers to validate their masculinity by emphasising stereotypically masculine attributes, emotionally distancing themselves from students, seeking promotion (where interactions with children are reduced), or by leaving the profession (McGrath 2021). Indeed, in settings lacking in teacher gender diversity, male teachers are more likely to be perceived favourably by their female colleagues when they conform with masculine norms; adopting roles such as disciplinarian, manual labourer, sports coach, or lead in stereotypically masculine subject areas (Cruickshank et al. 2020). This may differ for men who are homosexual, however, who may receive greater social approval to teach young children when male homosexuality is associated with femininity (Moosa and

Bhana 2020). Nonetheless, the gender-specific social pressures that arise from men violating social norms by electing female-dominated employment typically result in higher attrition rates among those men, with time spent in female-dominated employment being detrimental to men's career transitions and potential earning power (Torre 2018).

In addition to teaching appearing to be more financially viable and socially appropriate for women, some evidence initially appears to support the notion that women may be better suited to teaching than men. Ehrich et al. (2020), for example, investigated teaching dispositional traits amongst 230 female and 94 male undergraduate primary teacher education students in Australia, finding that female participants rated themselves more highly than their male peers on the traits of teacher efficacy and interpersonal and communication skills. Female teachers may also experience better relationships with their students. Specifically, findings from a study of 467 female and 182 male primary schoolteachers' relationships with 1,493 students in the Netherlands (Spilt et al. 2012) showed that female teachers reported less conflict and closer relationships with students overall; however, they reported significantly less close relationships with boys than with girls. Male teachers, in comparison, reported similarly close relationships with both boys and girls, yet poorer relationship quality overall.

Notwithstanding findings indicating that female teachers rate their own abilities and relationships with students more positively than their male colleagues, there is little to indicate that female teachers are more effective educators. Despite some (albeit slight) indications that female teachers have a more positive effect on learning (Winters et al. 2013), other analyses show a beneficial effect of male teachers on engagement (Roorda et al. 2011). Indeed, although students may have individual preferences for teachers with particular interpersonal characteristics, in terms of effectiveness, subject-matter knowledge and teacher quality appear to be more important attributes than teacher gender. There is also little to indicate that matching students and teachers by gender is beneficial for learning, despite benefits noted for matching students and teachers by ethnicity especially in classrooms lacking in ethnic diversity (Rasheed et al. 2020). Cho (2012), for example, analysed the effects of student–teacher gender matching amongst a sample of 201,477 secondary students across 15 countries and found no universal benefit for students assigned to a teacher of the same gender. These findings may not be surprising, however, given meta-analytical research showing greater support for the gender similarities hypothesis than the traditional gender differences model (Hyde 2018). Although there are a few exceptions, it is estimated that around 80 percent of human psychological and behavioural traits show gender similarities, not differences (Hyde 2018). Hence, differences identified between male and female teachers' perceptions and experiences are likely indicative of the social construction of gender, rather than predetermined traits or innate abilities. In other words, the scrutiny that male teachers may experience for choosing a career commonly regarded as 'women's work' may lead them to rate their own abilities and relationships with students more negatively. Addressing the social stigma attached to men who choose to work with children is therefore critical to ensuring a gender-diverse workforce of teachers.

6.3 Why Teacher Gender Diversity Is Important

Popular rhetoric in support of teacher gender diversity by way of greater male participation in the profession has tended to focus on social benefits for boys; namely, for male teachers to provide boys with positive male role models and father figures. As a basis for enhancing teacher gender diversity, however, such positions are either incomplete or incompatible with professional practice. To better interpret and analyse the potential impacts of teacher gender diversity on children, schools and societies, McGrath et al. (2020) proposed an interdisciplinary and multidimensional framework informed by theory and empirical evidence, consisting of four levels: the child, the classroom, the organisation and society (see Figure 6.2). An overview of the framework proposed by McGrath et al. is given herein to provide a more holistic foundation to examine the merits of teacher gender diversity.

6.3.1 Knowledge and Identity Construction

The child level asserts that the gender composition of the teacher workforce influences children's gender knowledge, efficacy beliefs and aspirations through processes of social transmission. Drawing on social cognitive theory, children develop gendered identities and interaction styles via interactions between their observations of others and individual motivational and regulatory systems (Bussey and Bandura 1999). Through having regular and frequent contact with children, teachers are important actors in modelling gendered behaviour, with their actions providing social cues for learned behaviour that in turn influences the qualities that students selectively express. Whilst children do not necessarily perform all learned behaviour, as the number of same-gender actors displaying the same conduct increases, so does the tendency for children to emulate the behaviour of those same-gender actors (Bussey and Bandura 1999). Where teacher gender diversity provides children with a broad range of observable gender performances

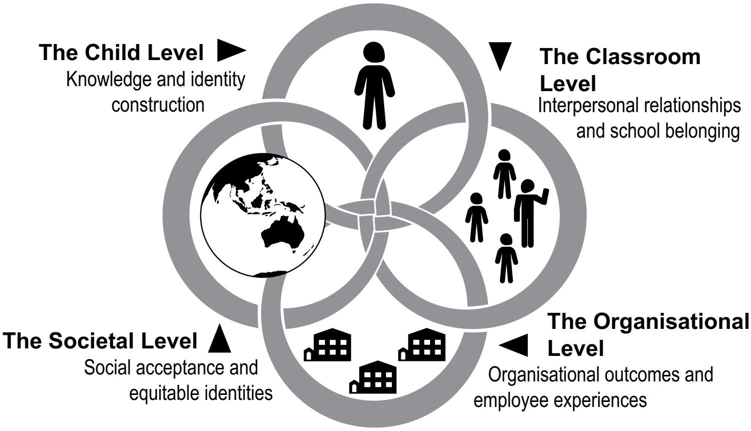
The Child Level ▶
Knowledge and identity construction
▼ **The Classroom Level**
Interpersonal relationships and school belonging
The Societal Level ▲
Social acceptance and equitable identities
◀ **The Organisational Level**
Organisational outcomes and employee experiences

Figure 6.2 Multilevel Framework for Examining the Effects of Teacher Diversity.

across workplace roles, gender knowledge and flexibility in gender constructions is enhanced, and particular qualities are not easily tied to gender. In this way, teacher gender diversity may broaden children's academic aspirations by combating gender stereotypes in academic domains. In contrast, a lack of teacher gender diversity may restrict children's observable gender performances to alternative, and sometimes less equitable, sources. Accordingly, the presence of male teachers may be particularly important for some children, permitting observations of men who are non-violent, compassionate and interact with women and children in positive ways.

6.3.2 Interpersonal Relationships and School Belonging

At the classroom level, drawing on social psychology, McGrath et al. (2020) identify that teacher gender diversity may be a feature of interpersonal relationships and psychological membership (i.e., a sense of school belonging). Here, greater diversity increases possibilities for students to interact with teachers who are similar to themselves, allowing students to feel understood by those in charge and promoting feelings of belonging and acceptance. A key tenet of this level, the principle of homophily, is the tendency for human social networks to frequently form around shared social and demographic characteristics (McPherson et al. 2001). This phenomenon has been observed across a broad range of social systems, indicating that relationships with similar others facilitate effective social bonds that are more stable over time and better able to survive structural changes, providing an important source of resilience. Notably, students themselves have reported finding it easier to relate to and confide in a teacher of the same gender (McGrath and Sinclair 2013). While the quality of students' relationships with teachers and sense of school belonging are fundamentally important, research finds that boys are at greater risk of negative relationships with teachers throughout schooling (McGrath and Van Bergen 2015) and commence high school with a lower sense of school belonging than do girls (Gillen-O'Neel and Fuligni 2013).

6.3.3 Organisational Outcomes and Employee Experiences

The organisational level in McGrath et al.'s framework proposes that teacher gender diversity informs decision-making processes, influences student outcomes and fosters innovation. Inclusive and gender-diverse work environments promote teachers' feelings of connectedness, self-worth and job satisfaction. Emanating from the political sciences, the application of representative bureaucracy theory posits that education systems are best situated to meet the needs of all students when the diversity of the workforce mirrors that of the broader school community, ensuring, for example, that all groups are considered in decision-making processes. Rather than being tied to individual teachers, the application of representative bureaucracy theory finds that students' disciplinary outcomes, academic achievement and assignment to gifted education settings are each associated with the demographic composition of teaching staff (Grissom et al. 2015). In addition, the gender composition of the workforce impacts how teachers

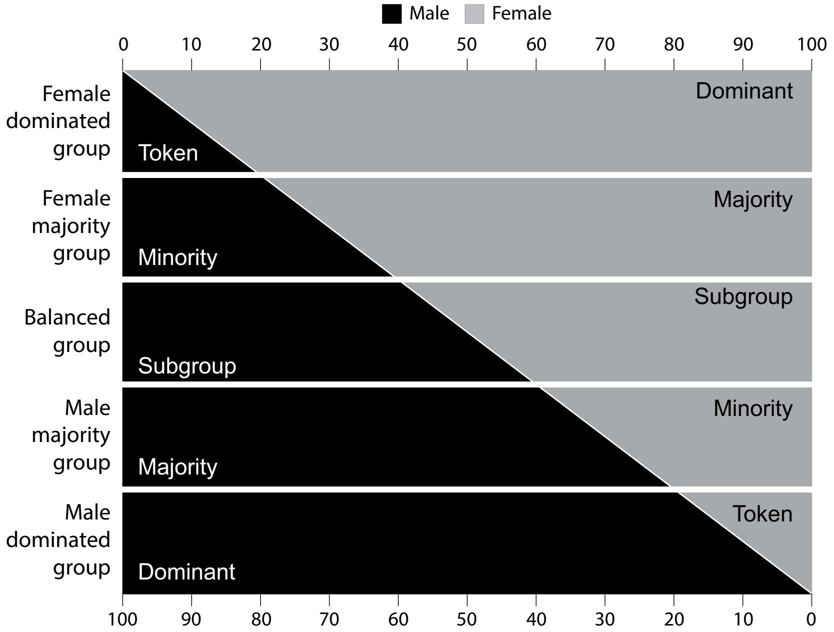

Figure 6.3 Gender Ratio Group Types by Proportional Representation.

experience the profession and are perceived by others. Notably, where a sizable proportional imbalance exists in a workplace, interactional experiences are fundamentally different for male and female staff. Describing various group types based on the gender distribution of a workforce (see Figure 6.3), Kanter (1977) identified three perceptual phenomena of token group members, who represent less than 20 percent of a group:

- Visibility—tokens receive a greater awareness share in the workplace, generating differential performance pressures.
- Polarisation—differences between token and dominant members are exaggerated, heightening group boundaries.
- Assimilation—characteristics of tokens are distorted to fit familiar stereotypes, leading to role entrapment (i.e., where workplace performances are confined to predetermined, expected roles).

Although Kanter's group types oversimplify diversity, the perceptual phenomena identified remain useful for understanding the experiences of under-represented groups of employees. A gender-balanced teacher workforce instead improves social cohesion amongst staff by reducing group boundaries, and thus the potential for some employees to experience loneliness, isolation or differential treatment.

A recent contribution to knowledge within the organisational level confirms a positive relationship between teacher gender diversity and job satisfaction. Lassibille and Navarro Gómez (2020) investigated the impact of teacher gender diversity on job satisfaction amongst lower-secondary teachers across 46 countries. Their findings indicate that higher representation of female teachers is significantly and negatively associated with job satisfaction. Moreover, female teachers gain significantly more job satisfaction as the representation of male teachers in the workplace increases, whilst male teachers' job satisfaction is not significantly affected (Lassibille and Navarro Gómez 2020). Variations between countries, however, may suggest that increasing the representation of male teachers will improve job satisfaction in settings where teacher gender diversity is lacking and notions of equality are valued (e.g., Australia), but decrease job satisfaction in already gender-balanced workplaces (e.g., the Netherlands), or where job satisfaction may be negatively affected by increased male competition in the workplace (e.g., the United States of America [USA]).

6.3.4 Social Acceptance and Equitable Identities

The societal level in McGrath et al.'s framework proposes that a gender-diverse teacher workforce supports the acceptance and visibility of alternative and equitable gender identities and expressions. In this way, teacher gender diversity demonstrates that education is inclusive of, uniformly valued by, and of significance to, a wide range of demographic groups. Framed by sociology and guided by Connell's (2005) ontological conceptualisations of masculinities, social systems operate within a world gender order, where particular social groups hold dominant positions over others. Beyond simplistic descriptions of inherent male dominance, recognition of the interplay between gender and other demographic characteristics, such as ethnicity and class, yields multiple masculinities (hegemonic, complicit, marginalised and subordinate) and multiple possible positions of domination and subordination (Connell 2005). Overlaying these concepts with occupational prestige suggests that, while women who enter male-dominated occupations gain social status and may be perceived as righteous, men who enter female-dominated occupations lose status and may be perceived as deviant. This is probable for all men, even those who may hold social dominance in other contexts. Nonetheless, a gender-diverse teacher workforce would have a positive effect on social equality by contributing to a reduction in occupational gender segregation and legitimising the role of men in the lives of children.

6.4 Hidden Lessons about Masculinity

The concept of the 'hidden curriculum' refers to the unofficial, unintended and informal transmission of norms, values, expectations and attitudes that takes place via schooling (Giroux and Penna 1979). The content of the hidden curriculum, inadvertently selected for transmission, is partly a reflection of the demographic composition of the organisational structure imposed on students. Although, arguably, no other workplace has as profound an influence on children's developing gender knowledge and identities than the school, teachings about gender typically manifest within the hidden curriculum. These unofficial lessons about gender are frequent and varied—extending from everyday classroom dynamics through to the way the education system is structured and operates. Extending upon what has been described thus far, the concept of the hidden curriculum is utilised to consider what students might inadvertently learn about masculinity in the context of an under-representation of male teachers and to stimulate further discussion about the unintended consequences that a lack of teacher diversity might have.

Given the influential role of schooling in shaping children's world views, surprisingly little attention has been given to the role of teacher gender diversity in defining and reproducing stereotypic conceptions of gender. As the rigidity of gender stereotypes (i.e., generalised preconceptions of male and female attributes) depends on the frequency with which they are reinforced by same-gender actors showing similarities, observing teachers with different gender identities displaying the same attributes may reduce the likelihood that those attributes will be ascribed to gender or become stereotypic. In support of this possibility, findings from a classic study conducted by Mancus (1992) suggest that the presence of both male and female teachers reduces students' stereotypic conceptions of gender. The study included 188 students in the USA from two primary schools: one where 33 percent of the teachers were male, and the other with no male teachers. Both schools had female principals. Students were invited to attribute a series of descriptive statements (indicating nurturing, academic, authority and management traits) to either a male or female fictitious teacher, with responses scored based on the number of non-gender stereotypical attributions made. The study found that students who attended the school with both male and female teachers made fewer stereotypical attributions. Notably, boys from the school with male teachers made the most egalitarian attributions. Boys and girls from the school with no male teachers were instead more likely to attribute classroom mismanagement to a teacher of the opposite gender.

The presence of male teachers alone, however, may not be sufficient to reduce students' stereotypic conceptions of gender when male teachers comprise a token group (≤ 20 percent) for two reasons. First, as token employees experience unique perceptual phenomena and social pressures that place them at risk of role entrapment, token male teachers are likely to be concentrated in roles that instead perpetuate masculine stereotypes (e.g., sports coach, leadership positions). Second, when male teachers comprise a token group, there may be too few same-gender male actors performing alternative expressions of masculinity within school settings to counteract masculine stereotypes or harmful representations of masculinity portrayed elsewhere. Such possibilities suggest that a critical mass of male teachers is therefore needed for school systems to challenge rigid masculine stereotypes and promote equitable, caring and non-violent representations of masculinity. The absence of such a critical mass accentuates the framing of the teaching profession as 'feminised' work; where men are anomalies, teacher gender differences are exaggerated and stereotypically feminine traits are emphasised as key teacher dispositions.

In addition to facilitating unintentional teachings about stereotypic conceptions of gender, teacher gender diversity may also inadvertently guide students' academic aspirations, status expectations and the sorts of competencies that students cultivate. Although, traditionally, attention has been directed toward teacher gender bias as a mechanism for subtly conveying differential expectations that see students judging themselves as more efficacious in gender-stereotypical domains (Bussey and Bandura 1999), researchers have more recently begun to consider the gender composition of teaching staff as a resource for students' personal orientations and vocational choices. Such work has found, for example, that girls are more likely to pursue careers in science and mathematics when they have attended schools with higher proportions of female science and mathematics teachers (Stearns et al. 2016). Though considerably little is known about the potential influence of teacher gender diversity on boys' academic aspirations and status expectations, the higher representation of male teachers within upper grades than within the early years of schooling may inadvertently communicate to students that men are more often specialists than generalists and less involved in the lives of children than women.

Notwithstanding broader representations of masculinity, a plethora of research indicates that boys and girls have different scholastic experiences, driven in part by differential teacher attention that conjures an image of the ideal student as female: compliant, polite, organised and independent. Although girls typically have more ambitious career expectations than boys (OECD 2015), "being an ideal student in school may not necessarily deliver better outcomes in the post-school years … It may be that compliant girls are more of a benefit to their teachers than they are to themselves" (Beaman et al. 2006, p. 354). In comparison, boys attract a disproportionate amount of negative attention from teachers and are more often perceived to be distractable, demotivated, disruptive and disorganised (Beaman et al. 2006). As boys are more likely than girls to display unfavourable externalising behaviours, they are also more likely to be reprimanded, suspended and referred to special education settings. Although these distinctions may reflect a poor fit between socially prescribed masculine norms and the student role, the gender homogeneity of the teacher workforce means that negative teacher interactions, experienced directly or vicariously by boys, predominantly involve female teachers, particularly in the formative years. There remains, however, little empirical examination of how classroom gender dynamics affect, or are affected by, boys' personal orientations and attitudes towards females, nor girls' expectations and understandings of males. Nonetheless, in the context of a lack of male teachers, primary school students have reasoned that while female teachers show favouritism towards girls, male teachers are impartial (McGrath 2011).

6.5 Conclusion

The hidden curriculum is an important, yet underutilised, concept for exploring the potential collateral lessons that are imparted when education systems lack teacher gender diversity. Where socioeconomic conditions restrict male participation in the teaching profession, students' knowledge of masculinities may become organised around various uncontested assumptions; magnifying stereotypic conceptions of gender, disproportionately positioning men as specialists and reproducing divergent gender expectations and aspirations. A gender-diverse workforce of teachers may instead reduce occupational gender segregation, increase job satisfaction among teachers, improve school belonging among students and enhance social cohesion more broadly. Undoubtedly, many more hidden lessons about masculinity transmitted via the demographic composition of the teaching profession remain to be uncovered. Certainly, if diversity is valued and equitable gender relations desired, it is imperative that hidden lessons about masculinity be illuminated and redressed.

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7 Overcoming the Under-representation of Teachers with Disabilities in School Communities

Enablers and Barriers

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7.1 Introduction

From a human rights perspective, the implementation of a truly inclusive education system must include teachers with disabilities. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (United Nations [UN] 2006) introduces the rights-based model of disability (Lawson and Beckett 2021) and calls on all signatory countries to "take appropriate measures to employ … teachers with disabilities" (UN 2006, p. 17). Similarly, the guidelines of the European Agency for Development in Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2011, 2012) highlight that the composition of the teaching population should reflect the social and cultural diversity of our societies, thus including persons with disabilities. However, the implementation of these recommendations remains a challenge. Indeed, teachers with disabilities are not only under-represented in schools and universities, thus depriving the educational communities of their contributions; they are also rarely included in inclusive education research (Neca et al. 2020), which focuses instead on the experiences of students with disabilities and special education teachers.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the experiences of 12 teachers with disabilities working in mainstream public schools, highlighting the enablers and barriers they faced and the pivotal role they can play in education systems and in driving social change. The findings presented are based on a study carried out in Portugal, where data about this group of teachers are almost non-existent. Although the country has issued very progressive legislation on inclusive education targeting students with disabilities over the last decade,[1] the same attention has not been paid to the situation of teachers with disabilities, as is the case in many other European countries (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education 2011).

In Section 7.2, we begin by summarising the main themes in the literature about teachers with disabilities (cf. Neca et al. 2020). Next, we explain the methodology of our project undertaken in Portugal, which was framed by a transformative paradigm (Mertens 2010; Creswell 2014) and included interviews with 12 teachers with disabilities. In Section 7.4, we present our findings, identifying the main enablers and challenges faced by these teachers regarding their inclusion in the education system. To conclude, we discuss our findings and emphasise the importance of research about teachers with disabilities.

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7.2 Research on Teachers with Disabilities

A recent literature review conducted on teachers with disabilities, comprising studies between 1990 and 2018, concluded that this topic remains understudied (Neca et al. 2020). Fifty-three articles were identified where the main theme related directly to teachers with disabilities in mainstream schools of compulsory and tertiary education. Research employing qualitative methods were dominant (31 papers), followed by theoretical articles (11), research employing quantitative methods (9) and research using mixed methods approaches (2). Four main research themes emerged: (a) *teachers' life trajectories, challenges and educational practices* (26 papers), paying attention to the experiences of teachers with learning disabilities (14) and physical, visual and hearing disabilities (12); (b) *teacher training experiences* (12); (c) *perspectives about teachers with disabilities* (9), reflecting other people's (e.g., students' or other teachers') representations and beliefs about teachers with disabilities. Finally, this literature also problematised (d) the *under-representation* of teachers with disabilities within schools and universities (6).

The available literature emphasises some important contributions of teachers with disabilities, such as their great empathy towards students with disabilities (Riddick 2003; Burns and Bell 2010) and their capacity to develop a more diversified school curriculum on the basis of their life experiences (e.g., Duquette 2000). Teachers with disabilities may be important role models for the whole school community, especially for students with disabilities, by positively reshaping their expectations and future prospects (Burns and Bell 2010; Pritchard 2010). By showing their competence to perform a professional teaching role, they also contribute to challenging negative social representations of disability (Grenier et al. 2014), traditionally linked to notions of dependence and incompetence (Nario-Redmond 2010).

Portugal has been noted internationally for its progressive legislation on inclusive education (Alves et al. 2020; UNESCO 2020) and high rates of inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools (Pinto and Neca 2020). However, the same attention has not been given to the situation of teachers with disabilities. For instance, the latest available data (school year 2017/2018) reveal that 98.9 percent of students with disabilities attended compulsory education in mainstream schools. In contrast, no official statistics are available for teachers with disabilities. While since 2001 there has been a Quota System (Decree-law n.º 29/2001) to promote the employment of persons with disabilities, including educators and teachers for public schools, there are no available data on the implementation of the law.

7.3 Methodology

To address the lack of data about teachers with disabilities in Portugal, a research project was conducted in 2017 comprising four studies. The first survey aimed to identify the representation levels of these teachers in public schools, whilst the second survey collected data on their experiences and educational trajectories. The third study aimed to identify enablers and barriers regarding the inclusion of teachers with physical or sensory disabilities and the fourth study was about the perspectives of school principals. Although our conceptualisation of disability is based on a human rights model (Lawson and Beckett 2021), recognising human dignity and diversity and locating the reasons of exclusion in social and physical barriers, our qualitative study (unlike our quantitative study), due to limited resources, did not cover all types of disability. This chapter focuses on the semi-structured interviews carried out with 12 teachers with congenital or acquired (in childhood or adolescence) physical or sensory disabilities working in public schools: eight women and four men, with ages ranging from 37 to 54, with physical (n = 5), visual (n = 3) and hearing (n = 4) impairments (see Table 7.1). Physical impairments included mobility problems caused by cerebral palsy or poliomyelitis, for instance and sensory impairments included blindness and partial or total hearing loss.[2] Participants were recruited with the support of the National Federation of Teachers, contacts with Portuguese disabled people organisations and the 'snowball' sampling technique was employed. The interviews were an average duration of 45 minutes, all carried out in person, recorded with prior consent and transcribed verbatim.

The interviews explored the following topics: participants' education trajectory up to the end of upper-secondary education, their experiences at university, their

Table 7.1 Profile of the Interviewees

ID[a]	*Sex*	*Stage of Education*[b]*/Education area*	*Type of School*	*Years of Experience*	*Type of Disability*
E01	M	2nd Cycle (Portuguese; History)	Mainstream School	34	Visual
E02	M	Secondary (Computer Classes)	Mainstream School	12	Physical
E03	M	2nd Cycle (Visual Education)	Mainstream School	25	Hearing
E04	F	Portuguese Sign Language	Mainstream School	11	Hearing
E05	F	Special Education	Mainstream School	28	Visual
E06	F	3rd Cycle (Spanish)	Mainstream School	31	Visual
E07	F	1st Cycle/Special Education	Mainstream School	28	Physical/ Visual
E08	M	Secondary (Computer Classes)	Mainstream School/ vocational	22	Physical
E09	F	1st Cycle/Educational support	Mainstream School	12	Physical
E10	F	Secondary (Physics and chemistry)	Mainstream School	17	Physical
E11	F	Portuguese Sign Language	[c]School of Reference for Bilingual Education	17	Hearing
E12	F	1st Cycle/ Educational support for deaf children	[c]School of Reference for Bilingual Education	4	Hearing

a Codification of the interviews (E01, E02, et cetera).

b 1st Cycle of Basic Education (6–10 years), 2nd Cycle of Basic Education (11–12 years), 3rd Cycle of Basic Education (13–15 years), Secondary Education (16–18 years).

c These schools aim to implement a bilingual education model (Portuguese Sign Language, as the first language, and Portuguese, as the second language), including students with and without hearing losses (Decree-law 54/2018).

educational practices as teachers and their perspectives as teachers about success factors in their professional journeys. Interviews were analysed with the support of the software NVIVO. ‘Codebook’ thematic analysis (Braun et al. 2019) was used to identify the main domains or topics regarding perceived enablers and barriers to inclusion from teachers’ discourses, following five steps: (1) familiarisation with data, (2) identification of themes, (3) refinement of the analysis, (4) revision/elimination of redundancies and (5) global and comparative analysis through the identification of themes.

7.4 Findings

The main perceived enablers to explain the inclusion of teachers with disabilities in school communities were the following: generally positive educational trajectories, social support networks and resilience and challenging negative disability representations. In turn, the main challenges identified related to the lack of necessary resources and supports and the lack of disability awareness and understanding.

7.4.1 Perceived Enablers

7.4.1.1 Changing Experiences with Progression through the Education System

When asked about their educational paths, before and after entering university, their early years at school were described by the interviewees as broadly positive:

> I was very lucky, I always had very good teachers who provided me the materials in advance … which allowed me to prepare everything and succeed.
>
> (E07, teacher with a visual and physical disability)

> It was very good [1st Cycle], it allowed me to experience friendships with the other children without disability. There was integration among those with visual disability and those without disability.
>
> (E06, teacher with a visual disability)

Perceived as encouraging, the situations mentioned related to opportunities for socialisation with other children and the provision of reasonable accommodations, that is, the necessary and appropriate adjustments needed in a particular case, for example, being provided with the materials in advance by the teacher. However, as they progressed towards more advanced levels of schooling (mainly in secondary and tertiary education), some experiences were described as being less positive, as the following interviewee, a woman with a visual impairment reported:

> I arrived in the classroom and the teacher looked at me and said: “What are you doing here?”
>
> (E05, teacher with a visual disability)

Despite her visual impairment, the woman wanted to take an elective course in the field of construction and civil engineering. She tried to convince the teacher that she could do the same tasks as all other students, although she would perform them "in her own way". However, the teacher replied: "At the end of the year I will not pass you, so you can leave now". And so, she left. This example is particularly telling of the low expectations and negative stereotypes that many teachers with disabilities faced throughout their own school years. Fortunately, in this case, another teacher invited the student to take a course in a similar field (mechanics) and she accepted the challenge. As highlighted by the interviewee, "some teachers may love their profession, but sometimes they lack the sensitivity to deal with certain differences" (E05). Despite this less positive situation, the interviewee stated that her school years had been "very pleasant, I felt always very well integrated, my colleagues were always very good to me, my teachers too" (E05).

It was while attending tertiary education that teachers with disabilities faced the greatest challenges:

> At the university … it was very difficult because I had no support … I sat in the front row and did lip reading of all the teachers … at the end I asked my colleagues if they would share their notes with me … I asked for [a sign language interpreter] but the university never provided me one.
>
> (E12, teacher with a hearing disability)

In this case, the support given to the student depended on the "sensitivity of the professor" [E12] and only a few supports were available. The lack of support to address special needs in higher education institutions was a common feeling shared among the interviewees, which has also been identified in other studies (e.g., Riddell et al. 2005; Martins et al. 2018). In Portugal, this situation can be related to the lack of specific legislation in higher education, which does not refer the obligation to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities. To successfully overcome such difficulties, support networks were identified as being an important resource and a success enabler.

7.4.1.2 Importance of Social Support Networks in Constructing Resilience

Social support from family and friends was mentioned as helpful in overcoming and dealing with the stereotypes, which traditionally do not associate disability and the possibility of a successful educational trajectory:

> My family encouraged me a lot.
>
> (E04, teacher with a hearing disability)

> I remember in elementary school that my parents took me in the lap and put me in the classroom … I was treated with great affection by my classmates and this was very important, it helped my inclusion.
>
> (E08, teacher with a physical disability)

> I thank my parents for two things … unconditional love … and the freedom they gave me … Before going to university, I had serious vision problems and I was practically advised by the doctor to put a blanket over my knees and stay at home, this never crossed my mind, nor my parents' minds.
>
> (E01, teacher with a visual disability)

As just described, family support was a key factor in overcoming barriers, not only relating to school environments, which were not entirely accessible, but also in preventing the participants from dropping out of school, given the low expectations they encountered due to their medical diagnoses. The role of friends, classmates and also teachers (as important sources of support) was highlighted as fundamental in promoting inclusion and a sense of belonging, thus fostering the self-confidence and resilience needed to continue to higher education, where challenges faced were expected to be even greater.

The development of adaptive strategies in the face of adversity (e.g., the lack of adequate accommodations provided in schools and social stereotypes) permeated interviewees' discourses about their educational and professional experiences.

> The schools did not provide all the supports I needed … maybe this had a positive impact on me because I was forced to adapt myself … and still today I have this attitude … I always have a plan B to solve the situations.
>
> (E02, teacher with a physical disability)

> Despite all the barriers that I have found throughout my life, I think you should never give up if you really believe in what you do.
>
> (E09, teacher with a physical disability)

> I had to overcome the difficulties by studying and being determined … that was how I managed to succeed.
>
> (E03, teacher with a hearing disability)

As the extracts show, resilience is "a learning process in response to discriminating practices at schools" (Buchner et al. 2015, p. 423). Being "determined", "able to adapt" and "hardworking" are not expressions of personal attributes but instead a result of a socially mediated process, involving a strong network of resources, such as relationships (e.g., social support networks), identity and community participation, among others (Runswick-Cole and Goodley 2013).

7.4.1.3 Challenging Negative Disability Representations

The sense of self-worth and competence identified in the interviewees' discourses (see also Louvet et al. 2009) contrasted with socially shared stereotypes about persons with disabilities, who may be seen as dependent and incompetent (Nario-Redmond, 2010).

> I was extrovert and intelligent, and my schoolmates invited me to do schoolwork with them.
>
> (E06, teacher with a visual disability)

> To be a teacher I had to find strategies … and 'weapons' to be able to perform well in my role … I share my experience with my students to convey strength … so they can succeed in life, being like me or even better.
>
> (E05, teacher with a visual disability)

> I asked my school principal if he saw me as competent as the other teachers. He told me that if a person with a disability obtained a doctoral degree as I did, it was because I was a worthy person.
>
> (E07, teacher with a visual and physical disability)

Although research suggests that persons with disabilities are aware of the negative cultural representations about them (Nario-Redmond 2010), the trajectories of our interviewees can be understood as forms of resistance and contestation against these harmful and negative public views. Against all social expectations, they managed to attend university, become teachers, and be included in school communities. One of the interviewees noted the importance of higher education to promote change:

> I like to encourage them [students] to think about higher education as something fundamental.
>
> (E11, teacher with a hearing disability)

Equally important, conveying a positive view of the experience of disability, and being regarded as role models (by all students, with and without disabilities), was also highlighted as being able to challenge hegemonic representations of disability:

> On the first day, I take special care to explain what my problem is, what limitations I may or may not have, and I make them feel free to ask questions.
>
> (E09, teacher with a physical disability)

The extracts showed the importance of making visible the experiences of persons with disabilities, allowing students to perceive their potential.

7.4.2 Perceived Barriers and Challenges

7.4.2.1 Lack of Resources and Support Despite Some Improvements

As in other jobs, teachers with disabilities also need their employers, in this case the schools, to provide reasonable accommodations (e.g., accessible school buildings, Braille materials, sign language interpreters), denial of which may be considered a form of discrimination, according to the CRPD. According to the interviewees, this is an area that clearly needs improvement:

> The school does not provide adapted materials. We have to do it ourselves … for example, since the numbering of a braille book is not the same as the print book, for each class, I make a scheme with the corresponding page numbers … then I tell the students 'let's read page 17' [print book]. Of course, the page of my [braille] book is not the same.
>
> (E05, teacher with a visual disability)

> Teachers without a hearing impairment have a lot of materials available. But when it comes to sign language you have to create your own material.
>
> (E11, teacher with a hearing disability)

The participants' observations regarding the lack of resources and adapted materials provided by schools clearly shows the additional effort and work required by teachers with a variety of impairments in their professional practice. Having to do such extra work was a difficulty already faced during their school years as students, and it had remained a necessity in their work as teachers. Although a right recognized in the CRPD, the provision of reasonable accommodations was not being fully enacted at the level of the practice. Still, some positive experiences were also described:

> The school board respects my situation a lot [physical disability] … they never assign me to classrooms which are too far from each other.
>
> (E10, teacher with a physical disability)

Some of the solutions proposed by participants to overcome the lack of reasonable accommodations involved awareness-raising, and the development of new laws and policies to help clarify the kind of measures that can be taken by schools to grant the specific supports needed (e.g., fewer students per class).

7.4.2.2 Lack of Disability Awareness and Understanding

Awareness-raising activities on the human rights of persons with disabilities within school communities were considered another key area for improvement and must include special education teachers (without disabilities), who were described, in one interview, as responsible for a less positive situation experienced by one teacher with a disability:

> A colleague [special education teacher] at the first parents' meeting had an unfortunate and inappropriate behaviour … She said that I was there only temporarily, and that she was waiting for another colleague to replace me because I have a physical impairment and could not take care of the children.
>
> (E07, teacher with a physical and visual disability)

The situation described reveals, on one hand, the importance of having teachers with disabilities in schools to combat prejudice about disability, and on the other hand, the hegemony of these deeply rooted social representations, thus requiring urgent action, as proposed by another teacher with disabilities:

> I think there is still a long way to go … it is important to invest in training and raising awareness … there is still a lot of discrimination and barriers that need to be overcome, both physical and psychological. Mindsets need to change.
>
> (E09, teacher with a physical disability)

> [Deaf persons] are capable, if they have help … I did it, I am married, and I have a normal life.
>
> (E12, teacher with a hearing disability)

These excerpts show how teachers with disabilities continue to face daily challenges related to others' (colleagues', students') views, not only regarding their competence to practice their profession but also related to their social participation.

7.5 Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this chapter is to advance knowledge on the main enablers and barriers to inclusion faced by teachers with physical and sensory disabilities, who are under-represented in schools. Regarding perceived enablers, our findings corroborated previous research: educational pathway experiences change from positive to more negative with progression through the education system (Ferri et al. 2005); the central role of social support networks for educational success (Vogel and Sharoni 2011); and the importance of other resources, which lead to resilience (Duquette 2000). Equally important, another perceived enabler was the role of these teachers in challenging negative disability stereotypes, showing, by contrast, competence and productivity (Lamichhane 2015; Bonaccio et al. 2020).

However, the results of this study have also highlighted some barriers and challenges. First is the scarcity of resources and provision of reasonable accommodations, not only in tertiary education (Martins et al. 2018), but also in workplaces (schools) (Damiani and Harbour 2015). Overcoming these barriers seems to be possible: research suggests that the costs of making resources and reasonable accommodations available are often lower than expected by organisations (Lengnick-Hall et al. 2008). The second obstacle identified was the lack of disability awareness within school communities. Pearson et al. (2016) showed the transformational role of disability studies for education professionals: reframing disability as a social, cultural and political phenomenon, instead of a medical problem, was fundamental to inform innovative practices. In our study, we described an episode where a special education teacher had negative attitudes in relation to a teacher with a disability. Despite all the training developed for the inclusion of students with disabilities, the appropriation of the rights-based model of disability at a societal, contextual (schools) and individual level (teachers, students) may take long periods of time. Some teachers still hold a medical vision of disability, which may coexist with the new rights-based model of disability; this ambivalence can slow down social change (Pinto 2011). Nevertheless, another contextual factor should be considered: the ageing of teachers. More than half of education systems in Europe face this challenge, including Portugal (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2021), which means that it is crucial to mainstream disability issues into teacher preparation programmes, as well as into continuous training, in order to foster the commitment of teachers to social justice (Pantić and Florian 2015).

In conclusion, this exploratory study identified important factors in overcoming some barriers to the participation of teachers with disabilities in mainstream schools. It is fundamental to develop further research, which may contribute to informing decision makers and public policies aiming to promote and support the presence of teachers with disabilities in schools. These professionals are a key element in the construction of inclusive school environments and can actively contribute to promote a positive change in the social representations of persons with disabilities in the wider society.

Notes

1 In 2018, a new law came into force, which rejects the categorisation of students and focuses the work of schools on the curriculum and on student learning. It is up to schools to respond to the diversity of their students, adapting the teaching and learning processes, using the multilevel approach that provides access to the curriculum for all, using Universal Design for Learning (cf. Alves 2019).

2 In this case, the interviews included the participation of a sign language interpreter.

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8 The Role of Professional Passion and Identity in Improving Diversity and Success in Professional Education including Teaching

Liz Thomas and Elisabeth Hovdhaugen

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we focus on participation in professional education in England and Norway, drawing on two qualitative studies with undergraduate healthcare students. We define professional education as undergraduate degree programmes that result in professional recognition (or a license to practice) as well as an academic qualification, for professional caring roles within the public sector, such as nurses and teachers. We exclude other public-sector caring professions, such as doctors and dentists, that require a longer period of qualification. The aforementioned 'short' professional programmes have commonalities in terms of the types of students who participate, their motivations for doing so and the careers into which graduates progress. In a Nordic context, these professions are termed 'welfare state professions'. Similarities between these programmes make it likely that lessons learned in one type of professional programme (as defined here) could be transferrable to other professional programmes. Here, we relate lessons from nursing to teacher education.

In this chapter, we argue that professional education programmes are attractive to students from 'non-traditional'[1] and under-represented groups, as they are vocational, and the students who participate have a strong 'passion' or motivation to become a professional within their chosen caring field. We contend that this passion to achieve a specific *professional* identity is more important than the more typical higher education (HE) *student* identity, which is required to access and succeed in traditional academic programmes. Drawing on our qualitative research, we explore the development of this professional passion to achieve a specific professional identity, and how it facilitates access and success. We then consider the implications of this for widening participation in teacher education (and other professional programmes).

8.2 Differentiating Professional Programmes from Traditional Degree Programmes

Short professional programmes and traditional undergraduate degrees appear akin, having the same duration and being frequently delivered in the same institutions. However, there are several significant differences. Firstly, professional programmes

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have a significant share of their coursework as placement training. Secondly, in certain countries they have a more diverse student population than regular university undergraduate programmes. In this chapter, we contend a third difference between short professional programmes and traditional undergraduate programmes, relating to the significance of professional identity, as opposed to student identity.

Professional degree programmes involve a significant period on placement. Nursing is regulated by an EU-directive (2005/36/EC), which states that half the degree should be conducted as placements. There is less uniformity in teaching degrees. In Norway, about 10–15 percent of a teacher education programme is devoted to placement, and in England trainee teachers, whether on the undergraduate or postgraduate route, must spend 120 days or 24 weeks in school in total, which is around 20 percent of course time on an undergraduate programme.

In England and Norway, nursing and teacher education programmes are particularly attractive to under-represented student groups compared to the HE-sector in general (e.g., Thomsen et al. 2017; With 2018; Woodfield 2014). In both England and Norway, teaching and nursing students are more likely to be first-generation entrants. Furthermore, nursing studies have been female dominated since they were founded, while teaching as a profession has become female dominated during the past couple of decades. In England, these students are also more often classified as 'mature age' when they enter HE, compared to students in the HE-sector as a whole; this is especially true for entry to nursing and postgraduate teacher training courses. In Norway, the average student age is higher, with one in four students entering when they are over 30 years old (Keute 2018). As a group, nursing students are older on average when entering, while teaching students are of average age. This points to a similarity amongst students who choose a professional degree across the two countries, being more attractive to first-generation entrants, and those who did not follow a direct path into HE from secondary education. It is acknowledged, however, that motivation and participation in professional programmes such as teaching is shaped by the national context (Heinz 2015; Moreau 2015), and in Ireland, for example, teaching is dominated by students from higher socio-economic groups (Heinz and Keane 2018; Keane and Heinz 2015).

Progression to HE is expected for some groups, while for others it is not the norm (Keane 2012). For many widening participation groups, and in particular students from lower socio-economic groups, the decision to go to HE is not a rite of passage, but rather it is a significant decision (Ball et al. 2002; Keane 2012; Reay et al. 2005). Keane (2012) identifies three broad motivations for entering HE: (1) academic or learning reasons (i.e., love of the subject); (2) vocational or instrumental reasons (i.e., in order to secure employment); and (3) social or personal reasons (including the social experiences and the benefit to others—both friends and family and wider social benefits) (see also Heinz 2015). Students from lower socio-economic groups are more likely to cite vocational reasons than other students (Marks et al. 2003) and are more likely to be deterred by costs on the one hand, and concern about return on investment on the other (Archer and Hutchings 2000).

These short professional degrees qualify graduates to work in professional roles in the welfare state, offering them careers that 'make a difference' or serve society; in other words they may represent an altruistic choice (Keane 2017). Indeed, working-class students on initial teacher education (ITE) programmes in Ireland cited vocational reasons, compared to the academic reasons cited by students from middle-class backgrounds (Goodwin 2019).

These 'short' professional degrees have been termed 'semi-professions' by several scholars (e.g., Etzioni 1969; Hodson and Sullivan 2011), as they are viewed as aspiring professions that hope to reach the same type of professional privileges that medical doctors and attorneys have had. There are also several scholars who focus on the importance of licencing and fulfilling a particular mandate for a profession, as a way to guard the knowledge, skills and tasks that are inherent to the profession (e.g., Hughes 1984; Larson 1977). However, it is beyond the aim of this chapter to dwell too much on what defines a profession, it is rather the point in this chapter to view nursing and teaching as two types of professional degrees in HE, which lead to roles in the welfare state, and which are attractive to similar cohorts of students.

8.3 Student Identity and Professional Identity

Research about access, transition and success in HE focuses on the formation of a positive student identity, initially imagining yourself as a student, and subsequently feeling yourself to be a student: "… transitions to and within HE involve radical shifts in learning identities … fostering a HE learning identity is essential for positive transitions" (MacFarlane 2018, p. 1203). A HE learner identity incorporates both academic and social dimensions and is collectively formed through the cohort or community of learners (Eccleston 2009). A strong learner identity contributes to student engagement, belonging and success (Bliuc et al. 2011; Thomas 2012; Trowler 2010). While a HE student identity is viewed as temporary, dynamic and socially constructed (Hussey and Smith 2010), it provides a sense of 'studenthood', which allows HE learners to view themselves as students and to fit in and study successfully (Field and Morgan-Klein 2010, p. 4). Huon and Sankey (2002) view the point of entry to HE as being of particular significance for the transformation required in learner identity, from learning at school to studying in HE, and this occurs through the process of transition and acculturation. Arguably students from 'non-traditional' backgrounds find the process of transition, and the development of a strong student identity, more challenging (Archer and Leathwood 2003), which may be due to a lack of cultural capital (Leese 2010), or a lack of familiarity with the expectations and norms of HE that are transmitted through the family. Student identity continues to develop throughout the HE-experience (Hussey and Smith 2010), and it changes an individual's 'horizons of actions', offering new career trajectories (Eccleston 2009). Completion of undergraduate study is usually followed by progression into graduate employment and the formation of a professional identity.

Professional identity is a form of collective identity, which is both grounded in being part of a group and also by being part of a profession (Jenkins 2008; see also

Hargreaves and Fullan's [2012] notion of teachers' professional capital, which is similar). Hence, the individuals are part of a group at the same time as they are part of a category, which is defined by those who are outside of the group, as a form of collective external definition. Kaufman (2014, p. 38) argues that "college is the prime location where students begin the transition from the role of student to the role of professional". This linear process of identity formation may offer an accurate description for 'regular' students, but is less applicable to students in professional education programmes. Many of these students come into HE already identifying with the profession they are qualifying themselves to enter, and hence they do not first create a student identity and then a professional identity. Participation in an HE programme is seen as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself, and something that has to be done in order to achieve the goal of entering their chosen profession; professional identity formation is embedded into professional degree programmes. In this chapter, the role of professional passion and identity is explored through research projects with nursing and healthcare students in England and Norway. This is supplemented by some evidence from students studying to be teachers in one institution in England.

8.4 Details of the Research Studies

The empirical material this chapter utilises is derived from two projects on nursing and healthcare students, one in Norway and one in England. The initial research study was commissioned by Health Education England (HEE) to explore the experiences of students with diversity characteristics in accessing and succeeding in NHS-funded HE programmes. This was a large mixed-methods project; here we are drawing on the 70 qualitative interviews, undertaken by trained student–peer–researchers, with current students and recent graduates from healthcare programmes at twelve HE institutions. The aim of the interviews was to investigate the experiences of students and recent graduates in relation to accessing, studying and being successful in HE, and progressing into the healthcare labour market, with a particular focus on identifying the enabling and challenging factors for students from equality and widening participation groups. The interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed and coded using an inductive method. Researchers independently read a sample of transcripts and identified key themes; a research meeting was used to develop and agree the themes into a coding framework. This was then applied to the transcripts by one researcher to ensure consistency of application, and this was checked by a second researcher. Thematic reports were generated to inform the analysis of the themes. In addition, interviewees were asked to complete a background survey to provide demographic details. From this information we know that all participants exhibited at least one 'diversity characteristic',[2] including being the first in their family to study in HE, and the majority were studying a branch of nursing or midwifery.[3] The interviews were conducted during the 2015–16 academic year, before tuition fees were introduced for healthcare students in England.

Interviews were undertaken with a similar interview guide with Norwegian nursing students studying at three institutions, in the period May 2019 to June 2020.

The interviews were conducted by research staff from an independent organisation. In total 29 students were interviewed, most individually and some in pairs. Students were mainly recruited at a lecture, which means that diversity was not necessarily a factor in the recruitment, but some interviewees had 'diversity characteristics', such as minority gender (male), mature age or first-generation status. In both projects, most interviews were conducted face-to-face, all were recorded and transcribed, and both projects had ethical research approval. The initial analyses were conducted inductively by the country research team, and then comparative analyses were conducted by the authors jointly.

8.5 Findings: Passion for a Professional Identity

The research with nursing students in both England and Norway suggests that students in these professional programmes had a passion to acquire a 'professional identity' (i.e., to become a nurse), and this motivated them to both access these HE programmes and to overcome the challenges that they encountered. This is in contrast to a student identity, which it seems plays little or no role in decisions to pursue professional HE programmes.

Students in both England and Norway explained how they were driven to access HE in order to achieve their chosen professional identity, for example:

> I chose adult nursing because it is what I want to do. It's just a pure passion. I believe you should do something you enjoy in life, whatever that may be, and this is what I choose to do, and this makes me happy.
>
> (Fiona, Nursing student, England)

> I want to be a midwife, and this is what you do to be a midwife so there aren't any other options. No way around it. It is just a degree, whereas you used to be able to do either a degree or a diploma. It's the job that made me decide to do the course.
>
> (Alison, Midwifery student, England)

> I really thought through my whole work experiences and working life, I wanted to spend my time on something that I felt was important and meaningful. I had started in the TV industry, and I really enjoyed it. But I always missed being there to do something meaningful with my time.
>
> (Anne, Nursing student, Norway)

> I feel so privileged in a way, that I can help people in need, and get as close to people as you do when you are a nurse, who really needs it.
>
> (Bettina, Nursing student, Norway)

Many of these students overcame a number of obstacles to enter HE. To become healthcare students, participants gave up employment; made other financial sacrifices; postponed family formation and house purchases; negotiated arrangements with partners, family and friends to support them; and sometimes entered HE with resistance from people close to them.

In interviews both in Norway and England, professional commitment and passion contributed to completing the programme of study. Interviewees reported issues that threatened to prevent them from successfully completing their professional degree programme: challenges created by finance, academic learning and assessment, professional placements and other personal responsibilities and circumstances. However, across the interviews, students and graduates explained how their strong motivation to achieve their chosen professional identity sustained them and enabled them to overcome difficulties:

> Being qualified is the only thing that's getting me through. I'm not enjoying this process at all, I just want to qualify.
>
> (Yvette, Midwifery student, England)

> I think it was just a desire to be a nurse and get on in life. That's what kept me motivated and kept me going. Sometimes it is so much easier to think, 'What on Earth am I doing?' You know, it's just so hard. I've had upsets and personality clashes, and sometimes I don't understand why people act like they do, but you just carry on. Well, I try to carry on.
>
> (Myrtle, Nursing student, England)

A student with disabilities explained how her health condition made it more difficult for her to study, but because she wanted to become a healthcare professional, she emphasised that she would find a way around the problems she encountered:

> No, I can't just give up, but maybe work around it. For instance, if I can't reach a deadline for whatever reason, extend it, mitigate the circumstances, work around it. It might hold me back but I eventually go, because it is what I want to do. I will eventually get there, in the end.
>
> (Nahleejah, Physiotherapy student, England)

The commitment of students to enter these professions—and overcome the barriers to entry and completion—is developed through their interaction with these professions through personal experiences, family members and employment. Personal experiences include challenging personal circumstances or events (see Lewis Rompf and Royse 1994). For example, Nahleejah was motivated to enter physiotherapy by her own health issues, while others were motivated by wider life experiences:

> Partly because of my own health, what I've been through and the interest I have because of that … [I] have a better understanding of what patients go through. I feel like I can help.
>
> (Nahleejah, Physiotherapy student, England)

> It started with an emergency where me and a friend had to call an ambulance, put the person in a stable side position, etc. There was a drug overdose at a subway station and then I was praised by the ambulance staff that I had done a good job. This made me realize I could handle the health sector.
>
> (Christian, Nursing student, Norway)

Quite a few of the Norwegian students came from families with experience of working in the health sector, which was important to them. A female nursing student stated: "I come from a family of nurses: mom, aunt and grandmother", while another student said "Yes, I am the sixth or seventh generation nurse in my family, so I have a family history of going into nursing". Several stated that having a family member who already was a nurse made the career choice known to them, and in addition, they also had family members who actively encouraged them to apply to nursing. One interviewee argued: "My aunt said to me that nursing would be a good fit for me". For other students the encouragement was less explicit, but family members provided positive role models. One English student talked about how she was inspired by her mother, who held a number of nursing and voluntary sector roles:

> She worked all hours, never got paid for it, lots of Christmas days, she wouldn't be there. That instilled into me you do it because you love it rather than because you get paid.
>
> (Mary, Nursing student, England)

In addition to these personal connections, other interviewees identified work experiences that encouraged them to enter HE and train to be healthcare professionals. Lack of employment opportunities resulted in some people working—formally or informally—in caring roles:

> I've been working at the hospital for about three years as a health care assistant, and I just knew that I wanted to do my nursing. This was the way to progress my career.
>
> (Isla, Nursing student, England)

> I worked on a young dementia unit for a little while, a long time ago … That was what made me want to do nursing in the beginning.
>
> (Liam, Nursing student, England)

For many students, the cited motivation was to help people (Keane 2017), but often this was inspired by a personal experience, family member or work experience, such as in the case of Daniel:

> I wanted to use my time in a more useful way, so I chose to focus on nursing. I feel you can make a big impact on people's lives in a positive way in nursing. Yes, you meet people in difficult situations, but you can contribute so they have a better outcome, or a more positive experience. I also have an underlying motivation in that I am interested in psychiatry as I have someone in the family who struggled with mental health problems. And that was a motivating factor.
>
> (Daniel, Nursing student, Norway)

What was striking in the interviews was the commitment to achieving a specific professional identity. Professional education programmes were framed as a means to an end that, in some cases, had to be endured. There was no discussion in the interviews of participants 'wanting to be students', and choosing these professional programmes lightly, or that they might have chosen a whole range of other degree programmes. The commitment to a specific professional identity was derived from personal experiences, family members and work experience, coupled with suitability and a desire to help people. This commitment to a specific professional identity drives access and success, empowering students to overcome a whole range of challenges.

We have not conducted similar research with students studying to be qualified teachers, but in work with a large cohort of diverse undergraduate primary education students in England during induction week in 2019, similar comments emerged. A session was held with 300 newly enrolled students in a BA honours programme in primary education with qualified teacher status (this is a 3-year, full-time degree programme that includes a practice component of 24 weeks in school and qualifies graduates to teach primary school children). The focus of the half-day session was on creating a safe space to talk about diversity, belonging and success. At the end of the session students were able to anonymously share information about themselves in the format 'I want you to know this about me …' and 'You can help me to be successful by…'. Two hundred and twenty-six responses were received, and while some were blank or frivolous, 160 students (over 70 percent) identified issues and ways in which they wanted to be supported to be successful. Twenty-three students identified serious issues and included their name and a request for support, while nine students provided their name but wrote positive comments, including looking forward to the course and offering to support other students. All students gave their consent for information to be shared and used for research purposes. Given the way these comments were collected, we did not expect people to talk about their passion to become a teacher, but students expressed strong desires to achieve the professional identity of being a teacher:

> I've always wanted to be a teacher my whole life and it's always been a dream of mine to help others. Helping to make my dream come true!

They also indicated that they had made sacrifices to pursue this professional identity:

> I have wanted to be a teacher for so long and this was a massive step for me to leave my job.

They had been encouraged to become a teacher by personal experiences that helped them see that they would be good teachers:

> My 4-year-old nephew is the main reason I'm on this course. He made me realise I love children and find joy in helping them learn.

And they indicated a desire to help others:

> I can't wait to become a teacher and help children and I would love to be a teacher in hospital one day.

These comments suggest that like students on healthcare programmes, the desire to become a teacher is a strong motivator to enrol on the programme—and hopefully it will enable them to overcome any challenges they encounter. There were no such similar comments about 'becoming a student'.

8.6 Discussion

Students from under-represented groups do not possess the cultural capital that offers smooth entry to and progression through HE (McMillan 2014; Meuleman et al. 2015). Cultural capital can be understood as tacit knowledge that facilitates transition, belonging and success in HE (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Longden 2004), and it is passed on to students primarily through their family and through middle-class schools. The studies reported here demonstrate the power and value of professional passion and identity. The interviews demonstrate how personal experiences, family members' encouragement, and employment opportunities can create a sense of fit with a particular profession, which operates as a powerful driver to enter and succeed in HE, irrespective of social or cultural background. Indeed, the acquisition of 'professional passion' and the goal of achieving the professional identity jettisons the need to develop a student identity, which is closely aligned with cultural capital and the habitus of the dominant social class.

While there are structural and cultural factors that inhibit access and success for students from 'non-traditional' backgrounds that need to be addressed, an additional, and more positive approach is to look to ignite, identify and nurture professional passion in students, which can be transformed into a strong and powerful professional identity, to drive access and success. The studies from England and Norway with healthcare students suggest that professional passion and motivation to achieve a specific professional identity are the product of personal experiences, family encouragement and role models and employment; in other words, exposure to a particular profession can create fit, self-belief and determination to succeed. Not only is this commitment powerful in terms of accessing and succeeding in HE, welfare state professions such as nursing and teaching need committed and passionate graduates in the workplace. Thus, efforts to widen participation in professional education programmes should work to ignite, identify and nurture professional passion, commitment and identity:

- **Ignite**: Students need opportunities to experience the professions both to ignite and nurture the passion and to provide valuable experience that assists them in gaining entry to HE. Some groups find it more difficult than others to access these pre-entry experiences. Interventions include providing opportunities to gain experience and to recognise a wider range of experiences. For example, a teacher education programme trying to engage more students from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups looked to both provide opportunities to work with children, and to recognise more engagements with children and young people outside of the classroom (Moody and Thomas 2020). Increasing the number of under-represented groups applying to teaching could involve helping students to reflect on their suitability to be teachers based on their previous experiences, and by offering them access to other relevant experiences.

- **Identify**: Recruitment should look in places where potential students are developing their passion, for example, working with children or in caring roles within the family, community and workplace, rather than just in schools. Selection should acknowledge 'passion' to achieve a specific professional identity as a valuable attribute. Recruitment should actively seek students with a passion to become a teacher (or other specific professional identity).
- **Nurture**: Professional courses are challenging, combining both academic studies and professional placements. Many non-traditional students are also juggling other responsibilities: caring, part-time employment and travelling to study. The passion sustains them, but it can be undermined by, for example, a poor placement experience. Institutions should focus on developing professional identity and offer support when professional identity is challenged or undermined; this will assist students to persevere and be successful on their course.

Notes

1. We are using the term 'non-traditional' students to refer to groups and individuals who have historically been excluded from HE through structural inequalities; we are not suggesting they are less well-suited to or capable of studying at this level.
2. Diversity of interviewees involved in the UK study: Gender (18 percent male); age (92 percent over 21 on entry, 64 percent over 25); dependent children (26 percent); low family income (71 percent £25,000 or less); ethnicity (24 percent ethnic minority); disability (20 percent); school attended (85 percent state school); first in family in HE (46 percent).
3. Sixty-nine percent were on a nursing or midwifery course; other subjects included orthoptics, speech and language therapy/sciences, podiatry, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, radiotherapy, dietetics, all of which are short professional degrees qualifying graduates to work in the National Health Service.

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Section II

Diversity in Initial Teacher Education and the Teaching Profession in Ireland

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9 'Working Class' Student Teachers' Constructions of Teaching as a Powerful Role

Encountering Deficit-based 'Teacher Talk' During Placement

Elaine Keane, Manuela Heinz and Andrea Lynch

9.1 Introduction and Literature Review

In this chapter, we explore the perspectives and experiences of 'working class'[1] student teachers on an initial teacher education (ITE) programme in Ireland, focusing on their constructions of teaching as a powerful role and their disillusionment with teacher 'gossip' (or 'teacher talk', Pollack 2012) about certain students, which was encountered during school placement. There has been a dearth of research exploring the experiences of student and practising teachers from diverse social class backgrounds. Indeed, scholars from Australia, the United States of America (USA) and England have argued that considerations about social class in teaching are largely invisible (Reay 1998; Van Galen 2008; Lampert et al. 2016), despite the importance of class in shaping teachers' professional experiences and identities (Van Galen 2008; Hall and Jones 2013).

In the international context, the work of Maguire and Burn in England (Maguire 1999, 2001, 2005a, 2005b; Burn 2001; see also Raffo and Hall 2006) has demonstrated the significant class-based discontinuities experienced by those from working class groups in ITE and into the workplace. This body of research has shown that working class student teachers and teachers 'battle' on various fronts in ITE and in schools, most notably with respect to lacking confidence and experiencing a sense of inferiority, including in relation to 'markers' of class, such as accent and dress. Further, they can become 'pigeonholed' in the school environment, often being allocated to teaching lower 'ability' and 'difficult' class groups. This same body of research from England has found that working class teachers positively impact working class pupils, especially through high expectations. In Lampert et al.'s (2016) study in Australia, a working class pre-service teacher ('Salli'), on a predominantly middle class ITE programme and teaching in a school in a 'low socio-economic' community, became highly cognisant of how her perceptions of different student groups related to her own class identity and previous experiences of class discrimination. Van Galen (2008), too, found that working class teachers' class backgrounds were central to the development of their professional identity,

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including in relation to how they viewed issues of inequality in education and society (see also Hall and Jones 2013).

Evidence of class-based discontinuities have also been found in Ireland. Keane (2017) noted the case of a student teacher from a lower socio-economic group[2] who subsequently left the profession, having experienced significant unease when issues of poverty arose in class discussions with other student teachers during their ITE programme, and what this teacher perceived as peers' lack of critical understanding of the structural nature of inequalities. In the same study, Keane (2017) considered the role of previous life experiences in the development of university students' altruistic motivational career orientations and found that those from lower socio-economic groups directly linked their wish to 'help others like me' (through their work as teachers, social workers, solicitors) to their own previous life and school experiences, which had frequently been very challenging. Research in Ireland has also shown that working class student teachers may have stronger social justice-oriented motivations for teaching than students from comparatively privileged backgrounds. For example, Heinz et al. (2017) found that postgraduate post-primary ITE entrants from lower social class (unskilled)[3] groups rated 'making a social contribution' as a significantly more important motivational factor than did those from several higher social class groups. Keane et al. (2018) connected 'working class' student teachers' frequently negative school experiences (which included not feeling encouraged at school, in general and regarding future careers, including teaching) to their perspectives about reasons for a lack of diversity in the teaching profession, and to how their own (frequently social justice-based) motivation to become a teacher fit therein. These participants also constructed their desired future teaching identity/ies in highly classed ways, expressing a strong desire to be a relatable and inclusive teacher, which they conceptualised as being approachable, caring and supportive of all pupils. To varying degrees, they felt that becoming this type of teacher could be achieved in part through disclosing their (classed) self to their pupils in disadvantaged schools (Keane et al. 2020).

In this chapter, we draw on data collected as part of the *Access to Post-primary Teaching (APT) project* (2017–2023), funded by the Higher Education Authority under PATH1.[4] A joint University of Galway and St. Angela's College, Sligo initiative, APT recruits and supports students from lower socio-economic groups in/to ITE. The University of Galway strand supports student teachers from lower socio-economic groups in the Professional Master of Education (PME) programme. Along with the provision of financial and other supports to participants, the project also works with senior cycle pupils in DEIS[5] schools to support their further or higher education (HE) and career planning (including in relation to teaching as a career) via the APT participants' PME year 2 practitioner research projects.

Following a brief examination of the research methodology employed in the APT project, we present our findings in relation to participants' constructions of teaching as a powerful role, and their disillusionment upon encountering deficit-based 'teacher talk' about certain students during school placement. Finally, in Section 9.4, we interrogate our findings through an examination of previous research on 'teacher talk' and end with recommendations for policy, practice and further research.

9.2 Methodology

The main research component of APT is an in-depth qualitative study based on two to three semi-structured interviews with all participants over the course of 3 to 4 years, exploring their schooling experiences, motivations to become a teacher, and ITE and early career experiences. In this chapter, we draw on some of our findings from the first round of interviews conducted with two APT participant groups, those who commenced the PME in 2017/2018 ($N = 11$) and in 2018/2019 ($N = 10$). The participants were offered a PME place via the standard Postgraduate Applications Centre (PAC) (competitive and over-subscribed) application system having met all application requirements. Eighteen of the 21 were female, and 3 were male. Twenty were of the majority ethnic group, being White, Irish and of the settled community, and 1 participant was a member of the Travelling community. All participants met required socio-economic criteria, having entered their undergraduate programme (at various institutions in Ireland) via a pre-entry Access programme or the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR). Therefore, all would be categorised as coming from lower socio-economic groups, or as being 'working class'.

Round one interviews were conducted during participants' first year of the PME and after they had experienced at least one school placement block. Following verbatim transcription, data were analysed using grounded theory techniques, including open and focused coding and categorising (Charmaz 2014). Numerous team analysis meetings were held after round one interviews with the first group of participants during which data and codes were reviewed and compared, and provisional categories were then constructed. This same process was repeated with the data from round one interviews with the second group of participants. Categories from both groups were then reviewed, and an overall schema of categories was devised covering both groups' data. In this chapter, we examine a category relating to participants' construction of teaching as a 'powerful role' and the part played by 'teacher talk' therein. Full ethical approval was provided by the University of Galway Research Ethics Committee. Pseudonyms are employed throughout.

9.3 Findings

In this section, we focus on a category in the data pertaining to participants' constructions of teaching as a 'powerful' role. In this regard, the participants emphasised the significant influence of teachers on young people's lives and noted the responsibility that accompanied occupying such a role. In this context, they were disappointed and disillusioned when they encountered negative 'teacher talk' about certain students.

9.3.1 Constructing Teaching as a 'Powerful Role'

The participants viewed teaching as a powerful role that exerts significant and long-lasting positive or negative influence on young people's lives, and most did so in the context of reflecting back on their own former schooldays. They emphasised understanding the key role of teachers in their lives, especially from the vantage point of maturity. As Clara explained, "When you see the effect teachers have in your life when you look back, it's so massive." Similarly, Ava emphasised that "I just think teaching's such an important job … Teachers are really important. It's kind of more when I reflect back now, I see how important they were". Liz emphasised the "power that you [as a teacher] can carry and how you can impress upon people that, even if things are bleak, you can turn it around". In this way, many saw teaching as a great responsibility and emphasised the importance of recruiting teachers "who want to be there" (Michael). Michael, for example, felt that those from a minority background would have this motivation:

> … it's probably one of the most important jobs in a country … where would we be without [teachers] … it's to get people who are properly motivated and who aren't going to possibly mess up a really impressionable child's mind for a long time … you really need people who want to be there … someone from a minority background [is] going to go into teaching … because they want to.
>
> (Michael)

The participants considered the classroom as a key site of enactment of power. For the participants, and again drawing on their own previous experiences of schooling, the real power in the teacher role was in teachers' ability to "change someone's life" (Sophie) in the broader sense of encouraging and supporting a student to think of future possibilities for themselves, beyond academic outcomes in their own classroom:

> You can actually make a difference to someone else's life by being a teacher … If you're coming from a disadvantaged background and you have no hope for yourself and your family has no hope for you, but that one teacher says 'You can do it, like I know you can,' like that can change someone's life.
>
> (Sophie)

This was an especially live issue for Sarah, who envisioned this role for herself as a teacher, expressing her desire "to be that person that can make a difference in a child's life". Liz too emphasised the powerful role of the teacher in supporting young people's life chances:

> I realised a long time ago from my experiences, that teaching is not just education, it's a provision for so many other things. It's social and emotional growth, you know, it's belief and identity, it's trying to help you to kind of find your wings in many different ways.
>
> (Liz)

Some participants shared personal stories of teachers who went above and beyond in caring for them personally, especially during difficult times in their years at second-level. Ava, for example, explained that there had been "an awful lot of issues in my family, like I would have been looked down upon" and that a teacher "really took me under their wing … just kept an eye on me", for which she was very grateful. She noted this as one motivating factor in her desire to become a teacher:

> I think one of the reasons was that the teachers I had really helped me to get to where I am today, and I've always wanted to give something back. I think like I wouldn't be here where I am if it wasn't for my teachers, um … I kind of want to follow in their footpath, because I find it quite inspiring what they do.
>
> (Ava)

Similarly, Martina explained that in her motivation to be a teacher she was influenced by a desire to "mirror" some of her teachers who she felt had been "absolutely amazing".

9.3.2 Encountering 'Teacher Talk' about Students, and Advocating for 'Students Like Them'

Cognisant of the power of the teacher role in its impact on young people's lives, the participants were also conscious of the responsibility that came with this power. For example, Ava emphasised the need to be cautious in one's role:

> I think it's such an important job, like you can have such influence over children, and obviously you need to be careful how you have your influence … very afraid to make a mistake … because you can't afford to make mistakes in this profession.
>
> (Ava)

The participants were also highly conscious of the 'dark' side of the powerful role of the teacher, in terms of the potential negative impact a teacher could have on young people's lives. Reflecting on his own experiences as a pupil, Michael noted:

> You can really mess them [students] up for the rest of their lives … I was really, really aware of that … because I had seen it happen. I went to an all boys' school, so like lads that I'd known all my life who were really clever guys, very smart, but they were just sort of pushed out, like especially the Travellers … [Teachers] really don't want them there … kids can be a lot, but they're so perceptive and you can really mess them up for the rest of their lives.

In this context, several participants expressed concern about 'teacher talk' in the staffroom and its effects. While conducting their school placement as student teachers, the participants had an opportunity to move 'behind the scenes' in schools, which for many was an eye-opening experience. Numerous participants highlighted problematic teacher–teacher discussions in the staffroom. They reported overhearing teachers gossiping about pupils, and recalled derogatory comments made about pupils characterised as 'troublesome', 'weak', or who came from challenging and/or disadvantaged backgrounds. Such discussions stood in stark contrast to the student-teachers' more idealised conceptualisation of the teacher role, and several expressed surprise and disappointment about this negative and inappropriate gossip about students. Clara had been troubled by the way teachers in her placement school talked about some of their students:

> … staff are lovely … [but] there would be a lot of teacher talk about certain students, like I wouldn't have some of the students, but I'd know their names because of people talking in the staff room. That's one thing that I didn't really like at all.

For Michael, what he heard in the staffroom made him believe that some of the students were really disliked by some staff, and he expressed significant disappointment about what he had heard:

> Like some of the things that I heard in the staff room … the gossip … you can tell that a lot of these teachers really don't like some kids … I know there's no way of stopping that, but it was very disappointing to see and hear.

Disillusioned by such commentary, Sophie felt that one was "failing as a teacher" by treating students in this manner:

> … so many teachers in this school are putting certain students in like a category: 'Oh well, that student's a waste of time, don't wanna learn' … And when you stop believing in a student and stop making a difference to a student, you're failing as a teacher … to me as a teacher, I believe that one of the best qualities there is, is to make a difference to people. Especially people that do have needs.

Jane believed that much of the teacher gossip she encountered was due to their "closed mindsets", and this deterred her from asking them for advice. She explained that the conversations reminded her of her own teachers when she had been at school:

> You'd hear conversations, and even like when I would speak to them [her colleagues] it was kind of very closed, and 'Sure, all them [sic] kids are bold'. It reminded me of my old teachers myself … and it's not very fair.

The participants empathised with and wished to stand up for the students who were being discussed in derogatory terms but felt unable to do so in direct ways, due to their status as a student teacher and the resulting power differential in relation to experienced teachers in their school. Instead, the approach they chose was to not engage in such gossip themselves:

> Yeah, there is a lot of negative teacher talk in the staff rooms … Like I never really contribute to that because I don't think it is really fair to talk about students when they shouldn't be talking about us, so why should we be talking about them?
>
> (Sarah)

Additionally, where possible, the participants advocated for relevant students in less direct ways. For example, Clara noted overhearing negative 'teacher talk' about a student "with a difficult home life" who was in one of her own classes. When asked by a colleague what she thought of this student, Clara reported that she had replied, "I think she's a lovely girl, and she's never misbehaved in my class". As Clara reflected more on this experience, she perceived a high level of similarity between herself and this student:

> I remember going home that day from placement and like, oh, that really hurt like. Even like I know how that girl feels, and it's not nice to hear that off a grown woman who's meant to be a teacher in this girl's life, like that's what they think of her.

Similarly, Paul tried to encourage his teacher colleagues to think of some students in a more positive light. Although he was teaching in a school that was "quite well-to-do", he had two students who came from more disadvantaged backgrounds in one of his classes. Recalling a conversation about these students with other teachers, he highlighted that: "Some teachers would be saying, 'They're this, and they're that,' and I said, 'No, no, no, they're good, you just need to give them time'".

One of the difficulties in hearing negative about 'teacher talk' and related gossip was that it contradicted how the participants believed teachers *ought to* think and talk about their students. They were surprised and disappointed about what they were hearing and seeing:

> … the staff room situation … you go out there and you're like, wow, this is happening … there's kids being singled out and left aside … at the beginning you're like, 'I'm not gonna be like that. I'm not'.
>
> (Aine)

The participants also commonly tried not to let what they heard from other teachers negatively influence their own views of, and interactions and relationships with, particular students:

> I was just trying my best in that way. And I was, you know, I got the warning, the friendly warning [about certain students] … I got that off about six different teachers about the same people, and I made sure that I kind of didn't take that on board. I was aware of who they were talking about, but I had no issues with any of them, they were being as good as you could want any student to be. There was one lad who had never done any homework, by week three he was doing it for me.
>
> (Michael)

Such experiences with staff also impacted on the participants' sense of fitting in and belonging in relation to other teachers in their schools, in a context in which they were already sensing class differences. Anna considered the other teachers in her placement school as being "your typical teachers, stereotypical white, middle class". Similarly, Clara was conscious of her 'different' background:

> I definitely do feel like sometimes, oh God like I am … a little bit different than the people around me … definitely in terms of our backgrounds and where we come from … Like my background would be a lot different to theirs, so it does make you feel … that you can see the difference yourself.

As a result of perceiving such differences, some of the participants expressed reluctance about sharing information about themselves with staff in their placement schools for fear of being judged by teachers who they felt were more middle class. As Ava explained:

> I definitely wouldn't be a background that you'd consider [for] teaching … I would never say it in a staff room who I am, or you know, my family … just in case it ever came against me down the line. I think people judge very quickly. Um, when you look at a teacher you kind of see a certain age, or certain gender, um, a person from a certain type of family, and I just don't fit in.

However, not all participants felt this sense of division. One participant, Paul, reported that he fit in well within his school, which he described as being affluent. As he explained, "Yeah, I think for the most part I do fit in, which is quite good. It's showing personal development I suppose".

9.4 Discussion and Conclusion

As we have seen in the findings, the participants constructed teaching as a powerful role through its potential impact on students' lives, largely based on their own educational experiences, and were conscious of the responsibility that accompanied that power. In this context, they were surprised and disappointed when they encountered negative 'teacher talk' about students in their placement schools and were particularly critical of it in relation to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Pollack (2012) notes that 'teacher talk' in staffrooms is ubiquitous but largely unexamined in research. That which exists has shown that 'teacher talk' about students from disadvantaged and minority groups is frequently underpinned by a discourse of deficit. For example, 'Salli' (Lampert et al. 2016), who engaged in school placement in a low socio-economic community, reported that her supervising teacher had used offensive language to describe students when 'warning' her about them and had voiced low expectations, labelling some as 'no-hopers'. Similarly, in Maguire's (2001) research in England, teachers from working class backgrounds reported teachers in the staffroom remarking in a derogatory fashion upon working class pupils' behaviours and appearances, as well as expressing low academic expectations. Discourses of deficit have also been found to underpin negative 'teacher talk' about minority ethnic students. In the USA, Pollack's (2012) study identified three deficit-based themes in teachers' discourse about racially or culturally 'different' students, which were characterised by negative beliefs and low expectations. For Pollack (2012), the functions of deficit-based about 'teacher talk' include the provision of advice and 'reality checks' for new teachers, justifying the underachievement of some students while abdicating responsibility, reinforcing an us–them paradigm, and even entertainment or amusement. However, such discourses are "not harmless" (Pollack 2012, p. 888); the labelling involved can entrench existing low expectations and negative beliefs about certain student groups (Pollack 2012). Indeed, African-American students in Miron and Lauria's (1998) study viewed teachers' negative 'gossip' about them as contributing to their academic under-performance. This is explained by such discourse constituting, as Young argues (2016, pp. 67–68), "… an institutional performance … a performative utterance" that "becomes an action that changes students, symbolically as well as politically and socially, and often educationally and economically". Young argues that the labelling involved leads to teacher actions, which subsequently "marginalise these students, and limit their educational opportunities" (Young 2016, p. 68).

As we have seen, the 'working class' student teachers in the current study were disillusioned upon witnessing negative 'teacher talk' about disadvantaged students. Due to their own prior experiences, it served as an uncomfortable reminder of being negatively talked to, or discussed by, teachers during their own schooling days, and they were highly conscious of its negative impact. Encountering this teacher behaviour was particularly disconcerting for them, as it contrasted sharply with their expressed desired teaching identity, which was to be inclusive of and relatable to students (Keane et al. 2020). The actions taken by some of the participants to advocate for their students against the dominant negative narratives of established teachers can be read as a form of active resistance to their class-based discourse of deficit. Young (2016, p. 68) asks "what role student teacher talk plays in replicating and intensifying race, language, and disability oppression"; to this we would add, *class* oppression. However, due to their struggles to achieve even 'legitimate *peripheral*' status as members of the practising teaching community (Johnston 2016; our emphasis), student teachers' ability to actively counter qualified teachers' negative talk is highly constrained. For a 'novice' to be regarded as legitimate within a community of practice, they have to be accepted (Wenger 1998). Student teachers in Johnston's (2016) study felt under pressure from teachers in their placement school to approach their teaching and their students in particular ways, indeed to "comply with practices which they felt were forced upon them" (p. 540). Thus, it is not unreasonable to suppose that student teachers may feel under pressure to engage in staffroom discussions in order to feel accepted. In this context, and given the school's potential role in their formal assessment as student teachers (or even as potential employers), resistance to or countering deficit-based discourse in relation to disadvantaged and/or minority students constitutes a brave but risky act of advocacy. The human, as well as professional, need to feel that one belongs in one's community or workplace (McBeath et al. 2018) is heightened for 'working class' student teachers who frequently already feel different to other teachers, as Anna and Clara did in the current study because of their class background. As we have shown, due to sensing such differences, some participants were reluctant to share information about themselves with teachers in their placement schools, which is interesting given their commitment to doing so with their students, which they felt was a part of being a relatable and inclusive teacher (Keane et al. 2020). This indicates that classed teacher self-disclosure (Keane et al. 2020) is likely context-dependent, and teachers from ‘working class’ backgrounds may perform various, and possibly contradictory, identities in schools.

This leads us to important questions about how to support ‘working class’ student teachers who are likely to encounter difficult relational experiences and tensions between desired and enacted professional identities in schools. Without intervention, these teachers may decide that the disjunction between their class identity and their desired teacher identity in school contexts comprised of mostly middle class majority ethnic teachers (Keane and Heinz 2015; Heinz and Keane 2018) is too challenging, and they may leave the profession (cf. Keane 2017). Careful preparation during ITE is vital for *all* student teachers to alert them to the possibility of deficit-based discourse in ‘teacher talk’, and to support their positionality and possibilities for agency in this regard. It may be necessary to reassure student teachers from under-represented groups that they do not need to intervene as ‘less powerful’ student teachers; that a quiet presence, and lack of involvement in deficit-based conversations, in staffrooms combined with supporting their students in classrooms is a *good enough* response in the short-term and that their agency can grow as they gain experience and ‘status’ in the profession.

Such ITE-based preparation is also important to educate majority-group student teachers about the impact of deficit-based ‘teacher talk’ on relevant students. We agree with Pollack’s (2012) recommendation to embed guided critical reflection into ITE and teacher mentoring programmes to facilitate student teachers in critically interrogating apparently ‘helpful’ deficit-based ‘teacher talk’. As previously argued (Doyle and Keane 2019), it is also clear that anti-bias professional development is urgently needed for experienced teachers in relation to deficit beliefs about students, diversity, teacher expectations (see also Cochran-Smith 2004) and the impact of ‘teacher talk’. Further research is needed about the placement experiences of student teachers from under-represented groups, including in relation to their relationships with colleagues, as well as their experiences of gaining employment and their early career trajectories.

Notes

1 The student teachers in the study reported upon in this chapter would be categorised as working class, because in terms of family income, they would be included in one of the lower socio-economic groups identified in the Irish Census. They also had to meet relevant socio-economic criteria in order to enter their undergraduate programme via an Access programme or the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR). However, as we have noted elsewhere (Keane et al. 2020), social class-related terms such as ‘working class’ and ‘middle class’ are often contested in Ireland and linked to the country’s post-colonial status (Breen and Whelan 1996). Hence, inverted commas are used with the term ‘working class’ in the title and in relevant places, particularly when referring to our participants, as this was not a term that *they* used, and we are not using this term uncritically. In this chapter, we also employ the term ‘lower socio-economic group’ (or other related term) where that was the term used as the class-related descriptor in the particular study being discussed.

2 This teacher had entered higher education (HE) via a pre-entry Access programme and had had to meet certain socio-economic criteria, in terms of family income, for example, in order to be eligible.

3 In this study, individuals were categorised into social class and socio-economic groups based on fathers' occupations using Central Statistics Office (CSO) classifications (CSO 2012, Appendices 6–8).

4 Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH): Strand 1 (Equity of Access to Initial Teacher Education).

5 DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) (DES 2005). DEIS schools are designated as 'disadvantaged'.

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10 ‘Going the Extra Mile’

Working Class Teachers and Their Engagement with Parents

Gareth Burns and Katriona O’Sullivan

10.1 Introduction

This chapter explores teachers’ relationships with parents in schools participating in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) programme. DEIS (Department of Education and Skills [DES] 2017) is the Irish State’s action plan for educational inclusion and co-ordinates the services, supports and resources that are deployed to target educational inequality in Irish education. The study upon which the chapter draws examines the relationship between teachers’ capacity to identify and name the unequal power dynamics that have traditionally limited teacher–parent relations in working class communities, and their motivation to create more democratic and inclusive power dynamics. Significantly, the study comprises teachers drawn from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, which facilitates an exploration of teachers’ habitus and its influence on their relationships with parents. Habitus is a concept developed by Bourdieu (1977) to demonstrate the ways in which not only is the body in the social world, but also the ways in which the social world is in the body. Thus, habitus is an embodied concept (Bourdieu 1990) and expressed through “the beliefs, values, conduct, speech, dress and manners—that are inculcated by everyday experiences within the family, the peer group and the school” (Mills 2008, p. 80). In the context of this study’s focus on teachers’ practice, habitus enables an intelligible and necessary relationship to be established between practices and the context within which they are situated. While research into teacher diversity has focused almost exclusively on the benefits for students, through (sometimes) problematic ‘ethnic matching’ models, little has been written about teachers from under-represented groups and their engagement with parents.

Consideration of the current research in the field highlights the need to further explore teachers’ engagement with parents, and more specifically, working class parents. The majority of those teaching in DEIS schools are white, female and of majority-group social class and ethnic backgrounds (Keane and Heinz 2015) and have been teaching for fewer than five years (McCoy et al. 2014). Leavy (2005) points to the lack of pre-service engagement Irish student teachers have with working class and ethnically diverse populations. Leavy also found that pre-service teachers demonstrate limited understanding of the manner in which education systems are based primarily on the beliefs and values of the dominant middle class.

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Hanafin and Lynch's (2002) study of the views of working class parents on home–school links found that parental involvement in school is often limited to the giving and receiving of information. The parents in this study also felt excluded from participation in decision making about matters that affected their children's progress and their families' finances. Additionally, early career teachers' concerns about being ill prepared to engage with parents (Killeavy and Murphy 2006) also point to the need to explore teachers' understandings of their professional role in terms of supporting the involvement of parents in their children's education. This aspect of their professional role is significant, as numerous studies have found that parental involvement positively affects children's experience of education (Lareau 2000; Epstein 2001; Goodall 2013; Thomas et al. 2015).

10.2 Literature Review

Following Lynch and Lodge's (2002) view of class as a force for political mobilisation, we argue that the denial of class inequality in contemporary culture has left us without a vocabulary to name class-based inequalities. Drawing on concepts from critical educator, critical sociology and teacher identity literatures, we foreground dominant discourses of working class parental deficiency in the literature review. This provides a contextual backdrop for a critical analysis of the role educators can play in supporting the development of teacher–parent relationships that are defined by a sense of partnership, solidarity and hope.

Amidst heightened hegemonic demands around 'respectability' (Vincent et al. 2010), working class parents, and in particular working class mothers, have become vulnerable to public political discourse that judge them as failing (Gillies 2006). Golden and Erdreich (2014, p. 268) highlight that studies of working class mothers show that schools' expectations of mothers' involvement presuppose certain skills, resources, time and wherewithal and serve to categorise them as incompetent without recognition of the efforts these mothers make in their children's education. Lareau's (2003) influential ethnographic study found that working class parents often experience a sense of powerlessness in their engagement with schools, which contrasts with middle class parents' sense of agency in relation to intervening on behalf of their children. Research by O'Brien (2009) found that working class parents care deeply about their children's education, but in the face of persistent economic insecurity and cultural exclusion, some working class mothers are not in a position to participate more actively in their children's education due to a depletion in their emotional resources (see also Doyle and Keane 2019). Crucially, discourses of cultural deficit negatively influence the way teachers perceive working class parents (Bakker et al. 2007).

Freire's work offers a counternarrative to discourses of working class exclusion, non-recognition and deficit, and calls on educators to unveil opportunities for hope that challenge these oppressive discourses (Freire 1992). This chapter places a particular focus on examining teachers' awareness and critique of the hierarchical power structures that have traditionally placed parents in a position of subservience to teachers. Drawing on Freirean pedagogy, critical literacy and capacity appears to be a necessary stimulus for teachers to work towards the development of democratic and inclusive relationships with parents. Freire (1996) considers this 'naming' of the world to be empty 'verbalism' in the absence of action. Drawing on this thinking, this chapter examines the level of connectedness between the 'naming' of these constraining influences on teacher–parent relations, and the motivation of teachers to democratise this relationship dynamic.

10.3 Methodology

This chapter explores teachers' attitudes towards, and engagement with, parents in schools participating in the DEIS programme, in a phenomenological study. Rather than adopting the new, North American understanding of phenomenology, as one that is primarily concerned with searching for participants' subjective experience of the phenomenon under consideration in order to express it uncritically (Crotty 1996), this study takes an explicitly critical phenomenological approach. Within this perspective, the extent to which participants' explicit and tacit understandings of the parent–teacher relationship were concerned with issues of social justice was deemed to be of critical importance. Moreover, as the aim of phenomenological research is to return to the concrete and the "internal experience of being conscious of something" (Holloway 1997, p. 117), the study was also concerned with recognising and examining the influence habitus has on teachers' understanding of their professional roles and responsibilities in terms of engaging with parents.

Semi-structured, life history interviews were conducted with 20 primary and 4 post-primary teachers from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Fifteen of the participants came from a middle class background, while 9 participants were identified as having working class origins. The class background of participants was assessed through a process of self-disclosure and/or deductions made by the researchers based on participants' reference to their parents' occupations, the area in which they grew up, schools attended, and history of family engagement in education.

Using non-probability purposive sampling, the sample contains two cohorts, 18 primary teachers were interviewed in 2011, and a further 6 (2 primary and 4 post-primary) teachers were interviewed in 2020. The 2011 cohort were interviewed as part of a doctoral study (Burns 2014) that sought to investigate primary teachers' understandings of 'making a difference' in DEIS schools and identified some significant variations of 'difference' along class lines. In particular, there were habitus-specific influences on attitudes towards, and engagement with, working class parents. The small number of participants from working class backgrounds (3) in the 2011 cohort meant that further recruitment was required in order to further develop understandings around the role class habitus plays in how teachers engage with working class parents. Using an identical phenomenological approach and interview schedule employed with the 2011 cohort, a further 6 teachers from working class backgrounds were interviewed in 2020. Those interviewed in 2020 were teacher mentors on Maynooth University's *Turn to Teaching*, a Higher Education Authority (HEA) funded PATH1[1] initiative aiming to promote diversity in ITE.

Identical processes of data analysis were applied across both cohorts. Individual participants' stories of being a teacher was the primary unit of analysis. The data analysis process involved the text of these individual stories being broken down into more manageable units, which involved discriminating 'meaning units' with a focus on the phenomenon (the teacher–parent relationship) (Giorgi 1985). The second and key stage of the analysis involved looking across the sample as a whole. In so doing, it became possible to identify patterns of shared interpretations of the teacher–parent relationship amongst participants along social class lines. An 'ethical protocol' was approved by the research ethics committees of St Patrick's College, Drumcondra (Cohort 1) and Maynooth University (Cohort 2). In order to protect their identities, participants were given pseudonyms.

10.4 Findings

Participants' attitudes towards parents in DEIS schools are explored in part one, while the second part examines the level of connectivity between participants' 'naming' of the inhibitive forces on teacher–parent relations and their motivation to democratise this relationship dynamic.

10.4.1 Teachers' Attitudes towards Working Class Parents

The view that a proportion of parents in DEIS schools had a deficiency in their parenting skills set was expressed by the majority of participants. Significantly, the vast majority of these participants were from the middle class (mc) group. In contrast, the working class (wc) group's positive attitudes towards parents were embedded within a discourse of empathy and inclusiveness. General criticism of what they perceived to be some parents' indifference towards their children's education dominated the majority of participants' contributions, with Barbara (mc, primary) stating: "Our biggest hurdle is definitely the parents' attitude to education … this drives me mad". A number of participants were concerned with instilling in their students a sense of discipline in order to compensate for what they perceived as the apparent marked absence of it in the home. Barbara stated: "They think I am very strict … because I think in a disadvantaged school you do have to have that discipline because it is something that they don't have at home".

Some of the middle class teacher participants considered some working class parents to be unappreciative of the 'compensatory' measures instituted as part of schools' participation in DEIS initiatives. Frank (mc, primary) and Fiona (mc, primary) expressed their disappointment at the level of appreciation they received from parents for voluntarily providing extra-curricular activities for their students. Hannah (mc, primary) and Barbara (mc, primary) felt that a sense of entitlement pervaded some parents' attitudes, which resulted in what they perceived to be a lack of appreciation for teachers' efforts. Barbara and Hannah grew up in middle class communities in close proximity to the communities they worked in and had attended DEIS primary schools themselves, and there is some evidence to suggest that their complex socio-cultural habitus exacerbated their adhesion to class-based deficit thinking. The condemnatory tone of the language used by

Hannah in her references to parents seeking "handouts" and being "on the take" is also in evidence in Barbara's claim that parents from working class backgrounds prefer to receive job seekers' allowance rather than gain employment ("sure why would you bother working if you get [it] in your hand?"). In contrast, she references her parents as people "who have worked for everything in our life" and that she was "raised in a way that was like 'we don't go on the dole'".

In contrast, there was a marked resistance amongst all working class participants to the assumption that working class communities are apathetic towards schooling and education more broadly. This is a view with which Len (wc, post-primary) and Ciara (wc, primary) disagreed:

> When you actually get into the area and meet the people, there's some absolutely fantastic people and some of the support that you get from the families from [named community] is second to none.
>
> (Len)

The working class group commended the level of parental involvement in their respective schools and strongly contested the perception that working class parents are less supportive of their local schools. A number of the working class group, including Len, expressed their discomfort when some of their colleagues engaged in negative commentary about working class people, which was firmly embedded within a thesis of deficit:

> Yeah, and then the parents … might be wearing a tracksuit and other teachers straight away say 'look at them'… they perceive them on how they dress, straight away they wouldn't engage with them … So yeah, it was tough to listen to those opinions in the staff room.
>
> (Len)

10.4.2 Teacher Engagement with Parents

Our analysis showed that the majority of participants demonstrated awareness of the factors that contribute to some working class parents' reluctance to engage with teachers and the formal school environment. The working class group were particularly conscious of the negative influence that hierarchical power structures have on the teacher–parent relationship.

Parents' negative childhood experiences of school were identified by the working class group as the primary source of many parents' reluctance to engage with teachers. Sandra (wc, primary) stated "that parents are afraid to come in because their experience in school might not have been great … I think they feel maybe somewhat embarrassed talking to the teacher". Sections of the parent population feeling "terrified to come into the office" (Len, wc, post-primary) and considering "teachers as the enemy nearly as they did when they were kids" (Claire, wc, primary) were identified by this group as significant barriers to authentic engagement with parents. Low literacy levels were also presented by Len (wc, post-primary), Sarah (wc, primary) and Lauren (wc, post-primary) as the source of many parents' anxiety.

Awareness of the tendency of some parents to assume a position of subservience in relation to authority figures such as teachers was apparent in Grace (mc, primary) and Fiona's (mc, primary) recognition of parents adopting "timid" (Grace) and "apologetic" (Fiona) dispositions when talking with them. Grace and Fiona shared some commonalities in their social upbringing and identity formation with the working class group, including reporting having greater levels of (positive) pre-service engagement with working class communities than other middle class participants.

Motivated by a strong desire to 'give back' to the community and responsive to the discomfort many parents feel when engaging with teachers from middle class backgrounds, the working-class group advocated a proactive approach that encouraged parents to discuss their problems with them:

> If you're [referring to parents] talking to management or a senior teacher from a wealthy background, they might feel embarrassed to say … I had a student there, the mother was telling me that there was jail time involved and there was a court case going on, but she was too embarrassed to say that to anybody else, but I knew about it. We put things in place for that student, very discreetly.
>
> (Len, wc, post-primary)

Imbued with a strong sense of vocationalism and communitarianism, the responsiveness of Darren (wc, primary) and Len (wc, post-primary) to the challenging social and economic context for many of the families they worked with brought them outside the formal remit of their professional role:

> … there could be an issue around a child's mental health, or they might have their own problems in terms of drug addiction, or alcoholism … They come to you, and they might be looking for help, like filling out things. To be honest, I don't really mind, because I kind of feel if you're working in a DEIS school or a disadvantaged area … your remit goes beyond just teaching the children.
>
> (Darren)

This expanded notion of their professional role was reflected in Len's (wc, post-primary) desire to "go above and beyond" and become involved in various extra-curricular initiatives in his school. These activities provided Len with the opportunity for him to connect with students and parents on a more equal footing, away from institutionally imposed contexts and meetings. Both Darren (wc, primary) and Len (wc, post-primary) felt that some colleagues who didn't 'go the extra mile' were more likely to have fractured relationships with parents:

> In my own school, there's a large majority of us who share a kind of sense of vocationalism. But for some of my colleagues who don't appear to do the same, like I would be aware that recently there was conflict between the parents and those types of teachers. They wouldn't really be going the extra mile.
>
> (Darren)

Lauren (wc, post-primary) and Sarah (wc, primary) attributed the strength of their relationships with parents to their embeddedness within the local community, and the importance of being "authentic" (Sarah), which cumulatively allowed them to build positive relationships with parents. Throughout, the working class group stressed the importance of supporting the development of a democratic and affirming parent–teacher partnership. This was embodied in Moira's (wc, primary) assertion of the importance of talking 'with' rather than 'down' to parents, and Lauren stressing the importance of ensuring "that they feel equal and … they need to feel like they have a voice … and that their opinion is heard too".

In contrast, boundary setting and professional protectionism governed the majority of the middle class participants' relations with parents. The majority of the middle class group expressed a positive attitude towards limited parental involvement in the life of DEIS schools. Adopting a defensive stance in order to protect themselves from parents "coming up knocking on your door saying 'why haven't you done this or this?'" and "try[ing] to distance themselves" (Linda, mc, primary) was an approach strongly supported by this group of participants. This finding is consistent with Len's (wc, post-primary) view that many teachers in DEIS schools, particularly those not from the local area, have a propensity to:

> … kind of hide a little bit … Definitely I know, some of the teachers aren't from the area … They would look at the address and they would see what part of the area it was from, I'm not ringing there.
>
> (Len)

Many of the middle class group displayed a heightened level of responsiveness to middle class parents' concerns in light of their perceived greater capacity to influence the running of the school. Frank (mc, primary) stated:

> Well, generally, the problems you have with parents are not with the parents of the DEIS children, it's the parents of the others. You would see very little of the parents of the DEIS children.

There was evidence that some of the middle class group were committed to cultivating the development of positive relations with parents. Building on their awareness of factors inhibiting parents from engaging more with the formal school system, Frances (mc, primary) emphasised the importance of making the school setting a power-neutral environment in which parents could engage freely and safely with teachers:

> Yea, just getting them in even to see that it is not a scary place, and then different things like say we had the jumble sale on last week … things that are maybe non-threatening, that are conducted in a fun, relaxed atmosphere, that definitely helps.
>
> (Frances)

Frances (mc, primary) and Grace (mc, primary) identified the role of the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Coordinator as being central to changing parents' perceptions of their local school through the promotion of projects that encourage parents to participate more actively in the life of the school. While the successful efforts made by these teachers and schools to encourage greater parent participation are to be commended, they were primarily based on engagement in politically 'neutral' topics or activities, driven by top-down perceptions of parental engagement.

10.5 Discussion and Conclusion

Consistent with previous research into teachers' perceptions of working class parents (O'Brien 2009; Golden and Erdreich 2014), class-based ideas dominated the majority of participants' attitudes towards working class parents. However, the working class teachers' strong resistance to dominant narratives of deficit and blame that sought to stigmatise working class parents as incompetent and disinterested was striking. There was no observed difference between the primary and post-primary sectors. However, the very small sample of post-primary teachers (four), all of whom were from working-class backgrounds, means that further research is required to develop understandings around the role class habitus plays in how teachers engage with parents across educational sectors. Reflective of the value they placed on the importance of the relational in education, the working class teachers' commitment to building open and inclusive relationships with parents also deserves specific attention in light of how tenacious and durable it was.

This very strong sense of what it means to be a teacher influenced the working class teachers' relationships with parents in a positive way. The cultural awareness and responsiveness to the sense of powerlessness and dependency that working class parents experience when engaging with schools (Lareau 2003) motivated them to do more. They expressed a desire to try to initiate open and inclusive relations with working class parents and felt strongly that teaching is an affective activity. Within this caring moral praxis, they saw care and the development of ethical, rather than economic or instrumental, relationships (Kelchtermans 2011) as an inalienable part of their daily practice.

These practices reflected the generative quality of the working class group's habitus in terms of perception and practices. In contrast, there was also some evidence of habitus and its more structuring and limiting quality evident in the intensity of middle class teachers' engagement with institutionally embedded discourses of parental deficiency. The propensity of habitus to determine people's likes and interests and inversely to engender a dislike towards other behaviours that are not part of one's "sense of one's place" (Bourdieu 1984) appears to lie at the root of some of the assumption-laden commentary on working class parents articulated by some participants. The boundary setting that governed the majority of middle class participants' relations with parents could be interpreted as part of a conservation strategy to protect the traditional position of teachers as the dominant power-brokers (Ball 1994).

In summary, an adhesion to deficit ideology influenced the majority of the middle class group's attitudes towards working class parents. This finding points to the importance of providing teachers with professional spaces along the continuum of teacher education to explore their cultural backgrounds in order to overcome possible cultural prejudices and ethnocentrism (Boler and Zembylas 2003). The challenging of ethnocentrism and its influence on teaching beliefs, styles and interactions with students and parents (Bourdieu 1984) should encompass a "serious, correct political analysis" (Freire 1992, p. 9) of hegemony and its many veiled and enigmatic guises. It would be important that this process is forged *with*, not *for*, communities suffering the fallout from intense social and economic inequality.

Overall, the heightened willingness and efficacy of teachers from working class backgrounds to 'connect' with parents, strengthens the call to ensure that the current HEA-funded PATH1 projects aiming to diversify teaching in Ireland move from positions of precarity as pilot initiatives to a mainstay of teacher education state provision. Considering the strong national policy focus on fostering parental involvement in schools (DES 2019), and particularly in DEIS schools (DES 2017), these findings also highlight the need to problematise the prevailing power dynamics that are traditionally skewed towards teachers within the social field of the school and the stifling influence they can have on teacher–parent relationships (Baeck 2010).

Note

1 Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH): Strand 1 (Equity of Access to Initial Teacher Education).

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11 The Journey from Further Education to Teacher Education

A Step too Far?

Eileen Kelly-Blakeney and Patricia Kennedy

11.1 Introduction and Literature Review

The St. Angela's College (STACS) strand of the University of Galway/STACS Access to Post-primary Teaching (APT) project funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) under PATH1[1] created an access route into initial teacher education (ITE) in Home Economics with Biology, Irish, or Religion, for Further Education (FE)[2] students from lower socio-economic groups. The project established partnerships with nine FE institutions in the Border Midlands and Western (BMW) region of Ireland. Students from partner FE institutions taking designated QQI[3] level 5 awards were invited to participate in the project and took part in a range of activities at the host institution (HI), including attending the Open Day, undergraduate lectures, and laboratory sessions offered as part of the ITE degree. Students attended outreach sessions delivered by academic and support staff from the HI at their FE college. Phase one of the project ran for 3 years, and each year, several students engaged in project activities but subsequently withdrew and did not progress an application to ITE. While the wider project explores the experiences of ITE students who entered the programme via the APT pathway, the project team was also interested in capturing the perspectives of those who decided not to progress to ITE to inform how the pathway might be strengthened. This chapter focusses on those students who withdrew in year three of the project.

In the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, and elsewhere, the creation of pathways that enable progression to higher education (HE) for students with FE or vocational education and training qualifications has been recognised as an important mechanism for widening participation to HE for some time (Hoelscher et al. 2008; Cree et al. 2009; O'Shea et al. 2012). In Ireland, however, increasing progression from FE to HE has only recently been prioritised as a policy objective. In 2015, only 6.6 percent of entrants to HE came from FE. The third National Access Plan (HEA 2015, p. 24) identified building "coherent pathways from further education … to higher education" as one of its five key goals and set a target to increase FE entrants to HE to 10 percent by 2019. The most recent figures indicated a small improvement (7.3 percent in 2017/18), but it was noted that the target was unlikely to be met (HEA 2018).

In Ireland, as in many other European countries, socio-economic disparities exist between school leavers who progress to FE compared to HE. Students from

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lower socio-economic groups are more likely to progress to an FE college than those from higher socio-economic groups (McGuinness et al. 2018). On completion of their FE course, fewer than one-fifth progress to HE (Dempsey et al. 2013), and those that do are restricted to a limited number of courses, largely because of HE institution admission policies that determine which courses FE award holders can pursue (Loxley et al. 2017).

Given that teaching-related programmes do not generally feature in the FE sector, in Ireland or elsewhere, and that direct pathways from FE to ITE are not well developed, there is a dearth of research on this area. O'Shea et al. (2012) examined the experiences of students who had progressed from a vocational education course to a primary ITE degree and found that, while the students valued the advantage that their FE course afforded them with regard to subject knowledge, they perceived themselves as 'different' to other students who had progressed straight from school. This issue of differential positioning by FE students is also reported by Katartzi and Hayward (2020), who found that students struggled to adjust to the different approach taken to teaching and learning when they entered university. Conversely, Barber and Netherton (2018), whose study included some students taking an education degree, found that students had developed confidence, had improved academic skills and were better prepared for university as a result of undertaking an FE course. Similar findings were reported in an Irish study, which found that students who had attended an FE course experienced a smoother transition to HE (Denny et al. 2015).

11.2 Methodology

In April 2020, six students who had left the APT project were invited to take part in the study. Ethical approval for the research was granted by the University of Galway Research Ethics Committee. Four female students agreed to participate. Table 11.1 provides an overview of their key characteristics. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted by phone, due to COVID-19 restrictions. Interviews lasted approximately 1 hour and sought to explore students' experiences from pre-school to FE, the factors that influenced them to think

Table 11.1 Overview of Participants

Participant	*Age*	*Education*	*Parental Education Level*		*Further Education Course*
			Mother	*Father*	
Mary	19	Leaving Certificate	Upper secondary	Lower secondary	Social Studies
Julie	18	Leaving Certificate	Upper secondary	Degree (mature student)	General Studies
Ann	19	Leaving Certificate	Upper secondary	Upper secondary	Nutrition, Health and Food Science
Jane	19	Leaving Certificate	Upper secondary	Lower secondary	Social Studies

about ITE, their reasons for undertaking an FE course and participating in the APT project and their reasons for deciding *not* to pursue ITE via this route.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, and transcripts were sent to participants for review. Thematic analysis of the data was undertaken using the constant comparative method (Braun and Clarke 2006). Transcripts were read by the project team individually to understand the data and to identify initial organising features, from which broader codes were identified, collectively collated, and, thereafter, organised into thematic maps. The importance of social support emerged as a key theme, and House's (1981) model of social support—emotional, instrumental, informational and appraisal—was utilised to illuminate how support was instrumental to the navigation of the education system by this cohort. Four sub-themes were identified: information deficit regarding FE as a pathway to HE, the support of teachers as role models, the benefits of participating in FE and the APT project, and the importance of appraisal support in informing participants' decisions to divert from ITE.

11.3 Findings

The findings are set out below under the sub-themes that were generated through the analysis. Pseudonyms are used throughout.

11.3.1 Pathways to HE: Informational Support

All of the participants in this study had progressed to FE immediately after their Leaving Certificate[4] (LC), by default rather than design, as all four had applied to go to HE, but were unsuccessful as they did not acquire the LC points required for their chosen course. Throughout their accounts, it was clear that the acquisition of LC points was regarded as the 'normal' mechanism for entry to HE, and for all these students a sense of uncertainty as to whether they would achieve the required points was prevalent. For example, Ann explained how she "put Home Economics and Religion (ITE) on the CAO[5] as first choice, but … didn't get enough points. […] I kind of knew myself I wasn't going to get it anyway", while Jane told us, "I applied for St. Angela's, but I didn't know whether I was going to go on and do it as I didn't know if I would get the points, which I didn't".

The experience of our participants was that FE as an alternative, or as a route, to HE was not promoted in secondary school. Although Jane had a positive experience of career guidance at school and referred to her teacher as being 'very good' as he provided her with information on 'taking the other route' (i.e., to FE), this was in contrast to the others, who noted that information on FE as a pathway to HE was either insufficient or incomplete. While Mary was made aware of alternative entry routes into HE, she explained that not all options were presented:

> When I was at school I was under the illusion, if you don't get the points, there is a lot of back doors, like to Arts in [university] … But we weren't told that doing a PLC[6] could get you into a course in England, or even the chance of doing the St Angela's teaching course.

Ann recalled how her "career guidance teacher always told me there was no back route or anything into Home Economics teaching", and similarly, Julie recounted that she was not made aware that the APT project provided a route into teaching:

> At school … I never actually found out about the APT course. I had no idea it was an actual option for me to do. It was only when I didn't get my points, my Dad started looking into things for me. He has a friend who is a teacher in [named town]. I think she actually did the Home Economics and Biology course in Sligo. She was the one who told him about the APT course.

The importance of family in providing informational support was also highlighted by Ann, who was a first-generation HE entrant, and it was her mother, rather than her career guidance teacher, who provided the information on FE as an alternative to HE:

> I was going to take a year out and everything and then Mam was like if I take a year out, if I start working, I mightn't want to come back into the education route. She didn't want me doing that, and then she said she would look into PLCs and it's better doing something than nothing.

The decision to pursue a course in FE following post-primary education was strategic for Mary, who had applied to do primary teaching in another Irish university as well as to a UK university for a health profession course but was offered neither. Following her LC, Mary realised that the FE course provided another pathway into both:

> I was going to go to [university] to do an Arts degree because that is what my sister did but then I felt I was just doing it because I didn't get the points. I wasn't doing it because I wanted to do it. I said I would do the PLC in [college] in Social Studies and I applied again for the [names course] in Scotland. I then applied for the APT in St. Angela's … it opened up a few things again by doing the PLC.

A notable finding was that all the participants had, at some stage during their schooling, thought about becoming a teacher and identified the influence of teachers as role models in that process. Mary reflected on her experience of primary school and noted that "the teachers were all very nice and really encouraging. I think it made me realise the impact teachers can have on a student". She explained how her Transition Year[7] work experience in a primary school influenced her, "I did my work experience in a primary school, and I realised then that maybe teaching would be something I wanted to do". For three of the four participants, their second-level subject teacher/s were a key influence in prompting them to consider teaching as a career. Ann, for example, said:

> I think it was the teacher I had when I went to secondary school. She was one of the role models. She always praised me and encouraged me and I just loved her and it made me love the subject even more.

11.3.2 Participants' Perceptions of FE and APT as Beneficial

Once in FE, the reality of the demands of their course was much greater than predicted for all four participants. FE was for Jane "… a lot harder than I expected. I thought I was doing my Leaving Cert again". Similarly, Mary described how her experience of the social studies course was not what she anticipated, and how:

> It was a lot harder than I thought. I don't know. You know when you hear people are doing a PLC, I was under some illusion that it wasn't all about assignments and that if you turned up to class you would be fine. That's not the case at all. It's a lot harder.

Julie, who had a sense of having an edge, already having acquired above-average points in the LC, was surprised at the level of work required:

> At the start, I went in thinking … I won't need to do that much work. I had this pre-defined idea that I did a good Leaving Cert so I would be fine. It is good in there, I am enjoying it, but the workload is massive. It is way more than I thought it would be. That was a bit of a shock, but I am enjoying it.

Julie referred to the perceived low status of FE relative to HE, and how she did not always disclose that she was in FE because:

> I think if I told people I was doing a PLC … now, they wouldn't say it to your face—they just have this idea that you are not smart enough either. There is a perception that people didn't get into their [HE] course because they didn't work. But some people do try but it just didn't happen for them.

All participants considered their academic and social experience of FE as beneficial. Referring to her FE tutors, Mary confided: "I got a lot of support. If you were doing an assignment you could ask for help". Jane, who experienced mental health difficulties, complimented the tutors and supports available: "They were really good because of what was wrong with me. They helped me out … they have a learning support centre. I was involved with that".

For all the students, participating in the APT project alongside their FE studies was a positive experience. Students spoke of the benefits of partaking in the different sessions offered through APT:

> You get an insight into everything. Compared to coming from sixth year you don't know what you are getting into. We got a chance to do an academic writing assignment for [tutor's name]. He corrected it and everything.
>
> (Jane)

> It was a very good programme. You could sit into the classes. You felt like you were wanted and stuff like that. They also interacted with you in the classes and stuff.
>
> (Ann)

In their accounts of participating in sessions in the HI, the opportunity to take part in classes and to interact with students on the ITE programmes was noted:

> Yes, I went up to St Angela's and I went to cooking classes and I also went to the theory classes as well … They fully included us in the classes … you are paired up with two other students and you can chat to them while you are cooking, and you are learning things. You are in an actual class and get to see what it would be like.
>
> (Julie)

Having an opportunity to meet students on the ITE programme who had entered via the APT pathway was noted as especially beneficial, as Ann explained:

> We also got to talk to APT students in second year. We had a meeting with, I forget her name now … but we had a meeting with her and we could talk to her and ask any questions, and it was very good.

11.3.3 Appraisal Support and Deciding to Step in Another Direction

Different reasons emerged as to why these students decided not to progress an application after partaking in a project that offered a direct entry route into ITE. For Mary, an unconditional offer from a UK university to pursue a degree in an allied health area provided the certainty of a guaranteed place that she required, and which the APT route did not provide, as applicants compete for a limited number of places:

> Yes, I got offered [names course] there. I was happy. That is why I withdrew from the teaching one.

In Jane's case, illness led to her withdrawing from her FE course and from the APT project:

> I left actually a month or two ago. I suffer with my mental health; I wasn't fit for it (the FE course). I just have to get on with it. I took this time to get better so that I can go to college next year.

Jane had applied to do a childcare degree in another HE institution (HEI), as she felt that, compared to teaching, the course and career would be easier for her to manage. Ann withdrew because her application for a SUSI[8] grant had been rejected, thus she no longer met the eligibility criteria for the project. However, because of participating in APT, she became aware of another degree programme in the HI which she could apply to using her FE award:

> I am going to do the BA hopefully in [HEI]. I hope to do that if I get my eight distinctions and then I will go to [HEI] to do education, so I can teach after that.

Julie had decided to pursue a course in a university nearer home. She explained that distance from home, and associated isolation, were the reasons why she decided not to continue on to an ITE programme:

> Yes, that was a big factor for me, me moving away and so isolated … I was scared to move up and be on my own … It wasn't the course or anything like that—just the distance. I am still applying to do [course] in [university] but I will be using my LC points, not my PLC results.

Despite the fact that she would not be using her FE qualification for entry to HE, she remained very positive about the project, claiming, "Even though I dropped out of it I think it was one of the best opportunities I ever got because it helped me make a big decision".

11.4 Discussion and Conclusion

These findings shed light on how a group of students benefitted from undertaking an FE course and engaging in an access to ITE project, even though the outcome for them was *not* to progress to ITE via the project. While it was not their first post-LC choice, for all our participants, pursuing FE was an informed decision, taken with the intent of accumulating capital that would enable them to progress to a HE course. In recounting their post-secondary school plans, the issue of the 'high stakes' (Smyth 2009, p. 7) nature of the LC points system for entry to HE in Ireland came to the fore, as did a lack of awareness of the potential of FE as a route to HE. For most of the participants, their parents, rather than career guidance teachers, provided informational and emotional support on FE as an option. These findings, echoing Smyth and Banks (2012) and McGuinness et al. (2018), suggest that the status of FE as a post-LC option is low among Irish second-level students. This issue, along with the lack of career advice to post-primary students about the FE field generally that emerged from the current study, is worthy of further consideration, given the national policy to increase progression from FE to HE (HEA 2015; 2018).

The findings mirror those of others (Cree et al. 2009; O'Shea et al. 2012) who highlight how undertaking an FE course enhances preparedness for HE. All the participants found their FE courses more academically challenging than anticipated. Completing such challenging courses helped build students' confidence in their ability to succeed at HE. The participants demonstrated how instrumental and appraisal support (House 1981) was operationalised, and how this support served to empower them as they navigated FE. Appraisal support involves affirmation and helping students reflect on their abilities and aspirations (House 1981). For these students, participating in the APT project was valuable in informing their decision to pursue a route other than ITE at this time. While all participants were keenly aware of the lower status of the field of FE relative to HE (McGuinness et al. 2018; Loxley et al. 2017), their positive experiences of FE and participating in the APT project led to a reframing of the value of FE. Engaging in the APT project made students feel welcomed and supported, and the respect and acceptance they experienced enhanced their capacity to see the possibilities FE opened for them and to ascertain what was the best next step for them.

Participants' reasons for deciding not to pursue ITE following FE and the APT project resulted from a reframing of their aspirations. Emotional and informational support accessed at FE college and participating in the APT project enabled them to appraise their own desires and ambitions and, for one participant, the choice was to pursue teaching via a different route. For the other three participants, it was not that FE to ITE was a step too far, it was that they made an informed decision to step in a different direction, and for a variety of reasons. Consistent with other work (Hoelscher et al. 2008), proximity to another HEI and not having to leave home was a key factor for one participant. Another had accepted a place in a UK university rather than compete for a place on the ITE programme after APT; and mental health difficulties caused one student to withdraw, an issue that has been noted elsewhere as impacting on aspirations regarding HE (Baker 2019). Loxley et al. (2017) note that the FE route into HE in Ireland is one of the more marginal pathways that, relative to other routes, is under-researched. Though small in scale and scope, this study provides useful insights into the perception and status of FE as a post-LC option, as well as about career advice regarding FE, and about how a cohort of FE students benefitted from engaging in an access to ITE project, especially through the social supports of which they availed.

Notes

1. Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH): Strand 1 (Equity of Access to Initial Teacher Education).
2. FE denotes education and training that takes place after second-level schooling in Ireland but that is not part of the HE system. It is available to anyone over 16 and includes Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses, community and adult education, and apprenticeships. In other jurisdictions the term *vocational education and training* (VET) is more commonly used.
3. Quality and Qualification Ireland (QQI) is the independent State agency responsible for the Irish National Framework of Qualifications and makes awards FE and HE. FE courses can be certified as level 5 or level 6, and both awards can be used to progress onto level 7 (ordinary degree) and 8 (honours degree) courses of study in HE institutions.
4. The Leaving Certificate is the national terminal examination taken by students at the end of second-level education, and performance in the examination is used for selection into HE. An applicant's results in six subjects in the Leaving Certificate examination are converted into 'points'. Where demand for courses exceeds places available, applicants are selected in rank order based on points achieved.
5. Central Applications Office (CAO) is the organisation responsible for overseeing applications to universities and colleges in the Republic of Ireland.
6. Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) course, another term used for FE.
7. Transition Year (TY) is a 1-year programme taken after the 3-year Junior Cycle and before the 2-year Leaving Certificate programme. Each school has autonomy to design their own programme.
8. Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) is Ireland's national awarding authority for all FE and HE grants.

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12 Migrant Teachers in Ireland

An Untapped Trapped Reservoir?

Rory Mc Daid

12.1 Introduction and Literature Review

The ethnic, linguistic and religious composition of the population of Ireland has become more diverse and more complex over the last 30 years. Free movement of people through an expanded European Union (EU) and high-level economic growth are routinely identified as the key drivers of these changes. As with broader society, multi-ethnicity is now a fixed characteristic of the Irish school-going population (Mc Daid 2019). In line with other jurisdictions, these developments have given rise to research, policy and practice imperatives and interventions with regard to racism, student achievement and teacher education. Concerns have also been expressed about the mismatch between the ethnic, linguistic and religious profiles of students and their teachers (Donlevy et al. 2016). These observations echo longer-standing work on the low numbers of teachers from minority ethnic groups, for example, in the United States of America (USA) (Carey 2020).

Increasing the ethnic diversity of the teaching workforce can only occur through two routes. The first of these is through programmes of initial teacher education (ITE). It is clear from Keane and Heinz (2016) that this route will not provide any substantial level of diversification in the ethnic or nationality composition of the Irish teaching workforce, at least in the short- to medium-term. The second possible route is through the recruitment of qualified migrant teachers, either those already living in the state, or those who migrate into Ireland. In stark contrast with other professions, such as nursing, teachers in other jurisdictions have never been targeted to come to work in Ireland, even in times of teacher shortages (Walsh and Mc Daid 2019). There is no indication of a change in policy in this regard so, again, this is not a rich source of diversification of the workforce. A subsample of teachers from other jurisdictions, those already living in Ireland, has received increased focus over the last 5 years. Both the *Migrant Integration Strategy* (Department of Justice and Equality 2017) and the current *Programme for Government* (Department of the Taoiseach 2020) specifically target the recruitment of teachers from the migrant community living in Ireland.

Internationally, teacher mobility and migration has increased tremendously over the past 25 years (Bense 2016), and the phenomenon has been subject to heightened levels of academic research (see Schmidt and Schneider 2016). Migrant teachers, understood as immigrants to a country who have undertaken their ITE

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qualification outside of that country, comprise significant levels of the overall teaching workforce of many countries, for example, Australia (Collins and Reid 2012), and in certain regions of countries, for example, London, England (Office for National Statistics 2019). Similar to populations of migrants from other professions, migrant teachers experience a range of barriers to continuing their careers in their new countries. These include, *inter alia*, difficulties with access to appropriate work visas, barriers to recognition of existing teaching qualifications, lack of job security, underemployment, linguistic discrimination and having to undertake considerable amounts of voluntary or unpaid work in an effort to secure teaching positions (Bense 2016; Jhagroo 2016). While these barriers have been documented transnationally, migrant teachers must navigate a set of very particular, state-specific, obstacles when they wish to pursue a teaching career in a new country (see, for example, Austria [Proyer et al. 2022], Sweden [Bengtsson and Mickwitz 2022]) and Germany [Terhart 2022]).

This is also the case in Ireland, where migrant teachers wishing to work in publicly funded primary and post-primary schools must apply to have their teaching qualification registered with the Irish Teaching Council (ITC), which licenses the teaching profession through a process of qualification recognition (Conway and Murphy 2013). The assessment of all applications are processed in line with EU Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications. Where significant differences are identified between the registration requirements of the ITC and the applicant's qualifications, a qualification 'shortfall' is applied to registration. The applicant can address these shortfalls through an aptitude test, or an adaptation period whereby a teacher can undertake a period of teaching practice in the identified area of the shortfall under the supervision of a registered teacher. Applicants have to address these qualification shortfalls within a period of 3 years, though they can apply to the ITC for an extension. The range of the shortfalls identified across applicants is quite significant, but there are also some automatic shortfalls, such as the Irish Language Requirement (ILR), for those who have qualified as primary teachers in another jurisdiction.

The *Migrant Teacher Project* (MTP) at Marino Institute of Education was established in 2017 with the aim of increasing the participation of migrant teachers in Irish primary and post-primary schools. Currently co-financed by the European Commission under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2014–2020, through the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and by the Department of Education, the project provides information, advice and training to migrant teachers who have qualified outside of Ireland to help them to continue their profession in Ireland.

12.2 Methodology

The quantitative data upon which this chapter is based were generated as part of a larger sequential explanatory mixed methods research project devised to analyse the needs of migrant teachers in Ireland. The study was funded by the Department of Justice and Equality as part of a larger National Integration Funding Programme grant. The quantitative data were generated through an online questionnaire hosted on *Question Pro*, which aimed to establish a profile of a selection of migrant teachers in Ireland and to capture their experiences in seeking to register, and in looking for teaching work, in Ireland. The questionnaire comprised 63 questions in total and was divided into six sections: background information, teaching qualifications, registering as a teacher in Ireland, seeking employment as a teacher in Ireland, employment as a teacher in Ireland and supports for immigrant internationally educated teachers in Ireland. The questionnaire was only available through the English language and took between 15 and 18 minutes to complete. The questionnaire was available for 12 weeks, between 8 March and 3 June 2018, and was promoted utilising traditional and social media, through migrant support and other community groups, as well as through complementary language schools. Survey data were generated from 240 participants. Mindful of the sample size and the potential for identification, participant confidentiality was ensured through careful attention to the treatment of contextual factors, such as country of birth, institute in which ITE was undertaken or current location in Ireland. Descriptive statistical analyses were undertaken with the quantitative data.

12.3 Findings

12.3.1 Background, Qualifications and Experience

Participants from 31 different countries of origin participated in the survey, 90 percent of whom self-identified as female. Some of these countries map relatively well onto broader patterns of migration in Ireland but the number of respondents from Spain is far higher than the general Spanish population living in Ireland (CSO 2016) (see Figure 12.1).

Over 95 percent of respondents were living across 21 counties of Ireland, with 46 percent living in Dublin (see Figure 12.2).

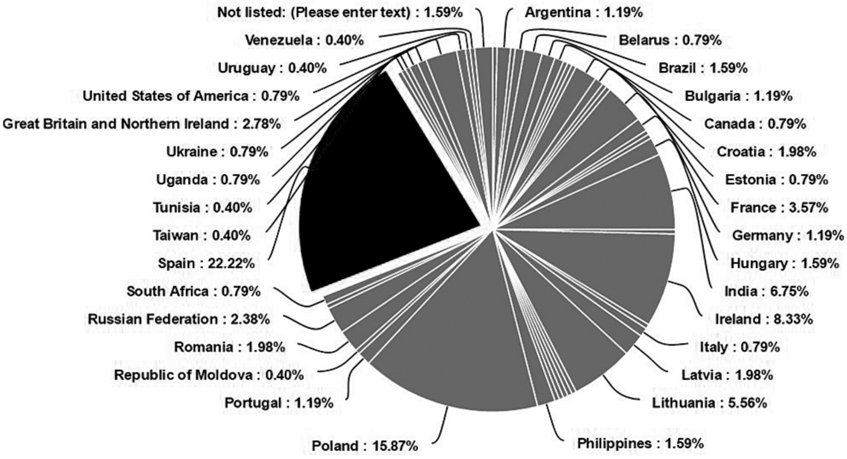

Figure 12.1 Country of Nationality.

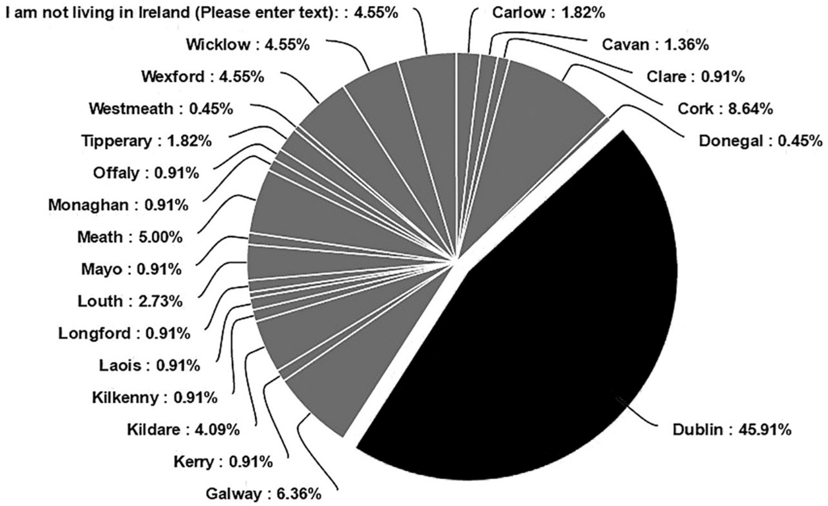

Figure 12.2 County in the Republic of Ireland Currently Living.

Participants were asked to indicate the languages that they spoke at "independent user level or above (B1/B2 Common European Framework level[1]). Two hundred and ten respondents indicated that they spoke English to this level; two indicated that they spoke Irish (Gaeilge) to this level. A total of 42 other languages were identified, ranging from very prominent languages like Spanish (70) and Polish (43) to those with far fewer speakers such as Arabic (two), Igbo (one) and Tamil (one).

With regard to qualifications, 40 percent of respondents were educated to the level of bachelor's degree, 55 percent to master's degree and 4 percent to PhD level. Thirty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they were qualified to teach at primary school level, while almost 47 percent indicated post-primary level. Of the remainder, who indicated 'other', this was evenly spread across early and adult education. The data also showed that 13 respondents were qualified to teach across primary to post-primary, predominantly in the area of languages. For those qualified to teach at second level, the majority were qualified in subjects that they could match to curricular subjects in Ireland. There were examples, however, of teachers qualified to teach subjects such as Mandarin or Psychology, which are not currently on the Irish post-primary curriculum, or of being qualified explicitly in an area such as Guidance Counselling or Special Educational Needs, which are seen as post-graduate qualifications in Ireland, additional to qualification as either a primary or post-primary teacher. Seventy-three percent of respondents had completed probation or induction requirements in the country where they had obtained their teaching qualification, while 17 percent of respondents indicated that there was no requirement to complete a probation period or induction course in order for them to obtain full qualification as a teacher in the country in which they obtained their Qualified Teacher Status. Forty percent of respondents had education management experience. Of these, almost 18 percent indicated having experience as a principal or a headteacher, a similar percentage as an assistant or deputy principal, while 34 percent had experience as either a head of year or subject department.

12.3.2 Teaching in Ireland

Eighteen percent of respondents were teaching in a publicly funded school in Ireland (primary, post-primary or special school) at the time of data collection. Of these, 50 percent were working full-time, and 40 percent were working part-time. Twenty-one percent were working in a primary school and 44 percent in a post-primary school. In response to a question asking respondents to describe their experience of seeking employment as a teacher in Ireland, 11 percent replied that they had never considered teaching in Ireland, while 38 percent had considered it, but had not pursued it actively. Thirty-six percent of respondents had actively looked for a teaching position in Ireland. Respondents indicated that registering with the ITC was the most difficult component in looking for work in Ireland. Fifty-four percent of respondents found this process "very difficult", while 24 percent found it "difficult". Only 4 percent of respondents found this process "easy". Being selected for interview was regarded as the second most difficult component of these processes, while CV preparation was understood as the easiest.

With regard to ITC registration, almost 19 percent of respondents held either full (11 percent) or conditional (8 percent) registration. Less than 5 percent had attempted to register but had been unsuccessful, and 9 percent were still in the formal process of registration. Over 55 percent indicated that they had not commenced the formal process of registration, with 34 percent responding that they had enquired about registration but had not yet applied (see Table 12.1).

Of those who indicated that they were registered (full or conditional) with the ITC, just over 19 percent were registered in primary, 45 percent in secondary and 26 percent in Further Education (FE). Just under 10 percent declared that they were registered in other/Montessori/Special Education. Respondents claimed that "addressing the shortfalls identified" was the most difficult element of registering their teaching qualifications. A key issue, mentioned by many respondents, related

Table 12.1 Respondents' Situation in Relation to Teaching Council Registration

Which best describes your situation in relation to Teaching Council registration?	*Percent*
I hold full Teaching Council registration	11
I hold conditional Teaching Council registration	8
I have applied for Teaching Council registration, but have not yet been registered (process ongoing)	9
I applied for Teaching Council registration, but was not registered (process completed)	5
I have enquired about Teaching Council registration, but have not applied	34
I was registered with the Teaching Council but my registration has now lapsed	1
I do not know anything about Teaching Council registration	20
I prefer not to answer	5
Other	7

to difficulties in obtaining the required information about their qualifications from the relevant universities. One respondent from Brazil, argued:

> All documents I have but I have one problem with my university … [it] doesn't want to … send my foundation disciplines. I'm very sad because I love children. I love work in school but my University not help me to give this document.

This respondent was working in a "community centre ECCE room and [doesn't] have any money to fly at this time" so cannot return to their home country to gather the required documents.

Just under 50 percent of participants indicated that having their documents translated was "easy" or "very easy". The cost of translation was mentioned frequently in response to open-ended questions, even amongst those who found this element of the process to be easy. When offered the opportunity to make any additional comments about their experiences of the ITC registration process or their experiences of addressing shortfalls, many of the respondents highlighted the financial issues once again. One respondent claimed:

> I'd love teaching in a secondary school in Ireland but my lack of knowledge about the country and the paperwork made me keep going with my own business. I can't afford stopping having an income to obtain any qualification that the country might need.

Another respondent considered the particular costs associated with addressing the ILR and claimed that the "financial burden to learn Gaeilge from scratch probably cost me about €8,000 in total including grinds, classes, exams, Gaeltacht". This respondent proceeded to highlight how they would have preferred to:

> … study at master's level in an area that the school could benefit from, intercultural education or special needs education … there are enough teachers who can teach Gaeilge already, foreigners shouldn't be forced to do so [but] acquire other skills instead to address shortfalls.

The vast majority of respondents who had not commenced the registration commented on the complicated nature of the process and the associated costs. For many, the required investment of time, finance and energy had to be balanced against the possibility of accessing secure, full-time work. For example, one respondent claimed that the main reason they had not applied for registration is that they were "not sure of the chances of getting a teaching job". A second respondent pointed out that the process was "too expensive (translations) and too long and it may be for nothing in the end", while another reasoned:

> I didn't want to go ahead with the application because I don't feel like I'll be able to pass the Irish requirements. I know there is a condition where you can get registered on condition that you pass the test after an amount of years, but what school would hire a teacher with a temporary registration who does not speak Irish over a permanent registered teacher who does have Irish?

Concern at sourcing stable work emerged as a key factor for respondents when they considered factors that influenced them in looking for a teaching position in Ireland. One respondent, for example, wrote, "I have a very good job but my dream job is teaching. I cannot leave my current job without a permanent position or full time job as a teacher". The availability of work geographically close to where individual teachers had settled was also seen to be important for some, with one respondent highlighting that "the relocation process from a place where it is easy to rent to a place where there is a housing crisis" was something which made it difficult to look for a job in a school in Ireland.

Further responses to this question pointed to concerns about how they might be treated as migrant teachers. One respondent, for example, highlighted "the atmosphere at the workplace, the attitude of other teachers towards me as a migrant teacher" as a key consideration. A second teacher expressed reservation in looking for teaching jobs because they were "not … a native speaker of English, and possible stereotype towards people of African origin". These potential difficulties were captured succinctly by another respondent:

> But I am also aware that parents may not wish to send children to schools where there is a foreign teacher, as they may be of opinion that such teacher is not as good as a native one … no one should be disillusioned that this won't happen if [migrant teachers] were to be employed in Irish schools.

Some further responses to this particular question critiqued components of the Irish education system, with one, for example, identifying that they did not agree "with certain aspects of national schools (religion, gender division, the way Irish is taught)". The issue of religion in Irish schools was mentioned by six respondents. One focussed on how they understood that "Catholic patronage is a huge impediment to seeking employment … if you're not Catholic, options are very limited", with another identifying this as the key reason why they would not seek to work as a teacher in Ireland, "Yes. I have no intention on supporting a religion I do not believe in".

Finally, respondents were asked to consider the benefits that migrant teachers can bring to schools in Ireland. Overwhelmingly, the responses to this open-ended question pointed to their position as role models and in contributing to stronger intercultural education. According to one respondent, "having a teaching profession that mirrors the demographic of society sends a strong message to migrant children and provides positive role models". A small minority of respondents did focus on other possible benefits, including exchanging "educational methods" and "knowledge of different educational systems" with teachers already in the system. One respondent argued that migrant teachers "are a source of diverse knowledge and experience, they can bring innovation and creativity to schools in Ireland." This would lead, in the words of another respondent to "new experiences in teaching practice. Different views on education and many new ideas implemented in [the] Irish education system". One particular example of this was provided by a Physical Education teacher with 5 years of experience teaching in another EU country, highlighting, "from my perspective I can only say that Physical Education is treated very badly in Irish schools, children are not introduced to many sports, lack of professional teachers with experience in other sports disciplines".

12.4 Discussion and Conclusion

The first key finding of this study relates to the diversity and the complexity of the situations of the respondents, meaning that there is no such thing as a 'typical' migrant teacher in Ireland. This is the case from basic demographic information such as age, country of origin and languages spoken, to teaching qualifications, teaching experience and current employment and echoes similar findings from quantitative studies, for example, Collins and Reid (2012) in Australia. For some of the respondents, these demographic and qualification factors will stack up to provide a helpful base to secure registration and employment as a teacher in Ireland, but any single factor can provide a significant challenge for an individual or group of teachers. An examination of, for example, the range of teaching qualifications is insightful in this regard. For some teachers, their individual qualification matched quite well with the current framework for registration with the ITC, albeit with requirements to address additional conditions, such as the ILR. For other respondents, however, their qualifications did not map as easily onto that framework. This is the case, for example, for those teachers who had qualifications in subjects that are not currently on the Irish post-primary curriculum, such as Mandarin or Psychology. This may also be the case for teachers of a specialist area, such as Guidance Counselling or Special Educational Needs, where the teacher does not also have a general teaching qualification at primary or post-primary level, a requirement for registration in Ireland. A third example is of teachers who are qualified to teach a subject across the primary to post-primary age ranges. Teachers who possess any of these qualifications will find it difficult to register with the ITC.

A second key finding of this study relates to the difficulties experienced by migrant teachers in relation to registration with the ITC. This is not unique in the context of teacher mobility internationally. Bense (2016), for example, explains how this is one of the major issues facing migrant teachers and argues that the process of certification can be lengthy and costly, especially when translation and authentication of certificates are required. The data revealed a need for high-quality information and communication at all levels of engagement in the registration process. This ranges from before a teacher even considers registration, through ongoing communication during the registration process, to locating and commencing modules to address identified shortfalls. Since these data were collected, the ITC has moved to reduce the costs associated with the translation of documentation, by accepting summary information of modules rather than full handbook transcripts and certified translations. Many teachers will still face significant costs and other barriers associated with fulfilling shortfalls applied to their registration. Depending on what shortfalls have been identified and where they are living in the country, a teacher may not be able to afford to take time off work or to travel to a HEI to undertake the requirements of a module.

A third key finding is that many migrant teachers have less flexibility to undertake the occasional substitution work or shorter contractual positions that are used as common entry routes to more stable employment, particularly in post-primary schools. Forty-three percent of the respondents were between 40 and 65 years old and, while not asked about caring commitments in the questionnaire, it is likely that many had child and/or other dependents that would mean moving location for work, or leaving stable employment for more precarious teaching work, would present a considerable challenge. Many of the more 'traditional' students graduating from ITE programmes in the state may have the economic, social and cultural capital to support them through these disruptive threshold years. For students from 'non-traditional' backgrounds, including migrant teachers, this practice can be quite prohibitive. It is also worth noting that in other jurisdictions, while migrant teachers undertake significant amounts of more precarious work, this does not readily translate into permanent positions (Schmidt 2016).

Finally, while the data revealed a deep reservoir of potential teachers, including those educated to master's level and with significant managerial experience, the respondents prioritised their identification as role models and intercultural educators as their strongest potential contribution to the education system. This is understandable given the dominant discourse about teacher–student mismatch and role-modelling (Donlevy et al. 2016; Lander and Zaheerali 2016) and the well-identified issues regarding the experiences of migrant and minority ethnic and language learners in Irish schools (Devine 2011; Kitching 2011; Mc Daid 2019; Machowksa-Kosciak 2017; Malone et al. 2020). Such positioning can be utilised by migrant teachers as a unique selling point as they seek employment. The literature critiquing this approach is strong (Santoro 2015) and includes a focus on role-entrapment and racism (Tereshchenko et al. 2020). With this knowledge, then, there is need for far more robust and critical engagement with this argument.

Note

1 The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is an international standard for describing language ability.

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13 ‘No One Sees a Traveller at the Top of the Class’

Experiences of Irish Travellers on Programmes Supporting Teacher Diversity

Gareth Burns, Miriam Colum and Jerry O’Neill

13.1 Introduction and Literature Review

Irish Travellers have a long history on the island of Ireland with their own language (Shelta, Gamon and Cant), culture and traditions that date back to the twelfth century (Giraldus and Dimock 1867). Despite this long-standing history, marginalisation and inequality have been a reality for Irish Travellers (O’Sullivan et al. 2018). Disparities are evident in every echelon of society and are particularly prominent in education, with Travellers described as a “uniquely disadvantaged group” (Mulcahy 2012, p. 311). Although by no means expansive, the literature around Irish Travellers accessing the Irish education system is developing. A few studies report on the lack of a sense of belonging for Travellers in education (Frehill and Dunsmuir 2015) with little awareness and understanding of Traveller culture and history by educators (Watson et al. 2017). Lloyd and Stead (2001) describe this lack of understanding as a ‘denial of difference’, wherein educators fail to recognise or accept aspects of Traveller culture.

Such denial of cultural differences and of multigenerational discrimination can impact Travellers’ motivation to stay in education and is linked to extremely limited progression into the labour force (Oireachtas 2020). It also has a knock-on effect on Travellers’ capacity to access and progress through higher education (HE), and out of a population of 30,987, only 167 hold a third-level qualification (Central Statistics Office [CSO] 2017). Additionally, there is a significant under-representation of Travellers in initial teacher education (ITE) (Keane and Heinz 2015). Issues of disclosure are likely to be important in interpreting the data around progression of Travellers to HE and ITE (Keane and Heinz 2015). One consequence of ongoing racism and discrimination is the likelihood that many Travellers may choose to conceal their Traveller identity due to fear of discrimination and exclusion (D’Arcy 2014).

The National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019 (hereafter, National Access Plan [NAP]) (Higher Education Authority [HEA] 2015) makes firm commitments to increase Traveller participation rates in HE. Some progress has been made in this regard with the progress review of the NAP (HEA 2018) showing that the number of Irish Travellers accessing HE has increased from 35 (2012/2013) to 61 (2017/2018). While the review acknowledges that more needs to be done, it is clear that Traveller educational ambition

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is growing with an emerging group of Irish Traveller scholars contributing to national policy and research discourses (Crickley and Kenny 2020).

As part of the realisation of the NAP (HEA 2015), the PATH1[1] programme was launched, which has the specific aim of addressing the under-representation of certain groups, including Irish Travellers, in ITE. From this platform, Marino Institute of Education's *Tobar* and Maynooth University's *Turn to Teaching* programmes were realised. While both programmes are committed to supporting Travellers through various ITE pathways, there are significant differences in each programme's focus and approaches. *Tobar* provides individualised and longitudinal supports for Irish Travellers in level 8/9 primary ITE programmes. Highly personalised and in-depth guidance-oriented relationships between the programme staff and participants are a central feature of the programme (Colum and Collins 2021). *Turn to Teaching* is a specially designed access course that provides a pedagogic and alternative accreditation pathway into a number of ITE programmes for a range of under-represented groups including, but not exclusively, Irish Travellers. Positioned within an emerging national research focus on diversity in ITE (e.g., Keane and Heinz 2015; Keane et al. 2018) and responsive to the paucity of research into the experiences of Travellers in ITE, this chapter articulates the experiences of five Irish Travellers with respect to accessing, and progressing into, ITE.

13.2 Methodology

This chapter explores five Irish Travellers' journeys into and through the *Tobar* and *Turn to Teaching* programmes. As part of wider and ongoing evaluative and reflexive processes, both programmes sought to explore Traveller participants' perspectives and experiences, and researchers from both programmes collaboratively designed and implemented the study. Ethical approval was granted from both institutions. Participants (see Table 13.1), all of whom were female, were purposefully selected. All Traveller students on the *Tobar* and *Turn to Teaching* programmes were invited, and agreed, to participate in the study.

Shaped by a view of human experience in which humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives (Connelly and Clandinin 2006), the study adopted a

Table 13.1 Participants' Profiles

Biographical details	*Programme*	*Prior Educational Attainment*
Annie[2], female, early twenties	*Tobar* (Professional Master of Education: Primary)	Leaving Certificate
Caroline, female, early thirties	*Tobar* (Professional Master of Education: Primary)	Level 8 Degree
Brenda, female, early twenties	*Tobar* (Professional Master of Education: Primary)	Level 8 Degree
Julie, female, early twenties	*Turn to Teaching* (Primary Teaching Stream)	Further Education, Level 6 Course
Patricia, female, early thirties	*Turn to Teaching* (Secondary Teaching Stream)	University Accredited Level 5 Course

narrative methodological approach. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants between late 2019 and the summer of 2020. We view(ed) the interviews, to use Holstein and Gubrium's (2011) term, as 'animated' interviews and framed the research encounter as "an actively constructed conversation through which narrative data are produced" (p. 149). Our questions, then, were crafted as narrative prompts to initiate a reflexive dialogic space, which, in turn, would allow us to explore participants' journeys into and through the respective programmes. The interview schedule had two main parts. Part one explored participants' journeys to becoming students on both programmes, with a particular focus on their prior experiences of education. The second part of the interview focused exclusively on their experiences of the respective programmes.

While the three *Tobar* participants were interviewed prior to the pandemic, the two *Turn to Teaching* participants were interviewed during the early months of COVID-19 in Ireland. We were acutely aware that the pandemic had a significant impact on students from under-represented groups in HE, and, in particular, on Irish Travellers (Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre, and National Traveller Women's Forum 2020). The research team engaged in critical discussion about the ethics of continuing with the research in this period. A decision was made to continue only after consultation with participants. Data collection methods were adjusted to include e-interviewing techniques via Teams and Zoom, phone calls and, in one case, email (Ravitch 2020). We acknowledge that our findings may have been different if all participants were interviewed prior to COVID-19, as the pandemic undoubtedly raised specific additional issues for those participants.

The interviews were transcribed, and data were thematically analysed by researchers from the respective projects separately. Then, a second analysis and synthesis across all data was conducted to identify common and contrasting themes in the participants' experiences. A thematic approach to analysis was adopted to focus on the narrative content, rather than process or context, and was useful, in particular, to "highlight commonalities and differences across datasets" (Shukla et al. 2014, p. 4). This was appropriate for the inter-institutional nature of the research, but also, given the small numbers involved, this approach helped to avoid ethical issues relating to participant identification associated with a more narrative approach to analysis, which uncovers the specificity of individual stories and their telling.

It is important, we feel, to note the ethical and methodological unease that we, as researchers, felt throughout this research project and that remains somewhat unresolved. As critically reflexive researchers and practitioners, the degree to which we are working 'with' or doing research 'on' Irish Travellers cuts to the heart of this unease; the research we consider here can, we fear, be more easily characterised as the latter. As our two programmes continue to develop, through a process of reflexivity and dialogue with and between ourselves and a wider community of practice including participants and other stakeholders, we look forward to continuing ethical and methodological growth. This growth, we hope, will allow our future research to increasingly adopt and perform the critical and participatory values in which we ground our work (Colum and Collins 2021).

13.3 Findings

The findings present participants' diverse and idiosyncratic journeys into and through programmes supporting diversity in ITE. Even a cursory reading demonstrates the need to resist the tendency, as O'Hanlon and Holmes (2004) observe, to perceive Travellers as a homogeneous group of people. Notwithstanding, there are shared elements to their stories, along the lines of life experience.

13.3.1 Diverse Experiences, Diverse Motivations

Participants' prior teaching and learning experiences had a positive influence on their decisions to become teachers, and these were particularly emphasised by the younger participants (Brenda [Tobar], Julia [TtT], and Annie [Tobar]). Quasi-teaching experiences garnered from minding younger siblings (Brenda, Tobar) and more formalised classroom experiences during transition year (Brenda, Tobar, and Annie, Tobar) and work placements (Julie, TtT, and Caroline, Tobar) supported their identification with teaching. Caroline (Tobar) explained that these experiences helped her to realise that she "loved working with children and felt I could bring a lot to the job as a primary school teacher".

Reflective of their life experience and more circuitous route to ITE than the other participants, Patricia's (TtT) and Caroline's (Tobar) stories are characterised by perseverance, a commitment to make a better life for themselves and their families and, like all the participants, a deep sense of wanting to make a difference. Through the development and accumulation of various personal resources, Patricia (TtT) and Caroline (Tobar) were empowered to plot a less certain trajectory to the one followed by the younger participants. The origins of Patricia's (TtT) teaching aspirations could be traced back to a transformative period of time when she emigrated to seek better employment opportunities and thus "escape a life that I was not willing to age into". During this time, Patricia worked in a community centre, where she bore witness to the damage caused by public servants disregarding the value system of indigenous people while performing their professional duties.

> I realised there was a set of societal factors that created issues for people and families from displaced, undervalued and ostracised communities within the Irish Travelling community, within indigenous communities, and likely in indigenous communities everywhere.

During her time abroad working with indigenous people, Patricia started to make connections between their experiences of displacement and oppression, and the experiences of Irish Travellers. In time, this stimulated her desire to become a values-based educator that would seek to effect social change:

> I think it's important to teach in a way that means something to the students. If I am teaching in a way that disregards the value system of the students, they aren't going to feel that the material applies to them at all. Yes, the value system of the communities needs to be upheld and respected and included in the education of the communities you teach in.

Her vision for social change was imbued with values she views as characteristic of Irish Travellers, namely "respect", "trust in personal interactions" and "standing up for those who need it", amongst others.

Similarly, Caroline's (Tobar) experience of working on a community project on Traveller culture triggered thoughts of wanting to do more to improve the experiences of Travellers in education. Echoing Julie's (TtT) desire "to break the barrier and show other Travellers that it can be done", Caroline (Tobar) felt that teaching would present her with an opportunity to effect real change and help inspire other Travellers to consider teaching as a career:

> No one sees a face like mine, no one sees a Traveller at the top of the class, I felt like we were selling a dream but there is no reality, I wanted to do more and I soon realised I could only do that from 'the inside' … the only way to do this was to become a primary school teacher to make a difference.

These observations not only reveal Patricia's (TtT), Caroline's (Tobar) and Julie's (TtT) social and political criticality, but they also provide an insight into the type of teacher they wished to become. In some cases, however, there was no relationship between participants' positive identification with teaching and its perceived attainability as a career. Prior to finding out about *Turn to Teaching*, feelings of difference, deficit and exclusion dominated Julie's (TtT) and Patricia's (TtT) reflections on the teaching profession:

> I had never considered being a teacher. I always pictured teachers as being someone from the countryside, from a stable nuclear-style family. Someone who enjoyed being in authority, maybe.
>
> (Patricia, TtT)

13.3.2 The Role of Guidance and Support

Some participants referenced strong familial support along their educational journey, epitomised by Julie's reference to the unconditional parental love and support she received, which insulated her from powerful feelings of pressure to 'make it':

> No, I kind of take it in my stride … my parents are very supportive, in the way that 'if that is what you want to do' … if you don't want to do it, like there's no shame in dropping out.
>
> (Julie, TtT)

However, given their lack of family history of HE knowledge and participation, there was an absence of discussion in the home about potential future educational options. Annie (Tobar) stated:

> My family didn't know anything about school, never mind third level education. This meant that I knew nothing about any courses available, different levels and different options available for me.

Additionally, many participants reported that they experienced a lack of academic and career guidance support in post-primary school. This deficit of support and encouragement was reflected in the difficulty participants had accessing information on pathways to teaching:

> Accessing information on teaching programmes was quite difficult. I did not know how I could re-sit my Leaving Cert Irish and maths, what TEG [Irish language proficiency certificate] exam I needed to take and how to apply.
>
> (Caroline, Tobar)

Julie (TtT) felt that teaching was not presented to her as a possible option by her school guidance teacher even though she had stated her interest in exploring it. It was not until Julie progressed to a Further Education (FE) course that she gained access to career guidance that supported her teaching aspirations, with Patricia (TtT) having a similar experience while studying on a level 5 university access course. Julie (TtT) states:

> I was in the PLC [Post Leaving Certificate Course] … I was talking to one of the guidance counsellor women, on what I want to do after this. 'Well, I really want to be a teacher, but that's obviously not an option at all because of the Irish'. She was like, well, you could go the PME [Professional Master in Education] route … Then she called me back a couple of weeks later, and she was like, 'oh, I found this course that you might be interested in, and it was *Turn to Teaching*'.

Access to career guidance at PLC level had unintended consequences, in that as well as identifying a possible pathway to teaching, it also illuminated the significant structural barriers that participants had to overcome to realise their teaching ambitions. Julie (TtT) and Annie (Tobar) identified the high academic entry requirements, including the Irish language competency required, as significant barriers for her and other Travellers. The length of the postgraduate route to primary teaching and the financial resources required for such a sustained course of study militated against Julie (TtT) considering it as a viable option prior to the establishment of *Turn to Teaching*.

All participants referenced the guidance role played by *Tobar* and *Turn to Teaching* staff in affirming the legitimacy of their teaching aspirations prior to commencing their respective programmes. Annie (Tobar) states:

> *Tobar* was extremely beneficial for me. Without it I wouldn't have been aware that I needed to re-sit my Leaving Certificate maths exam, meaning that I would've been rejected for the PME. I was also provided with grinds for my TEG [Irish language proficiency Certificate] exam which helped me get the results I needed for the PME entry requirements.

13.3.3 Experiences of the Programmes: Developing Confidence and Critical Capacity

Participants spoke of the profound impact that both programmes had had on their lives, their sense of identity and confidence to pursue teaching as a career. A number of participants referenced an emerging sense of self-efficacy with regard to their capacity not only to become teachers, but also to become teachers that seek to challenge structural and institutional discourses of deficit. In many instances, they attributed the development of these motivations to the space both programmes created for participants to engage in transformative discourses and processes and develop their critical literacy and capacities:

> The *Turn to Teaching* programme has done more for me than I could have imagined, before I started. Not only have we learned about teaching, but we have also learned about humanity and how to treat people, how to examine social constructs and the true impact and importance of appreciating diversity—valuing difference rather than tolerating and merely accepting difference.
>
> (Patricia, TtT)

Caroline (Tobar) spoke powerfully of the role *Tobar* played in boosting her self-confidence. It also provided space for her to reflect on her capacity to have achieved more in school, had she had access to adequate educational resources, and had the system been more culturally responsive and appropriate:

> The programme allowed for confidence building because I was slowly but surely unpacking the years of believing I was a failure because of a poor Leaving Cert. Instead, I was able to prove to myself that I could have gotten the Leaving Cert I deserved had I the financial luxury of affording grinds and been in a more culturally sensitive education system.
>
> (Caroline, Tobar)

While Julie (TtT) and Patricia (TtT) spoke positively about the transferable academic skills they developed during the programme, it was more specifically the modules and experiences that engaged directly with pedagogy and school placement that captured their imagination. Both spoke passionately about the guided reflection on school placement and how it contributed to increasing their confidence as emergent educators:

> I definitely want it more now because we did a placement … it just kind of showed a proper school setting, so it is definitely something I want to do more of.
>
> (Julie, TtT)

Patricia (TtT) felt the facilitated mentoring sessions she had with graduates of *Turn to Teaching* provided her with a dialogical space to consider the type of teacher she would like to be:

> Mentoring and speaking to students have benefited them and me. They learned from me, but I learned some invaluable insights from them in open discussions, and that demonstrated to me that the Freire ethos and style of education is where I am going with my approach to education in my career.
>
> (Patricia, TtT)

13.3.4 Affective and Material Resources and Challenges

The value placed on the relational (supportive relationships between staff and students) in both programmes and the emotional resources such supports created for participants allowed them to overcome periods of low confidence and self-doubt, as articulated by Patricia (TtT) and Brenda (Tobar):

> Just the fact that I had the extra support there and the fact that I had someone that I could go to, and I had all that extra support is definitely the reason that I ended up staying in the course [PME] and enjoying it as much as I have.
>
> (Brenda, Tobar)

Patricia (TtT) and Caroline (Tobar) referenced the role the staff in the respective programmes played in allaying concerns about having the necessary financial supports in place to ensure that their participation would be a positive one:

> Through *Tobar* I experienced the powerful advantage that comes with money because with financial security comes the luxury of curiosity. My mind was not absorbed by bills that needed paying, instead it was present in the classroom, with the lecturer and in the educational goals I wanted to achieve.
>
> (Caroline, Tobar)

In terms of shared challenges, both Julie (TtT) and Patricia (TtT) cited the move to online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic as being particularly difficult. While the programme supported students with access to laptops, poor connectivity, lack of a suitable study space and care responsibilities were factors that added to their collective stress during this time and adversely affected their concentration and motivation.

13.4 Discussion and Conclusion

Participants' stories of their journey to and through ITE are ones of hope, resilience, and resistance and were sustained by a desire to forge meaningful occupational futures in educational work that 'will make a difference'. Finnegan et al. (2019), in their study of students' (from diverse backgrounds) transitions into graduate employment, characterise this occupational desire as the search for "good work", which, as Keane's (2017) study revealed, can be seen as an orientation towards 'altruistic' work that holds out the possibility for both personal and social transformation.

Participants' emerging sense of their teaching aspirations, which were often ignored, unheard or reoriented to 'more suitable' career paths during previous school-based guidance experiences, were nourished in the *Tobar* and *Turn to Teaching* programmes, whose practices are located in principles and values of dialogue, participation, critical reflexivity, collaboration, and care.

These programmes provided the participants with important spaces to reflect on what Apple (2011) refers to as "the gritty materialities" of their lived experiences and enabled them to further develop an already strong critical literacy to challenge the deficit ideology that often positions them, and students from under-represented groups in general, as being in need of 'fixing' (Baker et al. 2004). Indeed, participant narratives displayed a strong sense of cultural pride and an emerging self-efficacy in their capacity to not only become teachers, but also to become teachers who seek to challenge structural and institutional discourses of deficit.

This developing political and social criticality, for participants and the programmes alike, sheds more light on both the structural and socio-cultural promoters and inhibiters of teaching aspirations amongst Travellers. Prior to participants' engagement with the programmes, the stringency of minimum academic requirements for entry to primary ITE made primary teaching unattainable for the Traveller participants. The length of the consecutive postgraduate route to teaching was also identified by participants as a significant barrier. While it should be noted that Travellers were largely absent from the 18-month postgraduate courses that operated prior to 2013, the significant decrease in participation rates of entrants from lower socio-economic groups in 2014, the first year of the 2-year programme, highlights the negative impact the move to longer programmes will continue to have on the Travellers with aspirations to teach (Keane and Heinz 2015). For many Travellers, a postgraduate route into teaching is often the only option due to the persistent presence of structural and cultural barriers to the profession at undergraduate level. Compared to undergraduate students, the lower levels of financial support available to Irish postgraduate students compounds this barrier even further. The findings of this study speak cogently to the need to ensure that the persistent financial barriers that prevent more Travellers accessing teaching are addressed and do not get obscured in the prevailing (but necessary) discourse around issues of cultural recognition.

Echoing findings from recent research into the experiences of Irish student teachers from lower socio-economic groups (Keane et al. 2018), the propensity of career guidance at school level to coach many students from under-represented groups *out* of teaching and "towards more 'realistic' options" (p. 90) was evident in some participants' experiences of post-primary education. Such experiences were particularly problematic, given their reliance on school-based guidance, as their families and wider social networks had little or no experience or knowledge of HE (Finnegan et al. 2019). In contrast, participants' narratives also speak to the critical role played by guidance in FE and the named programmes in reorienting their occupational biographies towards teaching as an achievable career option. There is an emerging awareness in research (Finnegan et al. 2019; O'Neill and Burns 2021) and policy development (SOLAS 2020) of the importance of longitudinal guidance for students from under-represented groups that crosses institutional spaces and, ideally, follows them on often non-linear educational and occupational journeys.

In conclusion, there was a strong sense across the participants' narratives of a commitment to the pursuit of a teaching career as a way of making a difference in their own lives and the lives of others. Their engagement with the critically reflexive spaces of the two widening participation programmes in this study repositions their stories of becoming (student) teachers, not as narratives of deficit but towards narratives of diversity and inclusion that have the capacity to disrupt and enhance teacher education and the teaching profession.

Notes

1. Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH): Strand 1 (Equity of Access to Initial Teacher Education).
2. At the time of interview, Annie was studying on an undergraduate degree programme. Following completion, she was accepted onto the Professional Master of Education (Primary) programme.

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14 Someone Like Me?

Minority Ethnic Children Reflect on the Need for Minority Ethnic Teachers

María Florencia Sala Rothen and Rory Mc Daid

14.1 Introduction and Literature Review

Ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity has emerged as a fixed feature of Irish society in the last three decades. While the demographic profile of the school-going population echoes these general changes (Devine 2011), the composition of the teacher workforce has remained stubbornly mono-ethnic internationally (Mc Daid and Nowlan 2022). Many jurisdictions struggle with this imbalance (Schmidt and Schneider 2016). The situation is particularly acute in Ireland owing to a number of historical, cultural and linguistic factors (Walsh and Mc Daid 2019). Mc Daid and Nowlan (2022) argue that there are two routes to diversify the ethnic composition of the teaching population in Ireland: via entrants into initial teacher education (ITE) programmes within the state and through recruitment of migrant teachers already qualified outside of the state. Keane and Heinz (2016) demonstrate the absence of any substantial nationality and ethnic diversity among ITE cohorts. Significant structural barriers exist for migrant teachers seeking work in the state (Schmidt and Mc Daid 2015) and so, while some migrant teachers do make their way into teaching positions, progress is slow. In terms of diversification of the teaching workforce, this route will have very little impact on the ethnic profile of the entire teaching population in the short- to medium-term (see also Mc Daid, this volume).

Diversification of the ethnicity of the teaching population has attracted increasing attention from policy-makers in other jurisdictions over the past three decades. Maylor (2009) notes that this attention is driven, partly, by a concern that the teaching workforce should reflect the ethnic diversity of learners and that this would provide a more balanced representation of society. This policy impetus is increasingly focused on employing minority ethnic teachers to address behavioural and achievement problems of certain minority ethnic young people, most especially Black and Latino boys in both the United States of America (USA) (Carey 2020) and the United Kingdom (UK) (Maylor 2009). This solution is often based upon an erroneous, essentialised rationale that minority role models will address school failure by providing students with strategies to navigate Eurocentric spaces successfully (Lewis 2006; Bristol 2020). Critical interrogations of these policy concerns highlight that little attention has been paid to articulating a research-based rationale for increasing diversity in the ranks of teachers (Villegas and Irvine 2010).

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Santoro (2015) picks up on this argument and provides a strong critique of the naïve assumptions that underpin the role-model approach. Through her work with culturally diverse teachers working in Australian schools, she argues that minority ethnic teachers are misunderstood as a homogeneous group with the ability to address the needs of all culturally diverse students.

Furthermore, they are also often identified as cultural experts who are expected to be more culturally responsive in their pedagogy. This can lead to a limitation of the roles that minority ethnic teachers play in schools (Wallace 2020) and role-entrapment (Kelly 2007), positioning teachers as diversity performers. This is problematic for a number of reasons, including the hidden affective labour that is demanded by such critical care work, which is added to the already existing hidden extra burden of responding to enduring experiences of overt and covert racisms (Tereshchenko et al. 2020). Furthermore, as Picower argues, minority ethnic teachers "are equally capable of using the tools of Whiteness, so recruitment must focus on bringing in people of color who are committed to equity and social justice in urban schools" (2009, p. 212). These tools of Whiteness can refer, for example, to curricula that reinforce racism or colonialism. This important contribution to the literature highlights the conceptual redundancy of simplistic role modelling.

The caring relationships teachers establish with their students are core to high-quality education for minority ethnic students (Cummins 2000). Many studies argue that immigrant students in Ireland have largely positive experiences with their majority ethnic teachers (Vekic 2003; Ní Laoire et al. 2009; Devine 2011). This literature identifies that minority ethnic students feel that their teachers are welcoming, understanding, willing to help, encouraging and committed to their work. Other studies, however, identify that some minority ethnic and linguistic students have a much more negative school experience in Ireland, including stark experiences of racism and linguicism (Devine et al. 2008; Bryan 2010; Mc Daid 2011; Kitching 2014; Ní Dhuinn and Keane 2021).

14.2 Methodology

Two post-primary school sites were selected on the basis of previous relationships between the lead researcher and the schools. The first site was a co-educational community school located to the north of Dublin city. Students were predominantly majority ethnic White Irish, though there was a significant number of minority ethnic students. The teaching cohort was predominantly majority ethnic, though there were a small number of minority language teachers, working in the area of modern foreign languages.[1] The second site was a female voluntary secondary school located in Dublin's inner-city. Just over 50 percent of the student population was drawn from 32 different countries, excluding Ireland. There were no minority ethnic or minority language members of staff at the time of data generation. Six focus groups with a total of 33 student participants were facilitated (see Table 14.1). Focus group interviews were particularly important for this research project because these "are an important tool for accessing the experiences and attitudes of marginalized and minority groups, including racial/ethnic minorities … and children" (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2010, p. 165). Participant numbers in the groups ranged from four

Table 14.1 Overview of Participants

Focus Group	*School*	*Gender*	*Age*	*Pseudonym*	*Birthplace*	*Immigrant Origin*	*Ethnicity*	*L1*	*L2*	*Time in ROI*[3]
1	Community	Female	16	Alicja	Poland	Polish	Any other White background	Polish	English	11 years
	Community	Female	16	Ioana	Ireland	Romanian	Any other White background	Romanian	English	16 years
	Community	Male	16	Jerome	Ireland	Filipino	Asian Irish*	English	Filipino	16 years
	Community	Male	18	Alexandre	France	French	Any other White background	French	English	3 years
	Community	Female	17	Bertina	Ireland	Nigeria	Black Irish*	English	N/A	17 years
	Community	Female	19	Aisyah	Malaysia	Malaysian	Any other Asian	Mandarin	English	10.5 years
2	Community	Male	16	Sebastian	Spain	Spanish	Any other White background	Spanish	English	6 months
	Community	Female	16	Camila	Spain	Catalan	Any other White background	Catalan	English	7 months
	Community	Female	17	Valentina	Spain	Spanish	Any other White background	Spanish	English	6 months
	Community	Male	16	Rafael	Spain	Spanish	Any other White background	Spanish	English	6 months
	Community	Female	14	Lena	Austria	Austrian	Any other White background	German	English	6 months
3	Community	Female	15	Li	Ireland	Singaporean	Asian Irish*	Indian	Mandarin	15 years
	Community	Male	17	Wei	China	Chinese	Chinese	Mandarin	English	4.5 years
	Community	Male	17	Ali	Iraq	Iraqi	Any other Asian	Arabic	English	3 years
	Community	Male	17	Reyansh	Ireland	Indian	Asian Irish	Telugu Hindi	English	15 years
4	Community	Female	17	Hannah	Ireland	Malaysian	Asian Irish*	Mandarin	English	17 years
	Community	Female	15	Saanvi	Ireland	Indian	Asian Irish*	Tamizh	English	15 years
	Community	Male	16	Abaeze	Nigeria	Nigerian	African	Igbo	English	14 years
	Community	Male	15	Akin	Ireland	Nigerian	Black Irish*	English	N/A	15 years

Focus Group	*School*	*Gender*	*Age*	*Pseudonym*	*Birthplace*	*Immigrant Origin*	*Ethnicity*	*L1*	*L2*	*Time in ROI*[3]
5	DEIS[4]	Female	17	Dembe	Uganda	Ugandan	African	English	N/A	2 years
	DEIS	Female	17	Zofia	Poland	Polish	Any other White background	Polish	English	5 years
	DEIS	Female	17	Elena	Spain	Spanish	Any other White background	Spanish	English	2 years
	DEIS	Female	17	Abigail	Bolivia	Bolivian	*	Spanish	English	2 years
	DEIS	Female	17	Tess	Netherlands	Dutch	Any other White background	Dutch	English	3 years
	DEIS	Female	17	Sharon	Mauritius	Mauritian	*	Creole French	English	5 years
	DEIS	Female	16	Andreea	Romania	Romanian	Any other White background	Romanian	English	4 years
6	DEIS	Female	18	Bilyana	Bulgaria	Bulgarian	Any other White background	Bulgarian	English	3 years
	DEIS	Female	18	Maria	Romania	Romanian	Any other White background	Romanian	English	4 years
	DEIS	Female	17	Mihaela	Romania	Romanian	Any other White background	Romanian	English	3 years
	DEIS	Female	18	Marie	Cameroon	Cameroonian	African	French	English	2.5 years
	DEIS	Female	17	Daria	Moldova	Moldovan	Any other White background	Romanian	English	2.5 years
	DEIS	Female	18	Melanie	Ecuador	Ecuadorian	*	Spanish	English	3 years
	DEIS	Female	19	Thais	Brazil	Brazilian	*	Portuguese	English	3 years

to seven. The sampling frame consisted of four criteria: participants had to (1) self-identify as migrant-based minority ethnic student; (2) be in Senior Cycle[2]; (3) have experienced the Irish school system for at least 6 months; and (4) hold a level of English that would allow them to communicate effectively in English with their peers and the researcher. The sample comprised 24 female and 9 male students between the ages of 14 and 19 years old drawn from 21 different immigrant countries or regions of origin. The participants were introduced to the categories employed in the 2016 Census (Central Statistics Office [CSO] 2017) to assist them to self-describe their ethnicity. Eleven of the participants rejected the categories and either self-identified using a category of their choosing or rejected categorisation. These students are identified with * in Table 14.1.

The focus groups were opened by the lead researcher using a scripted introduction, detailing her own positionality, the plan for the focus group, and the manner in which confidentiality would be protected in the study. At this point, participants were invited to complete a short questionnaire aimed at collecting data on the range of languages they spoke and the length of time spent in school in other countries. A video clip (Press TV 2014) on the topic of teacher diversity was then employed to stimulate the conversation. This conversation was guided by seven open-ended questions that explored participants' school experiences in Ireland, relationships with teachers, experiences of having teachers from minority backgrounds in Ireland, experiences of schooling in other jurisdictions, concepts of a "good teacher" and possible career paths.

With regard to analysis, the lead researcher first reflected on her positionality as minority ethnic researcher and as a minority language speaker and examined how this influenced her standpoints and assumptions. Secondly, the transcripts were read on a sentence-by-sentence level, and units of meanings (codes) were ascribed. Thirdly, these codes were collapsed, integrated and grouped to identify core themes. Finally, based on these themes and considering the relevance of individual contributions as well as the whole, the data were analysed and interpreted.

14.3 Findings

14.3.1 A Lack of Teacher Diversity

The students in this study had very little, if any, experience of being taught by minority ethnic teachers throughout their educational careers in Ireland. Students in the inner-city school claimed that all of their teachers were White Irish. The students in the community school did identify some ethnic diversity among the teaching staff. Lena, for example, mentioned that "most of them are White, but there is one Black American teacher" (Lena). When pressed on the level of teacher diversity, students from both schools revealed that there were other minority nationality teachers in the school, but importantly, these were teachers of Modern Foreign Languages (MFL), "the only teacher who is not Irish is Mrs [named teacher], the Spanish teacher, she teaches Spanish" (Li).

The students did reveal that they had seen or worked with minority ethnic members of staff at some point in their schooling, but these were generally working in assistant positions. According to Saanvi, “I’ve never had a primary school teacher from a different country, but there was, like, eh, a special needs assistant and she was from South Africa”. For some of the students who had lived in other countries before moving to Ireland, this absence of ethnic diversity was very different from their previous experiences. Abigail, for example, claimed, “I’ve been in London, like for about 6 years and there weren’t too many British teachers, they were from, like, I had primary teachers from Congo, Poland, India, but in here, it’s all Irish”. Alexandre had a similar experience in France, claiming, “It was everything! I would say it was a nice mix from lots of backgrounds. Like we had two or three Spanish, like, teachers that would be originally from Spain … it was a big mix”. This experience was not uniform among the participants, with Tess arguing that her experience of teacher diversity in Ireland did not differ from her experience in Holland, “Well, in my country, teachers aren’t that diverse either. It’s more like here: White, Dutch, Protestant or religious. It’s always that kind of teacher”.

Some of the students had noted the lack of balance between the ethnic and linguistic diversity of the student population and that of the teaching staff. Elena, for example, highlighted, “Well, I’m not sure about the rest of Ireland, but at least in Dublin, I haven’t seen any teacher that’s not from Ireland and most of the school [population] isn’t from Ireland, isn’t Irish”. Iona agreed, claiming, “In my class now, I think it is like, half of them are Irish [students] and half of them are not from Ireland”.

The students were aware of the difficulties faced by immigrant teachers to work in Ireland. Bilyana, for example, explained how “there are people living in Ireland that are teachers in their countries but here they work as cleaners because they can’t get their licenses approved”. Saanvi’s family had direct experience of this. She described how her mother, a qualified teacher:

> … is an SNA. She’s from India and it would be really, really hard for her to be a class teacher, coz if you’re in primary school here and you’re a class teacher, you need to teach every single subject so, that would mean that she’d have to teach Irish and stuff to children. So, if you’re from a different country it would be hard to be a primary teacher.

14.3.2 Desire for a More Diverse Teaching Staff

Many of the students reported that they would like more ethnic diversity among the teaching staff in their schools. There were a number of reasons posited in support of this change. Ali felt “the basis of it would be I am not the only one who is different”. Zofia argued that she would be more authentically herself with a more diverse teaching staff, “[being with] other people who understand you and that you can be true as well”. Jerome pointed to the diversity of learning experiences that would accrue from such developments, saying, “I think it’d be more interesting if they [teachers] were from different backgrounds … if everyone else was from a different background we’d be able to experience different opinions on stuff”.

While being very positive about increasing the diversity of their teacher population, the students prioritised the quality of the teachers involved rather than a simplistic drive for diversity in the profession for its own sake. The students wanted the best teachers, regardless of ethnicity. Characteristics of these "best teachers" included being caring, a good communicator, interested in their students and a subject expert. The focus on Leaving Certificate,[5] CAO[6] points and access to third-level education brought the emphasis on subject expertise into sharper focus. The attention paid to good communication skills was tied into an observation that minority ethnic teachers should have the linguistic competence required for high-quality teaching. Li, for example, asserted, "as long as they can communicate properly, and teach well, then it doesn't matter, I don't think it'd affect us". Camila concurred, "As long as I understand the things, it wouldn't make any difference".

Although the students generally agreed that the best teacher they could have was someone who met the aforementioned characteristics regardless of their background, there were certain cases in which students suggested that minority ethnic teachers would be able to have a better understanding of their lives as migrant students. Reyansh, for instance, explains that migrant teachers would "understand what it's like to be in a different place". This possibility of understanding the migrant experience was explored deeply by another student:

> Teachers that aren't like, I don't know how to say it, background origin, or maybe … they are, like, a different minority … maybe, Latino or Black, but they would understand you better than … a White teacher coz I don't think [White teachers] understand. Like especially if you are from a different country, they would not understand you fully … [Minority ethnic teachers] will be able to help you full … and know what it is like to be where you are from … so, I think, like, there probably needs to be more teachers that are from, like, different backgrounds than there's right now.
>
> (Abaeze)

Elena also identified this as an important reason for diversifying the teaching population:

> Also, the foreign people have started in new schools and in new countries, so, like, they kind of have the experience, whereas some Irish teachers have always been here, so they don't know what you're going through and then, they don't know how to help you.

Abaeze proceeded to explain that this experience was different with the identifiably minority ethnic teacher in his school:

> They [majority ethnic teachers] don't understand us. I just don't like to talk to any other teachers, it's just with Mr [named Black American teacher] because he's always talking to me about different things. He's probably the only one teacher that I actually like talking to because he's [had] a bunch of adventures and he gives you advice on what you can actually do … I just don't like to talk to other teachers because they just don't understand.

Tess was the only one of the 33 participants who disagreed with this opinion, claiming that "you don't really need a minority teacher that understands you, you just need a teacher that understands you".

14.3.3 Relationships with Teachers

The students in this study provided evidence of the supportive nature of their relationships with their majority ethnic teachers, frequently employing terms like "nice", "caring", "helpful" and "supportive". This was often based on the students' minority status, with Bilyana, for example, highlighting that, "teachers here can be really dedicated to foreigner students, and I really appreciate that a lot … they try to help other students who are struggling with the language". While this was the case for the majority of the students, there were examples of less positive relationships and interactions. Mihaela, for example, was critical of many of her current teachers claiming, "they don't help us very much, like they leave all the non-Irish girls to do their work alone". Lena expanded on this and reported on her experience with one particular teacher:

> It's like in English [classes], she is like, 'well, probably you should read something of your level or says something like, 'oh, yeah, your English is bad' and I'm like actually, no, it's just you who puts me under pressure, but never mind, and my English, on the contrary, is quite good.

Zofia pointed out that these perceptions of linguistic competence could impact negatively on the Leaving Certificate examination and therefore on entry to higher education, explaining, "It's like with ordinary and higher level. Like, because I've lived here for so long, I can speak English, but they still want me to do ordinary level although I know I have the knowledge of, like, other girls".

Some students reported linguistic and race discrimination from their teachers. Bertina, for example, highlighted that "when they look at me, or whatever, they assume I'm not from here or, like, my English teacher, she has had me for, like, 3 years and she never thought English was my first language". Camila recounted a more overt experience of linguicism, "it happened in IT [Information Technology] class, we were doing exams and the teacher told me in front of the class, 'she doesn't even know English' and I felt, like, sad". In addition to proficiency in English language, some of the participants had negative experiences in relation to their own first languages. Alexander, for instance, explained how "they'd say like, 'stop speaking French' or something like this. It depends, in class, we're not allowed to speak, but in corridors you can". Bilyana explored the impact of this on her own identity, explaining, "it's not like we're forbidden, but sometimes the teacher would say, 'Speak English!' and I think that's annoying because there's a big difference, like, I'm not myself in English, I am a completely different person in Bulgarian". Bertina [a Black Irish girl] provided further evidence of this erasure of identity, this time in relation to her forename, recounting,

> ... in my first year my teacher, she couldn't pronounce my name, so she asked me if she could call me Ben, like a boy's name and eh … I got a little bit embarrassed because I was in my first year, I'd just started.

14.3.4 Becoming a Teacher in Ireland

Seven of the participants indicated that they had considered teaching as a career in Ireland; five at primary, and two at post-primary, level, including one as a teacher of English as an Additional Language. There was a concern, however, from some of the students that they might experience racist discrimination from students if they were teachers. Ali, a boy from Iraq claimed:

> I think it's probably true that the Irish students … might not have the initial respect they would [have] for traditional [Irish] teachers. I think the students' attitude would be negative, me coming into the class, for the start at least.
>
> (Ali)

Abaeze, whose mother is a teacher, provided a strong example of this negative attitude in practice:

> I remember we had this teacher that she was a student or something, and she was from Argentina, and everyone was just laughing at her accent … it was very weird because every time she spoke, I was thinking of my mum because she was trying to be a teacher as well at that time so, I thought of that, I used to be really nice with her and it was, like, she was nice to me as well.
>
> (Abaeze)

Many of the students had ruled out progressing into primary teaching and identified the required proficiency in the Irish language as a barrier. Jerome, for example, highlighted "the thing that puts me off was having to be good at Irish because I just don't like the language at all. It's a language barrier and yes, [if I didn't have to do Irish], I would consider it". Zofia captures the implications of this barrier, "It makes you feel like you have less choices, but it's the only job we can't do". Of the students that indicated they had considered teaching as a career, Thais, explained that her motivation was serving as an advocate and role model for minority ethnic students like herself and her friends:

> I would like to be a minority ethnic teacher to help students like us … maybe because of the fact that some girls may feel more comfortable to have a teacher that's from somewhere else, but, also, I just like to teach.
>
> (Thais)

14.4 Discussion and Conclusion

A number of key themes are evident in the findings presented. The first is that the participants had very little experience of being taught by minority ethnic teachers in their schools in Ireland, or even of having people from minority ethnic backgrounds in teaching roles in their schools. For some students, this resonated with their experiences in other jurisdictions, though for many others, it was in strong contrast with previous experiences of having teachers from a variety of national and ethnic backgrounds. When the students had experience of minority ethnic teachers, they were often as a teacher of modern foreign languages or in a para-educational or teaching support role. This is unsurprising, given what Walsh and Mc Daid (2019) have characterised as the stark mono-ethnicity of the Irish teaching workforce.

The students were generally in favour of diversifying the teaching workforce, though this observation was tempered by a stronger concern that they be taught by "really good teachers", characteristics of which include that the teacher be "caring", "interested in their students", a "good communicator" and a "subject expert". The focus on "subject expertise" can be partly explained by the position of the participants in their educational careers, all of whom were in their final 3 years of post-primary schooling. The "high stakes" (Doyle et al. 2021) nature of the Leaving Certificate assessment impacts on all facets of teaching and learning throughout senior cycle with many students, particularly those with high aspirations, becoming more instrumental in their approach to their education as they prepare for the examinations.

The participants' focus on "care" and "being interested in their students" as core aspects of "really good teachers" is just as important. Most of the students spoke strongly about their positive relationships with majority ethnic teachers. This aligns well with previous studies in which many students recognised having good relationships with their teachers (Vekic 2003; Devine 2011). Just as importantly, however, some of the students recounted examples of racialised and linguistic discrimination. Such findings are supported in the literature (Kitching 2014; Ní Dhuinn and Keane 2021). We know that minority ethnic teachers are often positioned as advocates for their minority ethnic students and that the drive for diversification in other jurisdictions has been underpinned by a concern with lower achievement rates among certain minority ethnic populations, often with a particular focus on boys (Carey 2020). We also know that many minority ethnic teachers are motivated to teach for this very reason (Hayes 2020). Indeed, as we saw with Thais, there was evidence for this motivation from some of the students in this study. It is important, however, that policy-makers and education leaders understand that minority ethnic teachers cannot, on their own, address issues of underachievement or indeed the more significant challenges of racism in Irish schools. Even for the most committed, teaching for social justice is very complex work (Tien 2019) and, even when motivated towards social justice for minority ethnic students, not all minority ethnic teachers will succeed (Picower 2021). Furthermore, however, for those who do this extra work, we know from research in the UK (Tereshchenko et al. 2020) that this often leads to increased attrition from the workforce and constricts promotion possibilities.

The participants in this study did, however, discuss the ways in which they would benefit from having more minority ethnic teachers. These views count and must be considered in all discussions relating to the diversification of the teaching workforce. They drew on examples from the very rare interactions with such teachers in Ireland and also from their experiences in other jurisdictions. In this context, then, policy-makers and educational leaders face two strong challenges: one, how to reconcile a teacher's ethnicity and their desire to support and advocate for minority ethnic students without experiencing role entrapment. The second is the need to recognise the importance of all educators as social justice educators while drawing on, and rewarding, rather than sanctioning, the particular perspectives that minority ethnic teachers bring to a school.

Notes

1 Modern Foreign Languages taught in Ireland are French, German, Spanish, and Italian.
2 Senior Cycle refers to the period of education that follows the Junior Cycle and is generally taken by students between the ages of 15 and 18.
3 Republic of Ireland.
4 All of the DEIS schools were all girls schools.
5 The Leaving Certificate is a 2-year programme in the final years of post-primary school. Assessment is normally undertaken by way of examination paper with oral and aural assessments and assessment of practical work undertaken in certain subjects.
6 The Central Applications Office (CAO) manages the awarding of points on the basis of results secured in the Leaving Certificate examination. These points are then considered for entry into higher education.

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15 Creating Inclusive Communities

Preparing the University for a Cohort of Deaf-Sign Language Users in Initial Teacher Education

Elizabeth S. Mathews and Amy Ryan

15.1 Introduction and Literature Review

Deaf people have particularly low participation rates in higher education (HE) in Ireland. Despite improvements in the last two decades where the number of Deaf students in HE more than doubled between 2003 and 2013, continued difficulties with their participation means they remained a specific target group in the National Access Plan for 2015–2019 (Higher Education Authority [HEA] 2015). Furthermore, while international research indicates that enrolment in HE may have improved in recent decades for Deaf students, completion rates are markedly poor, in particular for those enrolled in 4-year degree programmes (Newman et al. 2011).

Both 'hard' and 'soft' barriers prevent entry to HE and create difficulties for course completion. Hard barriers are conceptualised here as specific policies and practices that directly block entry to HE (e.g., subject entry requirements for subjects that are not available to some students, requirements to complete a fitness to practice declaration or medical examination that prohibit entry for students with disabilities). Soft barriers are those issues that, while not directly blocking applications to HE, can make entry and progression difficult (e.g., failure to accommodate needs, lack of support structures and an inhospitable campus climate). While there are 'soft' barriers deterring Deaf students from participating in HE (discussed later), there have been specific 'hard' barriers to particular programmes. For example, in the Republic of Ireland, Deaf people were largely and inadvertently excluded from the primary teaching profession until 2019 because of the requirement for a high level of competency in the Irish language (Teaching Council 2017), as Deaf students are largely exempt from learning Irish while in school. Indeed, Irish is not taught as a subject in Schools for the Deaf. The same barrier does not exist at post-primary level, where the number of Deaf teachers has grown in the last two decades (Danielsson and Leeson 2017). To address this, Dublin City University (DCU) is currently providing a pathway (on a pilot basis for one cohort of four students) into the Bachelor of Education (BEd) primary initial teacher education (ITE) programme for Deaf students who use Irish Sign Language (ISL). The background to establishing this pathway has been discussed elsewhere (Mathews 2020). Students on the pathway are not required to have Irish (Gaeilge), but must have competency in ISL to a similar level (B1 on the Common

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European Framework of Reference for Languages [CEFRL]) (Leeson et al. 2016). As a result, the hard barrier preventing entry to ITE has, for now, been removed. Nonetheless, soft barriers are likely to remain and must be addressed to allow for the successful inclusion of Deaf students on campus.

While there were specific barriers for Deaf students entering primary ITE, research indicates that access and progression through HE in general is problematic for this cohort (Garberoglio et al. 2019) and that challenges in both academic and social domains within the university are evident (Hyde et al. 2009; Powell et al. 2014). In Ireland, students who are Deaf are more likely to withdraw from HE compared to students with other disabilities (Treanor et al. 2013). This could partly be caused by poorer academic readiness on the part of the student (Newman and McNamara 2016). However, Cawthon et al. (2014) highlight that institutional readiness is also critical, and they caution that initiatives focusing on improving post-secondary education participation tend to focus on the competencies of the individual, yet neglect the barriers that may exist within institutions themselves.

The most obvious feature of institutional readiness is the provision of reasonable accommodations so that students can access their education (Cawthon et al. 2014). In Ireland, the provision of such accommodations is a legal requirement under the Equal Status Act (Government of Ireland 2000). However, it is not simply a matter of the provision of accommodations; the overall campus climate can have an important bearing on whether students feel welcome or not. Indeed, providing access and adequate student supports for students with disabilities does not necessarily translate to a positive campus climate (Wilson et al. 2000). Cress explains: "[n]ot to be confused with campus culture, campus climate is the metaphorical temperature gauge by which we measure a welcoming and receptive, versus a cool and alienating learning environment" (2008, p. 96). Campus climate is defined as the "attitudes, behaviours, and standards/practices that concern the access for, inclusion of, and level of respect for individual and group needs, abilities, and potential" (Rankin and Reason 2008, p. 264). Positive campus climates can contribute to a student's sense of belonging and satisfaction (Fleming et al. 2017). Conversely, higher dropout rates are evident among students experiencing inhospitable campus climates (Cress 2008). For Deaf students, these inhospitable campus climates can be caused by audist microaggressions (Stapleton and Croom 2017) and their pervasive impact on Deaf students' campus experiences. Audism refers to the belief in the superiority of being (or behaving like you are) hearing (Humphries 1977). Using Sue's (2010) concept of microaggressions, Stapleton and Croom (2017) examine the racism and audism experienced by Black Deaf students in HE and note that such negative encounters are endemic.

Research among Deaf students indicates that their social interactions with hearing peers can also contribute to what can be characterised as a chilly campus climate. In New Zealand, for example, Deaf students showed that they were dissatisfied with the number of friends they had in class and with the effort made by hearing students to communicate with them. Subsequently, most of the 64 students sampled "displayed an air of resigned acceptance about their loneliness"

(Powell et al. 2014, p. 134). Loneliness also featured in data collected from students in the United States of America (USA) (Parasnis et al. 2005). Students may also struggle in their interactions with staff. In particular, those who perceive staff to lack Deaf-awareness may avoid seeking necessary supports from them (Powell et al. 2014). For example, academic staff may presume that provision of accommodations automatically levels the playing field for Deaf and hearing students, failing to acknowledge or validate the complex barriers Deaf students may face to academic success (Foster et al. 1999). Furthermore, they may neglect to make any adaptations to their teaching style to accommodate Deaf students and presume the responsibility of successful inclusion to rest with the individual student and/or the support staff (Foster et al. 1999). Stapleton and Croom refer to this as 'trivialisation', when the provision of accommodations is followed by "an insensitive, rude, belittling, or demeaning action" (2017, p. 24).

The preparation of DCU is a central component in the delivery of the BEd ISL Pathway. Owing to the need for institutional readiness for a cohort of Deaf students, starting in 2015, a suite of Deaf Awareness activities was held on campus in anticipation of the arrival of Deaf students. The overall aim of these activities was to create a warm campus climate for Deaf students, where not only would appropriate accommodations be provided, but also students would feel they fully belonged to the campus 'family'. When the pathway received final approval from the Department of Education (DE), funding was obtained from the HEA PATH1[1] initiative to formalise these Deaf Awareness initiatives. Commencing in the Spring of 2019 (before the intake of students the following September), ISL classes and Deaf Awareness Training were made available to staff and students across DCU. The latter was a one-off session provided to staff, while the ISL courses were delivered in 4-week blocks and open to staff (academic, administrative and service) and students. These activities were nearly always delivered by Deaf professionals. One of the performance targets for the initiative is that 150 students and 25 staff self-rate their ISL skills at level A1[2] on the CEFRL, and 75 students and 10 staff self-rate at level A2.[3] In this chapter, we present the results of an evaluation into the motivation of staff and students to attend Deaf Awareness activities, and into the effectiveness of these activities. The concept of campus climate is used to interrogate the findings.

15.2 Methodology

The Deaf Awareness activities described are part of the larger overall PATH1 initiative of providing access to ITE (primary) for Deaf students. The project is subject to a large mixed-methods evaluation comprising participant groups of hearing and Deaf students and academic and administrative staff. Data collection is ongoing and will continue through the duration of the degree programme.

The data presented in this chapter were collected through an online anonymous survey designed specifically to evaluate the Deaf Awareness activities (hereafter, referred to as activities) in this project. All students and staff who took part in the activities on campus were invited to complete the survey. From

Spring 2019 until the closure of the university campus in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 346 people had signed up for ISL classes on campus, 234 students and 112 staff. Approximately 50 more staff also attended Deaf Awareness Training. All 396 were invited to complete the survey. A total of 156 participants completed the survey (a response rate of 39 percent). The vast majority (91 percent) of participants engaged with ISL courses while the remaining (9 percent) participants were evaluating the Deaf Awareness training. Fifty percent of the participants were staff, and 50 percent were students. Of the students, most were undergraduate (43 percent vs. 7 percent postgraduate), and administrative staff narrowly outnumbered academic staff (27 percent and 23 percent, respectively). Sixty-four percent reported having not met a Deaf person before undertaking the activity.

The survey sought to establish participants' motivation for taking part in the activities and their perceptions of the activity's effectiveness both in terms of overall satisfaction with the quality of the activity and of preparing staff and students for working alongside Deaf students. Brief demographic information on whether participants were undergraduate or postgraduate students, or academic or administrative staff, was collected. Participants were then asked if they knew a Deaf person before taking part in the activity. Participants were asked to rate their level of ISL competency on the CEFRL (Leeson et al. 2016). Next followed a range of rating scales and open-ended questions relating to participant satisfaction with the activity and their evaluation of the activity overall. Closed questions asked how likely they were to recommend the activity to a friend or colleague (10-point numeric scale), how they would rate it (5-point scale), if they felt the course was well-organised (5-point Likert scale), whether they found the trainers approachable (5-point Likert scale), satisfaction with the length of the activity (5-point scale) and whether they believed that the activity had left them better equipped to work with Deaf people or not. Open-ended questions explored likes and dislikes about the activity, whether the activity had changed their thoughts or behaviours in any way (and how), reasons for signing up for the activity and any other information they wished to provide. The quantitative data were analysed using simple descriptive statistics while qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) through NVIVO to find recurring themes. The data reported here were collected up to summer of 2020, roughly halfway through the funding period.

15.3 Findings

In this section, we present the survey findings, focusing on two main themes: motivation for participating and effectiveness of the initiatives.

15.3.1 Motivation for Participating

Analysis revealed that the most common motivating factor for participating in the activity was a desire to communicate with Deaf people. Of the 70 references to facilitating communication with Deaf people, 36 referred to the Deaf students currently enrolled on the BEd specifically. It was evident that this was important for both staff and students:

> I felt working in a university that facilitates Deaf students, it's important to have some sign language should a student come into my workplace.
>
> (Staff member, ISL course)

> I felt that there was a language barrier between myself and other students.
>
> (Student, ISL course)

Others reflected that they would like to be able to communicate with Deaf people in their community or places of work:

> My parents' neighbours are Deaf, and it would be nice to be able to have a better connection with them.
>
> (Staff, ISL course)

While the use of interpreters was noted, it was important for several participants to be able to communicate *directly* (i.e., without an interpreter) with the Deaf students:

> As I am a student teacher, I might have Deaf students in my class in years to come, and it would be a shame if I could not communicate with them directly without an interpreter.
>
> (Student, ISL course)

Having an interest in ISL and Deafness was the second most motivating factor for participants.

> I have always wanted to learn some ISL but never really knew how to go about it. I thought that this would be the perfect way to get an introduction into what it might be like, and it did.
>
> (Student, ISL course)

One participant commented that the course linked to their research in the field of linguistics, while another spoke of how their son had enjoyed an ISL workshop in school. Three participants cited personal experience of hearing loss as their motivation for engagement, and three participants participated in this course as a follow-up to previous ISL courses.

15.3.2 Effectiveness of the Activities

At a basic level, from the participants' perspectives, the activities were effective, with 58 percent selecting the maximum "excellent" rating and a further 42 percent rating it as very good or good. There was strong agreement that the activities had been well organised (97 percent), and that the trainer/teacher was approachable

(99 percent). Using a 10-point scale to rank the likelihood they would recommend this course/event to a friend or colleague, 95 percent selected a value of 8 or higher.

The qualitative data indicated that participants were very happy with the quality of the activities and the learning environment. Participants reported that the activities were fun and that the content was easy to learn. The language taught was considered appropriate and useful, and the opportunity to learn specific vocabulary needed by participants was commended. Praise for the instructors and their methodologies, the small class sizes and the supportive environment emerged as significant factors contributing to the perceived effectiveness of the course:

> The teacher was excellent and met each of us where we were. We learned so much by being placed at our ease in a very friendly atmosphere—no fear of making mistakes.
>
> (Staff, ISL course)

> I also liked that it was in a small group, it was more one-to-one this way and I felt comfortable. I liked how we were consistently using and repeating sign language during the classes, it helped me remember.
>
> (Student, ISL course)

Indeed, many participants expressed interest in continuing to improve their ISL skills both through formal classes as well as in informal "meet-ups" to facilitate practice (83 references):

> It has opened me up the wanting to really learn more of ISL, I really want to learn more of ISL, a language I never thought too much about if I am honest.
>
> (Staff, ISL course)

> It was a sort of a 'lightning bolt' moment, where I wondered, why isn't everyone learning this in school? Seems utterly ridiculous not to be—there are nothing but advantages to knowing it.
>
> (Staff, ISL course)

While it is heartening that participants rated the activities highly, found them enjoyable and recommended them to others, it is critical that they also leave them better equipped for working with Deaf students. In terms of the CEFRL rating targets noted in Section 15.1, 61 (of the 75 set as a target) students self-rated at level A1, 10 at A2 and 3 at B1. In addition, 47 staff self-rated at level A1 and 3 at level A2. Overall, we are halfway to the student target of A1 ratings and have almost achieved twice the target for staff.

As well as this tangible improvement in ISL skills, most (91 percent) of the participants felt better equipped to work with Deaf people following the activities. Analysis of the open-ended question on changed behaviours and attitudes revealed further nuances. Given the aims of this initiative regarding improved inclusion of the new cohort of Deaf students, it is particularly positive to note that students and staff both reported that the course gave them confidence to approach and communicate with Deaf students more:

> It has really helped me understand how much people who are Deaf are used to people who are hearing and helped me feel more comfortable to approach the Deaf students in my year.
>
> (Student, ISL course)

> I want the Deaf students to know they can call to me and request the information about our Department and [that I can] help and advise Deaf students the way I help hearing students.
>
> (Staff, ISL course)

> I am talking and interacting a lot more with the Deaf pupils in my course and I am very happy about that.
>
> (Student, ISL course)

Beyond communicating with Deaf people, other participants (108 references in the data) reflected on their increased knowledge and understanding of Deaf culture[4] and history, improved awareness of issues pertaining to the Deaf community and a greater knowledge, awareness and appreciation of ISL as a language:

> It makes me appreciate the challenges faced by Deaf people in mainstream contexts more.
>
> (Staff, ISL course)

> Learning ISL has made me appreciate and respect the Deaf community.
>
> (Student, ISL course)

> I did not really view ISL as a unique language before the course, I do now.
>
> (Staff, ISL course)

Four participants also reflected on a new-found understanding of the important role of the interpreter:

> I learned a lot about sign language that I wasn't previously aware of and the importance of the interpreter to Deaf students.
>
> (Staff, Deaf Awareness Training)

Further analysis of the 11 participants who indicated that the activities did *not* change their thoughts or behaviours in any way revealed that 5 had known a Deaf person before engaging with the course, and 1 participant had mild hearing loss. One other participant had previously completed Level 1 ISL. As such, they may have come to the course with much of the knowledge that was being disseminated at this beginner level.

15.4 Discussion and Conclusion

Both individual (Nagle et al. 2016) and institutional (Cawthon et al. 2014) readiness are essential for Deaf students to succeed in HE. However, emphasis has typically been on the former, and academic staff sometimes assume that the provision of accommodations to Deaf students (which they see as being the responsibility of the student and support staff) can level the playing field (Foster et al. 1999). This can ignore the complex issues at play for Deaf students and results, overall, in a chilly campus climate where Deaf students are misunderstood and poorly served by staff who do not understand their experiences and peers who ignore them (Powell et al. 2014). Given that 64 percent of the sample in this research had never met a Deaf person before, it is perhaps understandable why Deaf awareness is so lacking in HE settings. To address this, DCU is providing a multifaceted and holistic programme of capacity building to create a warm campus climate for Deaf students so that they feel they belong to the university 'family'.

A diverse group of participants took part in Deaf Awareness activities on campus for a variety of personal and professional reasons, though the majority cited being able to communicate with Deaf people generally, and the Deaf cohort on campus specifically, as their primary reason for taking part. Overall, participants were very positive in their evaluation of the courses and noted them to be effective in improving their Deaf awareness and competencies in ISL. Through their engagement with the activities, staff and students at DCU are paving the way to create a warm campus climate for Deaf students by committing to direct communication with, and validation of, these students. Their commitment is evidenced through multiple references to continuing to take ISL classes and a call for staff and student networks to practice their skills.

Communication is at the heart of successful inclusion (Powell et al. 2014), and a warm campus climate for Deaf students is a necessity. Deaf students are vulnerable to feeling lonely and isolated in HE settings, even when sign language interpreters are made available (Parasnis et al. 2005). Direct communication with peers and with staff (academic staff in particular) is expected to improve the sense of belonging of Deaf students to the university 'family'. While many hearing students stated that they had an interest in ISL before commencing this programme, taking part in classes on campus gave them the confidence to approach their Deaf peers and communicate directly with them, something that has been lacking for other Deaf students in HE (Powell et al. 2014). For staff, this was coupled with a realisation that while direct communication is valuable, the complexity of ISL means that mediated communication via an interpreter will also be essential.

As well as fostering direct communication, the activities also led participants to validate the lived experiences of their Deaf peers and students. Acknowledging the existence of Deaf culture, the discrimination faced by Deaf people in the education system historically, the richness and value of ISL and the everyday challenges faced by Deaf people in an otherwise 'hearing' world is important in contributing to a campus climate that sees and recognises Deaf students for who they are. It also reduces the potential for audist microaggressions (Stapleton and Croom 2017) as the level of Deaf awareness among the campus community is raised.

The combined effect is that Deaf students should experience a warmer campus climate where peers and staff communicate directly with them, where their culture and language are validated and where they have an improved sense of belonging with the university 'family'. As data collection for this project continues, rich qualitative data will be collected from the Deaf student cohort and will provide further nuance to the successes and remaining challenges in the pursuit of a Deaf-friendly campus at DCU.

Notes

1 Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH): Strand 1 (Equity of Access to Initial Teacher Education).

2 Level A1 is summarised as: "Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details, such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person communicates slowly and clearly and is prepared to help" (Leeson et al. 2016, p. 9).

3 Level A2 is summarised as: "Can understand sentences and frequently-used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g., basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need" (Leeson et al. 2016, p. 9).

4 Deaf communities have been recognised as having their own distinct culture comprising language, values, traditions, norms and identity (Padden and Humphries 1988).

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16 LGBTQI+ Teachers in Ireland

Dilemmas of Visibility, Age-Appropriateness and Religion across a Period of Rapid Legislative Change

Aoife Neary

16.1 Introduction and Literature Review

Many LGBTQI+[1] teachers feel the weight of heteronormativity at school and detail experiences ranging from overt homophobia and harassment (Ferfolja 2008) to subtle everyday assumptions in language (Neary 2013). LGBTQI+ teachers engage in significant emotional labour, constantly checking themselves in making decisions about whether or how to let their LGBTQI+ identity be visible at school (Neary, Gray, and O'Sullivan 2016; Neary 2017b). A key concern amongst LGBTQI+ teachers is how to be 'authentic' and 'honest' about their LGBTQI+ identities whilst surveying the personal/professional divide and ambiguities around 'childhood innocence'. These teachers are very often concerned with presenting a correspondence with what is valued by their schooling contexts and thus preserving their professional legitimacy and security (McCarthy 2003; Ferfolja 2008; Gray 2013; Neary 2013, 2017a; Harris and Jones 2014).

In managing all of this, LGBTQI+ teachers adopt a spectrum of approaches in disclosing or 'coming out' at school, and their everyday negotiations are an ambivalent, messy mix of transgressing boundaries and reproducing normativity (Ferfolja 2008; Neary, Gray, and O'Sullivan 2016; Neary 2017b). Some try to perform as the 'super' teacher, detracting from their LGBTQI+ identity (Rudoe 2010; Neary 2017a, 2017b). Such commitments to this extra work to be the 'super' teacher increase professional legitimacy and act as a bulwark against the constant threat of illegitimacy, but also have their compromises, including the reproduction of heteronormalising effects (Neary 2017b). Many LGBTQI+ teachers maintain tight control over relations with students and parents because of the unpredictability of student and parent attitudes and beliefs. For some, this adversely affects their pastoral relationships with students (Neary 2017a; Hooker 2019), but others negotiate these relations with transformative effects for students (Mayo 2008). Some LGBTQI+ teachers even resort to leaving the teaching profession (Jones et al. 2014; Connell 2015).

Many teachers appear to feel an acute pedagogical responsibility to be a LGBTQI+ 'role model' (Russell 2010; Connell 2015). Such acts have been analysed for their refusal of victimhood and transformative potential (Ferfolja 2007; Wells 2017), but the imperative to 'come out' places inordinate responsibility on

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and poses further risks for the already potentially vulnerable LGBTQI+ teacher (Neary 2013; Meyer et al. 2015; Wells 2017). It can have essentialising and normalising effects (Khayatt 1997; Mayo 2014) and can silence the notion that disclosure is not possible or desirable for everyone (Rasmussen 2004). Moreover, taking another angle on 'coming out' in education, Brockenbrough (2012, p. 759) explains how Black queer male teachers "dimmed the spotlight on their queerness" and thus maintained a masculine authority with and connectedness to their students, instead taking up subtle and strategic opportunities to enact anti-homophobic resistances.

A significant theme in research with LGBTQI+ teachers internationally is the impact of policy and legislative frameworks. Across contexts, structural factors such as strong school leadership, combined with LGBTQI+ inclusive policy, have a positive impact for LGBTQI+ teachers (Ferfolja and Hopkins 2013). Changes in legislation have also been cited as crucial (Ferfolja 2009). Some research highlights how when anti-discrimination legislative protection has been introduced, LGBTQI+ teachers describe new feelings of safety and security (Ferfolja 2009). Across all contexts, non-permanent or non-tenured teachers are particularly vulnerable, and this is accentuated in contexts where legislative gaps remain (Neary 2013; Fahie 2016). Legislative deficiencies are felt in potent ways by LGBTQI+ teachers in religious or faith schools across the globe. Religious exemptions give legislative power and credence to the concept of religious ethos in schools (Neary 2013; Fahie 2016, 2017). In several contexts, religious exemptions have resulted in the dismissal of LGBTQI+ teachers on ethos grounds (see, for example, Callaghan 2015). Through religious exemptions, heteronormativity is maintained and a kind of 'holy homophobia' is facilitated (Callaghan 2015). In contexts such as Ireland, where there is such intertwining of church and state in education, religious exemptions take on a particularly stark hue. Section 37.1 of the Employment Equality Act 1998/2004 protected schools against unfair dismissal or recruitment litigation in cases where the purpose was to maintain the religious ethos of an institution under religious patronage. While Section 37.1 was never used in court, it historically acted as a 'chill factor' for LGBTQI+ teachers, bolstering heterosexism and homophobia (Fahie 2016).

This chapter presents three key themes from a meta-analysis of four separate qualitative studies exploring the everyday lives and concerns of LGBTQI+ teachers in Ireland between 2010 and 2019.[2] First, I outline key methodological details. Following this I outline and discuss three meta-themes: 'heteronormative politics of visibility and legitimacy', 'age-appropriateness and childhood innocence' and 'religious identifications and structures'. Finally, I raise pertinent questions for teacher education and the teaching profession.

16.2 Methodology

The illustrative data drawn upon in this chapter have arisen from four studies conducted since 2010 in Ireland. Study A (2010) was a small qualitative study comprising in-depth interviews with 8 lesbian and gay teachers, exploring their experiences of 'coming out' in their school contexts. Study B (2011–2014) was an in-depth qualitative study that included 15 LGB teachers who were entering into a Civil Partnership (CP) (the relationship structure that existed for same-sex couples prior to Marriage Equality). In this study, teachers took part in a first interview and then completed diary entries across a 6-week period, followed by a second interview. Study C (2015) was conducted during the Marriage Equality Referendum and focused on school leaders', teachers' and parents' perspectives on preventing homophobia and transphobia in primary schools. Semi-structured interviews took place with 6 school leaders and 12 teachers, and six focus groups were conducted with a total of 28 parents. Finally, Study D was a thematic analysis of LGB teachers' stories and testimonies in the mainstream Irish media between 2012 and 2019. These accounts captured 17 LGB teachers' voices ranging from those who contributed to media outlets anonymously, to those who were publicly visible through their advocacy work in the LGBT teachers' union groups. In total, the voices of 43 LGB teachers were captured across these studies. Unfortunately, the voices of trans, non-binary or intersex teachers were not captured empirically. I proceed, nevertheless, with using the term LGBTQI+ throughout because to do otherwise runs the risk of erasing trans and gender-diverse identities. The four studies capture a rich snapshot of LGB teachers' lives in a time of rapid change with regard to the politics of sexuality and gender in Ireland.

16.3 Findings

16.3.1 Heteronormative Politics of Visibility and Legitimacy

Aligned with the field of work with LGBTQI+ teachers internationally, LGBTQI+ teachers across the four studies I have conducted in Ireland describe constant self-surveillance work to manage their identities at school. Of course, all teachers manage personal/professional, public/private relations at school, but there are extra layers of work for LGBTQI+ teachers because the politics of visibility and appropriateness at school hinge on silent and invisible heterosexual and cisgender norms. Under such conditions, teachers are largely presumed to be heterosexual or cisgender and must 'come out' in order to be recognised as otherwise. Some choose to remain silent, and these teachers talk about the extra vulnerabilities that this silence causes. For example, some teachers describe situations where they overhear casual homophobia. Others even describe situations in the past where their secrecy was manipulated by others to control and maintain silence around their LGBTQI+ identity. Even when they do come out, LGBTQI+ teachers continue to carefully negotiate the silent heteronormative and cisgender logics of what is appropriate for discussion at school: "I'm not going to be kind of shying away from it … Saying that, I'm not going to be waving a flag either" (Steve, Educate Together Primary, Study B). Many work extremely hard to hone their professional effectiveness and classroom management and are acutely aware that this is part of protecting themselves in the event that their LGBTQI+ identification delegitimises them in some way. In the absence of an official announcement, there is continuous work involved in 'coming out' to people in school communities. Furthermore, many oscillate between thinking and worrying about who knows what, and a kind of defiant positionality and pride in identifying as LGBTQI+. This is particularly intense work for early career, non-permanent teachers whose precarious working conditions make them extra conscious and watchful of the heteronormative, cisnormative personal/professional divide governing the teaching profession:

> If I was permanent, I probably wouldn't be afraid then that I'd lose my job … if I was permanent/full-time I would not have hidden the fact that I was gay … It would give me some sense of security that I wouldn't be unemployed because I said I was gay. So, it does make a difference.
>
> (Elaine, Catholic Second-level, Study B)

Legislative changes in recent years in Ireland have had an impact on the ways that some teachers can negotiate their visibility at school. Celebratory traditions such as engagement announcements, wedding presents and cakes have opened up to LGBTQI+ teachers. For some teachers, this has been the very structure that has facilitated their 'coming out' process, and many describe surprise and joy at the reactions of their colleagues. Such changing politics of visibility are indeed empowering for some but, for others, they signal a reliance on a particular kind of relationship structure, one that is coupled and conforms to the heteronormative legitimising structure of marriage: "the women who were straight problematised the whole thing … 'what are you going to wear? Who is the best man? Who is this …', you know, they read the whole thing as a straight wedding" (Richard, ETB Second-level, Study B). Some teachers describe difficulties fitting within this heteronormalizing/homonormalising framework on offer and note the conforming work that they do in return for their legislative recognition and collegial supports. Such dynamics of gratefulness signal the power relations at work and the ways in which spaces like schools continue to orientate around heterosexuality and cisgenderism. These dynamics also signal the continued difficulties for those who fall outside of this homonormative/cisnormative frame. They remind us of the power of the politics of respectability and legitimacy at work in and through schools, pulling some LGBTQI+ people into the charmed circle of inclusion while 'others', such as trans and nonbinary people, or those who identify as bisexual, pansexual or polyamorous, fail to be visible or apprehended.

16.3.2 Childhood Innocence, Age-Appropriateness and Student/Teacher Boundaries

A powerful meta-theme intersecting all four studies concerns the way that discourses of childhood innocence and age-appropriateness cause reluctance and silence. This is particularly potent for LGBTQI+ primary school teachers who are always cognisant of the unpredictability associated with how knowledge of their sexuality or gender identity will be understood and perceived by young children and their parents. When they are made visible in primary schools, LGBTQI+ people are most commonly represented within negative or punitive anti-bullying frameworks. School leaders and teachers describe reluctances around what is appropriate for discussion at what age. The legacy of overly biological and heavily outsourced education around Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) contributes to and reproduces uncertainties and confusion around what is suitable for discussion in primary schools. One gay principal explains one point of tension here: "homosexuality is perceived as not child friendly … it's [understood as] something that is completely sexualised and … that isn't child friendly, the sex part of it isn't child friendly". Some teachers even experience overt homophobia from children but the power of their fears around being openly LGBTQI+ at school result in inaction and further silence. These fears appear to be experienced particularly potently by gay men primary school teachers who have the extra threatening layer of reductive ideas around gay men's sexuality, mixed with historically internalised fears around accusations of paedophilia. One teacher talks about his cautiousness:

> I'd be scared that some parents know, being a male teacher as well you just have to be very careful. And being male and gay, just, you get this caution about you to be careful and don't say too much in class or bring too much or your personal self into the class. You try separate yourself a little bit.
>
> (Donnacha, Catholic Primary, Study C)

Such fears spill over into second-level schools too, as some LGBTQI+ teachers describe concerns about the subtle, normalised working of homophobia at school and the unpredictability of young people's as well as parents' reactions and attitudes towards gender and sexuality diversity.

At both primary and post-primary level, most teachers struggle with conflicts between the pedagogical impact of being open about their LGBTQI+ identification and their tendencies towards self-preservation. On the one hand, teachers describe strong desires to be visible and open LGBTQI+ role models for children and young people who are identifying as LGBTQI+ and to take up opportunities to teach about gender and sexuality diversity at school. On the other hand, however, they display a constant tempering of these desires as they struggle to manage the potential risks involved. This careful consideration of student/teacher boundaries has impacts for developing pastoral relations with their students. Some invest heavily in discipline strategies that prevent students straying into personal questions, but this watchfulness has subtle and lasting effects for the shape of their rapport with their students, as one teacher explained:

> … one teacher—because we were pair teaching together—the ease with which she was able to speak about her family, her husband and her children, it's fantastic, because when you, it helps build your relationship with the kids, not only with your colleagues, but being able to talk about yourself you … actually helps build a better relationship with the children.
>
> (Fiona, Catholic Primary, Study A)

Again, these boundaries are policed particularly closely by those in precarious, non-permanent employment. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there are more examples of teachers doing pedagogical work to interrupt heteronormativity and cisnormativity in second-level schools, and legislative changes such as Marriage Equality appear to have given a legitimising frame through which this kind of equality work can be done. However, the emotional work of putting their own identities front and centre in their teaching, coupled with the risk associated with their work being read as furthering a personal agenda at school, cannot be ignored.

16.3.3 Religious Structures and Identifications

As aforementioned, Section 37.1 is a religious exemption clause in the Employment Equality Act 1998/2004 in Ireland that, in its original form, permitted schools to recruit and dismiss teachers using 'religious ethos' as a legitimate criterion. LGB teachers across these four studies described fearing Section 37.1 and the power of religious ethos in some Irish schools. Section 37.1 has undoubtedly contributed to the silences around gender and sexuality diversity in many school contexts. Some teachers described worries regarding employment status, and some teachers explained that they had invested in backup careers. As many LGB teachers began entering into Civil Partnerships (CP) between 2011 and 2015 and some were involved in political campaigns, they were acutely conscious that there was risk with regard to Section 37.1:

> I think the Board of Management would have said 'Look, you have a teacher on the staff, she had a CP and she's here in a Catholic school. And she really is … upfront about her CP … which is contrary really to the Catholic 'ethos' and what are we going to do about it as a Board?'
>
> (Darina, Catholic Primary, Study B)

Following many years of campaigning, Section 37.1 was amended in 2015, explicitly cross-referencing the nine equality grounds (including 'sexual orientation') on which discrimination is not permitted. However, mirroring EU law, an 'occupational requirement' clause was inserted, explaining that

> … a religious organisation shall not be taken to discriminate against a person … by giving favourable treatment on the religion ground to an employee or a prospective employee where the religion or belief of the employee constitutes a justified occupational requirement.
>
> (cf. Employment Equality (Amendment) Act, 2015)

This clause, intended to protect religious freedom in the patronage of a minority of European schools, has very different connotations in a country where 96 percent of primary schools are under religious patronage and teachers are required to teach religion in a faith formation model. And so, many of the same ambiguities that surrounded Section 37.1 continue to linger. Such ambiguities, combined with the long-lasting effects of legislatively legitimised discrimination, are such that 'religious ethos' continues to reproduce reluctances around gender and sexuality diversity in school communities. Further, the reluctances, silences and compromises that abound continue to have a significant impact on the everyday lives of many LGBTQI+ teachers:

> The law is changed but there are still schools where you feel you cannot be yourself. I now have permanency, and this is the first time I've been openly out and comfortable being out as a gay woman … it's 2018 … Do I show who I really am, or do I protect my job?
>
> (Member of INTO LGBT Teachers' Group, Study D)

Thus, while the magnetic pull to the promise of legislation is strong, the teachers across these four studies reveal the limited reach of legislation in the face of deeply cultural and institutionalised heteronormativity and cisnormativity. This is further complicated in Ireland by the ways in which these deeply engrained logics are fundamentally intertwined with a kind of Catholic normativity that is also embedded in the structure of the Irish education system. The teachers in these studies inevitably embody a Catholic cultural habitus, and this was particularly evident as some teachers entered into CPs and marriages. Some LGBTQI+ teachers had themselves been in religious life, while several teachers described having deep religious faith. For many teachers, their religious affiliations and/or relationships with their faith orientated them towards religiously inflected ceremonies in celebrating their CPs/marriages. Some also believed that Irish society continued to signal certain marriage frames as more legitimate than others and were acutely conscious of this in approaching their own celebrations. All of these complications further reveal the limits of an orientation towards secularism as a solution for LGBTQI+ inclusion.

16.4 Discussion and Conclusion

Clearly, several themes across the four studies referenced in this chapter echo themes in the research internationally. The extent of the work done by LGBTQI+ teachers in Ireland, in managing a personal/professional divide that is unique to the teaching profession, is a resounding feature of the work LGBTQI+ teachers do everywhere. We are also left in little doubt about the particularly layered vulnerabilities of early career teachers who are in precarious employment.

So, what are the pertinent questions for the teaching profession? Building on and aligned with the work of some who point out the limits of policy solutions that are enacted in reactive and tokenistic ways (Gray et al. 2016; Rudoe 2018), and those who note that enacting anti-discrimination legislation is no guarantor of LGBTQI+ teachers feeling safer (Ferfolja 2009; Connell 2015; Heinz et al. 2017; Lee 2019), the findings from the four studies presented in this chapter caution against an over-reliance on policy or legislative solutions for LGBTQI+ teachers. The watchful, self-surveillance work that they do to achieve an appropriate visibility and legitimacy at school underlines how the personal/professional divide of the teaching profession hinges on the presumption of heterosexuality. The work that teachers do in return for the acceptance and legitimacy they receive via their CPs/marriage also reveals the power dynamics that are at play as LGBTQI+ inclusion is approached in schools. These dynamics impart powerful lessons about the limits of simplistic solutions for approaching these issues and remind us to stay with the complexity of gender and sexuality at school. Echoing some scholars who have noted the limits of anti-discrimination legislation as a mechanism for improving the lives of LGBTQI+ teachers (Khayatt 1997), my research has provided an illustrative example across time in focusing on Section 37.1. A legislative issue that remained at the heart of union campaigns for many years and that many teachers worked to change, has, as predicted by several teachers, not just magically 'disappeared' the ways that religious ethos polices the lives of many LGBTQI+ teachers. Furthermore, many stakeholders are drawn towards secularism as a solution for questions of gender and sexuality diversity, but the ambivalent attachments that LGBTQI+ teachers have to religion, coupled with the ways in which religiosity is inextricable from the ways that normativity and legitimacy operate in some contexts, reveals such orientations as cruel fantasies. These findings alert us to a need for close attention to the nuances of these cultural factors at work in schools and help to orientate us sideways from the simplifying, teleological allure of policy and legislation. A final aspect that my research with LGBTQI+ teachers has underscored is the powerful ways that discourses of childhood innocence and age-appropriateness work to hold back progress with regard to gender and sexuality diversity. The effect is such that many schools—primary schools in particular—continue to render LGBTQI+ people invisible, and their lives and identities are not seen in positive terms but are instead predominantly reflected within punitive and negative frameworks of bullying (Bryan and Mayock 2012; Ging and Neary 2019).

Teacher education presents itself as an ideal site to explicate and complicate some of these fine-grained dynamics of gender and sexuality diversity. Such education needs to continue to attend to the workings of diversity at school and to prepare teachers to educate for gender and sexuality diversity. In doing this, however, we need to resist the slippage into neoliberal, identitarian models of recognition that seek acceptance and tolerance and achieve legitimacy and normalisation for some whilst excluding others. Such reductions can fail to reflect the spectrum of gender and sexuality identities and can have the effect of bolstering the logics of heteronormativity and cisnormativity rather than destabilising them. I believe that consideration of emotion and affect are central to this work, and I have argued elsewhere for a *queer pedagogy of emotion* (Neary 2020) in teacher education. Following Quinlivan (2018), who explicates the generative potential of attending closely to emotionality in pedagogical situations, a *queer pedagogy of emotion* puts emotionality at the heart of teaching about diversity. Instead of a focus on including the 'other' or respecting difference, exploring the ways that humans have common feelings and emotions across borders and differences can sidestep some of the conundrums of identity politics. Furthermore, approaching this work *queerly* involves a continuous commitment to staying with dissonance, tension and discomfort—concepts that will always abound when teaching about gender and sexuality diversity.

Note

1. The acronym LGBTQI+ is used throughout to refer to a spectrum of gender and sexuality identities.
2. This chapter aims to provide an overview of meta-themes across four studies I have conducted in Ireland. For further empirical and methodological detail, see: Study 1 (Neary 2013); Study 2 (Neary et al. 2018; Neary, Irwin-Gowran and McEvoy 2016; Neary 2017a, 2017b, 2020); Study 3 (Neary and Rasmussen 2020); and Study 4 (Neary 2020).

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17 Supporting Mature Students in Primary Teacher Education

A Framework of Care

Karina Ryan

17.1 Introduction and Literature Review

This chapter presents and discusses findings from a yearlong research study with mature students on a Bachelor of Education (BEd), primary, initial teacher education (ITE) programme at Mary Immaculate College (MIC) in Limerick. Mature students[1] are identified as an under-represented group in ITE under PATH1,[2] and in recent years, there has been a rapid fall in the number of mature students entering primary undergraduate ITE.[3] *Step into Teaching*, the PATH1 initiative discussed in this chapter, engaged with eight mature ITE students, mapping their journey into and through ITE, in order to enhance their educational experiences and thereby improve their retention, progression and academic success. This engagement comprised an introductory session at orientation, regular group lunch meetings, specific subject supports, and an open-door policy in the project office. An early project insight was that the research participants were all first-generation entrants to higher education (HE) and from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Literature on the lived experiences of mature students in HE, and in primary ITE, is limited both nationally and internationally. Boren and James (2017) highlight how mature students are generally overlooked in widening participation policy and research, and O'Boyle suggests that 'mature student', as a label, is a "poor catch-all for a heterogeneous group" (2014, p. 175). Dolan (2008) found that mature primary ITE students experienced significant financial and academic difficulties, and her research predicted the subsequent decline in entrants. Evidence strongly suggests that mature students, and other under-represented cohorts, often struggle with identity issues and belonging as they transition into HE (Christie et al. 2008; Keane 2009). These struggles are particularly apparent amongst under-represented groups in ITE who are becoming part of the predominantly middle-class teaching profession (Maguire 1999; Keane and Heinz 2015; Lampert et al. 2016). Strategies that have proven supportive during the early stages of HE transition include friendships formed by mature students, which contribute to a sense of belonging and to academic success (Kim and Schallert 2011; O'Boyle 2014; Cree et al. 2016); feedback and support from academic staff (Christie et al. 2008; Tett et al. 2012); and students believing that academic staff care (Tett et al. 2017). Research on the complex challenges faced by mature students, especially those

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from lower socio-economic groups, pointed to an absence of care in HE settings (Reay 2017; Tett et al. 2017). Noddings (2013) argues that authentic caring relationships in education move beyond a passive 'caring about' to a more relational 'caring for', and that care "is rooted in receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness" (Noddings 1984, p. 2). Tronto (2010) too adopts a holistic collaborative view of care, which is mindful of power relations and sits within a supportive culture of care. Tronto's theories emphasise the complexity of care, how it is multidimensional, being a disposition, an ethic and a practice (2010). She identifies five distinct yet interrelated phases of care, namely, *caring about*, *caring for*, *caregiving*, *care receiving* and *caring with* (Tronto 2013), and argues (Tronto 2010) that care must be purposeful, pluralistic and particularistic, mindful of diversity and attuned to individual needs and preferences.

While Tronto emphasises the difficulties in defining care, Mariskind views care as "a daily human activity undertaken in both private and public domains that supports human flourishing" (2014, p. 308). Lynch (2010) supports the conceptualising of care as a public good and argues that love, care and solidarity are inextricably linked with an individual's sense of belonging. The foregoing literature informed and shaped the *Step into Teaching* project team's understanding of the lasting educational impact of structural disadvantage, those strategies that have proved successful in supporting under-represented groups in HE, and the potential benefits of drawing on a comprehensive caring approach to orient mature student supports.

17.2 Methodology

This chapter is based on research conducted with the 2018–2019 mature student *Step into Teaching* group throughout their first year of the BEd primary ITE programme at MIC. Nine mature students entered the undergraduate primary ITE programme in 2018, and all were invited to participate in the project. Eight subsequently accepted the invitation and engaged with the *Step into Teaching* initiative throughout the academic year 2018–2019. Full ethical approval was received for an extensive longitudinal research project. Comprehensive notes were kept on all interactions. Six of the eight mature students also participated in individual qualitative, semi-structured, interviews at the end of first year.[4] Of the six mature student participants, two were male and four were female, and they were between ages 23 and 36 years. All of the mature students were first-generation entrants to HE, and two were parents.

The interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed. The interviewer was the PATH1 Programme Manager, and early interactions with the participants, and a growing awareness of their concerns combined with engagement with the academic literature, pointed towards a care-based approach. Collins's (2000) four key criteria when conducting care-based and social justice-oriented research (the primacy of lived experience, a focus on dialogue, centring the research on an ethic of care and energising it with an ethic of responsibility) guided the methodological approach. Ongoing formal and informal interactions built relationships and trust, guided the iterative development of the project and were very beneficial for the subsequent interviews. The findings considered in this chapter are drawn exclusively from the interview data. The data were thematically analysed, and this process was guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006, p. 87) six steps: familiarising oneself with the data, generating codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, refining and naming themes and writing a scholarly report of the analysis. For this chapter, the focus is on those findings related to aspects of care. Pseudonyms have been used throughout to protect the participants' identities. Extensive use was made of the original data to ensure that the mature ITE students' accounts and voices were not "torn apart in analysis" (Collins 2000, p. 258).

17.3 Findings

17.3.1 Educational Histories and Early Disappointments

All of the research participants were first-generation entrants to HE, and this positioning impacted their families' beliefs about education. Ross simply stated that "education wasn't big at home", whereas Lucy pointed out how education was not highly valued by her father:

> He would be very like 'just get a job now', he'd see college as being kind of like a frivolous thing, you know, because he has worked since he was a child.

The data indicated that while emotional support and encouragement of education was evident in some family contexts, practical support was limited. Ann explained how a lack of practical information was impactful and was not ameliorated by supports in school:

> Teacher told us we would be great teachers! You know all excited but never knowing, like, what was actually needed to be a teacher, or what education or what study you needed to do to get there. So I never had like anything proper behind me to stand for me.

Conor spoke about 'the push' factor, which he likened to active and ongoing support and encouragement from a parent or other authority figure. He believed this was very influential on the educational outcomes of his peers:

> I really could have done with a push at times like. Maybe around the Leaving Cert and stuff like that. I'm not downing the mother but she would have never pulled me to the side and said, 'Listen, like, what's the plan. What are you going to do? How are we going to go about it?' There was never any of that, it was all on my own back.

The participants spoke about incidents of being unsupported in school. Carol described how she was in a large school and "you would fall between the cracks there alright". Ann, on the other hand, recounted a very traumatic experience of class discrimination in school, whereby a teacher imitated her accent on a daily basis. She appeared to blame herself for her maltreatment:

> I should have gone somewhere that was a little bit more suitable for where I was coming from because I would have been the only one in the whole year, out of 120 students, that came from a disadvantaged area, and like there was no support there whatsoever. Everyone was just seen as like you are cream of the crop or you're nothing.

All of the participants recalled being unable to access the private education market, for 'grinds',[5] supervised study, language immersion programmes, and revision courses. Economic disadvantage was, as a result, academically constraining. Ann described putting pressure on her father to fund additional supports for the Leaving Certificate, similar to those being availed of by her school peers:

> I was coming home crying about these things that I wanted and we could only live within our means, but like I didn't understand that at the time because I wanted what everybody else had.

Carol was keen to improve her Irish to keep her primary teaching aspiration alive:

> I wanted to go to the Gaeltacht but it wasn't an option, there was five kids on one wage, maybe it would have helped but it was a no go area.

Participants wanted to be primary school teachers from a young age, and their stories testified to the devastating impact of not achieving sufficient points in the Leaving Certificate to make their aspirations a reality. Ross recalled the impact of disappointing results:

> I think I pushed myself quite a bit … and like I think I felt undone by some of the results.

Ann mentioned how her school's approach to the Leaving Certificate compounded her sense of failure:

> There wasn't a huge amount of guidance there and just a lot of pressure about points. And 'if you don't do this and you don't go to college then you're an absolute failure!' So, yeah, and then when I did my Leaving Cert … it just all fizzled away then after that … 'it's gone, you just ruined your chances' of whatever because that's the way that it's told to you.

17.3.2 Finding a Way Back to ITE

The participants showed incredible resilience in finding a way back to their teaching goals after being out of education for long periods of time. The importance of finding opportunities, in the form of recognition, direct supports, and access opportunities, to match their aspirations, was obvious from their accounts. Several participants spoke about trying to gain access to ITE for many years, and they benefitted enormously from the *Teacher Education Access Programme* (TEAP)[6] for mature students, which has been in existence in MIC since 2013[7]:

> The access programme then was massive altogether like, that was literally my access into teaching, which I was trying to get for so, so long.
>
> (Conor)

> I don't even know what I was searching for but I had been on the [local newspaper] and they had something about the Teacher Education Access Programme … And I felt in that moment, I was like 'oh my God this is it something good is gonna come from this now' … I just couldn't believe it. After all, after everything, that it was actually going to happen.
>
> (Ann)

Feeling welcomed at mature student interviews was mentioned by several of the participants. Lucy spoke about the impact of the supportive and relaxed environment she encountered, which contrasted to her previous experiences of education:

> The two people who interviewed me, they were lovely. Yeah, it made it so much easier because I felt good when I came out of it … They weren't trying to catch me out.

17.3.3 First-Year Struggles

All of the participants struggled with some aspect of their ITE programme. The majority struggled with or worried about Irish, but concerns were also expressed about Maths and academic writing. Ross explained how he had a fear of Irish and how he felt embarrassed asking questions:

> I can't ask this to an Irish teacher, I'll look like a fool … I felt like I should have known this in fourth class.

Conor voiced concerns about not meeting the academic standard, concerns that were echoed by all of the participants:

> I kind of had a bit of a fear of going into this year saying like, am I going to be good enough for this, you know? You're gonna have to put in savage work here like. And I did, I put in the work and I got the results.

Primary ITE undergraduate programmes are demanding with a busy academic schedule and a heavy workload. The mature participants faced many additional and diverse challenges. Carol's experiences, a lone-parent with a long daily commute, encapsulated such challenges:

> The mammy guilt is just something else but, I just kept saying to myself, 'Look, it's not forever, it's for the next four years. It's stressful but, it's doable'… I travel up and down to [other county], that was hard. But at the same time. I wouldn't stay away, like you can't, not when you have kids.

All of the participants experienced financial difficulties, and this led, in varying degrees, to increased anxiety, sleep deprivation, and feeling torn between academic success and funding their living expenses:

> I've bills like you know, I don't work for fun. I don't work for a bit of pocket money. I work to survive.
>
> (Lucy)

> It's just like I would be working till four in the morning on say a weekday and then I'd be going in to college and then I'd be working weekends and so like you are tired, but if I didn't have that then there would be no other way for me to be in college.
>
> (Laura)

Laura was frustrated by lecturers' expressed views on part-time work and what she perceived as a lack of understanding about the financial realities for some ITE students:

> It is just presumed by some of the staff that Mams and Dads are paying for everything. So it is tough when some lecturers have turned around to us and said, 'You have to give it [work] up. There is no way that you can study and do well in college while working'.
>
> (Laura)

17.3.4 Supporting Success in ITE

The participants frequently referred to factors that contributed to their academic success thus far. At the most basic level, adequate funding through the *Step into Teaching* project was transformative for Carol:

> It was like winning the lotto! I was like, what?! You know, just to know that I don't have to like be stressed all the time.

Laura too spoke of the impact of successfully accessing funding:

> When I reapplied I got the SUSI[8] grant, which was huge like that just completely eased the financial situation for me for a while so that was really great and without that I wouldn't have been able to continue on.

An important element of support during the transition into ITE was the peer support from within the mature student group. Lucy spoke about the importance of finding people like herself:

> I didn't realise how important it [peer support] was until I actually had it. There was nobody else I could relate to before I started the course.

Other participants echoed this point and specifically mentioned the importance of group support when they were struggling or feeling excluded:

> It was brilliant because sometimes we would be looking at something and going 'is this for real?' … Then we'd be no, no we're fine because you don't feel you are by yourself … Everyone is really supportive, like we all help each other out.
>
> (Laura)

Finding staff approachable was very impactful for participants like Conor:

> I just felt fierce comfortable approaching lecturers … That was kind of a relief because if I did ever have a problem or a question or something like that, before I would have been like, ah look, I'll just leave it I won't bother asking because they'll probably be saying 'what's this fella at, like?'

The participants were very receptive to feedback. Even when feedback suggested the need for improvement, it was greatly appreciated:

> I think he was quite honest with me … he did say that, you know, like, he saw that I was working on the stuff that I needed to address, big time … And, yeah no I thought he was very fair … he seemed very open to communication
>
> (Ross)

Academic feedback and support appeared to be particularly impactful when the participants lacked self-belief. Lucy specifically referred to "impostor syndrome" and credited positive feedback with enabling her "to catch up". Ann also echoed these sentiments and alluded to the potential negative impact of self-doubt combined with the intense workload of a primary ITE programme:

> The feedback that I'm after getting this year off some of the teachers is brilliant as well. So I'm just trying to bring that self-belief back a little bit because sometimes it's … it can get overwhelming. You know, just that little bit of, encouragement, I think yeah, and you learn so much.

In response to mature student requests, academic and reflective writing sessions and additional classes in Irish, English and Maths were provided. Students also had open access to the *Step into Teaching* office, and monthly lunch gatherings were organised to give the group a chance to talk informally and to provide feedback on the project supports. Participants spoke of the benefit of these supports:

> We love that we can just meet and chat you know … And the fact that you are there to help us and to guide us is just fantastic. I think now if I came here as an 18-year-old, I wouldn't have done half as well as what I'm doing now, definitely not. Because I do, I do feel the support there.
>
> (Lucy)

> To be honest, everything you've been doing is absolutely brilliant. I can't fault any of it. Because like if we come to you with something, you're straight on the ball, you have it. And even the extra classes ye did for us … it was absolutely brilliant and so beneficial.
>
> (Conor)

> We had [Irish teacher's name] and we've plagued her … but she was fantastic. Honestly like, I had such a fear of Irish coming in here and that ended up being my best exam result in first semester.
>
> (Ross)

17.4 Discussion and Conclusion

Working alongside, and building relationships with, our mature student participants has revealed the complexity and the ongoing struggles apparent in their participation on an undergraduate, primary, ITE programme. Their experiences point to a lack of educational care and support available to them as young people and subsequently to the damaging personal impact of 'failing' to achieve (Reay 2017; Buddel 2018) their early teaching aspirations. These earlier experiences contrast with their recent positive experiences of access programmes, and strengths-based affirmative mature student entrance interviews, which when combined with their resilience and work ethic, played an essential role in bringing them back to ITE. This discussion focuses on three key aspects of the findings: firstly, the importance of relationships to encourage dialogue, trust and collaboration; secondly, the power of listening and responding to identified needs in a flexible way and the significant impact of involving a wider group of academics committed to caring for mature students, and thirdly, the need to understand care as a complex and dynamic process that evolved significantly over the course of the first year of *Step into Teaching*.

Encouraging the formation of a strong mature student group, through group meetings from orientation onwards, was an important aspect of the project. Interview data highlighted how the mature student group cared for and supported each other and how these relationships became a very valuable resource both academically and in terms of social and emotional support. This finding resonates with previous research claims that strong relationships and solidarity within mature student groups are very beneficial for both emotional and academic support (O'Boyle 2014; Cree et al. 2016). The importance of relational care, as described by Noddings (1984, 2013) and Tronto (1995, 2010), is woven throughout the interview data, and continuing to encourage and facilitate this solidarity and group support became a central component of the *Step into Teaching* initiative.

Viewing the research findings from an access practitioner perspective, it became clear that while additional academic supports were very beneficial for participants, they were not sufficient to repair the historical damage caused to their academic confidence and educational identities. Enhanced understanding of earlier educational disadvantage indicated the need for more robust and collaboratively designed supports to encourage academic confidence through feedback and to support a growing sense of belonging in ITE. This insight resonates with previous research (Tronto 2010; Tett et al. 2012; Mariskind 2014) and with Lynch's (2010) theory that care is a public good and that feeling cared for is inextricably linked to establishing a sense of belonging. Accounts of the participants' experiences in first year resonate with previous research, which details the extended and multifaceted transitional struggles of under-represented students in HE (Reay et al. 2002; Buddel 2018). While this research points to the need for critical reflection on the carelessness inherent in HE and academic cultures generally (Tett et al. 2017), this broader consideration is outside the scope of this chapter.

A key insight from this research is that, while authentic responsive care requires an overarching care ethic and an active caring disposition, care is also a process with sequential and interwoven phases (Tronto 2010, 2013). Building relationships opened a space for care, and the findings indicate that the participants were comfortable sharing their experiences. Taking responsibility for this care role by actively responding to identified care needs, through 'care giving' action (Tronto 2010) built trust. Responsiveness and feedback from those receiving care (Tronto 2010; Noddings 2013) strengthened when participants could see how their requests for support were being met. The complex support needs of participants made it increasingly obvious that a small project team, consisting of a project manager and a project officer, could not provide all the elements of educational care required to support thriving in ITE. As the study developed, bringing the mature students' experiences to the wider faculty improved understanding of their struggles and elicited support from lecturers committed to collaboratively 'caring with' (Tronto 2010) in ITE. This wider collaboration has energised the project further and is supporting initial steps towards developing an inclusive 'culture of care' (Tronto 2010) for mature students and other under-represented groups in ITE.

This research study moved the PATH1 initiative towards care for students, care that is comprehensive, collaborative and oriented towards the building of ITE identities and flourishing in ITE. The interview findings support a holistic approach to care that combines pluralistic academic supports, offered to all HE students, with particularistic individual bespoke caring responses (Tronto 2010), which participants found very impactful. The literature on widening participation and care when combined with the participant interview data, reminds us as educators and access practitioners to actively disrupt the tendency for inequalities to be reproduced in HE (Buddel 2018). It urges us to be cognisant of the many barriers to full and successful participation in ITE faced by mature students both pre- and post-entry. This study suggests the need for further longitudinal research on care in ITE for mature students and other under-represented groups. The type of care envisaged for future research is relational and empowering care, which moves beyond access and retention to enabling students from under-represented groups to flourish in ITE and on into their teaching careers.

Notes

1 A mature student is currently defined as an individual over 23 years of age on the 1st of January in the year of entry to HE undergraduate programmes.

2 Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH): Strand 1 (Equity of Access to Initial Teacher Education).

3 In the HE institution where this research took place, the percentage of mature entrants has fallen from an average of 10 percent of entrants in the early 2000s to less than 2 percent in recent years. While national statistics on mature student entry rates to all undergraduate primary education programmes in Ireland are not currently available, the decline in participation has been noted as an issue of concern by HE institutions at PATH1-related meetings.

4 Two of the eight students who engaged with the *Step into Teaching* project in MIC were unavailable for interview for significant personal and health reasons. They continued to engage with the project team and received bespoke supports from the *Step into Teaching* team and the institution. This support, combined with significant resilience and strong motivation, enabled them to continue to year two of the programme. Ethical considerations ensured that their well-being and progression were prioritised over data collection.

5 'Grinds' is the term used in Ireland for private tuition (for which the student must pay) in which some students engage in preparation for State examinations.

6 This pre-existing mature access programme at the institution was an entry route for some of the *Step into Teaching* student participants.

7 While TEAP was very beneficial for the mature students who participated, it was a pre-existing initiative, and only new initiatives were eligible for PATH1 funding.

8 Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) is Ireland's national awarding authority for all further and higher education grants. SUSI offers funding to eligible students, from school leavers to mature students returning to education, in approved full-time third-level courses.

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Section III

Learning from Teacher Diversity Research and Charting Future Pathways

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18 Diversifying the Teaching Profession

Mapping Learning and Interrogating Tensions

Rory Mc Daid, Elaine Keane and Manuela Heinz

18.1 Introduction

Section I of this book drew on national and international literature and contributions from a number of national contexts to examine the rationale for diversifying the teaching profession. In Section II, we explored various dimensions of diversity in initial teacher education (ITE) and teaching. Most of the chapters in Section II were based on Higher Education Authority-funded PATH1[1] projects, which specifically aim to diversify entrants to ITE programmes in Ireland. Other chapters in that section explored teacher diversity from the perspective of LGBTQI+ teachers currently teaching (Neary, Chapter 16) and qualified migrant teachers seeking to work in Ireland as teachers (Mc Daid, Chapter 12). This final part of the book, Section III (Chapters 18 and 19), captures and synthesises key learning from the volume and charts future pathways to a more diverse, equitable and inclusive teaching profession.

This chapter is structured around five key themes generated through our analysis of the chapters in this volume. The first proposes that teachers from under-represented groups are strongly motivated to make a difference in the lives of the minority students with whom they work. Some of the difficulties associated with this motivation are explored through this theme. The second theme examines some of the key barriers to teaching reported in this volume by student teachers and teachers from under-represented groups. In the third theme, we expose the difficulties experienced by many of these teachers as they seek to be authentically present in schools. Theme four picks up on this difficulty through an interrogation of the impact of the various teacher diversity initiatives presented in Sections I and II of the volume. We argue that many of the individual students appear to have benefitted significantly from their participation in such initiatives but that a much more concerted effort is required with regard to transforming higher education institutions (HEIs) and schools. In order to be successful, this work needs to be both theoretically informed and underpinned by high-quality research. The final theme examines significant absences in teacher diversity research to date and argues for their inclusion in future work.

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18.2 Motivation to Teach: Role Modelling and Making a Difference

The first major theme across the research projects included in this volume is that the majority of participants linked their motivation to teach with a commitment to challenge social injustice in education and positioned themselves as role models for this work. Much of this motivation was based on reflections on their own experiences as learners and a desire to re-present what was best in their own school experience. Sarah, for example, in Keane et al. (Chapter 9), desired "to be that person that can make a difference in a child's life" (p. 116). While this is not necessarily unique in the context of teachers or student teachers, many of the participants reflected on the role that their own identity played in this commitment and on how they stepped into the space of being a role model for those who shared elements of their identity. Caroline, a Traveller student in Burns et al. (Chapter 13), wanted to become a teacher because she would have a chance to "effect real change" and to "help inspire other Travellers to consider teaching as a career" (p. 159). Similarly, Burns and O'Sullivan (Chapter 10) argued that the working class teachers in their study felt a "personal responsibility for the well-being and education of 'students like them'" (p. 117), echoing previous research findings that point to enhanced social justice-oriented motivations for student teachers from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Heinz et al. 2017). Thais, a student participant in Sala Rothen and Mc Daid's chapter, explained that:

> I would like to be a minority ethnic teacher to help students like us … maybe because of the fact that some girls may feel more comfortable to have a teacher that's from somewhere else, but, also, I just like to teach.
>
> (p. 174)

Importantly, some of the studies reported upon demonstrated how participants reflected on the importance of being a role model for *all* students, not just for those who perform or share a similar identity to themselves. For example, in Neca et al. (Chapter 7), a teacher with a physical disability noted they took "special care to explain what my problem is, what limitations I may or may not have" (p. 92) to provide a positive view of disability for *all* students. Furthermore, some participants extended this sense of responsibility to the wider community, with Burns and O'Sullivan (Chapter 10) highlighting how some of the working class teachers in their study sought to challenge deficit perspectives about working class parents, in particular working class mothers. The migrant teachers in Mc Daid's chapter (Chapter 12) prioritised their identification as minority ethnic role models and intercultural educators as a key potential contribution to the education system. Additionally, however, these contributions were identified as "unique selling points" with regard to the job-seeking process, in which these applicants are otherwise at a disadvantage (Mc Daid and Nowlan, 2022). The value of such potential contributions was elucidated in Ragnarsdóttir's chapter (Chapter 5), when she considered how teachers and school leaders from immigrant backgrounds implement culturally responsive practices in their daily labour.

The complexities, limitations and challenges surrounding role modelling across multiple under-represented groups' identities are very well developed in the literature (see Chapter 2). Neary (Chapter 16) sounds important alarms; paying particular attention to LGBTQI+ teachers, she raises questions about the imperative to role model and how this poses further risks for "the already potentially vulnerable LGBTQI+ teacher" (p. 189). Some of these risks are very particular to LGBTQI+ teachers, given the policy and legislative context in Ireland, but some are shared with other under-represented groups in teaching. These risks include essentialisation, role entrapment, removing the responsibility for critical social justice work from other staff members, and the significant additional workload involved with identifying or being identified as a role model in a school setting. Some of these observations and critiques are specific to one particular under-represented group, while others have broader application. As part of Chapter 6, for example, McGrath, troubles the idea that uncritical matching of students and teachers by gender is beneficial for learning, while pointing to evidence that there may be some positive effects of ethnicity matching for some children's academic and socio-emotional development. In Chapter 9, Keane et al. present the affective challenge that this work unearths for the working class teachers, particularly when they encounter deficit 'teacher talk' about students from disadvantaged backgrounds on their school placements. These encounters shone a light on the students' own working class identity and resulted in some of the participants actively hiding their own background from other teachers. Ava, for example, explained that she would "never say it in a staff room who I am, or you know, my family … just in case it ever came against me down the line" (p. 120).

In the context of this volume, two other, interconnected, facets of role modelling must be addressed. Firstly, in consideration of any positive effects on students of any form of matching, we must remain cognisant of the high number of small schools, particularly at primary level, in Ireland. Schools with four mainstream class teachers, or fewer, accounted for almost 42 percent of all primary schools in 2020, educating 14.2 percent of the population, including the majority of primary schools in many parts of the west of Ireland (Department of Education [DE] 2021). Schools with such small numbers of teachers will never achieve a teaching body that represents all different groups. The second facet is the possibility of remote online role modelling, wherein certain teachers *may* take on a more public role, for example, as a representative of their minority ethnic group. Such work may occur through a combination of social or more traditional media and may be an individual or state-sponsored initiative.[2] While this can be a challenging space for any teacher, it is fraught with additional potential difficulties for minority teachers in the immediate term, through their engagement in the public space, but also potentially in the longer-term, with respect to the impact on their teaching careers.

One final element to be considered in relation to role modelling concerns the dangers associated with having to perform to an idealised, sometimes classed or racialised, image of model minority (Kokka and Chao 2020). There remain significant questions to be interrogated about those minority teachers who reject such positioning or who are passionate teachers but who, for whatever reason, do not want to take on extra work in defence or promotion of particular under-represented groups. Furthermore, teachers from under-represented groups, regardless of their own intention in this regard, may assume what Puwar (2004, p. 74) refers to as the "burden of representation", whereby all actions of a person may be taken as representative of their group. In consideration of role modelling then, we generally concur with Rezai-Rashti and Martino (2010) that it is a flawed conceptual framework grounded in reductionist and essentialist notions of racial and gender affiliation. They encourage a more sophisticated discussion about the need for greater presence and visibility of minority teachers, which is rooted in a commitment to eroding systemic inequalities as they relate to issues of access and participation for minority ethnic teachers. In the context of this volume, we can extend that call to teachers from other under-represented groups.

18.3 Barriers To and Through Initial Teacher Education

Many of the participants in the studies reported upon in this volume reflected on barriers that they experienced, both in terms of *accessing* and *progressing through* ITE. In Chapter 15, Mathews and Ryan divided these barriers into 'hard' and 'soft', with hard referring to specific policies and practices that directly block entry to HE, such as a subject that is not equally available to some students. Soft barriers are those that, while not directly blocking applications from certain students, can and do make entry and progression difficult, such as the lack of support structures and an inhospitable campus climate (p. 178). In her chapter on minority ethnic diversification in Scotland (Chapter 4), Arshad detailed that this work requires, *inter alia,* making ITE appealing to applicants from minority ethnic backgrounds, ensuring university admission processes do not prevent minority ethnic applicants from being selected and, finally, providing better support for minority ethnic students experiencing discrimination or harassment while on placement.

While some of the participants in the projects reported upon in this volume were motivated to teach by positive experiences of certain teachers in their own schooling careers, many participants identified barriers (in their schools or the broader education system) to progressing on to an ITE programme. The participants in Ryan's study (Chapter 17), for example, described the impact of barriers that constrained their academic progression in the Leaving Certificate[3] and into HE. Lack of economic, cultural, and social capital meant that these students did not access the private additional supports, such as 'grinds'[4] and revision courses, of which their more privileged classmates availed to improve their chances of securing their desired HE place. Another example is expensive Irish language immersion programmes, which are targeted specifically by those students aiming to achieve the required grade in the Irish examination in the Leaving Certificate, without which they cannot enter a primary education ITE programme in the State. This barrier was noted by some of the participants in Sala Rothen and Mc Daid's chapter (Chapter 14), who had ruled out progressing into primary teaching because of a lack of the required proficiency in the language. One student participant, Zofia, explained that this "makes you feel like you have less choices, but it's the only job we can't do" (p. 174). The issue of the Irish language was also identified as a barrier by some of the migrant teachers in Mc Daid's chapter and has been explored in more depth elsewhere (Schmidt and Mc Daid 2015). While access to private additional supports can, of course, be limited by lack of economic capital, lack of appropriate cultural capital can be just as detrimental to aspirations to teach. As Annie in Burns et al. (Chapter 13) pointed out, "My family didn't know anything about school, never mind third level education. This meant that I knew nothing about any courses available, different levels and different options available for me" (p. 159). Supports provided by the state to plug the gaps in this knowledge were deemed unsatisfactory by some of the students in the chapters by Ryan (Chapter 17), Kelly-Blakeney and Kennedy (Chapter 11) and Burns et al. (Chapter 13). These authors also observed that in their studies, teaching had not been presented as a possible option by career guidance teachers to some students.

With regard to barriers experienced during ITE programmes, Thomas and Hovdhaugen (Chapter 8) reported that the participants in their research struggled with the challenges created by finance, academic learning and assessment, professional placements and other responsibilities and personal circumstances. These issues are prevalent across the chapters in this volume. In Ryan's chapter (Chapter 17), for example, there is a very real sense of the financial hardship experienced by the mature-aged, first-generation students as they returned to education, and the stress involved in managing a full-time programme while working part-time to fund their studies and meet other financial responsibilities. Funding, whether through national grant initiatives or specifically through the PATH1 projects, had been vital in addressing some of these material concerns. Ryan also provided evidence of what she refers to as the "first year struggles" (p. 202) of her participants, paying particular attention to specific subjects such as Irish and Maths but also to more general issues such as academic writing. The difficulties experienced by the working class participants during the placement components of their ITE programmes in Keane et al. (Chapter 9) are particularly stark, in relation to the impact of deficit-based 'teacher talk' to which they were exposed as they moved behind the scenes in their schools. Given the evidence of the difficulties experienced by qualified LGBTQI+ teachers in Neary's chapter (Chapter 16) regarding the constant 'self-surveillance' work involved in managing their identities in school, and the substantial focus in this regard in the international literature for students from minority backgrounds, this is an area that demands far more interrogation across ITE programmes in Ireland. Finally, with regard to other responsibilities and personal circumstances, Kelly-Blakeney and Kennedy in Chapter 11 explain how illness, and the isolation resulting from moving away from home, meant that two of their participants did not progress onto ITE. Furthermore, Ryan, in Chapter 17, importantly, draws our attention to the gendered role of care in society highlighting that mature students who are parents face additional challenges, with one female participant explaining the "mammy guilt" she felt in spending so much time on her ITE programme. Further attention to, and larger-scale research about, the experiences of student teachers from under-represented groups accessing and during ITE is clearly necessary to inform the design and implementation of relevant supports.

18.4 Authentically Present? Recruitment, Retention and Progression

While the majority of the contributions in this volume attend to the experiences of those wishing to enter the teaching profession, this is, as we know, only the first step in a career. The chapters that detailed the challenges faced by minority teachers working *in* the system demand that we also focus on retention and progression, with a particular focus on how minority teachers may or may not be *authentically present* in schools. Being authentically present means that teachers may be fully open about their intersecting identities (e.g., class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and religion) in all their relationships in school—with school leaders, colleagues, students, parents and the community. Neary's work in Chapter 16 is particularly insightful in this regard. While it focuses on the everyday lives and concerns of LGBTQI+ teachers in Irish schools within a very particular social and legislative context, it raises important questions for the diversification of the teaching workforce more generally. We know from the international literature that teachers from other under-represented groups encounter very similar challenges to those excavated by Neary (Marom 2019). The first area of concern relates to recruitment and retention. The potential of Section 37.1 of the Employment Equality Act 1998/2004 in Ireland to exclude certain teachers from employment and retention in Irish schools must not be overlooked. While Neary draws our attention to this in the context of LGBTQI+ teachers, it is equally important for minority religious teachers or teachers of no faith. Some migrant teachers in Mc Daid's chapter focus on this in the context of their journey into teaching in Ireland, with one arguing that, "Catholic patronage is a huge impediment to seeking employment … if you're not Catholic, options are very limited" (p. 150). If it is the case that "Catholic primary schools in Ireland should only employ teachers with an approved qualification for teaching Religious Education in a Catholic primary school" (Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference 2018, p. 3), and if this instruction is enforced by Boards of Management, then this will seriously challenge the integrity of atheist, non-religious and minority religion teachers or actually exclude them from over 88 percent of primary schools in Ireland. This will have an expanding application across a population that is becoming increasingly secular (see Heinz et al. 2018).

Neary (Chapter 16) also demands that we pay attention to the "vulnerability" of teachers from under-represented groups in precarious, non-permanent, employment. This is particularly acute for teachers who must undertake "constant self-surveillance work" (Chapter 16, p. 190) in order to manage their identities at school. Neary is clear that all teachers have to manage personal/professional and public/private relations at school, but she argues convincingly that there are extra layers of this work for LGBTQI+ teachers in Ireland. These challenges may be similarly experienced by many of the teachers from under-represented groups in this volume, including those from a Traveller and/or working class background. Some of the student teachers in Keane et al. (Chapter 9) were very aware of these tensions, even on their school placement, being clear that they felt "different than the people around me" (Chapter 9, p. 120).

The struggle to maintain authenticity as a minority ethnic teacher has been powerfully explored in Marom's (2019) work with Indigenous teachers in Canada, which argues that these teachers encountered difficulties in looking like a teacher (dress code), talking like a teacher (speech patterns) and teaching like a teacher (knowledge, pedagogy, and assessment). Marom's observations about these teachers' ways of engaging echo bell hooks's (1994, p. 181) comment that, "to avoid feelings of estrangement", those from working class backgrounds can and do "assimilate into the mainstream, change speech patterns, points of reference, drop any habit that might reveal them to be from a non-materially privileged background". In this context, the concept of institutional habitus is useful. Drawing on Bourdieu's (1977, pp. 82–83) habitus, "a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which … functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions", scholars in the field of widening participation in higher education (McDonough 1996; Reay 1998; Reay et al. 2001; Thomas 2002) have considered the concept of *institutional habitus*. This is understood as "the impact of a cultural group or social class on an individual's behaviour as it is mediated through an organisation" (Reay et al. 2001, para. 1.3). As Thomas (2002, p. 431) has argued, however, "institutional habitus should be understood as more than the culture of the educational institution; it refers to relational issues and priorities, which are deeply embedded, and sub-consciously informing practice". The institutional habitus of teacher education, and of schools in the sense that most teachers are not from under-represented groups, is very much in alignment with the values and practices of middle class, able-bodied, cisgender, heterosexual culture. The sort of strategies that Marom (2019) and hooks (1994) describe are necessary in order for teachers from under-represented groups to avoid feeling that they do not fit in, given that they feel "that their social and cultural practices are inappropriate and that their tacit knowledge is undervalued" (Thomas 2002, p. 431). They are, essentially, 'a fish out of water' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) in the face of an institutional habitus that excludes. Some of the participants in Marom's (2019) study clearly identified the forces of assimilation in their schools and understood that, in order to be successful, they had to be strategic. To this end, they maintained a dialectic position: "on the one hand 'fitting' in the school system, and on the other continuing to push against it" (Marom 2019, p. 331). This mass of hidden emotional labour for certain teachers from under-represented groups, especially when they are alone in that position in their school, takes its toll, however, and is one of the factors that drives higher attrition rates among minority teachers (Bristol 2019). Brown (2014) argues that teacher education's "normalised culture of whiteness … presents a formidable challenge to the goal of preparing teachers (of color) to teach in a manner that is relevant, critical and humanizing while also socially and individually transformative". To this we would add that teacher education's, and schools', normative institutional habitus presents a challenge to the goal of preparing *all* teachers to teach in alignment with social justice goals.

These important observations challenge us to expand our gaze from schools as only sites of learning, to schools as sites of work, and indeed as sites of cultural (re) production, in which teachers who perform their identities in a countercultural manner, must navigate and negotiate heteronormative, racist, classist, ablest, and other discourses and practices that continually misrecognise, injure, and reject their identity (Fahie 2016; Marom 2019). It ought not be expected that the pioneering teachers involved with PATH1 or similar projects should challenge these social injustices on their own. Instead, what is required is system transformation, so that teachers and learners from diverse backgrounds may feel they *authentically belong* in schools and can contribute to make them more equitable, inclusive, and just places of learning for all. In terms of teacher diversity, while representation greatly matters, by itself it will not lead to reform (Phillips 1996). For true system change and transformation, working towards "an institutional habitus [that] is inclusive ... and prizes diversity and difference" (Thomas 2002, p. 431)—at the levels of teacher education, schools and the education system overall—is necessary. To achieve a diverse, equitable and inclusive teaching profession, as well as continuing to work on representation, we need to simultaneously move towards transforming the institutional habitus of education.

18.5 The Impact of Teacher Diversity Initiatives—Towards System Transformation?

There is strong evidence of the positive impact of the range of teacher diversification initiatives explored in this volume, whether at a national level, such as that presented by Arshad in Scotland (Chapter 4), or at local level throughout Ireland through many of the PATH1 projects. Many of the participants in these initiatives have benefitted substantially on an individual level from engagement with the projects, while the projects themselves are also making an important, if numerically limited, contribution to the wider education space in terms of the participation of those from under-represented groups.

There are multiple examples from within the chapters of the transformative impact of involvement with PATH1 projects. Patricia, for example, in Burns et al.'s chapter (13) explained that the "*Turn to Teaching* programme has done more for me than I could have imagined before I started" (p. 161). Echoing Ahmed's (2012, p. 36) reminder that the "numbers can be affective. It can be surprising and energising not to feel so singular", some of the students found the peer support provided within certain projects to be beneficial. Laura, for example, in Ryan's chapter (17) explained the power of being part of a group in the *Step into Teaching* project as "Everyone is really supportive, like we all help each other out" (p. 204). The importance of supportive staff–student relationships was clearly central to the success of many of these initiatives. Brenda, a *Tobar* student in Burns et al. (Chapter 13), emphasised that this support was the reason she had remained in the programme.

Thomas and Hovdhaugen's focus in Chapter 8 on the difficulties encountered by students from 'non-traditional' backgrounds in developing a strong student identity is helpful in assisting us to recognise the complexities of the barriers faced by the participants on many of the projects reported upon in this volume. Providing the deep level of care required to support participants in the development of student and professional identity, from recruitment, through ITE, and into early career positions, necessitates significant labour, especially on the part of those leading teacher diversity initiatives. Reflective of the demands of emotional work made of teachers from under-represented groups in defence of minority students in schools, much of this labour remains hidden in the context of work responsibilities, yet the success of the PATH1 projects demands its continuation. Unfortunately, in HE, care and relatedness are regarded in a circumspect manner; indeed, Lynch (2010) argues that 'a logic of care*less*ness' (our emphasis) is instead pervasive. Internationally, neoliberal and related managerialist policies, combined with inadequate state funding, have led to a system characterised by high student numbers and heavy staff workloads in which research is prioritised over teaching and student support. These features, along with academia's traditional emphases (cf. Becher and Trowler 2001) on objectivity, formality, hierarchy, student independence (in learning and in being) (cf. Leathwood 2006), and 'appropriately distanced' lecturer–student relationships (cf. Macfarlane 2004), have combined to create a context in which care and relatedness are neither prioritised nor genuinely valued. Indeed, critics of the widening participation 'agenda', who have mistakenly connoted increasing student diversity with 'falling standards' (cf. Furedi 2004), have resisted and pathologised student support, not recognising that HE structures and modes of learning and teaching were designed with the perceived needs of the 'traditional'[5] student in mind (Leathwood and O'Connell 2003). Students have long reported problems of adjustment (academically and otherwise), but the culture of HE has been to let students 'get on with it' themselves (Smith 2002). Of course, much 'caring' does take place in HE, but the 'burden' of what is often seen as optional work more often than not falls to female academics (Ashencaen Crabtree and Shiel 2019) with frequently negative implications for research productivity and promotional prospects (Ivancheva et al. 2019). In the context of neo-liberal managerialist higher education policies, care work "is not countable" and becomes "… invisible as do the people who do it" (Ivancheva et al. 2019, p. 157). For 'affective equality' to be approached in relational justice terms, an equal sharing of the burdens and benefits of care work is necessary (Lynch et al. 2009). Much of this praxis is less visible in the mechanisms of promotion within HEIs. It is important that this work is valued and supported, not only by funders but also by HEIs.

While there is ample evidence of the transformative potential of the PATH1 projects with regard to individuals within this volume, there is far less evidence regarding success in *institutional transformation*, either of schools as sites of learning and/or work, or HEIs. To some extent, particularly in the Irish context, this can be explained by how recently these projects have been developed on the Irish educational landscape. We contend, however, that there has been no real attention paid to the transformational work (see Chapter 1) required to authentically address the challenges of diversifying the teaching workforce in Ireland. Engaging in such transformational work is no easy feat. Mathews and Ryan (Chapter 15) demonstrated the investment required by relevant staff to prepare their institution to work with a cohort of Deaf students, and this work appears to have been successful. In contrast, Neca et al. (Chapter 7) provided evidence of the difficulties experienced by one of the Deaf teachers in their work, when institutional preparation had not been conducted, and the student teacher reported an absence of necessary supports. Mathews and Ryan caution (Chapter 15) that further research is required to establish nuances to the successes and remaining challenges in the pursuit of a Deaf-friendly campus in their institution. Importantly, Mathews (2011) has emphasised the creation of a Deaf-friendly campus as a core component of broader commitment to empowering Deaf students to access primary ITE, and this commitment predates inclusion in PATH1. It is not apparent that this commitment to campus transformation is sufficiently embedded within some of the other PATH1 initiatives. Arshad's (Chapter 4) account of diversifying the teaching profession in Scotland demonstrates the importance of a systemic approach to this work, including coordinated involvement of all stakeholders in the system. Even then, as Arshad explains, their work has been replete with challenges, and their initiative focuses on *one* particular minority group, not the many groups included in this volume and across PATH1 projects.

One further observation is that the PATH1 projects in particular, but also all teacher diversity projects, need to be underpinned by a solid critical theoretical foundation. Drawing again on the work of Arshad in relation to Scotland, the importance of Critical Race Theory as a theoretical framework is evident. Adherence to critical transformative theoretical perspectives is just as important at a national level as at the level of individual projects. We do not underestimate the challenge of the work here, given that we draw upon multiple, intersecting dimensions of identity. Yet, work that is inadequately theoretically informed will not drive the systemic change required to address properly the multiple, often intergenerational, social injustices experienced by the groups absent from teaching in Ireland, or elsewhere. While some of the individual PATH1 projects are theoretically informed, it is not clear that this work is present across the projects. The absence of theoretically informed work that seeks to address systemic injustices will result in projects that act as bolt-ons to the 'real work' of the HEIs within which they are located, even if they are mainstreamed.

These observations regarding the individual and systemic focus of the PATH1 projects raise significant ethical questions about initiatives to diversify the teaching profession. In the first instance, when we know the extent to which some participants will require additional relational and material support, it is vital that these supports are resourced through relevant funding streams and within institutions. It is unethical to open the door to potential teachers if providers are not committed to ensuring an equality of condition (Lynch and Baker 2005) as they progress through ITE. When students encounter material barriers as part of their programme, they need to have them addressed without feeling that they are begging for further supports. When students struggle to develop a strong student identity or when they experience microaggressions in lectures or on placement, they need to have access to staff to help them to address these issues and to support them on the journey. In the context of systemic change, the PATH1 projects must not be envisaged as feeding an unchanged education machine, especially when this is to the detriment of the individual in the immediate or at some future point. It will be very difficult for dispersed, individual projects, which focus on singular identities, to drive the institutional transformation required so that these teachers enter, remain, and progress in the profession.

18.6 Absent Voices: Gaps in our Knowledge about Teacher Diversity

While we have some strong evidence with regard to the context of teacher diversity in Ireland and internationally, there remain very significant gaps in our overall knowledge of this phenomenon. This is true both with regard to the historical and current situation, as well as in relation to future foci. With regard to the current situation, it is telling that there has been very little research undertaken with primary and/or post-primary students in schools about diversifying the teaching profession. As a key partner in all educational endeavours, and in line with commitments to involving children in all matters of relevance to them (Lundy 2007), there is need for far more substantial work in this area. Similarly, research to examine the views of all other partners in education (school management and leaders, majority teachers, teacher unions, carers, parents and other members of the school community) is needed. In Chapter 1, we argued that *who is included in* (and excluded from) policy and practice in relation to teacher diversity is a vital consideration, and we critiqued the absence of minority ethnic groups other than Irish Travellers from PATH1, observing this to be highly problematic, given their significant under-representation in ITE and the increasingly diverse student population in Ireland (Tickner 2017). We appreciate that policy-making is a messy process (Stone 2001) and that research may be just one input (Marston and Watts 2003), but gathering and using research evidence is vital for evidence-based policy development in this field. As teacher diversity work progresses, there will be calls for affirmative action in recruitment and progression within the profession. While we already have examples of this in relation to religion[6] and language,[7] expansion to include other areas of diversity such as, *inter alia*, ethnicity or disability will necessitate responses, for example, by teacher unions and majority group teachers. Rather than scramble for evidence when this arises, it will be important to research these perspectives in the more immediate future.

A second key observation is that the focus on teacher diversity in Ireland is guided very much by understanding of the term ‘teacher’, and in this volume, we concentrated on primary and post-primary sectors. McGrath’s work (Chapter 6), however, establishes the dearth of male teachers in the early years of schooling and points to the importance of these years in the construction of gender identity. This should encourage us to widen our interrogation of teacher diversity to include the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) sector and to expand this beyond a focus on gender (see, for example, Bryan and Milton Williams [2017] on recruitment and retention of culturally relevant Black male teachers in early childhood education in the United States of America [USA]). There is some evidence that migrant teachers, for example, find work in ECCE, as it is less regulated than primary or post-primary teaching, but their experiences have yet to be researched in any systematic way. Similarly, little attention has been paid to questions about the diversity of the teacher educator workforce, at least in Ireland, or indeed about diversity in the inspectorate, the DE, and teacher unions.

A further observation is that the growing international literature in the field of body criticism and education has not yet been adequately explored in the context of Ireland. This work "analyses representational systems such as race, gender, ethnicity and disability as discourse that explain and give significance to bodily particularities and the differences among bodies" (Garland-Tomson 2003, p. xii). As more work is undertaken regarding the diversification of the teaching profession, challenges will inevitably be made to the "polite anonymity and disembodied equanimity that has traditionally characterised educational settings" (Garland-Tomson 2003, p. xii). This work will be very insightful in responding to experiences of many of the groups of teachers addressed in the chapters in this volume, such as teachers with particular disabilities, LGBTQI+ teachers and minority ethnic teachers. There are others, for example, Muslim women teachers, who remain unconsidered in the discourse in Ireland to date. While work in other jurisdictions demonstrates that these teachers face particular difficulties in ITE and employment (Sensoy and Stonebanks 2009, Bakali 2015), given the social and religious context of Ireland, this has the potential to become a serious political issue in the future. Todd (2006), for example, reflects on the right of Muslim girls and women to wear hijab to school and argues that they have been singled out as symbols of deep tensions within their respective societies. In Ireland, this issue came to prominence in 2008 when a school requested guidance from the Minister for Education in relation to a request from the family of a female student to wear hijab, which was deemed to be in contravention of the school uniform policy. A representative of the Minister communicated that this was a matter for the Board of Management of the school. In the context of Neary's observation in Chapter 16 regarding the 'occupational requirement' clause in Ireland's Employment Equality Act 1998/2004, it is worth considering how an employer will treat a teacher who, for example, chooses to wear a burka.

18.7 Conclusion

The critical literature on teacher diversity alerts us to the problematics associated with simplistic understandings of and approaches to the inclusion of teachers from under-represented groups in the teaching profession. We remain fully aligned with these standpoints and committed to the eradication of systemic inequalities as they relate to issues of access and participation for teachers from under-represented groups. Given the current context of Ireland, both with regard to the homogeneity of the teaching workforce, the broader legislative context, and social, moral and political discourses, we regard the *presence* of teachers from under-represented groups as playing a key starting role in the journey towards the eradication of these inequalities. To this end, we remain in favour of initiatives that make possible opportunities for those from under-represented groups to become teachers. This orientation is based, however, on the need for such teachers to be enabled to be *authentically present*, as students, both in schools and in HEIs, and as teachers. For this to happen, transformational change at system level is required. We argue that teacher diversity initiatives need to strengthen their focus on this component of their work, and that this also needs to be prioritised at a national level. In Chapter 19, we develop this argument and offer a number of principles to support such work.

Notes

1. PATH1 (Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH): Strand 1—Equity of Access to Initial Teacher Education) is Ireland's funding scheme for teacher diversity projects.
2. For example, see the Irish government's campaign about the importance of diversity in the classroom: https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/teaching-transforms/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/teachingtransforms/
3. The Leaving Certificate is the national terminal examination taken by students at the end of second-level education, and performance in the examination is used for selection into higher education. An applicant's results in six subjects in the Leaving Certificate examination are converted into 'points'. Where demand for courses exceeds places available, applicants are selected in rank order based on points achieved.
4. 'Grinds' is the term used in Ireland for private (paid) tuition in which some students engage in preparation for State examinations.
5. For example, being of school-leaver age, able-bodied, middle class, of the majority ethnic group, campus-based, and unencumbered by necessary external commitments or dependents.
6. The Bachelor of Education—Church of Ireland Pathway (Restricted Entry) in Dublin City University is restricted to students who can demonstrate a knowledge of, and willingness to support, the Protestant ethos of primary schools.
7. Dublin City University, Marino Institute of Education, Maynooth University, and Mary Immaculate College offer a distinct entry route for residents of Gaeltacht Language Planning areas to their Bachelor of Education for primary teaching.

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19 Charting Pathways towards a More Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive Teaching Profession

Manuela Heinz, Elaine Keane and Rory Mc Daid

19.1 Introduction

Throughout this volume, we have emphasised the importance of the representation of teachers from diverse backgrounds for an equitable education system and society. While most of the international research in this area has focused on the need for, and experiences of, teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds, in this volume we have included the dimensions of social class, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, age and gender. We have acknowledged the difficulties associated with inflexible identity categorisations and the complex challenges and risks arising from tokenistic diversity-matching discourses and practices (Santoro 2015). Despite these limitations (explored in greater detail in Chapters 1 and 2), we have argued that uncovering patterns of and reasons for the under-representation of certain groups in teaching represents a first important step towards a more equitable teaching profession and education system more generally.

Teacher diversity policy in Ireland and in other European Union (EU) countries has, so far, predominantly focused on *access* to a demographically representative teaching population. We still lack a clear picture, however, especially in the EU, about the impact of teacher diversity initiatives and the longer-term career pathways and progression of teachers from different backgrounds. Worryingly, research from Canada and the USA has shown that minority teachers are less successful in securing teaching positions due to hiring bias (Jack and Ryan 2015) and are more likely to leave the profession early than teachers from majority-group backgrounds (Ingersoll et al. 2021). In terms of career progression, in the United Kingdom, Worth et al. (2022) have reported that the under-representation of those from minority ethnic groups in the teaching profession is most pronounced at senior leadership levels.

The chapters in this book have drawn together perspectives about the rationale for greater diversity and equity in the teaching profession. Our summary and discussion of core themes arising from this volume, presented in Chapter 18, reminds us not only of the importance of this work but also of its complex nature and of the substantial challenge that lies ahead at policy, practice and research levels. We have revisited and problematised the role model rationale that continues to drive many teacher diversity agendas internationally, recognising

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the strong social justice orientations among many (student) teachers from under-represented groups. At the same time, we have amplified calls for attention to (and caution regarding) the impact of role model-based discourses and practices on individuals as well as on the wider education system. Our attention has been drawn beyond 'access to' and 'diversity in' the teaching profession towards the lived experiences of (student) teachers from under-represented groups and, in particular, to how their identities and professional practices are shaped, and often compromised and/or constrained, as they navigate and negotiate majority-group normativity in the teaching profession. While early successes of Ireland's PATH1[1] programme are encouraging, we have recognised limitations regarding the, so far, small numbers of participants as well as the limited, and largely self-reported, evidence base regarding its impact.

In this concluding chapter, based on the research presented in this volume as well as other recent teacher diversity research, we direct our attention towards the future, imagining pathways towards a more *diverse*, *equitable* and *inclusive* teaching profession. Following this introduction, in Section 19.2 we review key barriers for individuals from under-represented groups in terms of entering and progressing in the teaching profession. In Section 19.3, we revisit the central role played by institutional cultures and offer a framework of seven guiding principles for the development of a diverse, equitable and inclusive teaching profession. Finally, in Section 19.4, we summarise our recommendations and conclude the volume.

19.2 Barriers to Teacher Diversity along the Career Pathway

Research has pointed to numerous barriers that potential and actual non-majority group teachers encounter throughout the teacher career pathway, which we conceptualise as consisting of 4 phases and 10 associated stages (see Figure 19.1). In phase 1, 'pre-entry', individuals need to, firstly, want to, and imagine that they can, become teachers. They must also be able to financially afford initial teacher education (ITE). Phase 2, 'initial teacher education', comprises successful entry to, engagement in and completion of ITE (or recognition of an international teaching qualification). Phase 3, 'career entry', involves applying for

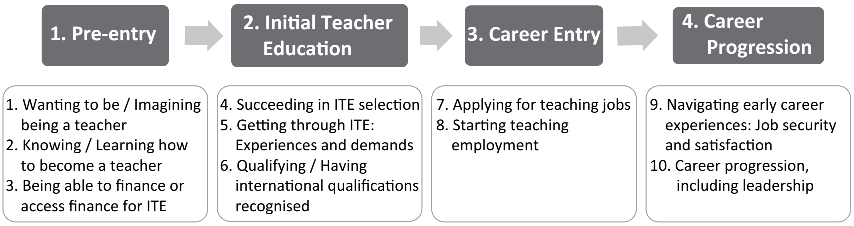
1. Pre-entry
2. Initial Teacher Education
3. Career Entry
4. Career Progression
1. Wanting to be / Imagining being a teacher
2. Knowing / Learning how to become a teacher
3. Being able to finance or access finance for ITE
4. Succeeding in ITE selection
5. Getting through ITE: Experiences and demands
6. Qualifying / Having international qualifications recognised
7. Applying for teaching jobs
8. Starting teaching employment
9. Navigating early career experiences: Job security and satisfaction
10. Career progression, including leadership

Figure 19.1 Four Phases and 10 Stages of the Teaching Career Pathway.

and (hopefully) gaining and commencing employment, followed by Phase 4, 'career progression', where teacher development (and retention) are impacted by job security and satisfaction, opportunities for professional development and, possibly, career progression into leadership roles in schools and other education or policy fields.

As we can see in Figure 19.1, focusing on the pre-entry phase, negative and/or discriminatory schooling experiences may act as barriers for students from non-majority group backgrounds, deterring them from even considering teaching as a career. Similarly, high ITE programme costs (and possibly insufficient knowledge about available financial supports and/or related application procedures) may dissuade students from lower socio-economic backgrounds from considering teaching. Those who can imagine themselves in a teaching role, who can finance the programme and who are encouraged and supported in their ITE application (often by a small number of teachers) will generally need to succeed in competitive ITE selection systems. In Ireland, Irish language criteria and, to a lesser extent, the requirement for a Catholic religious education certificate represent specific 'cultural' entrance barriers to international students, students with certain disabilities and, potentially, non-Catholic students (Heinz and Keane 2018; Heinz et al. 2018; Mc Daid, this volume). Barriers during ITE include high programme costs[2] and workload demands, language barriers and negative or discriminatory experiences that may lead to a sense of not belonging or not being able to cope (due to their positionality and personal experiences) in the profession (Donlevy et al. 2016; Keane et al. 2018, 2020; Prendergast et al. 2021). While we know less about post-qualification experiences, the existing research indicates that multiple barriers persist (and may lead to attrition) for teachers from under-represented groups. These include a lack of cultural and/or social support groups, challenges getting international teaching qualifications recognised, discriminatory/biased recruitment and promotion practices, insufficient job security, isolation and lack of sense of belonging, experiences of racism, discrimination and/or microaggressions, being pigeonholed as 'the diversity person' and associated burnout, as well as the absence of specific supports or reasonable accommodations (Blackmore et al. 2006; Jack and Ryan 2015; Santoro 2015; Donlevy et al. 2016; Heinz and Keane 2018; Logan 2018; Marom 2019; Keane et al. 2020; Steed et al. 2021; Arshad, this volume; Mc Daid, this volume; Neary, this volume; Neca et al., this volume).

It is clear that the most persistent challenge, translating into multiple barriers along the pathway, is related to the normative and dominant institutional culture in schools and teacher education. As has been pointed out by Thomas (2002), getting individuals from under-represented groups *into* ITE programmes, while progress, is not enough; indeed, we regard a narrow focus on entry to and support during ITE, which merely 'opens the door' to potential teachers while disregarding their career experiences and prospects, to be *unethical* (Chapter 18, this volume). Hence, future research, policy, and practice need to significantly extend their scope to explore and address experiences and barriers *throughout* the teaching career pathway.

19.3 Towards a Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive Teaching Profession: Principles, Policy and Practice

Working on this book has constantly challenged us to reflect on what our roles and responsibilities should be at this time, as teacher educators and researchers, and what our vision is for teacher diversity into the future. As we intensively engaged with research about the experiences of under-represented student teachers, teachers and school leaders, as well as with theoretical perspectives on inclusion, diversity, equity and social justice, it became clear that we needed to challenge ourselves and colleagues, in Ireland and internationally, to intensify our efforts and to decisively expose the limitations of, and go beyond, 'reactive' and 'strategic' (Richardson and Skinner 1991) responses to the lack of diversity within the teaching profession.

While recognising that *representation matters and has yet to be achieved,* we feel compelled to oppose assimilationist 'mosaic diversity'[3] approaches, which, intentionally or otherwise, essentialise and contain teachers from different backgrounds within normative majority group cultures, as they conflict profoundly with our commitment to equity and social justice. Nearly a decade ago, Brown (2014, p. 326) argued that teacher education's "dominant, (dis)embodied and normalized culture of Whiteness, White privilege and White hegemony" presented "a formidable challenge to the goal of preparing teachers (of colour) to teach in a manner that is relevant, critical and humanizing while also socially and individually transformative". In Chapter 18, we drew on the concepts of habitus (Bourdieu 1977) and institutional habitus (Thomas 2002) to illuminate how White, middle class, able-bodied, cisgender and heterosexual norms and privilege "… are deeply embedded in, and sub-consciously informing, practice" (Thomas 2002, p. 431) in schools and in teacher education.

Inclusion has become a core focus in education policy and pedagogy, but so far, it has almost exclusively focused on the needs of and opportunities for *students* (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment [NCCA] 2006; Department of Education and Skills [DES] and the Office of the Minister for Integration 2010; National Council for Special Education [NCSE] 2011; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO] 2017). While it is encouraging to see that Ireland's Teaching Council has included diversifying the teaching profession as an explicit goal in its latest strategic plan (2022–2027) (Teaching Council 2022), and while efforts have recently been made to portray the teaching profession as welcoming and as appreciative of diverse entrants (Department of Education 2021),[4] teachers are continuously treated as a homogeneous group in policy and professional standards documents (NCSE 2011; Teaching Council 2011, 2016, 2020). Indeed, the working environments of teachers have gained little attention apart from a recent focus on teacher well-being. Whilst general higher education (HE) and employment legislation and policies protect (student) teachers from minority backgrounds from *overt* discrimination, they neither offer space nor encourage capacity-building among teachers from under-represented groups to articulate their own educational experiences and/or perspectives, let alone to re-examine or transform normative and inequitable school cultures replete with covert discrimination and microaggressions (Marom 2019; Arshad, this volume; Keane et al., this volume; Neary, this volume). Teacher and leadership education programmes have started to explore the complexities of power, positionality and disadvantage in education with *all* (student) teachers and aspiring education leaders, yet they often fail to offer opportunities to those from under-represented groups to critically explore their own *underprivileged* and/or minoritised positionalities, strategies to cope with and resist stereotyping and/or discrimination and possibilities for agency.[5] Tensions between quality standards, curricula and taken-for-granted professional practices, on the one hand, and diverse ways of being a teacher on the other hand, have rarely been addressed.

Going forward, our focus will be on creating new spaces for dialogue, contestation and experimentation and the development of *ethical* approaches to 'teacher diversity', which combine actions to diversify the teaching profession with policies and practices that address issues of inclusion, equity and social justice for teachers from diverse backgrounds throughout the teacher career pathway. We do not claim to know 'the one right path' for the journey ahead. Like any process of democratic transformation, system-level transformation for a diverse teaching profession needs to be based on openness; it needs to involve partnerships between diverse individuals and groups to share perspectives and ideas and to imagine new futures together. Whilst recognising the context-dependent nature of what such a transformation will look like, we consider it useful to propose a broad framework of seven guiding principles for the development of a diverse, equitable and inclusive teaching profession. The principles are research-based and offer the potential to develop a common language and orientation for educators, policy-makers and researchers. We believe that they are applicable across contexts and offer them as "guidelines and possibilities, as opposed to rules and procedures" (Korthagen et al. 2006, p. 1039) for moving towards transformation. Alongside each principle, we suggest policy- and practice-related actions.

Principle 1: Build Critical Awareness of Teacher Education and Schools as Sites of Cultural Practice

> Building critical awareness and sensitivity among all teachers, school leaders, teacher educators and policy-makers of the normative nature of school and teacher education cultures is a precondition for meaningful reflection and action to create more equitable and inclusive work environments for all teachers.

While research indicates that teachers from under-represented groups are often consciously or unconsciously aware of how cultural norms and values influence everyday educational practices, teachers from majority groups are often unaware of how everyday taken-for-granted interactions (re) produce patterns of privilege and inequity. Critical interrogation of, and reflection upon, schools and teacher education as sites of cultural practice should be integrated and expanded across the continuum of teacher education, as well as in professional courses for principals, education leaders, teacher educators, and policy-makers. As part of this, research about the experiences of students, student teachers, practicing teachers and parents from minority and/or less privileged backgrounds can provide counter narratives to trigger reflection and discussion, which should also include a focus on participants' *own* experiences, positionalities and assumptions.[6]

Educators should conduct, and policy-makers should support, audits of teacher education and educational leadership programmes, and of school curricula and policies, to identify inequitable policies and practices, subtle forms of discrimination, stigmatisation, stereotyping and/or hierarchical representations of culture, language, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, social class, dis/ability and religion. Recruitment and selection policies for ITE, and teaching and education leadership positions, need to be examined and revised as required, and recruitment panels need to be appropriately trained, to avoid bias and to ensure equity and fairness throughout selection, recruitment, and promotion processes.

Principle 2: Identify Patterns of Under-representation and Devise Measures to Attract and Recruit Individuals from Under-represented Groups in/to Teaching

> As long as substantial 'diversity gaps' between student and teacher cohorts persist, targeted efforts to attract and recruit individuals from under-represented groups in/to teaching should continue.

Throughout this volume, we have emphasised the importance and benefits of a representative teaching profession for schools and all students, as well as for society generally. Notwithstanding the limitations of 'reactive' and 'strategic' responses (Richardson and Skinner 1991), which we discussed in Chapter 1, initiatives aiming to attract and recruit individuals from under-represented groups in/to the teaching profession form an important part of, and need to be considered an essential first step towards, a more transformative agenda in the longer-term. Decisions about the groups targeted and related initiatives must be evidence- and sectoral-based.

Promotion of a teaching career needs to start early, as perceptions regarding different careers are formed long before students actively engage in career decision making. Efforts need to be made to represent the teaching profession as welcoming of and a viable option for individuals from all backgrounds. Engagement with, and support for, individuals from under-represented groups should start at school level through effective career guidance, based on a philosophy of support for and high expectations of *all* students, which should include information on course options, application procedures and entry requirements, as well as financial, and other, supports available. Most importantly, as we have previously argued (Keane 2011; Keane et al. 2018), professional development with career guidance teachers, and teachers more generally, needs to focus on their expectations of students from different backgrounds in relation to further and higher education and future careers, and how such expectations are frequently mediated by class, ethnicity, gender and disability.

Potential barriers at ITE[7] and/or career entry stages need to be examined, such as the rationale for and impact of different ITE selection criteria, including Irish language requirements in Ireland, and affirmative action to recruit more teachers from under-represented backgrounds should be considered. Given the high cost of ITE in Ireland (Keane and Heinz 2015; Prendergast et al. 2021), financial support needs to be provided for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds to assist with tuition fees and with living and school placement-related costs. Further necessary supports may include assistance with application processes and interviews. Internationally qualified teachers should be supported in applying to get their qualifications recognised. Processes and criteria guiding the recognition of international teaching qualifications should be reviewed, and affirmative action strategies to facilitate access for these teachers to teaching experience and positions in their new home countries should be considered.

In addition to addressing structural and cultural barriers, efforts to attract and recruit individuals from under-represented groups in/to teaching should focus on "igniting, identifying and nurturing professional passion, commitment and identity" (Thomas and Hovdhaugen, this volume, p. 106). This can be achieved through work experience opportunities (or other 'real-world' experiences with the profession) and/or the recognition of "passion and commitment" as valuable attributes in recruitment and possibly selection (p. 103). Finally, a range of additional factors associated with the teaching profession, including the status of the profession compared to other occupations, and teachers' working conditions, job security and professional opportunities, will impact individuals' motivations to pursue teaching (Heinz 2015). It is crucial, therefore, in order to ensure sufficient teacher supply as well as diversity in the profession, that *all* teachers are supported and valued, and that efforts are made to promote and uphold a positive image of the profession and of teachers' work in society more generally.

Principle 3: Support (Student) Teachers and School Leaders from Under-represented Groups

> A commitment to diversifying the teaching profession needs to be accompanied by a commitment to supporting and ensuring equity for teachers from under-represented groups throughout the teaching career pathway.

Policy initiatives aiming to diversify the teaching profession need to focus on, and provide supports for, teachers from under-represented groups throughout all stages of the teaching career pathway. This means that supports need to be extended to continue *beyond* ITE so that qualified teachers from under-represented groups can secure teaching positions and successfully settle into and progress in the teaching profession, including, where they wish to, into education leadership positions. Given that many of the barriers identified in the previous section result from normative majority group cultures, supporting teachers from under-represented groups will remain challenging. It may involve mentoring and/or peer support to build resilience in light of the pressure to 'fit in', on the one hand, as well as to engage in "strategic planning" to "navigate the system in order to be better positioned to change it", on the other hand (Marom 2019, p. 332). Dedicated professional development programmes aimed at supporting teachers and school leaders from under-represented groups in articulating their voice, with recognising, coping with and countering discrimination and in developing authentic and culturally relevant teaching (Cochran-Smith 2004) and/or leadership practices (Mosely 2018) will be necessary. Supportive measures will need to be implemented with care to avoid labelling teachers from under-represented groups as 'at risk' or 'less able' (Kimmelmann and Lang 2014). Support may not always be appreciated or required (Szencsi and Spillman 2012) and should, therefore, always be offered on a voluntary basis.

Principle 4: Recognise Uniqueness and Plurality within Diversity

> While it is important to recognise and address the structural inequalities affecting certain groups, it is equally important to recognise the uniqueness of students and teachers and the plurality of experiences and perspectives within groups.

Even though there is a dearth of research addressing the use of categories such as ethnicity and race, class, gender, dis/ability and sexuality and terminology such as 'under-represented', 'minority' and/or 'disadvantaged' in teacher diversity policy and practice, we include this principle to emphasise the limitations, and to draw attention to the potentially negative impact, of using such categorisations. Critiques regarding the dangers associated with diversity-matching and role model approaches are closely linked to this principle as they demonstrate how the categorisation of equity groups operationalised through policy can result in a paradox of categories (Hart et al. 2004). As noted by Blackmore et al. (2006, p. 191), when categories "assume particular authority through policy and practice", they "often become unified and homogenized, essentializing difference in politically and socially damaging ways". Repeatedly using or "freezing" categories (and individuals within them) may "encourage social fragmentation" (Blackmore et al. 2006, p. 191).

Working toward the realisation of this principle will require professional opportunities for exchanging perspectives, experiences and practices. Case studies about educators from diverse backgrounds and their practices may help to portray teachers and school leaders as unique individuals who belong to, and share characteristics and perspectives with, many possible cultural, social, language and gender identities and heritages. Critical perspectives on identity, discourses of 'othering' (cf. Dervin 2016) and the concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989), as well as research regarding the complexities and dangers associated with role modelling practices and assumptions, need to be explored in teacher and leadership education.

While (and because) the use of categories will continue to be relevant, and perhaps necessary, in teacher diversity work into the future, we need to direct greater attention to where, how and why such categorisations are used, and how they impact perceptions, interactions and education practice. In this regard, discussion and research are needed about the impact of visual and textual representations (e.g., in promotional materials) of teachers from diverse backgrounds on various media. The tension that may arise between efforts to recruit individuals from specific 'groups' into the teaching profession, and the dangers of essentialising teachers from these groups, needs to be recognised in the development of new initiatives.

Principle 5: Create Safe Spaces in Education for Democratic Participation

> Achieving a diverse, equitable and inclusive teaching profession will require the creation of safe spaces in educational settings for authentic, respectful and impactful dialogue. Educators, education leaders and policy-makers need to be open to critique, to new ideas and to trying new ways of doing things.

We know from research that teachers from under-represented groups who do not easily 'fit' into dominant school cultures find it difficult or unsafe to articulate their perspectives and experiences and thus to be *authentically (re)present(ed).* To ensure that all voices are heard, we need to foster a culture in which the articulation and contestation of viewpoints is valued and in which dialogue and democratic deliberation enable agency and a capacity to influence decisions (Sinclair 2000; Mitchell 2001; Blackmore 2006). The first step towards *authentic* representation, presence, and participation, and related system-level transformation, requires educators to recognise and articulate tensions and differences in values, perspectives and practices. To move beyond 'mosaic diversity' in a system that perpetuates the dominant culture and related privileges, we need to create new and safe spaces for conversation, contestation, and experimentation. Creating these spaces is particularly challenging in contexts where teacher education faculties, school leadership teams and policy-makers are themselves homogeneous groups and mostly drawn from dominant groups in society.

For such spaces to be facilitated, critical thinking and democratic dialogue skills and dispositions need to be developed and practiced during teacher education and leadership programmes. School leaders need to be carefully selected and supported through professional development, mentoring, and peer networks so that they develop understanding and skills in relation to issues of power and bias, and in facilitating democratic dialogue and transformation in this context.

Principle 6: Recognise That the Development of Inclusive Schools Is the Responsibility of All Educators

> *All* teachers, irrespective of their socio-demographic positionalities, need to be prepared for and consider it their responsibility to be effective teachers for *all* students and supportive colleagues for *all* staff in schools.

A shared responsibility for equity and inclusion for all, students *and* teachers, needs to be emphasised throughout the teacher education continuum and made explicit in national and local policy documents guiding practices in schools and ITE. As we have seen from the research in this volume, the assumption that teachers from under-represented groups are best positioned to support students 'like them' as role models is based on flawed essentialism and can result in overburdening and burnout (Santoro 2015). In this context, teacher education programmes need to go further in supporting *all* student teachers to understand and enact their key role in schools—irrespective of their own socio-demographic positionality/ies—as inclusive educators of *all* students (Ladson-Billings 2004; Cochran-Smith 2009). This challenging work involves the critical interrogation of student teachers' self-identities during teacher education, with opportunities to reflect on their own personal histories and educational trajectories, to identify and acknowledge patterns, and personal experiences, of privilege and disadvantage. This knowledge and self-understanding can then be brought to school and classroom sites so that a pedagogy of care and compassion can be enacted in teaching for social justice for *all* students. For student teachers from under-represented groups, this work also needs to include strategies to cope with and resist stereotyping and/or discrimination, and possibilities for agency, including regarding self-disclosure.[8]

It is also necessary to expand conceptualisations of inclusive education to acknowledge and address issues of inclusion and equity for *teachers*. Issues such as teachers' sense of belonging, teachers' understandings of inclusivity, teachers' diverse backgrounds and perspectives, specific needs of teachers (for example, with regard to disability), as well as teachers' professional and collegial relationships, need to be explicitly addressed in inclusive and intercultural education policies for schools, as well as in standards and frameworks for teacher education.

Principle 7: Commit to Research-informed Policy and Practice

> Teacher diversity policy and practice must support and be informed by research.

Research focusing on teacher diversity has steadily increased and expanded, in terms of its geographical focus as well as regarding the dimensions of teacher diversity, over the past 40 years, resulting in increased policy efforts to diversify the teaching profession. Future work towards equity, inclusion and system transformation needs to be informed by ongoing research exploring issues pertinent to teacher diversity at different education levels, across career pathways, and with regard to the impact of relevant initiatives. Appropriate national and/or regional data collection systems need to be developed to provide evidence regarding representational patterns as well as the retention and attrition of teachers from different backgrounds. The definition of target groups for recruitment and support should be guided by sector-specific data. In Ireland, the Teaching Council would be well positioned to collect data on teachers' socio-demographic backgrounds and career pathways, given that teachers renew their registration on an annual basis. Collecting such data will also be necessary to monitor development regarding the Teaching Council's strategic goal to "support and promote diversity in the teaching profession" (Teaching Council 2022, p. 8).

Longitudinal research exploring the experiences of teachers from under-represented groups throughout their careers is needed to better understand enablers and barriers affecting their development and progression in (or attrition from) the profession, as well as their professional relationships and identities, their sense of belonging and job satisfaction, pedagogical practices and sense of agency for and capacity to effect change. Such research can establish the nuances to the successes, and remaining challenges, of teacher diversity initiatives and contribute to the development of targeted and context-appropriate supports for individuals, as well as at the institutional level. In the Irish context, we recommend that participants in the different PATH1 programmes be tracked to explore their post-qualification destinations, their early career experiences, and career progression.

In Chapter 1, we argued that *who is included* (and excluded) from discussions about teacher diversity matters. Future teacher diversity research should broaden its scope to gather evidence on the perspectives and experiences of the multiple stakeholders affected by and/or involved in making and performing education policy and practice, including students, parents, teachers and other school support staff, school leaders, teacher educators and policy-makers from different under-represented groups, as well as from majority group backgrounds. This broadening of scope will be crucial as we work towards dialogic democratic transformation. Alongside traditional quantitative and qualitative research approaches focusing on issues of representation and experiences, case study and/or collaborative action research could be useful in providing accounts of initiatives aimed at enhancing democratic participation and transformation at local level. Such accounts of transformation efforts *in action* could provide valuable insights into the dynamics of barriers and/or promoters of democratic participation in and transformation of systems as they play out at different education levels and in different institutional contexts.

19.4 Conclusion and Recommendations

In this final chapter, we have argued that a system-wide commitment to transform school and broader education cultures is essential in order to achieve and sustain a truly diverse, equitable and inclusive teaching profession. We have presented a framework of seven research-informed principles, together with associated policy and practice actions, as guidelines and possibilities for moving towards such transformation. The nature and combination of the proposed principles reflects our recognition of the need, as we have argued in Chapter 1 (p. 7), to continue to "focus on widening access and representation while simultaneously working to transform the systems which make such work necessary".

The translation of the seven guiding principles into actions will depend on context and ongoing developments as they unfold. To coordinate, support and review future initiatives, we recommend the establishment of national *Working Groups for a Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Teaching Profession*. Such groups should reflect the diversity of perspectives and stakeholders involved in teaching and teacher education, including students, parents, teachers, school leaders, the inspectorate (or equivalent), teacher educators, representatives of professional bodies, researchers and policy-makers from diverse backgrounds. In addition, schools and teacher education providers should be encouraged to establish *Equality, Diversity* *and Inclusion Working Groups* in their own institutions to examine current policies and practices and to enhance equity and inclusion for students *and* teachers.

We do not underestimate the challenge associated with the level of system transformation that is required, especially in contexts where teacher education faculties, school leadership teams and policy-makers are mostly comprised of individuals drawn from majority and dominant societal groups. However, our experience working with, and our learning from, (student) teachers from under-represented groups as well as fellow teacher educators, researchers and policy-makers has shown us that change is already happening, albeit slowly. "Numbers *can* be affective and energising" (Ahmed 2012, p. 36, *our emphasis*), and our engagement with diverse voices has been inspiring. It is our hope that the increasing diversity in the teaching profession in terms of numbers, the growing body of teacher diversity research and the commitment by all stakeholders to engage in dialogue and experimentation, to envision new ideas and to try out new things can lead us, together, towards more *authentic* representation, and, ultimately, towards democratic, system-level transformation.

Notes

1 PATH1 (Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH): Strand 1—Equity of Access to Initial Teacher Education) is Ireland's funding scheme for teacher diversity projects. See Chapters 1 and 3 for further information.

2 ITE programme costs are often higher than for other courses. In addition to tuition fees, there are significant costs associated with travel, clothes and equipment for school placement, and student teachers frequently encounter difficulties sustaining part-time employment due to high programme workloads. While remote/online programme delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the reduction of costs and facilitated certain kinds of flexibilities in terms of access to education for some, we do not regard remote or online initial and/or continuing teacher education as a panacea for issues of access and inequities in education. Indeed, critical discussion and interrogation of the assumed benefits and barriers for different groups of students (including student teachers from under-represented groups) is needed, particularly in terms of the issue of relatedness (cf. Murray et al. 2020).

3 cf. Benhabib's (2002, pp. 7–8) 'mosaic multiculturalism'.

4 Ireland's most recent 'Teaching Transforms' promotional campaign (via digital, newspaper, social media) highlighted the importance of teacher diversity. It featured a number of teachers from a range of backgrounds that are traditionally under-represented in the teaching profession; including teachers from lower socio-economic groups, members of the migrant community, and members of the LGBTQI+ community (Department of Education 2021).

5 Some exceptions are indigenous teacher education programmes (Marom 2019) and some leadership programmes for aspiring and/or practicing school leaders from under-represented groups, for example, for Black and minority ethnic (Coleman and Campbell-Stephens 2010) and LGBTQI+ (Lee 2020) teachers.

6 While critical reflection on inequalities in education, and related teacher and student positionalities, has been incorporated in many university-based ITE programmes over the past 15 years, it has been much less a focus in continuous professional development and leadership programmes, where the emphasis is more usually on policy matters, curriculum change and teaching strategies (increasingly with a focus on skill development).

7 In this context, teacher diversity needs to be considered in ITE policy, planning and evaluation, including in relation to eligibility requirements and selection criteria and processes, programme structure and programme engagement and assessment requirements, to ensure that future provision does not negatively impact the likelihood of candidates from under-represented groups applying for, and/or being accepted into, or being successfully retained in ITE. Teacher diversity 'checks' need to be conducted from the outset and throughout design, planning and implementation stages so that the impact, including regarding possible unintended side-effects, of new developments, policies or practices can be monitored.

8 See, for example, Coleman and Campbell-Stephens (2010); Marom (2019); Keane et al. (2020); and Lee (2020).

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