

A living history of teaching by Black [British] teachers in England and Wales

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Our positionality as teacher-researchers



Malcolm Richards

I am Black and British. I was born in Hackney to Caribbean (Guyana and St Lucia) parents of African descent. I am an English and Caribbean patois speaker. I am RastafarI. I am a graduate of the African Caribbean supplementary school movement. I am a former teacher, senior leader, and advisory teacher across schools across England.



Camille London-Miyo

I have been teaching in the statutory education sector for nearly thirty years. I have worked at all levels, from classroom teacher to Deputy Headteacher in primary and secondary school phases. I am an active trade unionist, and founder member of Black Educators Alliance, and Leicester Black Teachers Network.

Session Outcomes

Establish

Brief recap from Session 1 (Racial Literacy) and Session 2 (Difficult Conversations).

Demonstrate

Demonstrate examples of developing racial literacy by reflecting on our practice.

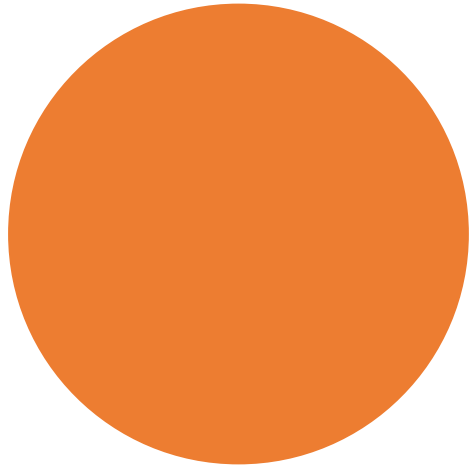
Define

Define what a racially literate community means and develop understandings of key characteristics to better communicate about race, racism, anti-racism and social justice.

Apply

Apply key concepts to real-life examples of racially literate communities, which can be developed, promoted and advocated in future practice.

Terms



Black [British]

This proposal uses the term Black [British] throughout (with the deliberate use of upper-case B) to describe any peoples who **self-identify** as of African descent, from across the global African diaspora, or of the continent of Africa, and [British] to denote those who are geographically located across England and Wales.

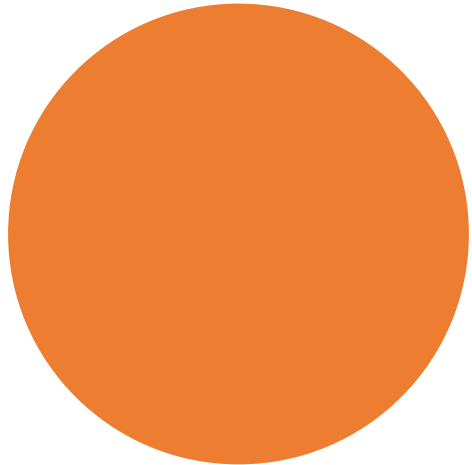
The story of Black [British] teachers?

The broad narrative articulated about Black [British] teachers is widely rooted in discourses of disadvantage, deficit, or challenges of retention and recruitment.

What is the professional narrative for Black teachers?

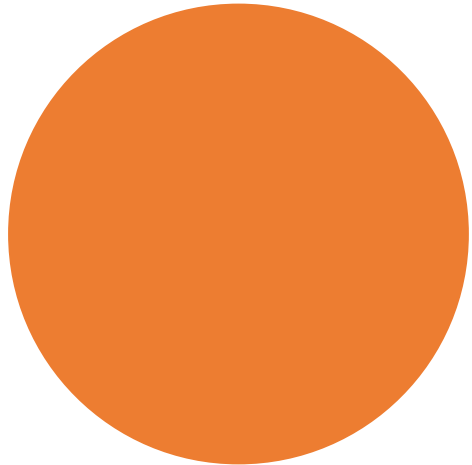
- At least 46% of schools in England and Wales do not have a Black, Asian or minority ethnic teacher (UCL, 2020).
- Black, Asian or minority ethnic teachers are disproportionately under represented in senior leadership, governance, teaching, educational research (UCL, 2020; DfE, 2019; 2018...).
- In Bristol in 2018, there were 26 (1.9%) Black Caribbean secondary school teachers, of 1,346 teachers, compared to 6% of the city's population (Runnymede Trust, 2017).
- Structural barriers such as racism, including assumptions about capability based on racial/ethnic stereotypes were everyday experiences for BME teachers. (NEU/Haque, et.al., 2017)

Connecting to narrative histories



- Black [British] teachers have long written about their experiences as students and teachers in education.
- Examples include:
 - E.R. Braithwaite - To Sir With Love (1959)
 - Beryl Gilroy - Black Teacher (1978)
 - Val Jones - We are our own educators (1986)
 - Chinua Achebe - The Education of a British-Protected Child (2009)
 - Aisha Thomas - Representation Matters (2022)
 - Jeffery Boakye - I heard what you said (2022)

Research of teaching by Black teachers



- A key example which informs this research is Foster (1998), *Black Teachers in Teaching* which offers an honest and compelling example of politics, philosophies involved in education over 50 years - distinct in that teachers are prepared to 'go on the record' to speak about losses, gains, inspiration, rewards, challenges and solutions of teaching.
- There is limited research which centres research by Black [British] researchers, and reflections with Black [British] teachers in relation to their professional lives.
- Notable (UK) examples include
 - Callendar, C. (1997). *Education for Empowerment: Practice and Philosophies of Black teachers*.
 - Osler, A. (1997). *Education and careers of Black teachers: changing identities, changing lives*.

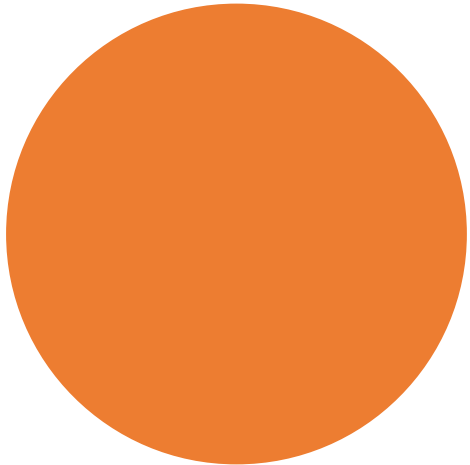
Rationale

The post-pandemic and post-movement for Black Lives period (2020-present) has resulted in increased dialogue around themes of social justice and anti-racism in teaching, teacher education and teacher development.

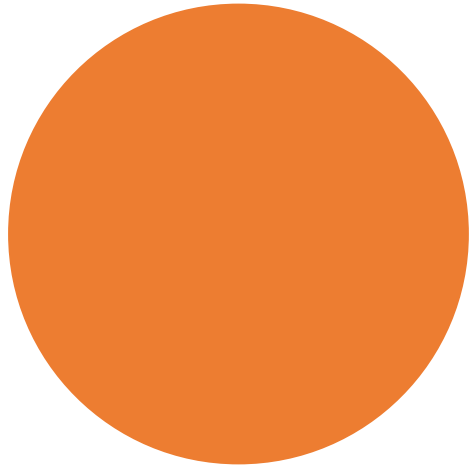
Government and industry-led responses simultaneously reject extensive mainstream evidence of systemic or institutional racism, whilst reinforcing conditions which promote the dominance of white-majority practitioners.

This is often located in a number of ways:

- as a new phenomenon,
- disconnected from scholarship of Black British teachers,
- Framed by essentialist characteristics of Black [British] 'culture'



Research Methods



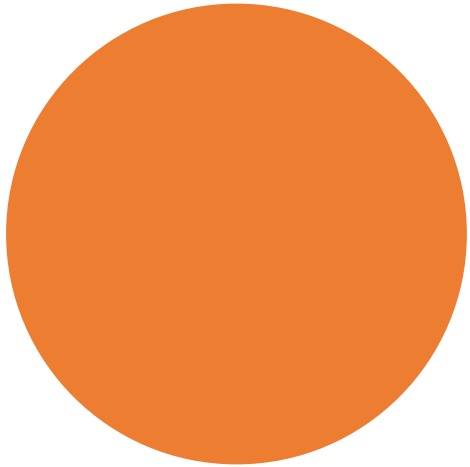
Using a life-history ethnographic approach (Foster, 1997), this research project captures the professional narratives of twelve (12) teachers who self-identify as Black [British] and have worked in schools in England and Wales over the last thirty years.

This will draw upon “community nomination”, in which volunteer participants are contacted through social media, personal and professional connections, and with Black [British] educational communities across England and Wales.


Research Questions

We will ask questions which consider the following topics:

- Social, economic, and cultural milieu;
- Schooling and teaching experiences
- Mentors, friends and influences on professional lives
- Philosophies of teaching;
- Perceptions of students
- Understanding of the role of teachers
- Changes observed over professional lives
- Considerations for the future



Research Ethics



Who are our
research
ethics for?

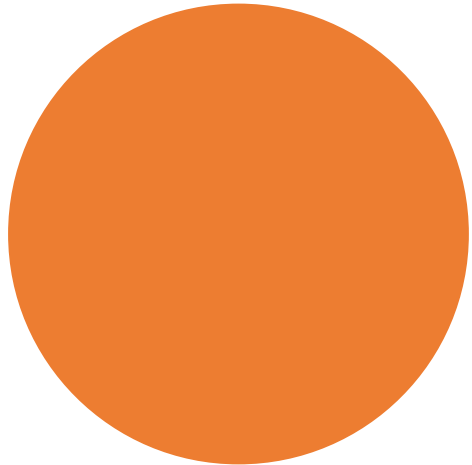
Considerations

- Decolonising research ethics (Brunger, et.al., 2021),
- Ubuntu as relational dialogues (Eze, 2017)
- Groundings (Rodney, 1969)

Research ethics will be applied via the University of the West of England, with adherence to BERA (2011).

- Consent (Part 1) will be sought to for participation in the study and data analysis.
- Narratives will be captured through interview, facilitated virtually using UWE digital platform (Ms Teams).
- Digital content will be stored securely and accessed by research team only in line with UWE and best practice protocols.
- Narratives will be recorded, transcribed and shared with participants only.
- Participants will retain full ownership of their words, alongside opportunity to edit and change any content as part of substantive review process.
- Consent (Part 2) will be sought after the interviews to use the transcribed and edited data (following reviewed) data for publication.

Proposal



This research proposal is distinctive in seeking to understand how Black [British] teachers reflect upon how their professional lives are, or have been experienced, in their own words.

The research study will focus equitable attention on analysing reflections from Black [British] teachers as an intergenerational, intercultural, and intersectional community of practitioners who have been at the hard edge of discourses of racial inequality, structural advantage, and discriminatory and disproportionate employment conditions.