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How to cite:

Bird, Elizabeth and Eyres, Ian (2000). Ethnic minority students in part-time, distance-learning initial teacher training. In: BERA Annual Conference, 7-10 Sep 2000, Cardiff University.

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Version: Accepted Manuscript

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Faculty of Education and Language Studies

**ETHNIC MINORITY STUDENTS IN PART-TIME,
DISTANCE-LEARNING INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING**

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**Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Conference
Cardiff University, 7–10 September 2000**

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It is widely acknowledged that there is a need to increase the number of ethnic minority students who are recruited into initial teacher training, and who enter and remain in the teaching profession. At the same time, the government is encouraging diversity in routes to qualified teacher status. Although certain elements of government policy may appear to be creating barriers to potential ethnic minority entrants, the establishment of new forms of initial teacher training may serve to attract ethnic minority students who found traditional training routes inappropriate.

This study examines the case of the Open University's part-time, distance learning PGCE course, and assesses its success in attracting and retaining ethnic minority students. It addresses three questions: Who are the Open University's ethnic minority students and why do they choose this course? How do these students fare in training and in entry to teaching employment? How do the experiences of these students in schools compare with their expectations, and what support do they need and receive? The issues raised for training and placement are discussed, together with implications for future approaches to recruitment.

Introduction

This paper represents a report on work in progress, and, as such, raises as many questions as it answers. We see it as valuable in highlighting a number of issues, and in indicating directions for further research.

The context in which this research was initiated was one in which the issue of ethnic minority recruitment to initial teacher training had become a prominent national issue. In the Green Paper 'Teachers Meeting the Challenge of Change' (DfEE 1998), the government states (PG 46) that,

"Teaching must attract high quality candidates from every section of society, bringing strengths and qualities which ensure that teaching is a vibrant and diverse profession. The Teacher Training Agency is asking all training providers to set targets for the numbers of ethnic minority and male trainees to whom they offer places."

The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) has recently stated (Spencer 2000) that it wishes to:

"increase current trainee numbers from 5 per cent at primary level and 7 per cent at secondary level to 9% overall by 2005". (pg 21)

The figures of 5 and 7% for primary and secondary, respectively, correspond to the figures in the 1997/8 TTA Profiles for Initial Teacher Training (ITT), (TTA 1999). The Office for National Statistics (2000) states that about one person in fifteen in Britain is from an ethnic minority group. This corresponds to about six and a half percent so that the percentage of ethnic minority students in teacher training would appear to be in line with the population as a whole. However, a higher proportion of ethnic minority groups are members of younger age groups, and the 9% target set by the TTA reflects the percentage of ethnic minority pupils in schools.

In this context, the provision of alternative routes to qualified teacher status (QTS) has been seen as one possible way of increasing ethnic minority (and other) recruitment to ITT. The Open University PGCE course represented one alternative form of provision, making part-time, distance-learning teacher training available nation-wide. This study examines the recruitment to, and training of, ethnic minority students on this course. Its primary aim is to arrive at some recommendations for possible ways in which such recruitment can be increased, and in which the success of these students can be maximised by providing appropriate support. This is seen as especially important at a time at which the Open University, in discussion with the TTA, is developing a new, flexible route to qualified teacher status: such recommendations could inform this development.

The research was also started in a context in which other researchers had highlighted problems experienced by minority ethnic students in teacher training (see, for example, training (Siraj-Blatchford 1991, Blair and Maylor 1993, Jones, Maguire and Watson 1996a,1996b and Garewal 1999). We want, therefore, to investigate the experiences of students following the OU course, to obtain a clearer idea of the composition of the group of students who appear on the database as 'ethnic minority', of how our recent ethnic minority students have fared, of what attracted them to the course and of how successful various elements of the course have been in supporting their progress and eventual success.

The Open University PGCE Course

The Open University Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) course was launched in 1994, as a part-time, distance learning course running over a period of 18 months and equivalent to the one-year, full-time PGCE qualification. Research carried out in the late 1980s and early 1990s by the Open University and the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) had found that there was significant interest in a teaching career amongst graduates in mid-career and considerable interest in part-time, distance learning provision. The Open University course was developed in response to this interest. It was anticipated the OU programme would make teacher training accessible to a large number of people for whom traditional routes to QTS were inappropriate. The principal aim of the programme was

“To widen access to teaching for those who require part-time, flexible course provision”.

Within this aim, commitment to diversity was a priority.

Research has indicated that the Open University PGCE course has been highly successful in achieving its purpose, and has provided access to teacher training for those who for personal and geographical reasons were unable to enter teaching through a conventional route. More than four thousand seven hundred trainees have achieved QTS through this programme, representing students from only 5 cohorts of primary students and six of secondary. Research, based on application form data and questionnaire responses, has indicated that the OU course is chosen because of the particular training opportunity it provides. 40% of applicants for the 99 cohort stated that their main reason for applying to the OU was the fact that it offered a distance-learning route (Open University, 1999). Responses to a questionnaire (see Lewis, 2000) indicated that 46% of students had not considered any other course. When

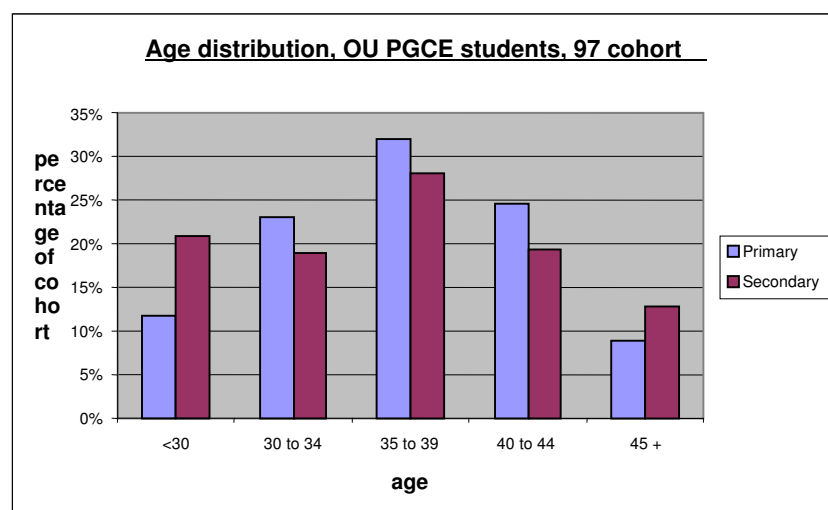
asked to indicate which factors reflected their reasons for choosing the OU course, the following results emerged:

Figure 1. Students' reasons for choosing the OU PGCE course

reason	percentage of respondents
Ability to study at a distance	46%
Flexibility of school placements	39%
Quality of course materials	38%
Ability to study in your own time	68%
The fact that it is a part-time course	80%
Other reasons	5%

The profile of students following the OU course is very different to that of the national cohort, in that the overwhelming majority of applicants are mature entrants to training. The nature of the Open University PGCE course means that it is attractive to these students, many of whom study the course while in other employment. Others have family commitments that make a full-time course, or travel to a distant university, inappropriate. For this reason, the age profile of OU PGCE students is very different to that found in traditional ITT institutions. The chart below shows the age profile for the 1997 cohort of OU PGCE students.

Figure 2. Age distribution of OU PGCE students



Only around 20% of secondary and 12% of primary students from this cohort were under the age of 30 at the end of the course. TTA questionnaire data (TTA 1998b) indicates that the average age for that national cohort was 28 years, almost 10 years less than the average age for the OU students.

A profile of this sort was suggested by the research carried out before the introduction of the PGCE course, which showed that the profile of those interested in part-time, distance training was different to that for those entering teaching through conventional full-time study. Leach and Moon (1997, pg. 3) point out that higher than usual numbers of potential entrants came from ethnic minority communities and that in the first three years of the OU course, recruitment was in line with this pre-programme research.

Open University data on ethnic minority recruitment to teacher training is obtained from PGCE application forms on which applicants are asked to indicate their ethnicity by selecting the code that they feel most nearly fits their ethnic origin. The codes provided for applicants to choose from are listed in Appendix 1. This information has been used to provide figures for the intake of ethnic minority students for each cohort of the OU course. Inevitably, some students prefer not to indicate their ethnicity, or find it difficult to find a category which they consider appropriate (this issue is addressed later in this paper, pg. 20). Non-respondents pose a particular problem in ethnic monitoring, but the percentage of OU PGCE students who do not provide ethnic monitoring data is typically only around 1%.

Ethnic minority recruitment to the OU PGCE course has been as shown by the table below.

Figure 3 Ethnic minority students on the OU PGCE course

cohort	Number of students	Number of em students	Percentage of ethnic minority students	Percentage of undeclared ethnicity
1994	1155	82	7.1	0.5
1995	1185	85	7.2	1.3
1996	1523	83	5.4	0.7
1997	1067	54	5.6	0.8
1998	913	34	3.7	0.9
1999	429 (secondary)	24	5.6	0.5

National data on ethnic minority recruitment to teacher training

National data on ethnic minority recruitment to teacher training is provided by the Teacher Training Agency's Profiles for Initial Teacher Training (TTA 1998, 1999). The table below shows national and Open University data as taken from the 1997/8 TTA profiles. The picture emerging from consideration of this data is that OU ethnic minority recruitment is broadly in line with the national average – which is what would be expected for a national provider.

Figure 4 TTA data for final year students in 97/98

1997/8 final year	Number of students	Number of ethnic minority students	% of ethnic minority students	Number of students of undeclared ethnicity	% of students of undeclared ethnicity
National Primary	12414	635	5%	642	5%
OU Primary	385	12	3%	2	1%
National KS2/3	252	5	2%	6	2%
National secondary	15007	983	7%	792	5%
OU Secondary	678	41	6%	7	1%
National Total	27673	1623	6%	1440	5%
OU Total	1063	53	5%	9	1%

TTA data indicates very large variations between the percentages of ethnic minority students recruited by different providers. Much of the very large variation between providers can be explained on the basis of their geographical location. Those recruiting a high proportion of students from ethnic minority students are typically located in large urban areas. This is illustrated clearly by the tables below, reproduced from the TTA profiles (TTA 1999), which show the top ten recruiters of ethnic minority students (by percentage of their intake), for primary and secondary trainees.

Tables 5 and 6: Top Ten Recruiters of Ethnic Minority students 1997/8

PRIMARY	
Provider	% Ethnic
University of North London	54%
Urban Learning Foundation	38%
University of East London	36%
Middlesex University	19%
Woodrow Consortium	19%
Goldsmiths College	18%
South Bank University	18%
Westhill College	18%
Bradford and Ilkely Community College	15%
Brunel University	12%

SECONDARY	
Provider	% Ethnic
Urban Learning Foundation	54%
Westhill College	53%
University of North London	37%
North London Consortium	36%
Solihull Secondary Group	29%
Bradford and Ilkely Community College	25%
Goldsmiths College	25%
University of Greenwich	22%
King's College	20%
University of London, Institute of Education	19%

TTA 1999 Characteristics of intake: Ethnicity
(percentage of first year trainees from minority ethnic background)

The percentage of the OU PGCE student intake is considerably lower than for these providers. However, because of the exceptionally large numbers of students following the OU PGCE course, the actual numbers of ethnic minority students training through this route are high compared with most providers. The table below shows TTA data for first year secondary trainees giving the number of ethnic minority students following their ITT courses.

Table 7 Numbers of ethnic minority students on ITT courses (secondary)

Provider	Number of ethnic minority students	Percentage of national total
University of London, Institute of Education	142	14%
Goldsmiths College	69	7%
University of Greenwich	61	6%
King's College	48	5%
Open University	41	4%
Manchester Metropolitan	30	3%
University of North London	28	3%
University of Warwick	25	3%
University of Wolverhampton	25	3%
National Total	986	

If we rank the providers in this manner, the Open University compares with large urban providers in terms of the number of ethnic minority students it trains, contributing, in 1997/8, 4% of secondary trainees, nationally. For primary, in terms of the actual numbers of students, the OU ranked 13th, providing 2% of the national cohort. Overall, for primary and secondary first year trainees in 1997/8, the national total of ethnic minority trainees was 1603, with the Open University training 53, or 3% of the national total.

It is worth pointing out, in this context, that many of the ethnic minority students who followed the OU PGCE course would not have trained by traditional routes. This has already been mentioned for OU PGCE students in general, and questionnaire data collected as part of this study indicates that this applied to the majority of the ethnic minority respondents (pg. 22).

This suggests that, by offering an alternative form of training provision, the OU may be contributing, nationally, around 3% of trainees who would not otherwise have entered the profession at that time. Thus, the OU provision has a valuable role to play in maintaining or increasing ethnic minority entry to the profession.

Methodology.

The study is envisaged as involving a number of approaches, many of which have yet to be utilised. The study involved students from three cohorts of students on the OU PGCE course, the 97, 98 and 99 cohorts.

As a first source of information, existing student data was used. Using data relating to individual cohorts of students involves consideration of relatively small numbers of ethnic minority students, which makes it difficult to draw any reliable conclusions. For much of this study, data for the three cohorts of students was combined, providing a total base of 2409 students, of whom 112 or 4.6% had identified themselves as being of ethnic minority backgrounds. This combined data was analysed for information concerning both the characteristics of the students and also their performance on the course.

It should be stated at this point that we recognise that the “group” of ethnic minority students referred to in this analysis consists of very diverse individuals, and we could debate, at some length, the value of considering them together as if they were some sort of homogeneous group. This analysis is carried out with the view that a numerical picture of this sort may have value in its ability to highlight where problems and difficulties may exist, but with the recognition that no conclusions drawn from this will necessarily apply to particular individuals.

The second approach was to distribute a questionnaire to students of ethnic minority origin. This phase of the research is not yet complete. Students from two cohorts, 97 and 98 were approached. The 99 cohort were not included in the initial questionnaire mailing as this took place at a time at which they were completing their PGCE course and applying for jobs. It is intended that these students will be contacted as the research progresses. Questionnaires were initially distributed to all students from the two cohorts who had successfully gained QTS and who had identified themselves as being of ethnic minority origin. At the same time, questionnaires were sent to those students who had chosen not to provide ethnicity data, together with a letter explaining the purpose of the research. These students were asked to complete the first page of the questionnaire, which deals with ethnic origin and ethnic monitoring categories, and to respond to the remainder of the questionnaire if appropriate.

The students involved in this aspect of the research were as shown in the table below, which indicates the numbers of ethnic minority students and students of undeclared ethnic origin, and groups them according to whether or not they passed the course. The “other” group includes any students who failed, withdrew, deferred, or were de-registered from the course.

Figure 8 Sample of students for the Questionnaire study

cohort	E m students			Undeclared students			Total
	total	Pass	other	total	pass	other	
97	53	39	14	9	5	4	62
98	34	23	11	9	5	4	43
total	88	62	25	18	10	8	105

In total, the sample included 72 pass students, 62 of who were known to be of ethnic minority background. Questionnaires were dispatched to all of these students. The response rate was disappointing with only 14 questionnaires returned, representing a 19% response rate. Seven responses were received from each cohort. In the 97 cohort,

6 replies were from students of known ethnic origin, with one reply from a student of previously undeclared ethnicity. This data has been added to the spreadsheet for analysis¹. For the 98 cohort, 6 replies were from students of known ethnic origin. One reply was returned from a student of previously undeclared origin. This respondent was not of ethnic minority origin, but rejected the use of the term “White-British”. While respecting this student’s position and arguments, he/she has been included in the white-British group for the purpose of data analysis

As yet, students who failed or who withdrew from the course have not been contacted. It was felt that students who had, for personal or other reasons, experienced problems during the course needed to be approached in a particularly sensitive manner, and it is intended that these students will be contacted personally as part of the second phase of the research. It is important, in examining the questionnaire responses, that we are aware of the sample of the students that these responses represent. The responses to the same questions from those students who did not succeed in gaining qualified teacher status may be very different, and are necessary if we are to obtain a more complete picture of the situation.

The second phase of the research will also involve follow-up interviews with some of the students who responded to the questionnaire. The initial approach of using questionnaires has been useful in helping to highlight areas that we wish to examine in more detail, and which will be more appropriately investigated by a more in-depth study.

The questionnaire used comprised a variety of questions, some of which were simple questions to elicit factual information. Other questions provided more space for response, in order to give respondents the chance to express their thoughts and opinions. The areas that the questionnaire was designed to investigate are described below.

Ethnic monitoring categories

The questionnaire was intended to supplement existing monitoring data in two ways. First it was hoped to reduce the number of former students appearing on the database as belonging to an ‘other’ ethnic group or with their ethnicity completely unspecified. As well as simply asking students in this category to again state which of the OU’s monitoring categories (Appendix 1) they felt they belonged to, it gave an opportunity for them to write in a category they would prefer to use and to comment on the usefulness of the OU’s categories. Unlike the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) categories used by GTTR and the Higher Education Statistics Agency, which are investigated by Carrington and Tomlin (2000), the OU categories include two - *Asian-British* and *Black -British* -which are ‘hyphenated’ in the sense that they allow respondents to record a dual identity.

Secondly, it was hoped that a more detailed picture of the composition of the OU ethnic minority student body could be achieved. Evidence exists that some students with English as a second language may experience difficulties in the way they are

¹ This accounts for the discrepancy in the numbers of ethnic minority students from the 97 cohort that appear in different tables in this report. Differences in the total number of students for a given cohort are related to the inclusion/exclusion from the data of students who withdrew very early in the course. Data used in this study includes all such students.

assessed on ITT courses (Leach 1994), and that students whose own schooling did not conform with the culture and conventions of UK education may experience problems in adjusting to the expectations of British classrooms (Townsend 2000).

Data on these subjects, as well as some socio-economic data relating to students and their parents' past employment, level of education at school-leaving age and students' experience (both as adults and as children) of UK schools was sought.

Practical constraints on students and course choice

The overall profile of OU PGCE students has some similarity to the profile of ethnic minority students offered by Carrington and Tomlin (2000). OU PGCE students in general are older than ITT students following more traditional routes to QTS and often have family responsibilities involving both childcare and the need to earn money whilst training. In the case of mature black women, there is evidence that, as ITT students, they commonly choose to train in a local institution, though, even then, many still find it difficult to dovetail family responsibilities with regular college hours (Blair and Maylor 1993). The OU PGCE was designed to meet the needs of those potential teachers for whom conventional full time training was not a practical option. The questionnaire seeks to confirm the hypothesis that many ethnic minority students choose the OU PGCE because of its flexibility in terms of time deployment and seeks data on how well the course has been able to meet the needs of students with substantial additional calls on their time.

Factors influencing the decision to teach

Students' perceptions of teaching as a profession will influence their choice of career and (Carrington and Tomlin 2000, Dhingra and Dunkwu 1995). The present sample can, of course, only give data on the views of those who opted to teach. Data on individuals' personal school experiences, both positive (Tomlinson 1983, cited in Siraj-Blatchford 1993) and negative (Moyo Robbins 1995, Blair and Maylor 1993) suggest that these are significant factors in the decision as to whether to become a teacher. Family attitudes have also been found to be influential, with some Asian potential teachers, for example experiencing opposition from their parents to such a career choice (Dhingra and Dunkwu 1995, Carrington and Tomlin 2000).

Ethnic minority trainees have characteristically cited reasons which have been described as 'altruistic' for choosing to teach (Jones, Maguire and Watson 1996b, Garewal 1999, Carrington and Tomlin, 2000). These often include reasons related to the achievement of ethnic minority pupils, such as the opportunity to provide a role model within school. The questionnaire asks students in general terms why they chose to teach and asks specifically if their own schooling influenced them

Experiences on the course, including instances of racism

On a distance learning course, students' patterns of contact with their partner schools and HEI differ from those of a conventional course. Meetings with Open University staff and fellow students, for example, are rare. There is, however, a range of support mechanisms within the course. Students follow extensive self-study materials in

printed, video and audio format. They attend approximately seven² tutorials and day schools at which they meet other students living in their locality, their own tutor and other OU PGCE academic staff; students' personal tutors are available for contact at all times via e-mail and telephone; national and regional electronic conferences, which have both a pastoral (including mutual support) and a teaching function, are open throughout the course. Students also spend 18 weeks in school, of which 16 are spent in a Partner School, usually of the student's own choice. In school, students work with a mentor, a school co-ordinator (usually head of department (secondary) or headteacher (primary) and other teachers, some of whose classes they teach in.

The questionnaire seeks to discover how well students feel supported at different stages of the course and by its various components. It seeks data on any aspects of the course that students found to be difficult in terms of practicality and asks about the support given by school and university staff.

A number of writers (Jones, Maguire and Watson 1996, Crozier and Menter 1993) have stressed the high proportion of course time spent in school, and the importance therefore, of mentors and other staff being supportive and sensitive to relevant equal opportunity issues. There is evidence of ITT students experiencing significant difficulties as a result of inappropriate mentoring (Jones, Maguire and Watson,), whilst Garewal's (1999) evidence suggests to her that white mentors can be fully supportive and Showunmi (1995) found that successful outcomes ensued when students were allowed to choose their own mentor.³ The questionnaire asks students to rate the quality of support they received from mentors and other school staff.

There is considerable evidence that ethnic minority ITT students encounter racism from many sources during their training (Garewal 1999, Jones, Maguire and Watson 1996a, 1996b, Blair and Maylor 1993, Siraj-Blatchford 1991) and a number of studies (Garewal 1999, Jones, Maguire and Watson 1996b) report that most ethnic minority students expect to encounter racism in the course of their ITT course and that the expectation of racism on the part of pupils and staff is a significant factor in black school-students' reluctance to consider teaching as a career (Dingra and Dunkwu 1996, Blair and Maylor 1993). A relatively large-scale study (Siraj-Blatchford 1991) reports that black ITT students report encountering racism in virtually every aspect of their training, including from fellow ITT students, from school staff and students and from HEI staff .

The school placement has been identified as the most likely context for racist incidents (Crozier and Menter 1993, Siraj Blatchford 1991, Jones Maguire and Watson 1996b), although at least one (small scale) study (Givens 1999) found ethnic minority students reporting, on balance, a positive view of their school experience and entertains the possibility that in overwhelmingly 'white' areas of the country, ethnic minority students may be seen as a 'curiosity' rather than a 'racial threat' and thus be less likely to arouse racist hostility. As a national provider, the Open University has ethnic minority students in all parts of the country, in inner-city, suburban and rural schools. Data from the questionnaire has the potential to show different patterns of support in different places and different types of school.

² the exact number has varied slightly between cohorts and between the primary and secondary course.

³ In fact, OU PGCE, students have a large say in their choice of school but more likely to be allocated a mentor by a senior member of school

Information is sought separately on students' experiences on each of their placement schools, one of which (the *partner school*) is usually chosen by the student whilst the second (known as the *TIAS* ('Teaching in another school') *school* is not). There has been some discussion as to the appropriateness of placing ethnic minority students in predominantly 'white' schools (Carrington and Tomlin 2000, Jones Maguire and Watson 1996a). The need for students' identity to 'fit' that of their placement school has been explored in at least one study (Jones, Maguire and Watson 1996a), which concluded that criteria for 'fitting' may include class, gender age etc as well as ethnicity. The sample used in one piece of research into the experiences of students in a predominantly 'white' area of the country (Givens et al 1999) was strongly biased towards students who were perhaps more likely than many to achieve a good 'fit' in all white schools, with students often describing themselves in such terms as 'middle class'. It was thought that some of the socio-economic and educational data elicited by the questionnaire might shed light on other factors affecting individuals' success in school, particularly in terms of 'fit'.

In the expectation that many students would report incidents of racism, the questionnaire asks about coping strategies (Jones, Maguire and Watson 1996a) which ITT students have employed.

Employment

Finally students were given the opportunity to comment on their experiences in finding a teaching post and asked whether they were currently employed as teachers.

Findings of the Study

1. Analysis of combined data for 3 cohorts.

Ethnicity data for the three cohorts used in this study is as follows:

Figure 9 Ethnic origin of study sample (student numbers)

cohort	Ethnic Minority	White-British	White-other	Undeclared	Total
97	54	930	75	8	1067
98	34	807	64	8	913
99	24	369	34	2	429
Total	112	2106	173	18	2409

Represented as percentages, these figures are:

Figure 10 Ethnic origin of study sample (per cent)

cohort	Ethnic Minority	White-British	White	Undeclared
97	5.1%	87.2%	94.2%	0.7%
98	3.7%	88.4%	95.4%	0.9%
99	5.6%	86.0%	93.9%	0.5%

Ethnic groups

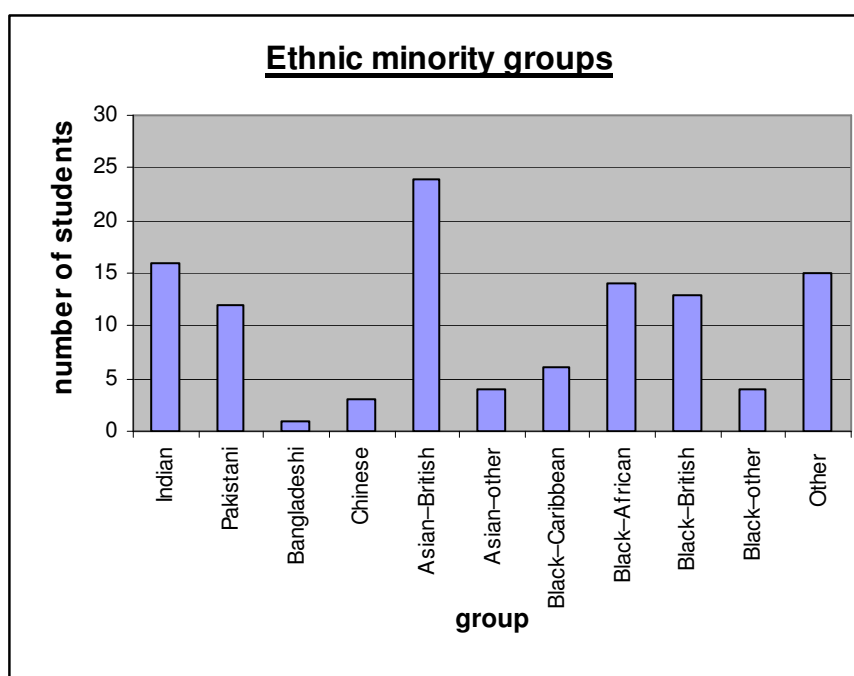
The advantage of considering 3 cohorts together in this way is that the group of ethnic minority students considered now totals over 100 so that it is possible to look at the sub groups within this group. The table below gives the numbers (and percentages of different groups):

Figure 14 Ethnicity of OU PGCE students

ethnic code / group	Number of students
A Indian	16
B Pakistani	12
C Bangladeshi	1
D Chinese	3
E Asian – British	24
F Asian – other	4
G Black – Caribbean	6
H Black – African	14
J Black – British	13
K Black – other	4
R Any other ethnic group	15
Total	

The data is represented graphically below:

Figure 15 Ethnicity of PGCE students



This chart shows that the largest numbers of students on the OU PGCE describe themselves as Asian British and Indian. Bangladeshi and Chinese are the least represented.

In order to try to obtain some national comparison, Graduate Teacher Training Registry (GTTR) data, (GTTR, 1999) from their annual statistical report was used. GTTR data for the 1998 entry gives the following figures for those students accepted by GTTR teacher training institutions:

Figure 16 Ethnicity of Students accepted by GTTR Institutions, Autumn 1998.

Ethnic group	Number of acceptances
Black Caribbean	145
Black African	103
Black other	49
Asian Indian	238
Asian Pakistani	167
Asian Bangladeshi	55
Asian Chinese	33
Asian other	93
Total	883

It is difficult to make a direct comparison between the distribution of the different ethnic groups in the OU data and the GTTR admissions data because of the different categories used. GTTR data has no Asian-British or Black-British categories, and no “other ethnic group” category. The table below is an attempt at comparing the two data sets.

Figure 17. Ethnicity of students accepted by the OU and by GTTR teacher training institutions.

	GTTR per cent of accepted students	OU per cent
Black – Caribbean	0.72%	0.25%
Black – African	0.51%	0.58%
Black – British		0.54%
Black – other	0.24%	0.17%
BLACK Total	1.47%	1.54%
Indian	1.18%	0.66%
Pakistani	0.83%	0.50%
Bangladeshi	0.27%	0.04%
Chinese	0.16%	0.12%
Asian – British		1.00%
Asian – other	0.46%	0.17%
ASIAN total	2.91%	2.49%
Other ethnic group	0.00%	0.62%
EM total	4.38%	4.65%
White	72.84%	86.18%
not known	14.02%	0.90%

It would appear that the general pattern is similar for the OU and for national data, with Asian groups being much more strongly represented than Black groups, and with

Asian Indian students being the largest group. As with OU data, Bangladeshi and Chinese students account for a very small percentage. At first sight, the OU seems to have a much lower representation of Black-Caribbean students but many of these may be accounted for in the Black-British. The much higher percentage of white students in the OU sample may well correspond to a significant extent to the large percentage of GTTR students whose ethnic origin is unknown⁴ However, some of these students will also be of ethnic minority origin, so the true percentages for the GTTR data will vary from those shown in the table.

National population data (ONS 2000) is reproduced in the table below, showing the numbers of people (in millions) belonging to each ethnic group. In the third column, these have been converted into approximate percentages in order to compare them with the tables above.

Figure 11 National population data

	Population in millions	percentage
White	53.1	93.5%
Black Caribbean	0.5	0.9%
Black African	0.4	0.7%
Other Black groups	0.1	0.2%
All Black Groups	0.9	1.6%
Indian	0.9	1.6%
Pakistani	0.6	1.0%
Bangladeshi	0.2	0.4%
All Pakistani/Bangladeshi ⁵	1	1.8%
Chinese	0.2	0.4%
None of the above	0.8	1.4%
All other groups	1	1.8%
All ethnic groups	56.8	

Comparing this with the tables for GTTR and OU trainees, above, show that there are clear similarities, and it would appear that the variations are broadly in line with national demographic patterns. However, the ONS data do clearly indicate the higher proportions of ethnic minority members in the younger working-age population, so that ethnic minorities may still be under-represented on ITT courses. For the OU course with a predominantly mature intake, a truly representative proportion may be lower.

Regional patterns in Open University recruitment

As mentioned above, TTA data shows wide regional variation in the extent of ethnic minority recruitment. The table below shows the Open University regions. Ethnic minority data has been broken down by region to give some indication of the geographical regions from which the OU recruits its PGCE students.

⁴ Carrington and Tomlin (2000) estimate that, of those who do not respond to ethnic monitoring questions, 30% are of ethnic minority origin: on this basis another 10% of the GTTR sample would be expected to be white.

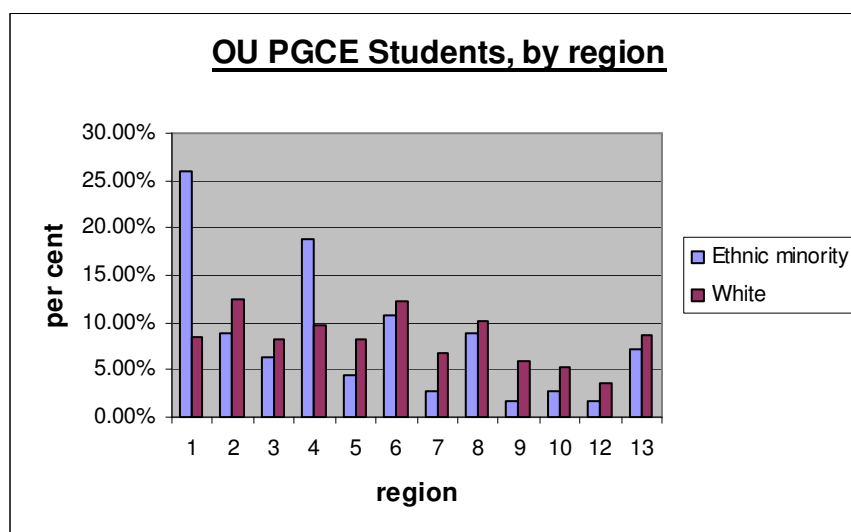
⁵ ONS data states that this figure “includes those who did not state their ethnic group” – presumably these people had indicated Asian origin.

Figure 11. Open University regions

<u>Number</u>	Region	Area Covered
1	London	Greater London
2	South	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Channel islands, Dorset, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Oxfordshire, Part of Wiltshire
3	South West	Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Scilly Isles, most of Wiltshire
4	West Midlands	Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, most of Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands
5	East Midlands	Most of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, part of Staffordshire (Burton-on-Trent area)
6	East Anglia	Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk
7	Yorkshire	North, South and West Yorkshire and East Riding of Yorkshire
8	North West	Cheshire, part of Derbyshire, Isle of Man, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside
9	North	Cumbria, Durham, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear
10	Wales	Wales
12	Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland
13	South East	Kent, Surrey, East Sussex, West Sussex

The percentages of white and of ethnic minority students from each of these regions are shown in the chart below. Of particular interest is the way in which the recruitment patterns compare.

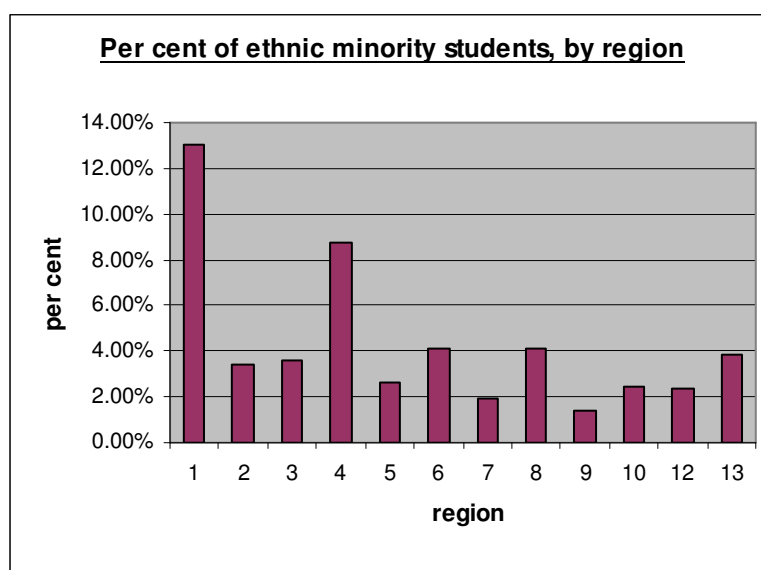
Figure 13 OU PGCE students by region



The indications from this chart are that particularly high proportions of the ethnic minority intake are from greater London (region 1) and from region 4, the West Midlands. 26% of the ethnic minority intake are from London, as opposed to only 9% of the white students.

The pattern of ethnic minority recruitment is also clearly indicated by the chart below that shows the percentage of students within each region who are of minority ethnic origin.

Figure 13 OU ethnic minority students, by region



In general, these recruitment patterns are what would be expected in terms of the national ethnic minority population. In general, there seems to be recruitment at a level of around 3% across the country, with some regions showing substantially higher proportions.

Student performance on the PGCE course.

Data for the 97 and 98 cohorts was examined in order to compare the numbers of students who passed, failed, were de-registered or withdrew or deferred from the course. Students from the 99 cohort are not included at this point as many results have yet to be decided so that the data for this cohort is incomplete. Data for this cohort is considered separately. The table below shows the percentages falling into each category. Students whose final result is not recorded on the student database, or whose ethnicity is undeclared are not included in this analysis. The actual numbers are shown in the first table, as a reminder that the number of ethnic minority students is relatively small, with an individual student contributing one percent within that group.

Caution must therefore be taken in interpreting the results. The second table shows the same data represented as a percentage of each ethnic category.

Figure 17 Student results, OU PGCE course (numbers)

Ethnic group	Result					Total
	Pass	Fail	De-registered	Deferred	Withdrawn	
Ethnic Minority	66	2	1	2	17	88
White-British	1378	16	21	47	410	1872
Grand Total	1444	18	22	49	427	1960

Figure 19 Student results, OU PGCE course (percentages)

ethnic group	Final				
	Pass	Fail	De-registered	Deferred	Withdrawn
Ethnic Minority	75.0%	1.1%	2.3%	2.3%	19.3%
White	73.6%	1.1%	0.9%	2.5%	21.9%

There is little difference between the percentage figures for the two groups, and the slightly higher percentage of failures among the ethnic minority group cannot be considered as significant, as this difference may relate to only one or two individuals⁶.

An analysis of results data for the 99 cohort examines their status at the beginning of August 2000. This analysis omits those students whose ethnic origin is unknown (only 2 students, less than 0.5% of the cohort). This analysis includes only small numbers of ethnic minority students – caution must therefore be exercised in looking at the percentage figures for ethnic minority students, as 4.2% represents only one student. For this reason a table giving actual student numbers are included in the table.

Results are classed as follows:

Pass - has successfully completed the course

ESE – extra school experience. These students have submitted their portfolios and been considered by the award board, who have judged that, although the students cannot be awarded a pass at this point, they show the potential to achieve a pass with additional teaching practice.

Extended – these are students whose portfolio will be submitted at a later date because their personal circumstances have meant that they have, as yet, been unable to complete the course. This may be, for example, because illness has prevented them from completing sufficient weeks of teaching.

Pending – students whose portfolios have been submitted but do not contain all the data needed for the student to receive a pass grade

TMA04 resubmission – students who have been asked to resubmit their final assignment.

⁶ A simple analysis of this data showed that the difference was not statistically significant.

Figure 20. Results of OU 99 cohort as at beginning of August 2000 (percentages)

Result as at 10/08/00	ethnic group			Grand Total
	Ethnic Minority	White-British	White-other	
Pass	41.7% (10)	62.9%	61.8%	61.6%
Withdrawn	12.5% (3)	23.6%	26.5%	23.2%
Fail	4.2% (1)	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
De-registered	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.7%
ESE	12.5% (3)	1.1%	2.9%	1.9%
Extended	29.2% (7)	8.4%	8.8%	9.6%
Pending/resubmit	0.00%	3.20%	0.00%	2.80%
Grand Total	100.0% (24)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The figures in this table do show a difference between the groups. The white-British and White-other figures are very similar, but the column for the ethnic minority students is very different to these. As compared to the white groups:

- The % of ethnic minority students who have passed at this point is smaller
- The percentage of ethnic minority students who withdrew during the course is smaller
- A much higher percentage of ethnic minority students falls into the extra school experience category
- A much higher proportion of ethnic minority students have been granted an extension.

As already stated the ethnic minority group is very small, so it is difficult to draw firm conclusions, but this table may suggest that a higher percentage of our ethnic minority students are experiencing particular difficulties in successfully completing the course. However, this could also be related to the lower withdrawal figures for this group, with a higher percentage of white students withdrawing from the course in response to difficulties of one kind or another.

The performance of students on the tutor-marked assignments (TMAs) was also analysed.

TMA assessments award the student one of the following five grades:

Fail

Bare (or Borderline) Fail (B Fail)

Bare (or Borderline) Pass (B Pass)

Pass

Higher Pass

The table below shows the percentage of students who were given pass grades (Pass, B pass or H Pass), Fail grades (Fail or B Fail), and who did not complete the assignment.

Figure 21 performance of students in Tutor Marked Assignments

TMA01	Fail	Pass	Not submitted
E-M	8%	87%	5%
White	1%	95%	5%
TMA02	Fail	Pass	(blank)
E-M	9%	78%	13%
White	1%	85%	13%
TMA03	Fail	Pass	(blank)
E-M	4%	77%	19%
White	2%	77%	21%
TMA04	Fail	Pass	(blank)
E-M	4%	68%	29%
White	1%	74%	25%

While it is important to bear in mind that the ethnic minority sample is still relatively small, so that an individual student’s result contributes just less than 1%, the table does, nevertheless, show a difference between the ethnic minority group and the White group, with ethnic minority students showing a higher rate of failure. This is particularly marked on the first two assessments. The decreased failure rate for the last two assessments may well reflect the increased percentage of non-submissions which probably correspond to students having withdrawn from the course. It is likely that those students who performed poorly on early assessment are among those having withdrawn.

Of further interest is the following table, which shows the percentage of students receiving higher pass grades for each of the assessments:

Figure 22 Tutor Marked Assignments - Students receiving higher pass grades

Assignment	Ethnic minority	White
TMA01	11%	21%
TMA02	12%	23%
TMA03	7%	21%
TMA04	6%	22%

Far fewer ethnic minority students were awarded the highest grade, as compared to their white peers. We would like to investigate this further, to see what the reasons for this difference may be.

School experience is assessed under the same categories. The performance of the student is assessed by the mentor following written guidance and face-to face training.

Many students do relatively little solo teaching on their first placement so the extent to which the first school report (SR1) reliably reflects the student’s potential as a teacher is debatable. Pass and fail percentages for the three reports from the partner school are recorded in the table below.

Figure 23 School Report Grades

	Fail	Pass	No grade
SR1	1%	37%	7%
	0%	50%	4%
SR2	3%	36%	15%
	2%	38%	18%
SR3	4%	23%	29%
	1%	34%	27%

Although, as for the TMA assessments, there is a higher percentage of ethnic minority students in the fail category, the difference is small. However, the pattern of higher pass grades observed for TMAs is also present for school reports, as is shown in the table below. We need to establish what causes this situation.

Figure 24 School Reports – Students awarded higher pass grades

Assessment	Ethnic minority	White
SR1	33	47
SR2	25	32
SR3	21	32

This analysis of grades for TMA and school experience raises some interesting issues. It appears that, for some reason, fewer ethnic minority students achieve high grades either for written assignments or for performance in the classroom.

Responses to the questionnaire

At the time of writing only 13 responses from ethnic minority alumni have been received, representing a rate of return of 19%. Obviously such a sample is not a basis for any sort of generalisation, but even with such a small and self selecting sample of successful students some patterns are discernible and some pointers to further research do emerge.

Categories

Almost two-thirds of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the categories used. One white respondent (who had been sent the questionnaire because she had originally classified herself as of ‘other’ ethnicity) objected to the use of the term ‘white’ as she did not consider herself to belong to a ‘white race’. Several other objections arose out of the difficulty in expressing complex ethnicity, for example one

respondent with a Kenyan father and white British mother preferred 'mixed race', a concept which is not catered for at all. Others seek to express their Britishness alongside their non-British heritage (British –Persian, British African, British of Indian Origin). One noted

'The term Asian-British suggests that the person has renounced their Indian origin whilst Asian-Indian suggest that the British culture has been rejected/excluded.'

In requiring students to opt for one category we may be forcing them to renounce other elements of their identity which they feel are equally important.

As well as the obvious omission of a category for students of dual heritage, two respondents point out that there is no category of East African Asian/Indian.

The students

6 respondents placed themselves in Asian categories, 5 in Black categories and two (one Iranian and one French) in the category 'white-other'.

Seven respondents have English as their first language. Of these, 2 speak another language regularly and a further 2 have parents with another language. All but two of the sample, therefore, are used to hearing a language other than English used within their immediate family. Where students learnt English as an additional language this was almost invariably done at school or at least when the respondent was of school age (in all but one case beginning between the ages of 5 and 10 years)

One respondent reported using their first language to positive effect with parents whilst another reported that his 'accent' was viewed negatively by the students he taught. Otherwise there is no evidence of bilingualism being considered either as an asset or as a cause of difficulty during the course.

The additional detail of ethnicity revealed gives a little support to concerns arising from the database as a whole that students of Bangladeshi origin are an underrepresented group. Similarly, of the 5 black respondents, four are of African heritage whilst only one is from a Caribbean family.

Questions on parents' occupations and educational attainments give data on students' socio-economic background and of the likelihood of their 'fitting' (Jones Maguire and Watson 199x) in certain types of schools. Of the occupations named for students' fathers, only three appeared to be 'blue collar' or manual. Including two described only as 'self employed', the remaining appear to have followed white collar or professional occupations. Of the seven mothers for whom jobs are stated, 5 held white collar or professional posts. By the age of 18, seven mothers and 9 fathers had been educated to GCSE level or higher. 5 fathers and 3 mothers had the equivalent of A levels or higher qualifications. Given the age of respondents (predominantly mid-late thirties), and therefore the period in which their parents were educated, there appears to be a relatively high proportion of relatively well-educated parents. Of the students themselves all but two reported holding jobs which can be described as professional or white collar.

Overall, socio-economic and educational data on the respondents suggest a group more like that interviewed in Exeter (Givens et al 1999) than some of the inner city samples

5 respondents received their secondary schooling (and therefore, presumably their primary schooling too) outside the UK, though three of these had experience of voluntary or paid work in UK schools before starting the course. The questionnaire does not yield any evidence that these students' perceptions of UK schools were particularly negative.

Practical constraints on students

It is clear that family responsibilities were a significant factor in the lives of the majority of respondents whilst they were following the course. 11 cited significant domestic responsibilities (of whom 10 cited childcare and 9 had children of primary school age or younger).

In line with the overall pattern for OU PGCE students in the London and West Midlands regions (Lewis 2000), 7 respondents remained in employment while studying.

I was able to work for most of the course –this was very important as I am the only one in paid employment- I don't receive any other financial help.

I had young children, it was easier to study from home, part-time.

I had an eight-month old baby and my partner worked long hours.

5 included in their reasons for choosing teaching as a career the belief that the hours of work were compatible with family responsibilities.

..fits in very well with our family life i.e. the school holidays etc

Whereas the most important factors influencing respondents' choice of degree course were the nature of the particular course (11) and the academic reputation of the institution (10) and childcare was not an issue for anybody, when choosing a PGCE course, students rated the ability to study in their own time (12), the fact that it was part-time (11) and the opportunity to study through distance learning (9) as the most important factors.

7 respondents did not consider any alternative route to QTS whilst four of those who did found that other routes did not meet their needs. Again this supports the view that many OU PGCE alumni are people who would not otherwise be able to follow an ITT course.

Factors influencing the decision to teach

Most of the respondents had some recent experience of UK schools. 5 had children in UK schools at time of applying; 6 had experience of working in UK schools 2 as

volunteers, 1 as a support teacher, one as Classroom Assistant, 1 as a language assistant, 1 as a science technician. 9 had close relatives who were teachers, of whom 4 reported at least 1 teacher parent. 9 had close friends who were teachers. With exception of 2 respondents who were discouraged by teacher friends and relatives, all the others received encouragement from teachers within their social circle to join the profession, though one who reported encouragement from some relatives added:

Sister in law had been in teaching for 30 years- seen many changes, many for the worse.....friend also disillusioned with teaching after 15 years

Such feelings are not, of course, confined to members of ethnic minorities.

The pattern of personal or family links with schools is reflected in Moyo Robbins's (1995) sample of nine ITT students, all of whom had either worked in educational settings or had close teacher relatives.

Within the present sample, however, three respondents stand out as having neither close friends nor relatives in the profession, or, apparently, any recent personal experience of UK schooling. Of these, two were very strongly discouraged by their parents and all three were discouraged by some family members. (There is a consistent pattern of spouses supporting students in their wish to teach). It would appear, from this evidence, that unfamiliarity, rather than familiarity with the profession may act as a deterrent to recruitment. The overall impression is that most of the present respondents would have had some reason to feel comfortable within the school environment.

Seven of them reported that their own experience at school had influenced their decision to teach, with four adding comments. Of these, three cited 'good', 'enthusiastic' and 'inspiring' teachers. The one negative comment.

I wanted to help children have a better experience of schooling than mine

came from a student who had been educated outside the UK. Surprisingly, in the light of the research evidence that exists to the contrary, no respondent referred to experiences of racism in their own schooling.

The most common reasons given for choosing to train to teach were; job satisfaction (6), hours of work/ holidays compatible with childcare (5) and a sense that teaching was a logical 'next step' (mostly from other work in education) (4). Three respondents included 'altruistic' motives, expressed in terms of children's learning without making any reference to the needs of ethnic minority students. These motives overlap somewhat with those discerned by Carrington and Tomlin (Carrington and Tomlin 2000), differing notably in that none of their interviewees mentioned hours and holidays (this concern is perhaps not surprising in people who have opted for part-time study) and a lack of reference on the part of OU students to a wish to act as role models, or indeed to further the interests of ethnic minority children in particular at all.

Course experiences including racism

My main placement school was brilliant; helpful staff all round, a close knit school community

The overwhelming response from this group of successful students was positive, with few practical difficulties (beyond the predictable stresses of dealing with employment and family life alongside a demanding course of study) reported, none apparently directly linked to the students' ethnic minority status.

Mentors and other teaching and management staff in both partner and TIAS schools are almost all rated as supportive or very supportive. Every respondent rated at least 3 of the categories of staff (mentor, other teachers, headteacher, head of department) as supportive. Nobody has rated more than 1 category as not supportive. Of the 26 mentors rated only one was rated negatively – a partner school mentor rated as 'obstructive'. 18 mentors received the highest possible rating, 'very supportive', although a few respondents did comment that their mentor lacked the time to complete all the formal requirements of their mentoring role

My mentor was helpful, but due to constraints on her time was unable to give me the assistance I needed at times. I felt that all support I had from her came through our personal relationship, which was good.

Teachers were very busy, had little time to offer any real help and advice. Mentor also very busy but made time to see me.

In the light of the controversy over whether to place ethnic minority students in all white or ethnically mixed schools it is very interesting to note that when given a (relatively) free choice, nine out of the thirteen (including all the Asian students) chose to do their main placements in 'predominantly white' schools. where they reported a supportive environment⁷. This accords with Carrington and Tomlin's (2000) finding that students' apprehension at the prospect of working in 'all-white' schools proved on the whole to be unfounded, and Jones, Maguire and Watson's (1996a) that placement in a school within the student's own locale leaves them feeling 'relatively comfortable' rather than Jones, Maguire and Watson's (1996a) finding that 'black and other minority students overwhelmingly reported feelings of discomfort in their school placement'. Perhaps it is not surprising that whilst a number of writers (Verma 1993, Dingra and Dunkwu 1995) point to the need for strategies like access courses and outreach work as the route to widening participation, a course populated largely by mature and self motivated graduates, and especially this particular sample of students should include a high proportion who feel comfortable in their chosen school.

The expectation of racism was low – only 3 students reported that they expected to encounter it, with none of these actually reporting incidents. This low rate of

⁷ a check on the location of placement schools suggests that while some students would probably have had difficulty in finding a local, ethnically mixed school, others appear to live in areas where they could have chosen either kind of school.

anticipation may be connected to the fact that at least some of the students will have been familiar with their partner school (through paid or voluntary work there, or as a parent) before beginning their first placement. On the other hand, one student who did not expect to encounter racism reported that, in his partner school, despite excellent subject knowledge he felt he had not been fairly assessed, that he had been ‘treated differently’ and that one of the teachers ‘hated’ him. Some responses regarding parents’ attitudes also suggest that when students report ‘no racism’ that is not always the whole story. Students’ initially reporting ‘no racism’ but then giving information on incidents which could be viewed as racist is a common pattern in the literature (Givens et al 1999, Siraj-Blatchford 1991). As Siraj-Blatchford notes,

‘There may be an overall under reporting of ‘incidents’ which some black students may perceive as trivial or unremarkable’

and

‘it is extremely difficult to analyse precisely a survey where little indication is often given regarding the student’s understanding of racism and their terms of reference and contextual life experience’..

So, for example, the OU PGCE alumni who wrote of parents at their TIAS schools:

No one made any comments but let’s just say I was more aware of what their personal opinions might be, but I was confident in ...my ability.

and

They were not sure how to react to black teachers in a predominantly white area.

both replied ‘no’ to the question “Do you consider that you did encounter any kind of racism during the course?”.

Siraj Blatchford’s (1991) view that such issues are better pursued in interviews than in questionnaires seems a sensible one, and one that has clear implications for the progress of this study.

The question of the significance of their ethnicity to pupils does not appear to be high on the students’ own agendas, 8, for example, answered ‘don’t know’ to the question asking about the significance of their ethnicity to pupils in their partner school. A further three were sure that their ethnicity was not significant. Only two answered the question affirmatively, with one implicitly positive comment,

It was the first time many of the teachers had had an Asian teacher or any significant interaction with Asians,

and one (from the student who felt that he had been treated in a racist way in his partner school) implicitly negative (with reference to his ‘age, colour and accent’).

A slightly higher number, 3, felt that their ethnicity had been significant to *parents* in the partner school

they were not used to having black teachers for their children

Responses regarding the (unchosen) TIAS school follow a very similar pattern with almost the same group of students perceiving significance to parents and children. Again, this tends to suggest that responses to such questions depend greatly on the individual respondent's definition of racism and willingness to tolerate what they perceive to be minor incidents and that a questionnaire is not the best medium through which to explore such questions. Not surprisingly, only 3 respondents suggested strategies for coping with racism, and these were not things that had actually been implemented by the students.

Employment

Ten of the respondents are in teaching posts, whilst another had been offered a post she was unable to take up for personal reasons. Of the two remaining respondents one has given up applying – she feels that her previous jobs in management may make her appear threatening to some headteachers, this type of comment is not unusual among from mature students with previous employment experience of this kind (see Bird 2000). This respondent also makes the point that many of her local schools are church schools which are able (legally) to exclude applicants who are not Christians. The final respondent is still looking for a teaching post after submitting 250 applications. He feels his 'age, race and appearance' may be factors.

Summary

The research reported here is very much in its preliminary phase. Nevertheless, the data in this paper does offer some insights into the achievements of the Open University's PGCE course, as well as raising a number of issues for further research

- The Open University's monitoring categories were judged to be unsatisfactory by a majority of the respondents to the questionnaire; the hyphenated categories (*Black-British* and *Asian British*) go only a very short way (if that) towards solving the problem of the recording of complex identities. In this respect, the study has highlighted the difficulties of ethnic monitoring, and in particular of comparing data with national and other data sources, which may use different and overlapping categories.
- Open University recruitment of ethnic minority trainee teachers is broadly in line with national recruitment figures, and shows clear regional variations in line with national demographic patterns.
- The questionnaire confirms the view that the OU PGCE is attractive to ethnic minority students because it offers flexibility in terms of time and that the OU has the capacity to recruit students who would not otherwise be able to follow an ITT course.
- The majority of respondents were familiar with UK schools before starting the course and/or had close friends or relatives who were teachers.

- Most respondents were encouraged by their family to enter teaching; strongest discouragement came from families with no teacher members.
- Most respondents gave reasons for entering teaching which related to their own lifestyle and aspirations; only a few gave 'altruistic' reasons and none of these was concerned expressly with ethnic minority pupils.
- The majority of respondents came from relatively well-educated, 'white-collar' backgrounds and had themselves held white-collar and professional posts before (and often during) the PGCE course
- The majority of respondents chose to do their school placements in schools where predominantly the pupils were white; they reported few incidents of racism and felt well supported by mentors and other school staff.
- There is a need to investigate whether the respondents are representative of the OU PGCE's wider body of ethnic minority students; the question of regional differences should also be examined.
- There is evidence of experience of racism in some students' responses, even where they state that they encountered no racism at any point in the course; this is a matter which needs to be investigated further through interviews.
- Although there appears to be little difference between the success, failure and withdrawal rates of ethnic minority students and their white peers, fewer ethnic minority students achieve higher pass grades for either tutor marked assessment or for school reports. It is important that the reasons for this are investigated more fully.
- So far data on several aspects of the course has only been collected from students who have been successful in gaining QTS; we need now to conduct interviews with students who did not complete the course successfully.

The Open University has the potential, in developing its new Initial Teacher Training course, to contribute significantly to maintaining or increasing the level of ethnic minority recruitment across the country, in particular through providing training for those whose personal circumstances makes a more traditional training route inappropriate: this is in line with the main aim of the OU PGCE programme and with the philosophy of the Open University. It is hoped that, by developing this study, we will achieve a clearer picture of our ethnic minority students, which will make us both more successful in recruiting such students and in supporting them as they train to be teachers.

Appendix 1. Ethnic codes

Asian codes

Asian – British	E
Bangladeshi	C
Chinese	D
Indian	A
Pakistani	B
Asian – other	F

White codes

White – British	L
White – other European	N
White – other	P

Black codes

Black – British	J
Black – African	H
Black – Caribbean	G
Black – other	K

Others

Any other ethnic group	R
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