Teaching culturally diverse pupils: How ready are Scottish student-teachers?

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Culturally diverse classrooms: a global context

- Unprecedented levels of global mobility

- Culturally homogenous societies are rare in the 'Global North'.

- Southern Theory (Connell 2007). 'Northern and 'Southern' do "[…] not name a sharply bounded category of states or societies, but […] emphasise relations – authority, exclusion and inclusion, hegemony, partnership, sponsorship, appropriation …" (Connell, 2007, viii-ix).

- All teachers need to be culturally responsive practitioners
  to build on students' 'funds of knowedge' (Gonzales, Moll & Amanti 2005);
  to promote social justice through naming and critiquing discourses of inequity within and beyond the classroom;
  have "pedagogical dexterity" (Epstein and Gist 2013, 19).

Challenges for Teachers

- Knowing what to *do* in classrooms

- Knowing *about* their pupils

- Knowing about *themselves*

(Santoro, 2009)

The Study: Design and Methodology

- Stage one: a survey of all student-teachers enrolled in a Bachelor of Education program in one Scottish university (n = 329)

- Stage two: individual in-depth semi-structured interviews with 12 student-teachers

Analysis: Themes and Subthemes

- Lack of confidence in culturally diverse social contexts (lack of contact with culturally diverse others, fear of language barriers, fear of different cultural mores)

- Lack of confidence in culturally diverse classrooms (inadequate teacher education, lack of experience in culturally diverse classrooms)

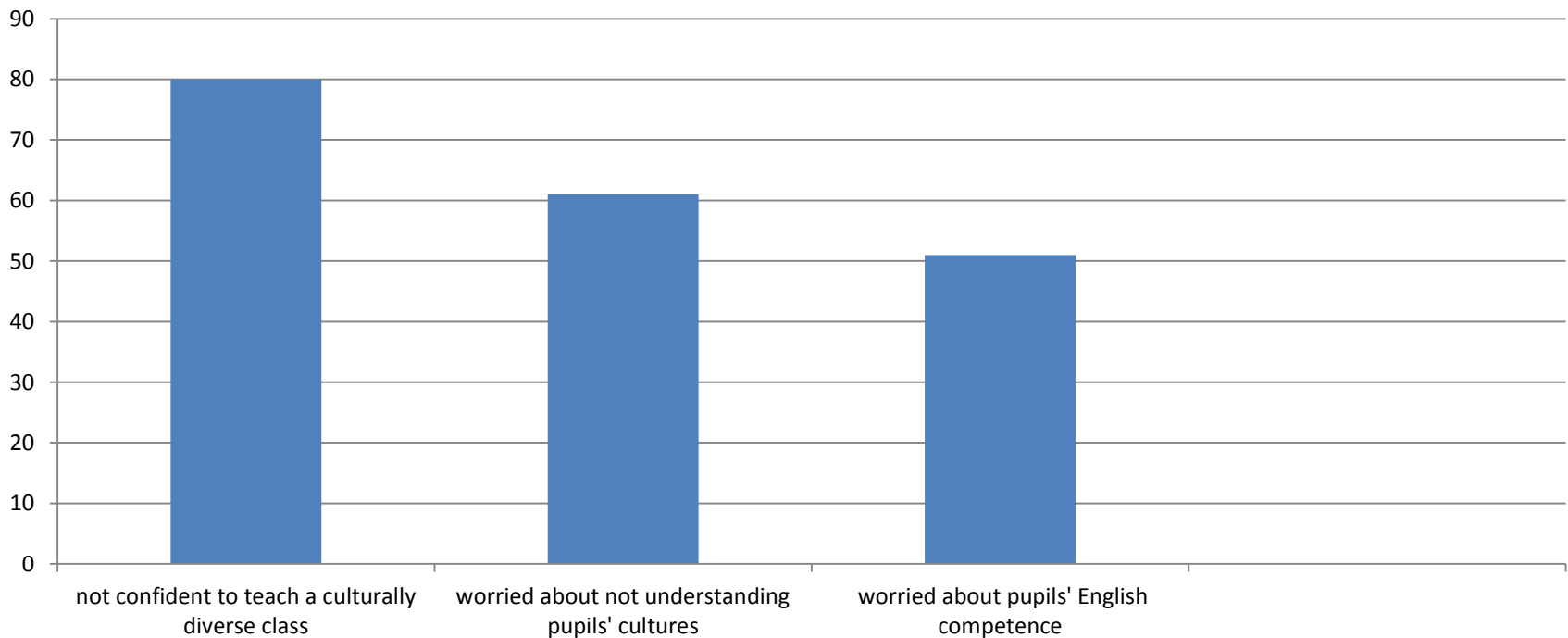- Lack of knowledge about own enculturation

Respondent Profile

Ethnicity

- white
- other
- not specified
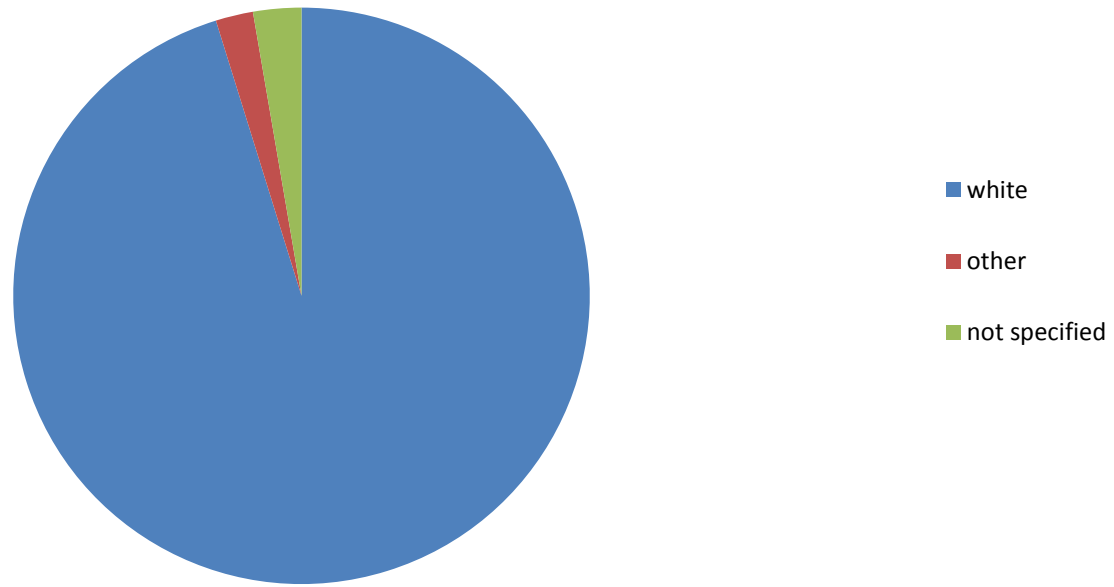
Language Profile

Legend:
- English - L1
- Monolingual
- Fluent speaks of L2

Anxiety about teaching culturally diverse pupils

Knowledge of 'Cultural Others'

I wouldn't have a clue. I don't know. I would say it is probably ummm … I would say there's quite a lot of .. Eastern European culture. I would probably say that there was a lot of… Poland comes under Eastern European doesn't it? […] So I would say, Eastern Europeans, but that would be as far as my knowledge would be able to stretch.

Knowledge of 'Cultural Others'

There weren't any black children in my school. And I think there was one in another school that I knew of and that's it. Like, I really didn't have any contact with anyone else that wasn't white because that was just the people I grew up with and the school I went to. And then you come down to Glasgow and then it is like another big culture shock because there's loads of like coloured people with black coloured skin and you are like, "Wow, that's really different". It's a really big culture shock.

Knowing the 'Cultural Self'

I can't say that I've thought about it much, no . . .. ummm. I think my experience of being through the Scottish system will always be something that affects how I am as a teacher. Umm, but as far as culture necessarily goes…. I wouldn't say….., there's not been …… I don't really know, not really sure.

Knowing the Cultural Self

- "I don't think my culture's really impacted on me too much at all"

- "I'm white and boring"

- "I'm just normal"

Whiteness

Whiteness is "socially, historically, and culturally constructed in social structure, ideology, and individual actions" (Yoon 2012, 589). It is a "socially constructed, dynamic set of strategies in speech and action" (Yoon, 2012, 10).

Teacher Education Cultures and Environments: Preparing Culturally Responsive Practitioners

Critical Teacher Education – a risky space.

It can "expose prospective teachers to a variety of ideological postures so that they can begin to perceive their own ideologies in relation to others…" (Bartolomè 2007, 281).

It can problematise colour blindness.

Teacher Education Cultures and Environments: Preparing Culturally Responsive Practitioners

- The inclusion of alternative non-Northern perspectives into teacher education curriculum

- Reflective/reflexive versus technicist teacher education

- Changing the profile of the teaching profession – age, ethnicity

Thank you

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