

# Reflections and Resolutions

## views and voices over the years

This paper consists of extracts and quotations from Multicultural Teaching or Race Equality Teaching in the period 1982–2018. It has four sections:

- (1) I wish I could say: violence and aggression
  - (2) Beyond the surface: personal and cultural identity
  - (3) To advance equality: the public sector equality duty
  - (4) Shared responsibility: facing the future.
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### **(1) I wish I could say: violence and aggression**

#### **Today**

I wish I could say that Stephen's death couldn't happen today.

*Doreen Lawrence, at the Home Office launch of a report reviewing ten years of progress since the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, 2009, quoted in 27/3*

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#### **Cheered him**

My first day at school began with a very tall white boy lifting little me off my feet, pushing me against the wall, and saying 'We don't want any more Pakis here'. He then turned to his mates, who cheered him.

*Karamat Iqbal, recalling his childhood in the 1960s, 2014 (32/2)*

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#### **Echoing resonance**

I went through school with an uneasy suspicion that I was inferior. It may have been a product of the notion that the history of the non-white population of this world is embedded in slavery and colonisation, or perhaps the echoing resonance of the word Paki as it accompanied me through the hostile corridors of the science block.

*Nitin Sawhney, 2004, quoted in 24/3*

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#### **Never get promotion**

When I was subjected to a racial attack a local education authority officer said, 'Racial harassment is your problem. Don't bring it into the school.' A senior adviser suggested that I look for jobs elsewhere saying, 'Why don't you look for senior posts in Hackney or Leicester? Many of your people live there.' A headteacher told me, 'You will never get promotion in one of the local schools. Try the race relations industry.'

*Faysal Mikdadi, 2003 (21/3)*

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#### **Friends, flatmates, people on your course**

I came to university to get an education, not to be the object of vitriolic hate ... Often the perpetrators are people we know – friends, flatmates, people on your course. But it's said with a smile so Mohammed won't mind because it's 'banter' ... Islamophobia on campus is a serious issue that the vast majority of the student community doesn't want to face up to.

*university student, 2015, quoted in 33/1*

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### **A key issue**

A key issue was the failure of schools to acknowledge the scale of name-calling and harassment experienced by Traveller pupils and the relationship of this to disciplinary exclusion for fighting. The name-calling reflected wider prejudices about Travellers in the neighbourhoods and raised questions about the responsibility of schools to be aware of this and to be associated with initiatives to address it.

*Gwynned Lloyd and Joan Stead about research in Scotland, 2002 (21/1)*

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### **Inferior in your own skin**

... Obviously I was feeling sad, and I was feeling a bit depressed as well, and for the first time in my life I was feeling a bit ashamed to be black, cause I'm proud of my heritage and stuff ... Nobody has the right to take that away from you, nobody should make you feel inferior in your own skin.

... That really hurt, so I went away and usually I don't let things like that upset me, but for some reason it really did, and I went home and the rest of the week every time I was doing something those words would just play through my head.

... I felt really upset and lonely. I felt that I could not trust anyone at all.

'I think teachers should be taught more about racism, because I don't think they understand what actually goes on in classrooms sometimes, or in a playground or whatever.

*interviews with primary and secondary school students, 2012, quoted in 31/1*

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## **(2) Beyond the surface: personal and cultural identity**

### Respect and value

It has become clear that there is no one mixed-race identity, no one mixed-heritage culture. There is no mixed-heritage colour. We have a duty to look beyond the surface and to respect and value the individual components that formulate the 'mix'. An English/Korean child, for example, wants to be recognised as precisely that ... She wants her English roots acknowledged, her Korean name correctly pronounced and used as readily as her English one, and her Korean language promoted, her cultural arts practised and displayed, and positive images depicting the lifestyles and values of Korean people. She already knows a cultural expert who can facilitate all this – her mum.

Bina Radia-Bond, 2005 (24/1)

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### When people migrate

Students should have an understanding of where black and ethnic minority cultures and religions emanate from, but they need to understand that all cultures undergo change in lands of origin and in particular when people migrate and set up home in other parts of the world. Educational policies and practices should appreciate and present this.

Linda Appiah, 1999 (18/1)

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### Modern day stuff

Obviously what you are being taught about Rosa Parks and Nelson Mandela and all that, it is all stuff that has happened in the past. But I think it is important to reinforce

modern day stuff, because obviously our country has modernised and I think it would be beneficial to bring up more current events like stuff that happens on an everyday basis rather than big events that happened back then ... The small things are the things that really change your view, because you know it is happening in the moment.

focus group of secondary school pupils in Scotland, 2014, quoted in 34/2

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Normal

I don't really mention it [his Muslim heritage background] too much. I kinda just act as if I'm normal.

Algerian-Scottish teenage boy, 2014, quoted in 34/2

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No posters showing anything anywhere of me

The thing I feel in this school is there are no posters or anything anywhere which show anything of me ...When my teacher says to put pictures in our work from Clip Art, I can never find anything that shows black people doing anything.

Year 9 boy of mixed heritage, quoted in 27/1

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Whiteness

Schools could be places where real progress is made. But this is possible only if they encourage and enable every individual to examine their own values and attitudes. Schools need to empower their staff by developing an understanding of the effect of the different discourses and how they influence and are influenced by power. Within education I see Whiteness Studies as an opportunity to enable white teachers to see and confront racism with honesty as an integral part of day-to-day life without guilt.

Wendy Willmer, 2008 (27/1)

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Their dignity would be taken away from them

... I think it were a bad situation because it were done because someone wanted to do it [pulling hijab off] for fun ... When I have me headscarf on it makes me feel like I'm an individual, and I wear it for a purpose for my religion... They wear a headscarf for a reason, and I think that if the headscarf were taken away from them their dignity would be taken away from them.

primary school pupil, 2012, quoted in 31/1

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Navigating the challenges

Because current schools – good or not – consistently fail Black students ... I want cultural and ethnically appropriate provision so that my children retain a strong self of identity and feel accepted as part of society ... We need a school that will keep the children grounded in their culture, build confidence and expose them to a support network that will allow them to manoeuvre and navigate the challenges of the British society.

African-Caribbean parents quoted by Rosemary Campbell-Stephens on why they would send their children to a new free school, 2011 (29/2)

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### (3) To advance equality: the public sector equality duty

#### Keeping girls and boys in their place

Schools are in a unique position to challenge the preconceptions which are established early and which are so hard to undo later. The public sector equality duty (PSED) requires schools to advance equality for both sexes but many are currently failing to address the stereotypes that keep girls and boys in their place – and many are reinforcing and perpetuating them. Education should ensure that children are equipped with skills that will enable them to pursue as wide a range of opportunities as possible. It should encourage them to challenge attitudes and beliefs that can reduce their own and others' options and equip them with the self-confidence and resilience to overcome obstacles to self-fulfilment.

Mark Jennett, 32/2, 2014

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#### Issuing a ticket but keeping the door locked

Parents who wish to exercise their disabled child's right to mainstream education can find themselves under pressure to accept a special school place, despite the government's promise of parental choice. Without strategic leadership from the government and incentives for schools to develop capacity to include disabled pupils, the promise of parental choice will remain hollow. After all, offering an entitlement without developing capacity is like issuing a ticket but keeping the door locked.

Artemi Sakellariadis, 2014 (32/2)

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#### In breach of the law

Young people who identify as transgender frequently report that they face disadvantageous circumstances and discriminatory attitudes during their schooling. Things happen to them that are in breach of the law ... Research shows that many of the people working with young trans individuals – the teachers, school psychologists and social workers – have received no training in trans awareness and perpetuate negative attitudes and transphobia, possibly through their lack of confidence or awareness of how to think about and work with this group.

Catherine McNamara and Jay Stewart, 2014 (32/1)

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#### The wider environment

Disability-related bullying persists not just because 'bullies' are targeting individuals but because many young people are living and studying in environments where negative attitudes towards, and stereotypes about, disabled people are socially acceptable. Tackling disability-related bullying isn't just about eradicating incidents on an individual level: we must also engage with issues in the wider environment.

Sarah Soyey, Kate Hollinshead and Yvette Thomas, 2014 (32/2)

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#### Evidence of compliance

Linking equality and diversity frameworks with awards offers schools advantages, including: a whole school approach; better leadership and commitment from senior managers; year-round activity, rather than one-off events; an opportunity for everyone to be involved -- teachers, parents and carers, pupils and the local community; creative and innovative activities; embedding equality in the school ethos; positive experiences for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development; and opportunities to gain recognition and positive press coverage of achievements. And by taking part in one or more of these schemes, a school can provide evidence of compliance with the public sector equality duty (clause 149 of the Equality Act 2010).

Bill Bolloten, 2011 (30/1)

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#### Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality – namely, the fact that no one is ever just one thing – must inform all thinking in education. Research and policy-making reflect the fact that people live at the intersections of several different kinds of inequality ... Adopting an intersectional framework allows for the exploration of differences within and between groups that take account of issues such as historical and socio-political context while still maintaining awareness of racial inequalities.

Sameena Choudry, 2014 (32/2)

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### (4) Shared responsibility: facing the future

#### Hearts and minds

Typically we think about training in terms of skills, knowledge and understanding. But whenever there's training which involves the element of race, it has to be more than that. It has to engage hearts and minds, it has to force us to contemplate our humanity. It's actually got to make us think about love and care and concern and kindness. We've got to come to a position collectively, where we agree that guilt and blame have no place at the dining table of shared responsibility.

speaker at a national conference, 2006, quoted in 24/3

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#### Political literacy

We have come a long way from the days of assimilationist practices where those who were othered were expected to give up their otherness and fit in. There is now a recognition of the importance of having a lens of 'plenty' that encourages us to value diversity in all its complexities and richness. However, what we have also learnt is that racism and discrimination morph into new forms, and that it would not be possible to address or capture all of their dimensions. Now more than ever, educators need to consider in each subject area, for each age and stage, how they can teach political literacy.

Rowena Arshad and co-authors, 2017 (34/2)

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#### I am not going away

There have been times over the past four years when I felt like giving up. There are only so many times you can be ignored, bullied and discriminated against, which is bizarre when all you are trying to do is promote equality and eliminate discrimination! But there have been other times where I feel it's all worth it and I know I am making a difference and that outweighs all of the bad times. And I think people are listening now, or maybe it's just that they know I am not going away and my work for equality is just beginning.

Helen Newbery, 2006 (24/2)

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### What might be possible

What is becoming obvious is the disturbing increase in the division between the followers of the Trumps and Farages of the world and the rest of us. And this makes working for racial equality ever more difficult. Who cares? Well, looking out from my pigeon hole, I see that compared with thirty years ago many more of us take racism very seriously and act to counter it. So what can we do in practice to stem the flow of Trumpism, Farageism and our general powerlessness over the increasing hostility to immigrants and the concomitant racism? We need to identify what might be possible.

Jane Lane, 2017 (34/2)

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### Our shared history

To move beyond the blame and fear culture that characterises black-white relationships, the consequences of our shared history must be surfaced and worked through. Race and the pivotal role it plays in British culture must be faced, no matter how unpleasant.

Gloria Gordon, 2007 (25/3)

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### Each and every one of us

The equality agenda is about values, principles, standards and justice for us all. It is about each and every one of us being inspired to make our own personal contribution to the goal of equality and fairness for all. It is about personal responsibility and commitment and not leaving it to someone else. Those who are not part of the solution remain the problem.

Herman Ouseley, 2000 (18/2)

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