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# Finding 'pockets of possibility' for anti-racism in a curriculum for student teachers: From absence to action

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## Abstract

Many institutions have found the strength to name racism and seek space for curriculum and other systemic changes. We argue this is happening against a backdrop of curriculum, regulatory and policy changes in education, and particularly initial teacher education and training (ITE/T), which are de-racialised. We propose that a 'pocket of possibility' lies within such divergences, and present research leading to the creation of an anti-racism framework for ITE/T to support action against this emergent landscape. The paper documents each aspect of the research and snapshots of the findings of a global literature review of anti-racism in initial teacher education, which demonstrated the need for an embedded approach to anti-racism, informed by critical understandings of whiteness and racism. We share some of the complexities, obstacles, and effective anti-racism practices revealed in the review. The findings of the review led to the creation and analysis of a survey for ITE/T providers in England, which provided encouraging evidence of useful practice alongside needs of the profession. We conclude with a statement of intent and hope to maximise of the minimum entitlement of the Core Content Framework (CCF) by a purposeful undoing of the perpetual de-racialisation of education.

## KEYWORDS

anti-racism, anti-racism framework, core content framework, de-racialisation, initial teacher education and training (ITE/T)

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper is founded on a commitment by the authors to promote knowledge and understanding of race, racism and anti-racism in initial teacher education and training (henceforth ITE/T), which in turn is based upon a combined authors' experience and practice-based observations of over 40 years. Our observations, thoughts and commitment were echoed by colleagues in other institutions who form the membership of the Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers (henceforth UCET) Equalities Group. The research study captured here, reviewed global literature on anti-racism in ITE/T and examined practices in ITE/T in England through a national survey. The findings from the review and the survey were then used to inform the writing of an antiracism framework for ITE/T providers in England, which is briefly outlined in this paper. The framework is not a replacement for or update to an existing anti-racism framework as no equivalent framework exists for England. It is important to reflect on that fact. It is 2022 and, in the week we begin writing this article, a new public report on racism is published following a global pandemic: The National Health Service (NHS, 2022) Race and Health Observatory Rapid Evidence Review noting, "Ethnic inequalities in access to, experiences of, and outcomes of healthcare are longstanding problems in the NHS, and are rooted in experiences of structural, institutional and interpersonal racism." In March 2022, a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (p. 2) was published about the case of Child Q a "Black female child of secondary school age, [who] was strip searched by female police officers from the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). The search, which involved the exposure of Child Q's intimate body parts, took place on school premises, without an Appropriate Adult present and with the knowledge that Child Q was menstruating." (Child-Q-PUBLISHED-14-March-22.pdf [[chscp.org.uk](https://chscp.org.uk)]). The report found that "racism (whether deliberate or not) was likely to have been an influencing factor in the decision to undertake a strip search" (Ibid, p. 6). 2022 has heralded great flux in teacher education, with the enforced reaccreditation of all ITE/T provision following the government's Initial Teacher Training Market Review report (2021). ITE/T providers must demonstrate their curriculum fully incorporates the Department for Education's Core Content Framework (CCF) (2019). The CCF is the minimum entitlement for all trainee teachers in England which "all ITT providers must incorporate—in full—within their curriculums" (Ofsted Initial teacher education [ITE] inspection framework and handbook, updated February 2022). The CCF therefore plays a central role in the current reforms of ITE/T, and effectively forms a state-mandated and enforced curriculum for ITE/T. As Smith (2021a) has noted elsewhere however, the CCF contains no reference to race, racism, anti-racism, or even the terms prejudice or discrimination.

These early ruminations reflect perfectly wider social and political divergences in the wake of the resurgent Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, following a global response to the murder of George Floyd, a Black American by a White police officer in the US in May 2020. On the one hand, many organisations, such as the NHS Race and Health Observatory, Universities via Decolonising movements such as the Rhodes Must Fall campaign; and schools as exemplified by the National Education Union (NEU) motion passed at their conference in 2022 for changes to the National Curriculum to "ensure that education embraces culturally inclusive classrooms and reflects all children's backgrounds", have found the courage to seek space for curriculum and other systemic changes. On the other hand, the current UK government appears reluctant to name racism, particularly institutional or structural racism and especially in relation to education. For example, in launching the Government's Commission on Ethnic and Racial Disparities report (CRED, 2021), which was tasked with identifying, explaining and providing recommendations to overcome persistent racial disparities, the Commission's Chair, Tony Sewell, declared that the commission had found "no evidence of institutional racism". In another example, the Department for

Education (henceforth DfE) have very recently launched new guidance for teachers on political (im)partiality (Political impartiality in schools—GOV.UK [[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)]), in which the BLM movement is singled out in a scenario in which it is explained that BLM “may cover partisan political views. These are views which *go beyond* the basic shared principle that racism is unacceptable, which is a view schools should reinforce.” As the NEU have already pointed out, “The losers in the DfE's 34-page game of obfuscation about what is and is not a ‘political’ issue will be the students who are denied the opportunity to engage with the most challenging issues of our time.” (Guidance on political impartiality in English classrooms ‘confusing’ say teachers’ unions | Schools | The Guardian).

The approach adopted in this research study is very much in tune with that advocated by Joseph-Salisbury and Connelly (2021, p. 1) to seek “pockets of hope and possibility” in the contradictions and divergences which exist between activism in the real world of school and university classrooms attuned to real world educational and wider inequities, and the new world of restrictive and obstructive ITE/T policies and regulations, which, following a brief commentary on terminology, we shall expand upon in arguing a rationale for this study.

## A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Before going further, it is important to be clear about the language we use in this paper. There have been many critiques of the acronym ‘BAME’ (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic)/ BME (Black Minority Ethnic) in research and policy. In 2019/20 alone, Bunglawala (2019), deputy director of policy and strategy for the Race Disparity Audit (2018), and Nora Fakim and Cecilia Macaulay (Fakim & Macaulay, 2020) to name just two, highlighted serious concerns, ranging from the acronym being created as a ‘safe’ term to avoid concerns about anti-Black racism, to the homogenization of racially diverse people. The acronym BAME (or BME) is only used here when citing others who have used this acronym, otherwise we chose to employ the term Black and Global Majority (BGM) following discussion with the research team and partners for the purposes of the project’s literature review, with a recognition that this acronym captures a moment in time but is also unsatisfactory and therefore, subject to change.

## PROVIDING A RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY: WHY ANTI-RACISM IN ITE/T, AND WHY NOW?

Our classrooms in England are ethnically and linguistically diverse with 33.9% of primary and 32.1% of secondary pupils recorded as being of BAME heritage (term used by DfE), and 20.9% of primary pupils and 17.2% of secondary pupils recorded as having a first language other than English (DfE, 2020–2021). Given the continued diversification of our classrooms, and the fact that racial inequities in educational experiences, inclusion and outcomes have been recorded since the 1970s (e.g., Coard, 1971), resulting in an anti-racism movement in education which, in relation to policy making, was the most prominent (although not necessarily effective) in the 1980s (Gillborn, 2006), it seems inconceivable that we should *still* be arguing the need for an anti-racism framework in ITE/T in 2022. But we *are* arguing for such a need; indeed, we are arguing the primacy and urgency of anti-racism in ITE/T, and we do so for several reasons.

Firstly, there remains longstanding educational inequities as captured by the British government’s own Race Disparity Audit. We also know that children in Asian and Black households are more likely, compared with the national average, to be living in persistent low-income households during the period 2013–2017 (ONS, 2020: Child poverty and

education outcomes by ethnicity—Office for National Statistics [ons.gov.uk]). The percentage of children in Black households living in persistent low income was six percentage points higher than the percentage of children in White households living in persistent low income (ONS, 2020). Covid-19 has brought these economic inequities into even sharper relief, with school closures and unequal access to technology and other socio-spatial circumstances at home (Lander et al., 2021), food poverty and grief from loss of family members resulting in a substantial impact on students of BGM heritage. The education of current and future teachers must contribute, as an urgent endeavour, to breaking this cycle in addressing the education of pupils from ethnically and linguistically minoritized and economically disadvantaged communities. As the Carter Review (Carter, 2015) acknowledged, ITE plays an important role in transforming school practices, and hence we believe that an anti-racism framework for ITE/T is an essential stepping-stone on the way to a more equitable education system overall.

Secondly, our teaching population remains predominantly White; although as Callender (2020) points out, the numbers of BGM teachers in different regions vary greatly. Recent government statistics reveal that 85.7% of all teachers in England in 2019 were White, compared to 78.5% of the working population who are White (School teacher workforce -GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures [ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk]). Recent detailed analysis undertaken for the NFER (Worth et al., 2022) reveal that “People from Asian, black and other ethnic backgrounds are over-represented among applicants to postgraduate ITT, which suggests that there is no shortage of interest in joining the profession among these groups.” However, “acceptance rates [into ITE/T courses] for applicants from these ethnic backgrounds are generally lower than for applicants from white ethnic backgrounds” and “[b]y the time applicants have enrolled, completed their training and achieved qualified teacher status (QTS), Asian, black, mixed and other ethnic minority groups are under-represented compared to the wider population.” (Ibid). Moreover, this is a trend which continues at each subsequent stage of the profession. There is therefore a remaining cultural dissonance between the teacher and pupil populations (Chui et al., 2017). Maylor (2018, p. 112) reports on possible reasons for the under-recruitment of Black men into teaching including the possibility that stereotypical racist constructions of Black men as “aggressive”, “trouble-makers” and “lacking discipline” ... [are] inadvertently reinforcing conceptions of Black male teachers as undesirable.” In other words, just as teachers have been shown to hold, often unconscious models of the ‘ideal’ pupil in their heads, against which other pupils are judged (Pearce, 2005; Youdell, 2003), it is likely that teacher educators, most of whom have previously been classroom teachers, hold similar stereotypical mental images of the ideal student teacher, thereby accounting at least partially for these such racial disparities in acceptance rates to ITE. An antiracism framework would support ITE colleagues to monitor and critically reflect upon processes relating to recruitment and retention of BGM student teachers and contribute to breaking the cycle of cultural dominance within the profession.

Thirdly, we would argue that a focus on anti-racism in ITE is necessary at this juncture to counterbalance current education and ITE policies, including the CCF, because of their inexplicitness and wilful inattention to racism. A critical discourse analysis of the current Teacher Standards (Smith, 2013) revealed, unlike the preceding teaching standards, an absence of reference to race, racism, or ethnicity, as replicated in the CCF. Smith (2021a, 2021b) alongside Gillborn et al. (2016) have since demonstrated a general tendency towards *de-racialisation* in statutory and guidance policy documents relating to education and associated regulatory inspection frameworks in “the literal removal of reference to race and ipso facto a concern for racism” (Smith, 2021b, p. 3). Perhaps then, it is unsurprising that in the last set of published DfE NQT (newly qualified teacher) survey results, far too few newly qualified teachers felt well prepared to teach pupils from “across all ethnic backgrounds” and only 39% felt confident to “teach pupils for whom English is an Additional Language

(EAL)" (the lowest score in the survey and an important consideration because of exclusionary language practices sometimes referred to as ethnolinguistic racism or linguisticism). The de-racialisation of the ITE curriculum may imply race neutrality but we argue for race cognisant pre-service teachers who possess and utilise knowledge to break the cycles of race inequity in education. This can only be achieved if they are educated about race, racism and race inequities since the latter perpetuates life-long disadvantage for BGM students, especially those living in poverty.

This rationale was effectively the starting point to our research in detailing the reasons for the study, but also in elaborating some of the changes to ITE/T which we understood the anti-racism framework resulting from the study, would need to engender.

## THE RESEARCH STUDY UNDERPINNING THE ANTI-RACISM FRAMEWORK

### Principles of the research

The study emerged following discussions with colleagues in UCET. We identified the need for a framework which would support teacher educators in transforming practice with respect to preparing student teachers to teach a diverse pupil population. The framework had to be built on empirical research. Our aim was to establish a baseline which charted the extant literature on teacher education and race, and to survey current ITE practice and interview respondents who had identified good practice within their provision. In other words, our intent was to map the ITE landscape in England to identify the pockets of possibility (Joseph-Salisbury and Connelly, 2021) and the gaps within ITE with respect to all aspects of ITE provision including, teaching, placements, the curriculum, and support for BGM student/trainee teachers. This type of scoping study has been long overdue in ITE since the last such study was conducted in 2006 by Davies and Crozier.

Several organisations were then approached as potential contributors, leading to the creation of a team of partners as in Table 1.

### The study

In essence, this was exploratory research to reveal ITE/T practices in England, understood in light of an extant global literature on anti-racism and teacher education, in order to inform the creation of a research-informed anti-racism framework with transformative intent.

In discussion with our partners, we ascertained that the research should take place in two main stages. The first stage involved a global literature review to locate studies into anti-racism and teacher education. The literature was located by searching for an intersection of key words: racism and initial teacher education, or anti-racism and pre-service teachers, cognisant of the different ways in which initial teacher education is expressed across the English-speaking world. Given our concerns about the de-racialisation of education and ITE/T, we kept the search focussed specifically on race, racism, and anti-racism for this study. We employed snowballing once the database search was exhausted, by referring to reference lists of key studies and citations to useful papers. The review involved a process of first encoding the information arising from the literature to initially organise the information and then later synthesise this in order to identify and develop themes arising (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006, p. 83) as in the findings below. The authors worked together with the project research assistant to regularly discuss the literature search and the encoding of themes, revising accordingly to ensure 'data saturation'. The literature was also categorised



TABLE 1 Anti-racism framework partners

Project partner organisation	Contribution type
UCET (Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers)	Access to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)—ITE providers; consultation on research report, guidance document; dissemination events
NALDIC (National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum): a professional organisation for teaching pupils for whom English is an additional language	Consultation, co-production of resources, dissemination
Centre of Race Education and Decoloniality	Dissemination events
Show Racism the Red Card	Consultation, co-production of resources, dissemination
NEU (National Education Union)	Consultation, co-production of resources, dissemination
Universities of Sanctuary	Consultation, co-production of resources, dissemination
BAME Ed Network	Consultation, co-production of resources, dissemination

contextually to gain an overview of country-specific roles in relation to the emergent themes (resulting in a contextual summary chart).

The literature review was not exhaustive, nor did it claim to be systematic, but it is an extensive global review, which revealed 123 relevant research/scholarly publications from 1986 up to 2021 (most publications were in the 2000s).

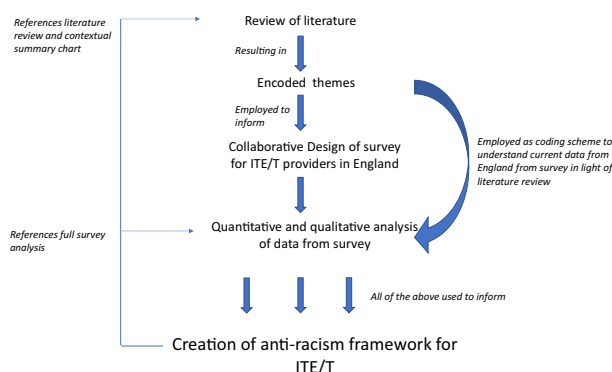
The broad themes arising from the literature review were then used to inform question categories in the survey of ITE/T provision in England, the second stage of the research. The survey was constructed in partnership with the research team, following their reading of the literature review and was separated into seven sections covering:

1. survey respondent's personal and professional details;
2. awareness of and need for antiracism policies in ITE/T;
3. views on the characteristics of effective anti-racist pedagogy in ITE/T;
4. information about respondents' own practices;
5. respondents' course-and-self evaluations;
6. respondents' and colleagues' level of expertise and training and perceived barriers to anti-racism in ITE/T;
7. respondents' relevant publications and willingness to respond further.

It was constructed via Jisc online surveys and underwent a small trial. It was opened in May 2021 for approximately 6 weeks and was shared via the weekly newsletter issued by UCET to all HEI ITE/T providers in England, and to all School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) providers via the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT). Participants were informed that strict confidentiality would be maintained, and results would be handled in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Following the return of surveys, our aim was to contact all respondents who had indicated they were happy for us to do so, to ask them further questions about their responses and to ask for example work to share with the framework. In the end, because of time pressures and Covid, we spoke with only 6 colleagues, whose responses are captured in the framework.

The survey responses were initially analysed quantitatively using JISC. The findings from this quantification together with the free text responses in the survey were then analysed



**FIGURE 1** Research stages and relationships.

qualitatively by interpreting responses in light of the findings of the literature review themes to look for consistencies and contradictions. This mixed analysis approach (as captured in Figure 1) involved the encoding of the literature resulting in themes, which was then used as a thematic coding scheme applied a-priori (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2021) to the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the survey in order to more fully understand the current English ITE/T context.

To add to the credibility of the literature review and the survey analysis outcomes, the full literature review, which contains thick description of many of the sources, the context summary chart, and the full survey analysis are publicly available to download alongside and interactively embedded within the resulting anti-racism framework, available at: [NU Anti-racism Framework final-compressed.pdf \(ncl.ac.uk\)](https://ncl.ac.uk/anti-racism-framework-final-compressed.pdf).

## A SNAPSHOT OF FINDINGS FROM THE GLOBAL LITERATURE REVIEW

The contextualised themes arising from the literature review revealed some interesting findings; for example, all the literature which focussed on directives from the state avoiding reference to racism, were from the UK, whereas the majority of examples of anti-racist pedagogy and practices in ITE/T came from the US. The following broad themes emerged from the literature review:

- The role of policies and procedures in developing anti-racism in ITE/T
- Reasons for the need for anti-racism work in ITE/T
- Constraints, complexities, and the need to develop a racial literacy
- Centring BGM experiences
- Critical race theory and critical whiteness studies as a foundation to anti-racism pedagogies
- Anti-racism pedagogies and responses of White pre-service teachers
- Effective anti-racism pedagogies in ITE/T in practice.

Within these themes, the following findings emerged of particular concern to the development of both the survey and the anti-racism framework itself.

### Lack of anti-racist pedagogies

A major finding of the Literature Review (henceforth LR and available to view at: [Global Literature review - final.pdf \(ncl.ac.uk\)](https://ncl.ac.uk/global-literature-review-final.pdf)) noted since the 1990s, was the need for specific, coherent,



consistent and embedded anti-racist pedagogies in ITE (see Arday & Mirza, 2018; Crozier & Davies, 2006; Daniel, 2009; Flintoff et al., 2014; Joseph-Salisbury, 2020; Lander, 2011; Malin, 1997; Milner, 2010; Nieto, 2000; O'Brien, 2009; Pollock et al., 2010; Rezai-Rashti & Solomon, 2008; Wilkins, 2013). Current provision was found to be lacking, particularly in the English context, leading to low levels of racial literacy (Joseph-Salisbury, 2020), negative stereotyping of BGM pupils, and a lack of critical introspection, in turn leading to deficit perceptions by student teachers of children's home and cultural backgrounds (Bhopal & Rhamie, 2013). Such perceptions can lead to low teacher expectations of BGM pupils which may result in low attainment; a perpetual cycle evidenced by many researchers (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000).

The LR also found that when anti-racism was part of a course it tended to be 'one-off' or a standalone anti-racist workshop, which was argued to be ineffective in developing student teachers' critical thinking and proactive responses to racism in education. Joseph-Salisbury (2020, p. 8) also found in interviewing teachers about their training that "there was a sense that issues of race and racism were often subsumed under inequalities more broadly, and were sometimes marginalised by considerations of class, and the 'white working class' specifically" therefore, providing insufficient knowledge and understanding about the terms, and functioning of race and racism for student/trainee teachers to reflect on and take into account through their practice whilst on school placement. Further, where anti-racism work existed, responsibility tended to rest with one or two ITE/T tutors who had the skills and confidence, meaning this was both an isolated learning experience not embedded within the structures and processes of teacher education institutions, and ultimately unsustainable.

The reasons articulated for a lack of focus on and barriers to anti-racism by initial teacher educators revolved around a lack of tutor knowledge, and a lack of confidence (e.g., Arday and Mirza 2018), alongside a lack of time in the ITE/T curriculum (e.g., O'Brien, 2009, pp. 194–205). Arday and Mirza (2018, p. 188) found that ITE tutors felt confused between the need to be neutral in supporting all students equally, and recognising and addressing the reality of BGM students' lived experience of racism:

Somewhat surprisingly for a university with a 'diverse' student make-up, tutors were not confident and received very little training and support about issues to do with multiculturalism, bilingualism, inclusive pedagogy and practice. Topics such as talking about Islam and ethnic and religious difference were consciously avoided in classroom discussions.

Alongside and possibly underpinning the lack of tutor knowledge and confidence, the LR also found a lack of training and institutional support for embedding anti-racism into ITE/T curriculum in England, reflecting its absence in DfE policies, the Teacher Standards and CCF, and in the Ofsted frameworks in England.

Absence of anti-racist pedagogies in ITE classrooms was found to reproduce student teachers' 'fear' of discussing and dismantling racism in school classrooms (Devine, 2005; Lander, 2011; Leonardo & Porter, 2010; Picower, 2009). The consequences of this limitation in the ITE curriculum were discussed by Arday and Mirza (2018, p. 178) as leading to a situation where "the external materiality of the Black and Minority Ethnic student's situatedness (i.e., the political, economic and social structures that produce inequality) is constituted, reconfigured and lived through their corporeal representation as seen by the white tutors i.e., as 'undeserving', 'needy', or 'oppressed' racialised others". This has an increased impact on BGM ITE/T students in particular, who felt 'othered' on the PGCE course (see also: Bhopal & Rhamie, 2013; Maylor, 2018; Wilkins & Lall, 2011), thereby engendering feelings of not belonging on the course or even within the profession. BGM student teachers' experiences

of racism within ITE will contribute to their absence in the profession until ITE/T providers systemically embed anti-racist practices.

## Development of racial literacy

Given these constraints and complexities, several studies argued for the development of a racial literacy among ITE/ITT course providers. The literature revealed that embedding anti-racism within ITE/ITT to develop a racial literacy needs to include critical self-reflection on whiteness and systems that work to promote the interests of whiteness (e.g., Hobson & Whigham, 2018, in Arday & Mirza, 2018). As Picower (2009, p. 199) asks: "How do White, middle class, prospective teachers make the transition from being unaware of their culture to a critical understanding of the role of culture, power, and oppression?" The role of critical understandings of whiteness and critical race theory (henceforth CRT) in developing a racial literacy for anti-racist pedagogy was revealed as crucial practice in many studies (see for example: Allen, 2004; Aronson et al., 2020; Bhopal & Rhamie, 2013; Crozier & Davies, 2006; Flintoff et al., 2014; Gillborn, 2005, 2019; Lachuk & Mosley, 2012; Leonardo, 2009; Matias & Mackey, 2015; Smith, 2014; Smith & Lander, 2012; Warmington et al., 2017) in order to deconstruct the reality of being racialised White in a white supremacist society, and how that confers advantage in all areas of people activity (Welsing, 1991). It is through an exploration of whiteness and how it underpins the racialisation process that students can begin to understand how racism manifests itself in multiple ways and gives rise to racial inequities within education and society.

## Teaching about whiteness

Hobson and Whigham (2018) provide an honest account of the difficulties (real or perceived) of being a tutor in ITE/T while teaching whiteness and endorsing anti-racism in higher education. Notably, fear of causing offence or 'getting it wrong' caused anxiety for the tutors. The LR also captured an awareness of emotional responses by student teachers including fear, avoidance through colour-blindness, anger and denial (Callender, 2020; Devine, 2005; Gillborn, 2019; Picower, 2009; Smith, 2014, 2016; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2002). An internal critical reflection of how the 'self' reproduces our racist history and is therefore complicit in the evolution of racism in a myriad of ways, is far more difficult for students and hence also their teachers.

Further, Leonardo and Porter (2010) expose the problem of trying to be 'safe' in anti-racist pedagogies:

Safety discourses on race are a veiled form of violence and it will require a humanizing form of violence to expose contradictions in the discourse of 'safety'.  
(Leonardo & Porter, 2010, p. 140)

Developing knowledge of the construct of whiteness, white privilege, white supremacy, and racism, does not however, guarantee an individuals' ability to renounce or change practices (Endres & Gould, 2009, p. 424). Studies of White preservice teachers show that even when a White student associates their racial group with privilege, they do not think it will impact their teaching practice (Bhopal & Rhamie, 2013; Matias et al., 2014; Puchner & Markowitz, 2014). Vaught and Castagno (2008) and Webb (2001) promote coherent anti-racist pedagogies that do not rely solely on the reflective process, as this can work to substantiate bias and resistance by focusing on the individual. Nevertheless, Le Roux (le Roux, 2016) maintains that without this work, changes in the school classroom will be impeded.

Another issue for White teacher educators teaching about whiteness is captured by Whigham and Hobson (2018) who argue:

Whilst my attempts to encourage learning through the 'affective domain' and the development of skills of empathy for White educational practitioners or students may have good intentions, I will always remain unable to provide an authentic and complete understanding of the lived experiences of other racial groups who occupy the 'liminal space of alterity'. (Whigham and Hobson in Arday & Mirza, 2018, p. 20)

This illustrates how the lack of experience and knowledge about racialised others appears to impede action to change or improve the curriculum and develop pre-service teachers' understanding of race and its effects on racially minoritized students. Thus the status quo remains.

## **Good practice**

Several effective anti-racist pedagogical approaches were revealed which work with the difficulties previously identified. The pedagogies use a Critical Race Theory (CRT) framework combined with Critical Studies of Whiteness (CWS), counter storytelling and a centring of the Black imagination. We present three examples from the LR (for a summary of examples see [global literature chart - themes by country.pdf \(ncl.ac.uk\)](#)). Firstly, video-cued ethnography is utilised by teacher educators Campbell and Valauri (2019) in the US to help facilitate anti-racist preservice teaching, using the stories of parents of colour experiencing the school system. Secondly, some teacher educators employ an intersectional privilege studies approach: "The adoption of intersectionality as an organising principle that provides the opportunity for a more nuanced and critical approach to issues of racialisation, racism and oppression" (Nash, 2008 in Scrimgeour & Ovsienko, 2015, p. 33). By adopting an intersectionality approach to anti-racist pedagogies Scrimgeour and Ovsienko (2015, p. 33) state that resistance from preservice teachers is reduced. Thirdly, and in recognition that emotions are themselves racialised, Matias and Mackey (2015) opted for an emotional-based approach to embed CWS as an anti-racist pedagogy in ITE, "one that explicitly identifies and defines emotionality, addresses the emotions that will be felt in the course, and included lectures on theorizations of emotions" (Matias & Mackey, 2015 p. 36). Similarly, African American ITE tutor, Milner (2007), studied the impact of emotional counter storytelling and narrative inquiry as he reviewed his own pedagogies. As a White teacher educator invested in radical, critical teacher education in the UK, Smith's (2014) study complements Matias and Mackey's (2015) approach, as well as the findings identified by Matias and Zembylas (2014) regarding emotions of pre-service teachers in the US. Smith uses documentaries to stimulate emotion, leading to critical reflection among student teachers and, "the relationship between emotion and transformed student thinking in relation to each documentary viewed" (Smith, 2014, p. 218). She does, however, note some caution in adopting such an approach, suggesting that teachers using documentaries as a transformative tool to shift student thinking should "read beyond the face value of students' emotional responses" (ibid, p. 234).

As explained above, the findings from the LR were then employed in the design and analysis of a survey distributed to ITE/T providers across England.

## **A SNAPSHOT OF FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY**

The survey front page was looked at 453 times (although not necessarily by that number of individuals). The survey was opened 80 times but only 27 individuals submitted the survey.

One of the 27 returns was submitted by a student and hence was excluded. There were, therefore, 26 usable survey returns. The respondents represented a wide range of course types, including PGCE, undergraduate, school direct and SCITT courses; subject areas and educational stages (early years, primary and secondary). And 13 respondents were responding on behalf of more than one course type. Most of these respondents played a senior role in the courses, e.g., head of course, head of ITE, head of Primary or Secondary Education. Of the two who were not in a leadership role, both had responsibilities for equity/anti-racism. The pattern was more varied for those 13 who were responding on behalf of only one course, suggesting that these respondents may have taken individual responsibility to respond to the survey. Survey respondents' gender and ethnicity is captured in Table 2.

As Figure 2 reveals, the majority of respondents were Senior Lecturers not senior managers. They clearly took responsibility for this area of the curriculum and may be as identified in the LR the knowledgeable tutors who taught about race on the ITE programmes within their institutions.

Most of the respondents had been teaching in ITE/T for between 5 and 9 years and the overwhelming number of respondents worked in London or the South-East.

Those answering the survey were unequivocal in their support for anti-racism appearing as an aspect of ITE/T provision:

It is essential that we address institutional racism, White privilege and colour blindness to ensure that we disrupt the prejudice and discrimination BAME pupils experience during their time in education.

Whilst we acknowledge there was probably an element of bias in that those completing the survey were committed and, as above, took responsibility for anti-racism work in their courses, nevertheless it is encouraging to see, as in the above free text response, respondents' reasons for the inclusion of anti-racism echoed those identified in the global LR, including:

- the role of teachers being paramount in promoting antiracism to develop a racially equitable society;
- the importance of anti-racist pedagogies including Critical Race Theory (CRT), Critical White Studies (CWS) in ITE/T;
- a recognition that the majority White teaching population does not reflect the growth in racial diversity among school pupils in England leading to a need to ensure student teachers develop a racial literacy;
- and an acknowledgement of institutional racism as prevalent in society including in education systems.

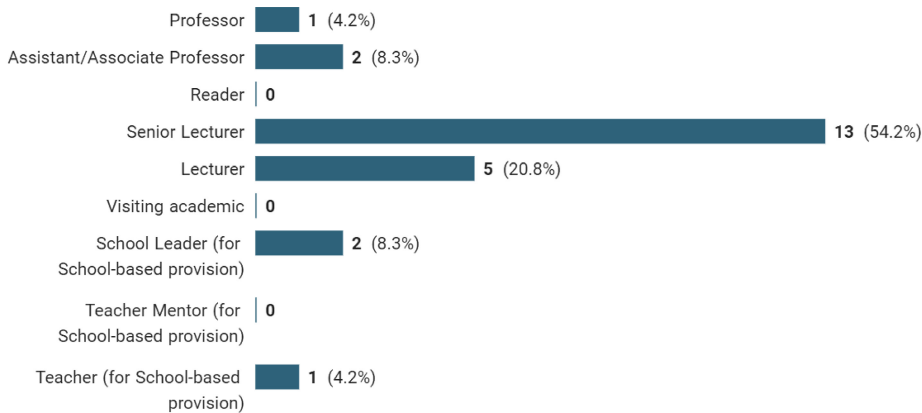
The survey asked respondents to rate 13 characteristics of anti-racism in ITE/T (as revealed in the LR) in terms of their importance (Table 3). And 65% of respondents rated each of the areas listed as very important (the highest rating). Statement 13 was the only one to be rated as unimportant and by only one respondent (see Figure 3 for full results).

Clearly respondents noted that student/trainee teachers should be prepared to deal with racist incidents in the classroom and that they should be knowledgeable about statutory legislation as specified in the Teachers' Standards. They also indicated an understanding of the ways racism is manifested in interpersonal interactions including for example, racial microaggressions (statement 3) and in systems (statement 4). Statement 5, developing knowledge of critical theories, pedagogies and anti-racism approaches in education was rated as slightly less important, and yet these 3 statements (3, 4 and 5) lie at the heart of anti-racism teaching.

TABLE 2 Survey respondent data

	Gender	Ethnicity <sup>a</sup>
Male	5	
Female	20	
Cis female	1	
British Asian		1
Chinese		1
Mixed Black African & White		
Black Caribbean and white		1
		1
White British		15
White		6

<sup>a</sup>Respondents named their ethnicity rather than responding to predetermined categories—25 responded to this question.



Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)

FIGURE 2 Respondent responses to their professional role.

In terms of their own current practice, 69.2% felt they adopted an anti-racist pedagogy in their own teaching when teaching student teachers, in order to model what this looks like in practice, and 68% said that they taught student teachers to become anti-racist pedagogues in their classrooms. There were some interesting responses from those who gave more detail as to why they did not do this on their courses, which showed that they are unsure what this means, they know that they need to do more, or, as captured in this quote, a reflection of the lack of specificity about racism in directives from the state for ITE/T:

I believe in positivity and inclusion for all. Through literature and my sessions, I aim to include a range of marginalised individuals and how we can best communicate this to our students. My concern is that the role becomes a political tool for some lecturers.

This quote reflects the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) approach described in the LR where race is subsumed into teaching about wider equalities in order to minimise the possible backlash from some student/trainee teachers who feel uncomfortable learning

TABLE 3 Characteristics of effective anti-racist pedagogy in ITE/T

1. Knowledge of the equality act and their responsibilities as a teacher as reflected in the National Curriculum and the Teachers' Standards
2. Being able to deal with incidents of racism or racial harassment in school
3. Understanding the ways racism is manifested in interpersonal interactions including for example, racial microaggressions
4. Understanding the ways in which school systems can act to discriminate against pupils from BAME communities
5. Developing knowledge of critical theories, pedagogies and anti-racism approaches in education
6. Drawing on knowledge of these theories, pedagogies and approaches to ensure better outcomes for all pupils, especially those from BAME heritage
7. Developing knowledge of ways to provide BAME representation in the curriculum to include achievements and experiences—decolonising the curriculum
8. Knowledge of acronym 'EAL' and being able to identify pupils and their languages
9. Developing inclusive teaching practices for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) to promote better outcomes
10. Developing inclusive teaching practices in understanding the needs of pupils who have refugee/asylum seeker experiences
11. Developing inclusive teaching practices for pupils who are Roma
12. Developing inclusive teaching practices for Traveller pupils
13. Raising awareness of 'unconscious' teacher bias; for example, in understanding societal stereotyping of pupils from BAME communities and how this affects deficit assumptions and the lowering of teacher expectations and disparities in exclusion rates

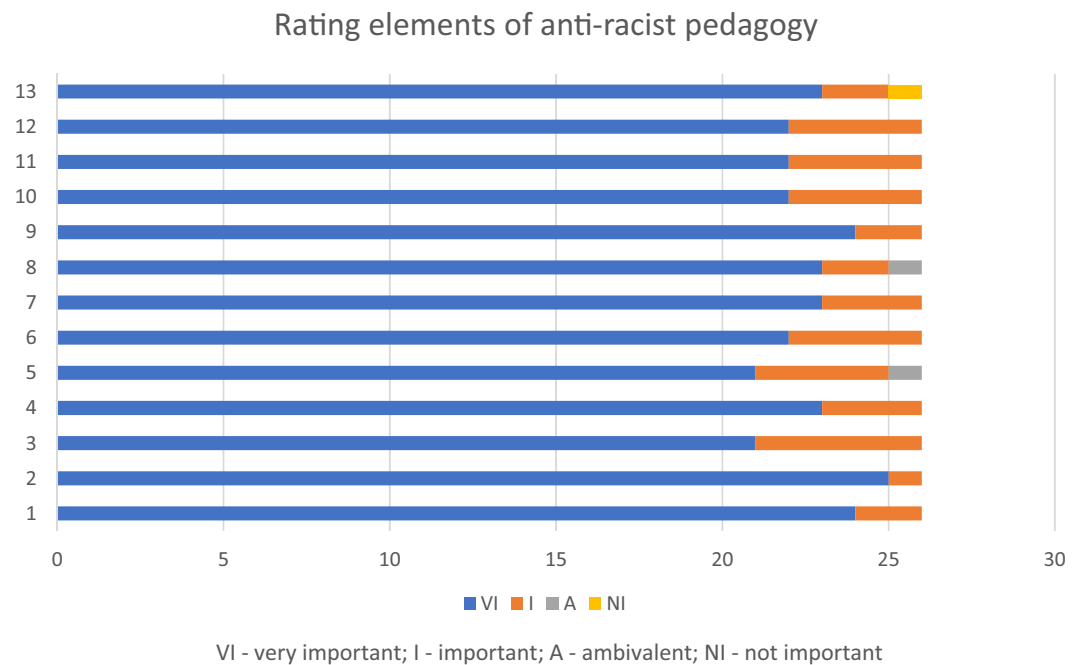


FIGURE 3 Respondent ratings for elements of anti-racist pedagogy.



TABLE 4 Approaches to practice

Approach	Number of respondents	Percentage
An embedded approach	17	77.3
As part of a series of lectures addressing a range of equality issues	16	72.7
Provision of key readings	14	63.6
Taught by members of staff with relevant knowledge	12	54.5
Seminar activities	11	50

about race, racism and whiteness (e.g., Smith & Lander, 2012). Staff teaching about race and racism are often labelled as political, but the label rarely extends to those examining disability for example. There is no hierarchy of inequality but the omission of race from the ITE curriculum sustains the status quo of silence and inaction (Lander, 2014).

For those who do teach anti-racism, we found that they employed a variety of practices, but the aspects of provision which the highest number of respondents agreed were included in their practice are as captured in Table 4.

These were encouraging results because the LR identified a need for anti-racism to be embedded across the course (and wider institution) using a variety of pedagogies in order to be effective. For anti-racism to be embedded in ITE/T, including within placement schools and with school-based mentors, then, as noted in the LR, this must happen despite student resistance evidenced via evaluations. Support to embed anti-racist pedagogies must come from the wider institutions producing ITE programmes, with an understanding that the ‘tools of whiteness’ will be used in critique of anti-racist teaching by preservice teachers, leading to difficulties particularly for BGM ITE/T teachers.

It is also encouraging to see anti-racism as part of a series of workshops or lectures rather than just a ‘one-off’ session as reflected in the LR. Although it is unsurprising that the survey revealed antiracism was taught by knowledgeable staff, without embedding practice, reliance on one staff member is precarious, not least because of the pressure placed upon that individual which can not only be burdensome, but also harmful if the teacher educator is a person of colour (Smith & Lander, 2012).

The responses in relation to course-and-self evaluations were more mixed with just over half of survey respondents (52.2%) saying they did not conduct an evaluation with student teachers about the teaching of anti-racism on the course. Similarly, in terms of conducting a specific appraisal of the experiences of student teachers of BGM heritage about the teaching of anti-racism on the course, the majority of survey respondents (56.6%) did not do this. The LR (e.g., Aronson et al., 2020; Aveling, 2006; Campbell & Valauri, 2019) revealed that course evaluations of anti-racism practice are imperative for identifying ‘shifts’ in students’ thinking and behaviour. Evaluations also help identify barriers to anti-racist teaching, (e.g., Leonardo, 2009; Picower, 2009), which is useful in planning anti-racist pedagogy. Even less encouraging was the finding from the survey that the majority of respondents did not record student experiences or witnessing of racism on the course or on placement. This reflects findings in the LR and is worrying because poor reporting and recording of racism on the course and placement may contribute to non-recognition of racism in schools, and higher non-completion rates of BGM student teachers.

The survey also asked about respondents’ and their colleagues’ level of expertise and training and perceived barriers to anti-racism in ITE/T. As one may have suspected, the person completing the survey reported more knowledge and confidence to teach anti-racism than they claimed for their colleagues. In terms of types of training in anti-racism, there was a mix of formal and informal training, where official university-wide online training was not viewed as useful as less formal training in working with colleagues.

TABLE 5 Statements relating to barriers to anti-racism in ITE/T

Lack of time
Lack of course colleagues' expertise
Lack of school-based mentors' expertise
Lack of importance on course
Lack of importance in schools
Lack of importance on teachers' standards
Lack of importance on CCF
Geographical region of course
Student cohort demography

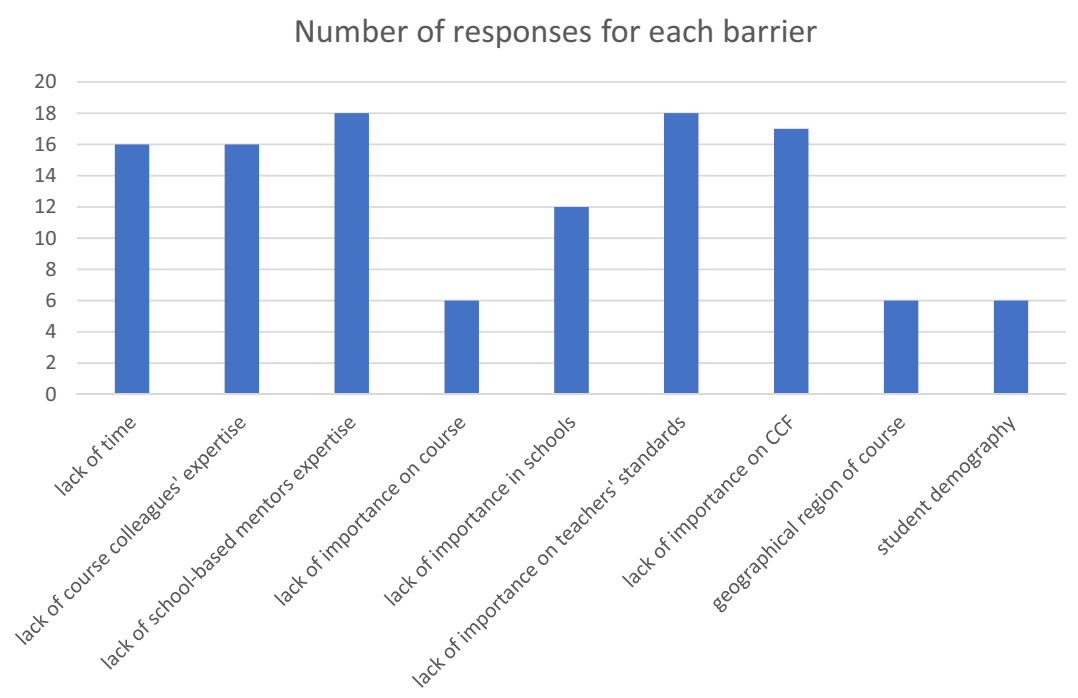


FIGURE 4 Respondent ratings for barriers to anti-racism in ITE/T.

In terms of perceived barriers to teaching anti-racism in ITE/T (as in Table 5), respondents ticked any of the statements, reflected in the LR, which they believed was a barrier to teaching anti-racism in ITE/T.

As can be seen in Figure 4, no statement was found not to be a barrier. The statements which were chosen by most respondents were:

- lack of school-based mentors' expertise (18).
- Lack of importance in teachers' standards (18).
- Closely followed by:
- Lack of importance in CCF (17).
- Lack of time (16).
- Lack of colleagues' confidence in teaching anti-racism (16).

Lack of confidence is exemplified in this additional free text by a respondent as:

Confidence levels and levels of comfortability of staff to deliver anti-racist content, for example with White members of staff who don't feel as though they are able to deliver this content. Lack of diversity on staff team.

The LR highlighted the importance of developing racial literacy, to increase the confidence of teachers so they can discuss/teach anti-racism,

By their own admission, many teachers are ill prepared to teach in ways that promote anti-racism, and this can include BME teachers. Racial literacy therefore needs to be placed at the centre of teachers' role and teacher training. It is important that all teachers take responsibility for teaching in ways that promote antiracism. (Joseph-Salisbury, 2020, p. 2)

Another survey respondent added:

Quite an antagonistic govt approach in DfE and certain libertarian groups which have questioned these approaches as confounding government policy, breaking education act 1986, and taking a very centralised control of course content through the CCF.

As Gillborn (2005) argues, "Regardless of the political persuasion of the incumbent political party, therefore, race equity has constantly had to fight for legitimacy as a significant topic for education policy-makers." (Gillborn, 2005, p. 493).


## WRITING THE ANTI-RACISM FOR ITE/T FRAMEWORK

Before writing the anti-racism framework drawing on the global LR and survey analysis, we spent time reviewing other anti-racism frameworks including within but also beyond education to help us structure the framework. We found Wellcome's anti-racist principles and toolkit (Wellcome's antiracist principles, guidance and toolkit | Wellcome) particularly useful in its clear phrasing of principles.

The Anti-racism framework for ITE/T is divided into three sections:

- (A) Overarching Values and Understandings.**
- (B) Executive Summary of the Global LR.**
- (C) Themes: Pedagogy and curriculum; Student teachers and placements; Leadership in teacher education; Staff training—teacher educators and school-based mentors; Course evaluation processes.**

The themes are presented as a series of questions to support critical reflection and course development and are linked directly via interactive icons to the sources of evidence and practice in the LR, the LR summary chart (per country contextualisation), practice notes and examples from the LR and from survey respondents' interviews, and further useful external links. We also encourage course reflections with a series of questions at the end of each theme. We advise ITE/T Providers to draw on the framework alongside the Teacher Standards and Core Content Framework in ways appropriate to their course context. It

 This framework was created in light of both the global literature review (to which the themes below refer) and the survey (please refer to the survey analysis here).

I) Pedagogy and curriculum







Practice Questions	Things to think about (with links to the literature review)	External links and practice notes and example:
<p>Are you aware of the Equality Act and your responsibilities as reflected in the National Curriculum, Ofsted framework for ITT, Teacher Standards and the CCF?</p> <p>What does the legislation and what do the policies mean in relation to the understanding of race, racism and anti-racism on your course?</p>	<p>What is your understanding of racism? Do you understand racism as manifested in interpersonal interactions and systems, processes and policies?</p> <p> See for example, p.31 – racial realism</p> <p>Is your understanding of racism founded on the voices of racially minoritized people?</p> <p> Eg. critical race counternarratives, p.24</p> <p>Do you draw on critical theory? See arguments that Critical Race Theory in ITE is essential in challenging racist norms in education,</p> <p> p.30, p.31</p>	<p> <b>Practice notes:</b></p> <p>Student teachers are introduced to the statutory equality frameworks, given key readings e.g. <i>Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack</i> by Peggy McIntosh; introduced to the language of race and racism</p> <p><b>Practice note:</b> Primary and secondary students attend a session with staff from the Black Curriculum <a href="https://theblackcurriculum.com/">https://theblackcurriculum.com/</a></p> <p><b>Practice examples:</b></p> <p>CRT with Primary PGCE students (Resource 1) Example professional Studies work with Secondary PGCE students (Resource 2)</p> <p><b>LINKS:</b></p> <p>For an overview of CRT, race and education listen to the Talking Race podcast from the Centre for Race, Education and Decoloniality</p> <p> Talking Race   Podcast on Spotify</p> <p> See video link for a discussion about racism in education</p>

FIGURE 5 Excerpt from the anti-racism framework: the theme of pedagogy and curriculum.

is suggested that they address the themes holistically or separately as per their specific needs.

This excerpt from the framework (Figure 5) is from the theme ‘pedagogy and curriculum’ and demonstrates how critical reflection is encouraged by drawing on the LR and appropriate resources and looks for colleagues to think of the central tenets and tensions in the content of an anti-racism ITE/T curriculum:

This framework is now live for all teacher educators to access and utilise to transform practice: [Anti-Racism Framework-Institute for Social Science-Newcastle University \(ncl.ac.UK\)](https://www.ncl.ac.uk/anti-racism-framework).

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Limitations of the search for, and the findings of the literature review are acknowledged. Firstly, as most studies into anti-racism in ITE/T tend to be small scale, large scale and longitudinal evidence was scarce. Consequently, the long-term impact on student teachers of some of the anti-racist pedagogies identified in the literature review has not yet been empirically examined. There also remain widespread societal anxieties in critically and authentically talking about race and racism (e.g., Tatum, 1992), limiting the number of studies and possibly also the findings of the studies located. It must also be acknowledged that the studies referred to in the literature review are those written in English, resulting in literature from seven countries (the UK and Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, the US and Canada, and South Africa).

In terms of the survey, as already acknowledged, a limitation was the small number of respondents, although it is worth remembering that half of the respondents were responding on behalf of more than one course and course type. Plus, most respondents were women

working in the London or South-East of England. This means it is not possible to claim the survey findings are representative of the current ITE/T field. The limited number of responses could be indicative of many issues, including, of course, the fact that the survey was launched in May 2021 in the midst of a global pandemic, when many HEI staff continued to work from home, already spending many hours in front of their computers; undertaking an online survey may not therefore have been viewed a priority whatever the subject! The limited number of completed responses compared to the number of times the survey was opened could, however, be a reflection of a lack of space and/or will for anti-racism work in ITE/T courses presently, given the climate described at the outset of this paper, meaning colleagues were less inclined to respond to an aspect of practice not prioritised on their courses. There is also a possibility, although given the literature review findings it seems highly unlikely, that colleagues may have felt the survey too onerous given the hefty amount of work they do in relation to anti-racism on their courses.

Whatever the reasons for the low response rate to the survey, the conclusions we reached in terms of what was needed in the anti-racism framework, were also informed by the extensive literature review. Combined, these two sources of evidence, their publication online, together with the presentation of the framework as questions for colleagues to interact with, means that we are confident of the credibility and usefulness of the anti-racism framework. A useful measurement of the impact of the framework would be a subsequent and hopefully more representative survey of the ITE/T field in England.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON THE 'POCKETS' OF HOPE AND POSSIBILITY' FOR THE FUTURE

This paper captures the research underpinning the creation of a research-informed anti-racism framework for ITE/T to find pockets of 'hope and possibility' which may lie amid the divergence between existing and needed activism in the real world and the current restrictive and de-racialised ITE/T policy and regulation landscape. Our hope is that the framework will encourage space in ITE courses for critical and informed reflections upon race, racism, and anti-racism countering, for example, narratives of colour-blindness, meritocracy and assumptions/discourses of deficit as explanatory factors for education disparities. We hope it will act to prompt initial teacher educators not only to alert student teachers to wider societal and institutional explanations for successes or failures within the schooling system, and to supplement generalisations with lived experiences as exemplifications, but also to understand how not doing so could impact future teachers' behaviour towards pupils and families, with potential serious long-term negative ramifications for pupils. As Levine-Rasky (2000, p. 272) argued, student teachers must "realign their gaze of surveillance from 'the putative problems of these racialised others ... [towards] the workings of the dominant culture itself.'" In short, the 'minimum entitlement' curriculum provided by the CCF must be maximised by a purposeful undoing by ITE/T providers of the perpetual de-racialisation of education. We hope the anti-racism framework borne from this study with examples of transformative practice in the literature and from current ITE/T providers in England who responded to the survey, will provide curriculum space or a 'pocket of possibility' for anti-racism action.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This is to acknowledge that no financial interest or benefit has arisen from the direct applications of your research.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Raw data associated with this paper is not available for external use. Analysis of the survey which includes some data can be found at: survey analysis PDF.pdf (ncl.ac.uk).

## ETHICS STATEMENT

Information given by survey participants in this research was treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The study was approved by Newcastle University Research Ethics Committee, and is fully consistent with BERA ethical guidelines for education research.

## GEOLOCATION INFORMATION

the data was collected from participants in England.

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