

# “Teachers like us’- Understanding minority students’ perspectives on barriers to becoming teachers.’

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## Introduction

The purpose of this research project was to explore the perceptions and experiences of students from black and minority ethnic backgrounds of barriers to becoming teachers and going to university. This exploration would also help us to understand how we can support students who want to become teachers to apply for and succeed in a teacher training programme at a UK university.

The **preliminary findings** show the following:

- High school students do not consider a teaching career because they aim ‘higher’
- Students of colour feel identified and can relate more to teachers of colour
- They would like to demystify universities and get more information on how the application process works

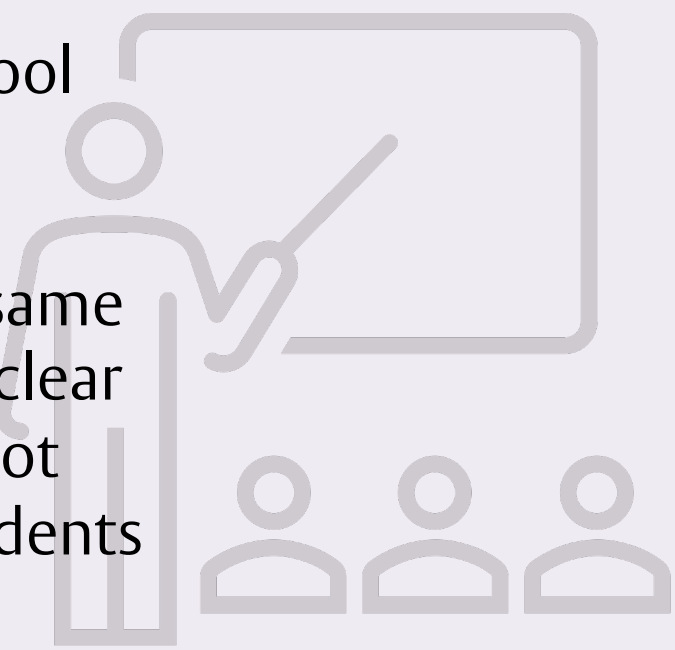
## Context

- A study by the UCL Institute of Education in 2020 found that **46% of all schools in England have no BAME teachers**
- Job satisfaction and retention of BAME teachers, but more specifically, Black teachers, are affected by the intersectional aspects of their identity such as race, gender, class or immigrant status.
- NFER report (2022): “**All ethnic groups except white are under-represented at all career stages of the teaching profession, except for initial teacher training (ITT)**”
- No shortage in applications from people of colour but disparity increases across levels of seniority, from acceptance onwards

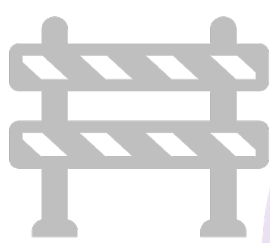
## Analysis & Findings

*“I think of like a white man with a good background, as in like went private school when they were younger, or they were like fortunate. Like they grew up in a rich environment ”*

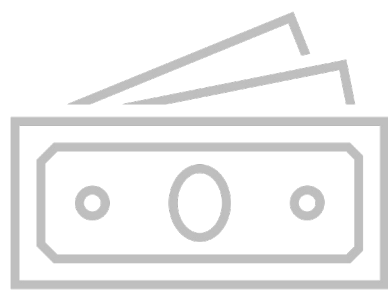
1. Overall students did not particularly perceive there to be barriers to them becoming teachers but rather did not see it as an attractive profession
2. However, they did perceive wider barriers in school and society, which seems contradictory
3. Black and Asian teachers do not progress in the same way as the rest of their White peers so there are clear barriers, but this research shows that these are not necessarily explicit or seen by secondary age students



**Invisible barriers:** students are aware of the intersectional elements of their identities which might be a barrier in the future and therefore influence their career choices.



**Culture:** Teaching in some cultures is not perceived as a “good” career or worthy enough to be studied in university. Parents encourage a more money driven mentality.



**Positive role models:** having teachers from a diverse background sets an example of what students from ethnic minority backgrounds can achieve and there’s a mutual understanding of the barriers they might face in school too.

**Sense of Belonging:** students’ vision of a role model and its characteristics are correlated with what they consider a good teacher and how included they feel in the classroom



**Stereotyping:**

*“What do you see when you hear the word teacher?”*

*“I feel like with certain subjects I think of women teachers and then I feel there's male teachers for different subjects as well, but that a lot of the time, the majority are white”*



**Representation:** “Yeah, whenever I think about teachers *is always like a white teacher*. Kinda’ old and strict, so it’s never like...I never think about any ethnic minorities as teachers. So, whenever I think of teachers its either my old teacher, or like a white English teacher.”

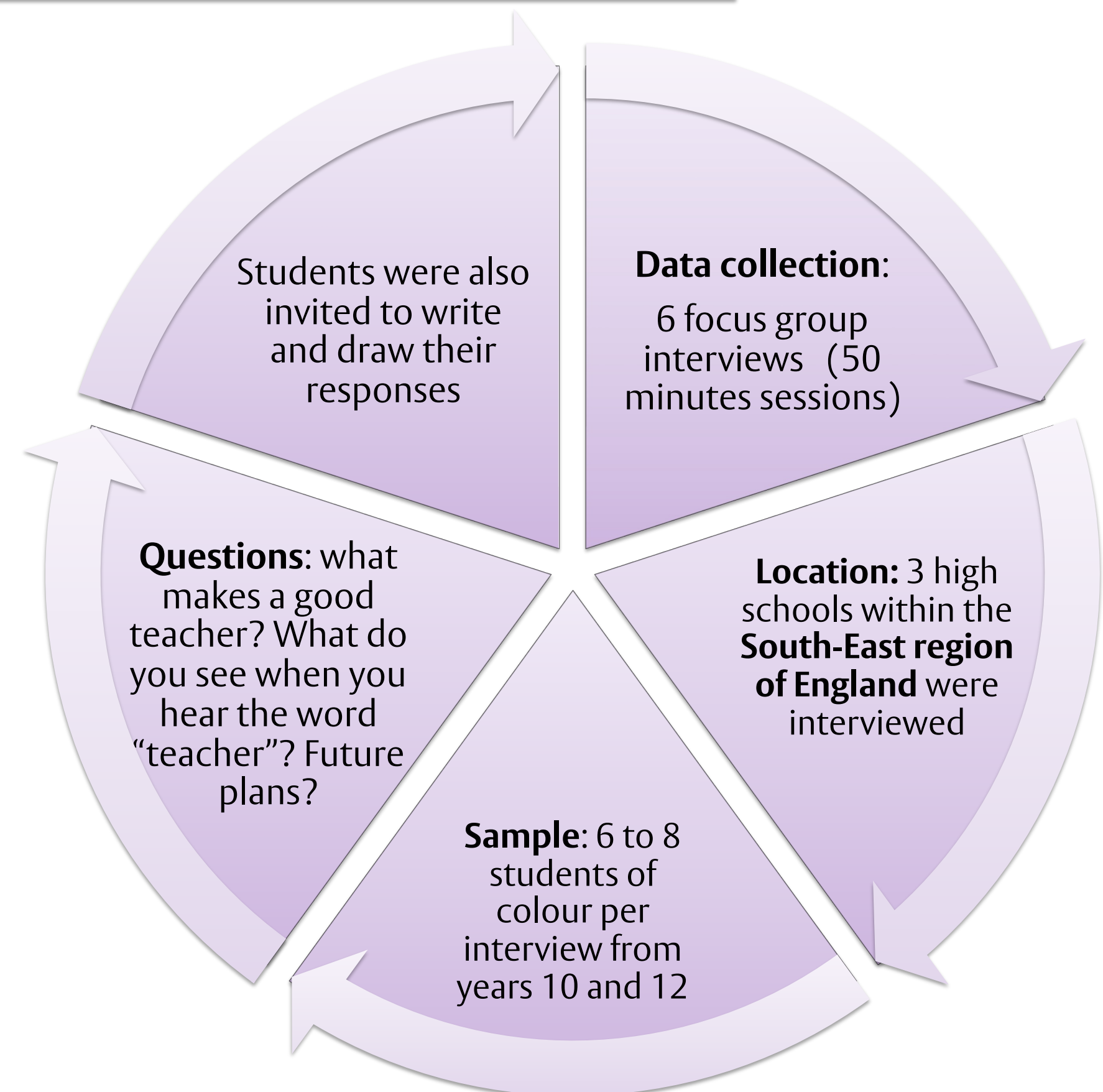
## Why does diversity matter?

- **Impact:** Staff BAME representation should be reflected across schools and within their leadership spheres regardless of the demographic of the school population because it promotes and generates more tolerance and understanding among different groups of children
- **BAME students’ attainment:** having teachers as role models for these children can contribute to raise their aspirations and ambitions, tackle educational inequality and close the attainment gap

As members of the Institute of Education department we also want to be better and improve within our own institution by:

- Increasing representation
- Increasing sense of belonging
- Reflecting on our own privilege/prejudices and then make changes to curriculum and pedagogy

## Study area & Methodology



## Themes

### Acknowledgements

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