How well prepared are newly qualified teachers (NQTs) to respond to challenging issues of race and equality in urban schools? Anecdotal evidence suggests NQTs often do not feel adequately prepared for these challenges by their experiences of initial teacher education/training. Yet enabling teachers to deal confidently with diversity issues is crucial to a school’s role in promoting community cohesion.

This project aims to explore teacher educators’ understandings of race in/equality issues and how they are addressing them within their practice; and to identify ways of supporting teacher educators to further embed race equality into their work.

The research team consists of Peter Hick and Lorna Roberts at Manchester Metropolitan University with Rowena Arshad and Laura Mitchell at the University of Edinburgh. The team is interviewing a sample of teacher educators in Manchester and Edinburgh, which offer contrasting and complementary contexts: in Edinburgh, the school population is overwhelmingly white; whereas in Manchester, schools are more often ethnically mixed.

The project is making good progress, with interviews and policy context papers nearing completion. Regular telephone conferences have been held, together with our first team meeting in Manchester and our second planned for Edinburgh in January. Our next steps will be analysing our interview data and identifying key themes. The findings will feed into the development of a Self Review Framework to support teacher educators in reflecting on existing practices. The Framework is intended for use by individuals or teams as a staff development activity and will be disseminated at seminar events in Edinburgh and Manchester in April and May 2011.

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Project page: Teacher Educators for the 21st Century: Promoting cohesion, challenging expectations: educating the teachers of tomorrow for race equality and diversity in 21st century schools: http://escalate.ac.uk/6915