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Diane Warner, Lancaster, Educ. Faculty. Today’s presentation is from part of MA which used methodology of Practitioner Research. Double focus on developing as a teacher/lecturer in HE and seeking a deeper understanding of the students with whom I work.

Came to teach at UoC 5 years ago, also trained here, so aware of the ethnic & cultural make-up. Current figures show 92% of the student pop. Is White [2007/8] The Whitest HEI in the new Northern universities which have FT ITE courses [Edge Hill, Bolton].

My study seeks to explore an aspect of this whiteness.
The research grew out of an action of 1st years on the 4-year primary teaching degree – in an English assignment they were required to choose and justify teaching a children’s book. This is what I found over 2 years of marking. From this I developed a hypothesis from which to work.
The hypothesis

- White student teachers, new to Initial Teacher Education, are likely to automatically choose books for use in the primary classroom which portray ‘white privilege’ assumptions (Dyer, 2000; Frankenberg, 2000; Solomon et al, 2005;) and values, because they bring into play their own cultural and ethnic perceptions and views, and unwittingly apply them as norms.
Today's presentation focuses on the second bullet point.

- investigate how white student teachers, of a UK heritage, perceive multicultural children’s books as part of their developing pedagogical understanding;
- examine social factors which cause a cultural blindness, in white student teachers, towards multicultural educational issues;
- relate the perceptions and attitudes of these students to the role of Initial Teacher Education and my role as a lecturer.
Bullet 1: Separateness

Bullet 2: Safety of the known is a significant driving force
Some underlying theoretical points.
...deep-rooted old patterns...

[Ambe]

62% had never heard of any of the listed well-known minority ethnic authors and their books, and only 1% had used a multicultural book in the classroom, in their two years of ITE experience.
Handouts: Questions arising from some of the stories?
Cultural disawareness is “like wearing blinkers which actually point inwards, forming an acute angle of non-awareness. The wearer is locked into a single way of knowing and being, consequently causing a separation.” [Warner, 2008, p.48]
Some findings…

• The cultural background of beginning teachers does have a significant effect on the way they perceive multicultural issues;

• Their ‘cultural disawareness’ is woven into the newness of the ITE experience; producing an unsureness and a consequent ‘treading carefully’ within known bounds.