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## Professional lives under review: evaluating the human capital impact of Overseas Trained Teachers (OTTs) on secondary education in London

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### Contextualization

This scoping study extends existing research in the fields of education, migration and identity that focuses on the impact of Overseas Trained Teachers in London's secondary schools. In recent years, researchers have examined the issue of international teacher migration from the perspective of a 'brain drain' to some countries. However, a major limitation of existing studies in this area is that the challenges and benefits of having OTTs in English classrooms were not explored. In addition, the impact teaching in London has on the OTT was not explored. The present study, in an attempt to fill the observed gap, examines the impact of OTTs in London and the impact that teaching in London has had on the professional lives of OTTs. This study contributes to the literature by providing a framework by which the work of OTTs in London can be examined.

**Abstract:** *Notions of teacher quality, character and identity are debated worldwide. It is commonly held that the voices of 'new' teachers are largely underrepresented in such debates (Kompf, 2005). By engaging teachers in research into their own determinations of teacher quality, their dialogue can provide insights into the personal and individual processes of becoming a teacher within a broader socio-political framework (Frid and Reid, 2003). The earlier phase of teaching can be described as one of 'survival' and 'discovery' (Huberman, 1992), signifying the 'reality shock' new teachers face. Researchers (Day, 1999; Graham and Phelps, 2003; Bleach and Rhodes, 2004) emphasise the need for teachers to be properly supported at the earlier phase of their career; a requirement also identified for migrant or Overseas Trained Teachers (Miller, 2006).*

*This paper discusses findings on teacher identity as regard the experiences of Overseas Trained Teachers (OTTs) from the Caribbean in the course of their employment in London. Through teaching in London, OTTs have experienced both negative and positive impacts. On the one hand, these impacts have undermined previously held value positions resulting in some degree of confusion and turbulence. On the other hand, OTTs have navigated conflicting discourses and have combined past experiences with present knowledges to produce a form of localised 'teacher identity'.*

### The migration and recruitment of Overseas Trained Teachers to England

Little has been written about the historical pattern of overseas trained teachers coming into the United Kingdom either through voluntary migration or as a result of being actively recruited. Traditionally, teacher exchange programmes were administered by the British Council and organised through the former Central Bureaux for Educational Visits and Exchanges. There has also been an established pattern among teachers from Commonwealth countries such as Australia and New Zealand, who go to teach in England, especially London, for a short period before returning home.

More recently however, the decline in influence of local authorities in England, in the early 1990s, coincided with a period of rising school rolls and falling teacher numbers. Teacher

wastage due to poor salary levels; better job prospects elsewhere (Dolton, 1990, p 103); workload, government initiatives, stress, the need for change, poor pupil behaviour, low salary levels and poor leadership (Audit Commission, 2002; Smithers and Robinson, 2000, p 102; 2005 p 5) were also proposed as reasons fuelling the loss of teachers. Together, these factors were regarded as the catalyst for the shortfall in teacher numbers during 1997 and the early 2000s when the numbers of teachers leaving the teaching profession rose to unprecedented levels. In 2001, for example, extra money for schools did not serve to alleviate the recruitment crisis as there were insufficient trained teachers willing to work in schools in some parts of England.

London in particular was affected by the shortfall in teacher numbers (Hutchings *et al*, 2000). Annual vacancy rates published by the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2002) suggested that there were just under 28,000 available in London in 2001, and that there was further need for almost 7,000 in the primary phase and just over 8,000 in the secondary phase. In 2003, the DfES further reported that London had just over 32,000 teachers, but that turnover (those leaving a teaching job relative to the size of the teacher labour force) and wastage (those leaving the teaching profession altogether expressed as a fraction of all teachers in service) had been increasing.

A seemingly expedient, though logical, solution to this problem of local teacher shortage was to look elsewhere. That is, to recruit teachers from abroad. It was around this time (in 2000), that teacher recruitment and supply agencies entered the education market with the expressed aim of 'helping schools', and by extension the government to meet their staffing needs. As the local shortage of teachers continued, some teacher recruitment and supply agencies flourished; a situation which fuelled several unlikely partnerships between themselves and some local authorities and schools, as they travelled the world to recruit teachers. Such partnerships, it should be noted, did not prevent local authorities and schools from undertaking recruitment initiatives abroad, independently.

Using Home Office and Work Permits UK figures, Miller (2006) estimated around 43,000 OTTs across the UK. Within the Commonwealth of Nations, for example, England has received the most teachers from developing countries, and several more thousands from the developed countries. Home Office and Work Permits UK (December, 2006) also confirmed that for the period January 1997 to July 2006 a total of 44,319 work permits and work permit extensions were issued to persons from overseas where the category included 'teachers and trainers'. Top supplier countries over the period 1997-2006 were: South Africa (10,474), Australia (8,816), USA (5,367), New Zealand (4,212), Canada (3,513) and Jamaica (2,289).

Perhaps the recruitment of such large numbers of OTTs is best understood by the DCSF's position on the (then) shortage of local teachers:

During the late 1990s we had an acute shortage of teachers and we couldn't recruit enough teachers, particularly secondary teachers. London had particular problems and so did many other large cities across the country...our own people were taking some years to come through the teacher training colleges and local authorities were permitted to contract teachers from overseas. The department facilitated this by paying for the work permits so school didn't have to pay. We also made an arrangement whereby schools recruiting OTTs didn't have to make a case; in other words, teachers were seen as a priority group like nurses so work permits were granted solely on demand. So it got easier for schools to bring in an overseas teacher... we made it easier for the employers to bring them in...teachers...from abroad, whether they were recruited directly by schools or local authorities (DCSF, Senior Policy Officer)

In addition to this poignant admission, a number of other factors also helped to boost the supply of teachers: teaching was already becoming a globalised profession; increased international school movement saw large numbers of pupils and teachers travelling to the UK; schools in large cities such as London were becoming more cosmopolitan and more multicultural and the growth in technology and especially the Internet provided easier communications than in the past.

## **The current professional status of Overseas Trained Teachers in England**

A large part of the ongoing debate around 'brain drain' / 'brain gain' have focused on what overseas trained teachers gain from coming to the United Kingdom (Miller, 2007). Morgan *et al* (2005) focussed on remittance being sent to source countries; Hutchings and Maylor (2001) focused on the induction experiences of Caribbean teachers and Ochs (2003) focused on the degree to which large scale international teacher migration threatens educational attainment and outcomes in source countries, primarily developing ones.

As mentioned earlier, there are an estimated 43,000 OTTs in the UK (Miller, 2006), the majority of whom are said to be located in London. A 2002 survey carried out by the NAHT (National Association of Head Teachers) found that, out of the 10,454 primary teaching posts (5,199 in inner London and 5,254 in outer London) in 716 schools: 10 per cent was filled by OTTs and a further 8 per cent filled by teachers without UK Qualified Teacher Status, of which, it has been presumed that most are OTTs. Of the numbers of OTTs correctly identified, 13 per cent were said to be working in inner-London schools and 7 per cent in outer London. In the inner-London borough of Hackney, 20 per cent of all teachers were said to be from overseas (McNamara *et al*, 2007, p 42)

At end of the school year 2006, there were an estimated 11,800 OTTs without UK Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) (DfES, 618g survey). Of this number, 1176 (circa 10 per cent) were on Employment Based Route (EBR) schemes such as the Graduate Teacher Programme, the Registered Teacher Programme and the Overseas Trained Teacher Programme, to QTS. The number of OTTs on QTS training schemes (1176) represented only 19 per cent of the total numbers of teachers on EBR courses to QTS in England. In 2008, the Training and Development Agency for Schools revealed that 1008 OTTs had gained QTS during the school-year 2006/7. In addition, the TDA revealed some 11,000 OTTs in England, were still without QTS.

Though the number of applications for OTTs without QTS to the TDA's Employment Based Routes continues to rise (TDA, 2008), demand for OTTs has fallen. The DfES (2006) has suggested four reasons: (a) for permanent jobs, most employers will now look to employ someone who in the UK; (b) more locally trained teachers are completing teacher training; (c) there is a fall in numbers among the primary aged cohort and (d) teachers from the European Union can work in the UK quite easily as they don't need QTS as under EU protocols their qualifications must be given immediate recognition. Together, these reasons point to a changing landscape for OTTs in England. Having positioned OTTs within England's teacher labour force, I now turn to a summary of their teaching experiences.

## **Method**

The findings reported in this paper represent only a small section of a London University Institute of Education qualitative doctoral study on the impact of Overseas Trained Teachers in London. 27 persons were interviewed: nine OTTs; six pupils; four national policy officials; three local authority teacher recruitment officials; two headteachers; one school governor; one teacher recruitment and supply agency official and one Initial Teacher Training Provider/

Designated Recommending Body. The study focused only on secondary teachers in London and participants represent both inner and outer London areas. Data was collected over two years and participants were selected using a combination of convenience, purposive and snowball sampling techniques.

## **The experiences of Overseas Trained Teachers in London**

The experiences of Caribbean Overseas Trained Teachers in London can be described as being both negative and positive. Shock; loss of confidence; impairment of self-esteem; lack of support; financial constraints; not being accepted as equals by local colleagues; not having their original qualifications accepted as equivalent; and being abused (verbal, racial, and physical) by pupils are largely representative of their more negative experiences.

For the first three to six months it was stressful, to say the least. It made me wonder if I really wanted to continue teaching at all. Firstly the stress had a hard knock on my self confidence. I felt very low...depression, missing family and teaching in a challenging school where the support was very minimal and where you weren't seen as an 'equally capable' teacher. It was tough, physically, mentally, emotionally. (St Vincentian OTT, male)

[T]he fact that knew that my qualifications would not be recognised here troubles me greatly. They came to the Caribbean to recruit and they did not tell us before we left the country. That's bad. Not everybody would like to go back studying again... If I had known maybe I would still have taken up the opportunity, but under different conditions (Guyanese OTT, female)

One white pupil called me a fucking black bitch, and told me to 'get out' (Jamaican OTT, female).

There are some pupils who would constantly make fun of some teacher's accents (Trinidadian OTT, female).

I don't feel comfortable teaching outside my specialist subject. I think they are trying to set me up to fail, so they can say I am no good. But I would be much more effective if I was teaching Physics, not Science (Jamaican OTT, female).

The distress faced by OTTs did not escape the attention of local authority and DfES officials. Local Authorities for example, cited instances of teachers experiencing de-skilling and loss of professional status due to not teaching their specialist subject. The practice of out-of-field teaching was described by Bracey (2002) as potentially damaging to teacher motivation and contribution to pupil outcomes and attainment. The DCSF noted the distress faced by OTTs in being paid lower than expected (and in some cases, lower than promised) wages.

I suppose OTTs are made worse off financially because things haven't worked out to expectations; salaries and the cost of living are not as they imagined; promises haven't been fulfilled so it has not been a very good experience (DCSF, Senior policy officer).

In the words of two OTTs:

I think...coming to London, my quality of life has dropped dramatically. I've suddenly become poor...which I have not been accustomed to...there has been a false sense of financial achievement (St Vincentian OTT, male).

When you are in the Caribbean you talk about the life in London, but when you arrive in London you realise that due to the financial burdens, life is far less....(Guyanese OTT, female).

But the experiences of OTTs are not untypical of migrants generally (Lee, 1966) and have not all been negative. For, despite negative experiences, OTTs reported positive experiences: greater awareness of learning difficulties and planning for inclusion; increase in subject knowledge and skills; improvements to professional practice; and greater access to continuing professional development.

In the words of two OTTs:

Teaching in England has helped me to reflect...in a positive way on my profession, on my practice, on learning as a whole. It has had a positive impact on my overall development because I've been forced to examine every aspect of the teaching and learning process (St Vincentian OTT, male)

Teaching in England has first of all made me a better teacher: a better teacher in the sense that I've gained a variety of experience. Apart from managing difficult pupil behaviour, I am much better informed about students with learning difficulties and how to plan for and deal with students with those disabilities (Jamaican OTT, male)

DfES and local authority officials were quick to support the above views, boasting a *world class education* system and a highly developed National Curriculum. In addition, headteachers have also suggested that OTTs have benefited from 'cutting edge' research into the brain and by having increased access to opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD).

On the positive side, I would say OTTs benefit from such things as research into education, teaching and learning; research on the brain; about learning styles and by being supported with CPD (Headteacher, Outer London High)

There *appeared*, however, some degree of confusion amongst OTTs about what counts as CPD. For example, one OTT recollected that she was in a school for two years but had not attended any out-of-school training. However, as the discussion unfolded between the OTT and this researcher, the OTT admitted to having attended several in-school training opportunities.

In sum, the experiences of teaching in England have impacted the lives of teachers in positive and negative ways. Characteristic of these experiences is a process of transition defined by isolation, shock, resistance, turbulence, conflict, gains in localised and other forms of professional knowledges and acculturation. For the majority, the result of such a process has resulted in the development of a newly formed professional identity. The approximate process of overcoming their negative experiences, ascertaining new knowledges and '*coming to*' a new professional identity therefore provides us lenses through which we can evaluate their human capital impacts.

## **The human capital impacts of overseas trained teachers in London**

Any attempt to *measure* the quantitative impact of overseas trained teachers from a small scale study is a difficult enterprise. However, there is evidence that OTTs produce qualitative or discernable impacts on aspects of schooling in London in areas such as: Workforce stability; high expectations on pupils in relation to attainment; modelling pupil behaviour;

pupil mentoring; sharing international teaching experiences/ approaches; placing; pupil attainment; curriculum enrichment, and through facilitating and enabling culture sharing and cultural literacy.

## Workforce stability and continuity of teaching and learning

As previously mentioned, a large number of overseas trained teachers were recruited to England to fill the gaps left behind by local teachers (McNamara *et al*, 2004; Smithers and Robinson, 2005). Towards the late 1990s, local teacher shortage became problematic and began to affect teaching and learning in several schools. To ensure pupils remained in schools and that there was minimum disruption to teaching and learning provisions, the then DfES sanctioned the recruitment of OTTs by local authorities, schools and teacher supply and recruitment agencies. Despite negative experiences however, the OTTs in this study, remained committed to their job of enabling teaching and learning. In the words of one female OTT from Guyana, 'What they [students in England] have now is what our students back home have lost'.

The significance of having stable teachers in the education interplay cannot be understated. Headteachers, local authority and DCSF officials have also confirmed that the presence of OTTs in London's classrooms have ameliorated severe staffing problems.

[O]bviously I feel overseas trained teachers provide stability and continuity to our school and to our pupils' learning (Headteacher, Outer London High).

[W]e were going through a period of great staff shortage. The first thing is that OTTs provided the source of teachers to fulfil the role of school. And that's why most schools looked to OTTs (Headteacher, North London High).

[O]f course we have to acknowledge the fact that OTTs are filling vacant positions that otherwise might not be filled. They are bridge builders. The actual straightforward pragmatic point is that, at a time when we had been short of teachers, they filled the gap and provided that bridge for us...obviously we at the DCSF recognises that they have provided resources that otherwise we did not have, particularly at the start of this decade (DCSF, Senior policy officer).

At the level of the classroom, some OTTs reflected:

The pupils at College of Overseas Trained Teachers have suffered. They have experienced an unstable education because of high teacher turnover. Lots of local British teachers literally use the school to get experience, to get a position, and then move on, with little consideration for the pupils that they teach, and their emotional stability. The fact that I have been there or three years, along with a whole group of teachers from the Caribbean have provided a solid foundation of continuity for the school, for pupils' education (St Vincentian OTT, male).

I have found that at the school that I am at, there is a frequent turnover of staff...I have provided stability by being here for so long (Guyanese OTT, female).

OTTs have been recognised by the DCSF as 'building bridges'. On the one hand, this implies that OTTs have been recognised as important members of the wider teacher labour force in England and on the other hand, their physical presence has served to curtail workforce problems and enabled schools to carry out their core *business* of teaching and learning.

## Placing and maintaining high expectations of pupils

A key indicator of a secondary school's overall success or progress is the number of its pupils achieving grade of A\*-C in five or more GCSE examinations. To a large extent, the success of pupils is underpinned by the expectations pupils have of themselves and by those placed on them by parents and teachers. This study found no evidence that the expectations OTTs place on pupils are inconsistent with (or below) the demands and expectations placed on them by locally trained teachers.

Two teachers shared their reflections:

At 'School of Inner London' students normally take GCSE examinations in Year 11. Last year I prepared and entered some in Year 10 who did very well and boosted the school's standing in the league table. This year the head[teacher] has asked me to pilot a group of fifteen Year 9 students for early entry Mathematics (Guyanese OTT, female).

I was told that my expectations for pupils were very high and that I should keep them high. This particular deputy headteacher made that statement after a series of lesson observations when I was doing QTS. She used to observe my lessons a lot. She felt that my expectations were high, very high, compared to other teachers (Jamaican OTT, male).

A position endorsed by headteachers:

[S]ome OTTs in our school have brought with them a 'can do' culture...they come from a 'can do', 'will do' culture and I think that impacts massively...it's a contrast to the English model which is always about 'we've tried that before and that one doesn't work'. They dare children to dream and to challenge themselves (Headteacher, North London High).

Yet, placing high expectations/ demands on pupils provided opportunities for conflicts.

[L]ots of overseas trained teachers actually come to England with demandingly high expectations of young people, only to be demoralised because at times their expectations of some young people and the expectations of parents in this country have not been at the same level as far as working is concerned (Headteacher, Outer London High).

Conflicting expectations of pupil are not untypical for parents and teachers, or for pupils themselves. It is particularly important to note that whilst some OTTs were criticised (by parents) for placing demandingly high expectations on pupils, it is not the same as being criticised for expecting 'less' than desirable outcomes of pupils. In general, participants agreed that most OTTs were sufficiently aware of the 'culture of schooling' in the UK and are able to negotiate and set suitable targets for pupils.

## Behaviour modelling and pupil mentoring

One of the fundamental assumptions underpinning the recruitment of Caribbean OTTs to London was their potential to help manage poor behaviour and to provide role modelling for pupils, Black boys especially. The approximate merits of such a position have been widely debated (Degazon-Johnson, 2005; McNamara *et al*, 2004; GLA, 2006) with many citing 'potential' positive changes, underpinned by ethnic and racial identification.

This study found some evidence that supports the above recruitment strategy. However, from the outset, it is important to make clear that, whilst the presence of OTTs in London schools have been found to be positive for helping to manage poor behaviour and boosting academic performance, such impact is more widely felt in schools where large numbers of pupils are from countries or regions from which OTTs are drawn, and where there is a high concentration of OTTs in a school.

Jamaican teachers are the best behaviour managers. They are just natural at it...a certain look in a child's direction or a chat outside and they often get the message (Teacher recruitment and retention manager, South East London).

When I see Caribbean children behaving badly it concerns me greatly. They know it's a 'free for all'. They know they can get away with almost anything here. But I often pull them to the aside and say to them 'you know you can't behave like that back in Jamaica, so what are you trying?' This approach normally works.... (Jamaican OTT, female).

This one-on-one approach has been regarded by local authority officials and headteachers as effective:

Young people in London and children from Afro-Caribbean background are often seen as underachieving. This is where a colleague who has come from the Caribbean or Africa can be used in a positive way as a role model to show these young people that the colleagues who come from overseas, particularly from Afro-Caribbean communities, have achieved a lot and they should be looked up to (Headteacher, North London High).

But systemic and resource limitations have restricted the approach a school may take.

I would like to have been in a position to say to all the colleagues who would have joined from overseas... 'you are here because you've got an important role to play in our school and we want you to bring that additionality to our school'. We should be saying... 'you've come from the Caribbean, we've got youngsters who are born here but their grandparents and parents were from Caribbean and they would probably relate to you if we gave you the blank cheque to actually mentor them' (Headteacher, Outer London High).

In the main, the findings confirmed widely held notions about Caribbean OTTs and their perceived ability to model the behaviour and outcomes of pupils from the Caribbean or of Caribbean heritage.

## **International teaching experiences and different perspectives**

The debate about the benefits of OTTs in English classrooms must take account of the specialised skills and experiences which they possess. OTTs provide different teaching approaches and experiences and bring with them international perspectives to issues of common interest and concern. In educating the migrant child, for example, such skills, experiences and approaches must assume a prominent place (Casciani, 2006). First, such experiences and approaches lend themselves to two discrete events. On the one hand, such experiences provide a basis for extending learning beyond its normal *routinised format* thereby stimulating interest, clarifying misconceptions and galvanising learning. On the other hand, such experiences validate migrant pupils and their experiences in the eyes of their peers. This practice of *co-identification* was recognised by Wei (2007) as stimulating self-efficacy around shared beliefs.

Two pupils explained:

When a teacher from abroad tells us something that happened in his or her country, we are more likely to believe than when someone around school tells us. Sometimes pupils make up stories, but when the teacher from that country says its true then we trust what that boy or girl said (Michael, Year 9 pupil).

When I read something in a book about, say Africa or Jamaica, many of my English teachers don't have a clue. They have not been outside of the UK, and so they don't know. But, when you have teachers who have lived in those parts of the world, and they can actually clarify things and tell you stories; to me, it's far more real than how a textbook can ever make it (Hannah, Year 13 pupil).

Hannah's point received support from a Jamaican OTT who suggested:

[I] provide different experiences to pupils...experiences that a teacher raised and trained here could not provide...Because, I gained a lot of experience from my country, where I was teaching before, therefore, I feel I am able to transfer some of that here (Jamaican OTT, male).

The prior skills and experiences of OTTs were recognised as a significant conduit in strengthening cross cultural understanding.

[O]ur latest pupil level annual school census (PLASC) document, 68 per cent of pupils in the borough are from a range of ethnic groups. Many are from overseas and include teachers and families of teachers. Obviously, this brings the scope for understanding, personal and professional experience amongst staff and a multifaceted approach to looking at the needs of our youngsters, with the benefit of stable classrooms and communities (LA education director, North London).

[T]hese teachers have come from other countries and cultures.... Our schools are multicultural, particularly in London. Teachers from other cultures therefore tend to reinforce that multiculturalism rather than have all white teachers ...school, and that has certainly been welcomed (DCSF, Senior policy officer).

No one can deny it really. Without OTTs in schools, teaching and learning would be bland. The experiences that these teachers bring and are able to share, adds a whole new perspective to things. It all adds up (sic). It'd be good (Recruitment Officer, Central London Agency).

The experiences and perspectives that the OTTs bring with them are made more poignant by their prior experiences: personal and professional, that enables them to establish themselves in negotiating impact in schools.

I am 30. I bring 30 years of experience, seven of which are teaching experience. I am not a newly qualified teacher. What they have now, is what our students back home have lost (Guyanese OTT, female).

The fact that OTTs benefited England's educational system through prior teaching and international experiences represents a human capital gain to England and should not be ignored. The gains to the local educational system were first reported by this researcher (Miller, 2007).

## Pupil attainment and academic outcomes

The presence of large numbers of OTTs in a single school was found to have potentially significant benefits where the pupils in that school are mainly from the backgrounds of the pupils. In addition, attainment has *allegedly* been raised where the presence of OTTs was relatively stable.

[A]t my first school, the performance of my Year 11s was good and I think that was also down to high expectations of pupils and good preparation techniques... It's the same thing at this school; in my first year, my first set of Year 11 students got over 80 per cent A-C. You know sometimes it is said that it is the results that count...and I think that's very important (Jamaican OTT, male).

I have been the only person teaching textiles in my school for the past three years. The first year, 45 per cent passed; the second year, 60 per cent passed, and the third year, 80 per cent passed. If that's not down to my effort then I don't know to whose... (Jamaican OTT, female).

My pupils have consistently done well. They have to. If they do well I don't have a job, therefore I make sure to give them everything that I have got (Trinidadian OTT, female).

Headteachers generally agreed that OTTs had the potential to influence school or departmental results. Specific scenarios, however, were less willingly highlighted. For example, the headteacher of Outer London High commented on the quality of knowledge possessed by some OTTs, but stopped short of making direct connection between this knowledge and increased pupil performance.

But pupils were fairly definitive:

I took my Philosophy in Year 12, and I was the only student in my class. My teacher is an OTT from Jamaica. I passed my examination. It's due to him; his skills; his competence. Some students who had two other teachers failed (Teddy, Year 13 pupil).

I took my Religious Studies exam one year early and my real teacher did not even know. When she's there she's shouting at us and arguing, I was getting help from another RE teacher at school. He is from Jamaica. He was different. He was calm and helpful and he had faith in me (Margaret, Year 11 pupil).

The findings reported in this section present a number of issues. First, the physical and *stable* presence of OTTs in schools can positively influence academic outcomes. Second, though some pupils reported positive examination outcomes from their interactions with OTTs, there was insufficient data to establish generalisability. Third, the potential benefits OTTs provide in enabling better examination results for schools and individual pupils should be captured and recognised.

## Culture sharing and cultural literacy

Cultural literacy has been defined as the ability to understand and appreciate the similarities and differences in the customs, values and beliefs of one's own culture and the cultures of others (Arvizu and Saravia-Shore, 1990). OTTs have been found to contribute to the development of cultural literacy among migrant pupils or pupils from migrant backgrounds and among pupils and teachers outside their cultural/ ethnic group. In respect of OTTs and

migrant pupils, for example, it is important to recognise three core issues: co-identification (Wei, 2007), ethnic identification (Yinger, 1976; Waters, 1990) and racial identification (Cross, 1971). In all three aspects, background, knowledge of one's background or background experiences and migratory status are prominent for OTTs and migrant pupils (or pupils of migrant heritage), have an opportunity for cultural bonding and discovery. But this cultural bonding has been found to extend to other colleagues and pupils individuals and may take the form of informal discussions, per se, or seeking opportunities to promote aspects of one's culture to audiences outside one's ethnic or racial group.

It is at this stage of interaction that more effective forms of cross cultural understanding and cultural literacy develops. In affirming their own identities, the presence of OTTs can generate pride in and awareness of their own identities in pupils. Furthermore, OTTs can share cultural norms with local teachers and pupils who, in return, do the same, such that knowledges about practices and behaviours are 'officially' exchanged, thereby deepening understanding and creating 'acceptance'.

When I arrived, I taught in East London where 96 per cent of the pupils in the school were from Africa and the Caribbean. Most of the children were from war torn areas. I could certainly relate to them...living in Kingston and all...and they could relate to me...my experiences... (Jamaican OTT, male).

[T]he fact that I am from a background that is similar to a large percentage of the students I have been able to relate to them and build good relationships. Some English pupils are now even aware of and tolerant towards other people's culture because now they understand things better. No one is quick to judge anymore (St Vincentian OTT, Male).

The above submissions points to definitive benefits to be gained by London schools and by extension by English society from the presence of OTTs predicated on two things: the OTTs' knowledge and prior experiences; and the OTTs' responsible position in educating children. In helping to fulfil the goals of cultural integration through education, OTTs therefore have demonstrated a solid grasp of secondary education in England and an understanding of global cultural themes. If these interactions produce positive and lasting results then schools, communities and society will become more responsive to the similarities and differences in the customs, values and beliefs of other cultures (Arvizu and Saravia-Shore, 1990).

In general, participants agreed with both the practice and principle of such culture sharing and engagement.

I am Greek and English and my favourite teacher is my Religious Studies teacher. He is from Jamaica. When he talks about Rastafarians, it is so different from what I would usually read or what I am accustomed to hearing about them. He takes pictures of himself with Rastafarians to class to show us and I think...'they are not bad people after all' (Michelle, Year 9 pupil, Focus group).

OTTs have used their background and that of pupils to deliver inspiring lessons. This deepens multicultural awareness and brings textbooks to life (Head of Diversity in Teacher Recruitment, TDA).

[I]t is what we know...OTTs from a variety of places tend to build the cultural richness of schools. Obviously it adds a sort of richness in schools that would otherwise not be (DCSF, Senior policy officer).

Identity is important in a child's life. If you were in a school abroad and had a teacher from your country, wouldn't that be a good thing? I think it's a great thing

that OTTs can come here. They provide role models for all children but obviously, more so for the ones from their own backgrounds (Recruitment Officer, Central London Agency).

The headteacher of North London High North London High proposed that experiences, norms, and value positions defines an individual and which can benefit schools and communities.

[A]n OTT's background does help. The school and the school community need to be aware of the backgrounds and cultures of its teachers. Being aware is important in the development of young people at school and also in understanding colleagues from abroad. Local colleagues will be able to learn how the OTT's culture can help and contribute to school development, problem solving and community development...That's their 'additionality' as I call it (Headteacher, Outer London High).

The importance of an OTT's background experiences and cultural awareness to teaching and learning, especially in multicultural schools and communities, was highlighted most comprehensively by the headteacher of North London High:

In this school we have pupils from several backgrounds. I think this has changed our schools over the last few years. I think, therefore, that it is really useful to understand that as the student population is drawn from a multi-ethnic background, the teaching force has to reflect that. Therefore, it can't just be white middle class people teaching them...it's got to be a variety of people from a variety of countries from a variety of cultural ethnic backgrounds...therefore, I think it [background] does is that it helps to sustain that multi-ethnic basis for the school. OTTs bring in a different perspective that is always going to be useful in education. If we are not careful we get people who go to school, go to university, get a PGCE, teach; and in a sense they are locked in the educational world for the rest of their lives. It's vital we bring in people with a wider experience base and part of that can be OTTs... the presence of OTTs is absolutely useful for cultural diversity (Headteacher, North London High).

The above findings suggest that the ethnic and cultural background and experiences of OTTs are tools for strengthening and deepening both school and community cohesion. So important is this issue that some headteachers have pointed out that in order to maintain the 'multi-ethnic basis of the school' it was imperative to recruit teachers from a variety of cultures and countries. In addition, these findings suggest that through their interaction with pupils, OTTs are capable of helping pupils to become more knowledgeable about their own cultural heritage, whilst fully interacting with the predominant UK culture.

## Conclusions

Teaching in England has been recognised as challenging and difficult. Upon arrival in England, Overseas Trained Teachers are faced with several experiences: some negative; others positive. *Ceteris Paribus*, these experiences may continue throughout the OTT's tenure and can undermine or enhance their OTT's human capital contributions. Yet, despite the negative impacts, teaching in London has benefited the majority of OTTs to the extent they've described their professional practice as having been 'overhauled'. This professional redefinition is underpinned by new knowledges which serve as complements to their prior, situated knowledges. OTTs have negotiated their survival, have mastered a certain set of discourses that includes speaking, writing, dressing, acting and living within pre-determined boundaries, often in accordance with some unwritten rule that governs the community of teachers in England and in doing so have produced certain benefits to London's secondary education.

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