

Cultural capital and the potential of RE: Insider perspectives from trainee teachers

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Abstract

In England the concept of cultural capital (CC) has been introduced to educational discourse by including it in the frameworks of Ofsted, the body responsible for monitoring the quality of education and social care. To increase the CC of all children, schools are now expected to ensure their curriculum on offer is ambitious and consists of essential knowledge that introduces pupils to the best that has been thought and said and that engenders an appreciation of human creativity and achievement. This research reports the views of trainee primary teachers about the link between CC and RE. 157 trainees from a university in the West Midlands, England completed a questionnaire to select activities they perceived as contributing to CC through RE. Some also participated in discursive engagements during taught sessions. Overall, those activities which are perceived to be specifically RE orientated have been selected by more trainees than the generic activities in increasing CC. The article argues that RE has potential of making a valuable contribution to increasing pupils' CC.

Keywords: religious education, cultural capital, primary, teaching, pedagogy

Introduction

Every so often, concepts are introduced to educational discourse which bring challenges and opportunities around their origins, meaning and implications. In recent years the English national inspection authority, Ofsted, has placed an increased significance on the concept of CC in its school inspections. Ofsted intends that increasing CC will impact the outcome for pupils, the design and delivery of curricula and the professional development of teachers. Putting CC, which is a contested concept, in the framework of inspection which will be used to judge schools raises questions about how and to what extent primary schools, with an already overloaded provision and workload (DfE 2018) are responding to this requirement.

There is growing research about CC especially in a Bourdieusian framework. Thomson and Hall (2022) analysed conversations with senior secondary students and Bates and Connolly (2023; 2024) interviewed teachers in two schools as part of an evaluation of a programme for disadvantaged students in English primary and secondary schools. A critical exploration of how the embodied CC of non-white students is positioned within the cultural ethos of two majority non-white schools was examined by Barnard (2022). A recent study of 14 secondary

schools in England collected CC practices compiled from 38 interviews with senior leaders, teachers, and support staff (Riordan 2024).

The present research is significant as it adds to this growing body of knowledge and research by focussing on the views of trainee primary teachers in their first year of the BA Honours with Qualified Teacher Status course in a university in the West Midlands, England regarding the links between RE and CC. Finding out what early career teachers think about CC is important for several reasons. First, students' conception of CC provides a source of imagination about how they may contribute to CC while on placement. Knowing how they conceptualise CC has potential to impact the decisions about teaching strategies that they might make in school as ECTs (Early Career Teachers). Knowing this also reveals the possibilities of the type of RE they might deliver and its associated links with CC. Second, if ITE tutors intend to assist trainees to critically analyse this contested concept and its contemporary interpretation, then ITE tutors, in addition to Ofsted's definition and that of Bourdieu's, ought to first know what students' perceptions are. The latter perspectives become relevant as evidence from Bates and Connolly (2023, 517) suggests that teachers, in their sample, re-interpreted CC in their own ways. Third, there is yet to be a study investigating the perceptions held by trainee teachers in England about CC. Given the level of debate that the introduction of CC into the inspection framework has provoked amongst educators (Barnard 2022; Bates and Connolly 2023; Riordan 2024; Thomson and Hall 2022), a study among future teachers is warranted to learn and include their views. This research explored the views of trainee primary teachers about the links between RE and CC. The article begins with an overview of RE in England and then traces the origin and purpose of CC specifically in the context of recent education policy followed by a definition of CC and its theoretical origins.

England and religious education

To understand the significance of the link between RE and CC and what is happening, it is necessary to briefly explain the curriculum, regulatory system and its relationship to school improvement. First, it is important to locate this article in its specific national context. England is a constituent country within the United Kingdom (UK) with Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland being the rest. The UK is a sovereign country, but these countries within it have different educational systems (Barnes, Lundie, McKinney, Williams, and Cullen 2024). Thus, while this article is concerned solely with England, where the RE provision shares some characteristics with that of other nations, its implications extend beyond England and may be relevant to other contexts. However, there are different legislative frameworks for RE.

In England, there is no statutory national curriculum for RE outlining exactly what is taught in state schools. Rather, each local authority has its locally agreed syllabus which is required to be taught by the schools that it maintains. Currently, each local authority constitutes a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) which is a body of representatives of the Church of England, other faith communities, the local authority and teachers. The Education Act 1996, Section 390 (1 & 5) affords a legal responsibility to SACRE to advise the authority about RE and Collective Worship and to appoint an Agreed Syllabus Conference who creates the RE syllabus (UK Government 1996).

The current legal context for RE in England is provided by the Education Act 1996, although it adopted and retained the requirements of the Education Reform Act (ERA) 1988, wherein the subject was renamed as Religious Education. Local authorities must ensure that the agreed syllabus for their area is consistent with Section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996, which requires the syllabus to reflect that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain (UK Government 1996). In England, all schools with a religious character can teach RE that is distinctive to their tradition. Parents continue to have a legal right to withdraw their children from RE lessons but not in Wales, where the subject is now called Religion, values and ethics (HWB 2022). However, for some years now, the Government has continued its academisation project, whereby schools operate independently, to some extent. These schools, known as Academies or Free Schools, offer a broad and balanced curriculum and are not legally bound to use their locally agreed syllabus, instead, they are free to choose any RE curriculum if it meets certain requirements (Roberts and Danechi 2019). A potential tension between a locally determined arrangement and essential culture might be resolved by balancing and integrating core cultural knowledge and skills into local curricula to ensure pupils receive a well-rounded education.

Background: understanding CC within education frameworks

School improvement is a controversial and complex phenomenon in the UK. In England, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) is the body responsible for monitoring the quality of education and social care. Schools now no longer receive a single overall grade like “Outstanding” or “Inadequate”, instead, they are assessed on the quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, and leadership and management (DfE 2024), which then becomes public knowledge. Their reports inform policymakers about the effectiveness of schools. Hence, what Ofsted stipulate becomes imperative. Recently Ofsted introduced the terminology ‘cultural capital’ as an element of the accountability of schools. Its application by Ofsted, in some instances, is compelling schools to reconsider their curricula and pedagogies. Thus, how Ofsted defines CC is important.

In 2019, Ofsted published two handbooks (Ofsted 2019a; Ofsted 2019c) and a framework for inspecting schools (Ofsted 2019b). In these, it stipulated that the quality of education will be evaluated by the extent to which “leaders take on or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all learners, particularly the most disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or high needs, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life” (Ofsted 2019b, 9). In addition, inspectors will also focus on how effectively leaders provide professional development activities in relation to increasing children’s vocabulary and cultural capital (Ofsted 2019a). Their understanding of knowledge and cultural capital is derived from the following wording in the national curriculum: “It is the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement” (Ofsted 2024, S255). Through this essential knowledge, pupils are to be given CC to enable them to become socially mobile, contribute to society and become educated citizens.

There are several issues to highlight before examining the contested concept of CC. As soon as teachers and educators perused the frameworks, debates reflecting diverse perspectives

ensued to define CC, explore its intent, and consider how schools could attend to its requirements. Ofsted appear to have adopted a narrow conception of CC. However, Bourdieu's theorisation and conception of the concept has been similarly queried (Zembylas 2007), particularly for being narrowly framed (Nightingale 2020; Watkins 2018) and for deviating from traditional and contemporary definitions (Bates and Connolly 2024). However, the main difference between Bourdieu's (1986) typology and Ofsted's take on CC is that Bourdieu's conceptualisation included background knowledge of the arts, politics, language, history and prior experiences of pupils. Thus, Cowley (2019) proposed that for the term CC to have validity and meaning, practitioners need to start from a position of celebrating children, rather than seeing them as being in deficit when they arrive.

The inspectorate was criticised for advocating cultural conservatism, dismissing the experience of working-class pupils, misunderstanding the concept and ill-defining it (Mansell 2019), and for including ambiguities caused by language used in the framework. In response to such criticisms, ex-Chief Inspector Spielman clarified that CC was the essential knowledge and those standard reference points that educators want all children to have. It was also about recognising that children are capable of learning about things without experiencing them directly. She, therefore, stressed that it was vital that educators do not limit children only to what they are able to put directly in front of them. Importantly, CC was a golden thread, woven through everything teachers do to teach children well. She emphasised that Ofsted would not be judging it separately and that it should be a central part of the curriculum (Spielman 2019).

Advocates, such as the Conservative Party Nick Gibb MP who was then the Minister of State for School Standards, talked about building CC as a way of closing the attainment gap and achieving social justice (Gibb 2018). However, since CC is to be used to judge the quality of provision in schools, it is being used as a tool to hold schools accountable. Moreover, his proposition raises questions about how to create similar experiences among children who have had dissimilar life chances from a stratum of society. Thus, the concern is that inequality may be perpetuated as the middle class have more capital while the lower class have less.

From the above, it is evident that CC is a feature to be used to judge the quality of provision in schools. It is a mechanism for disciplining schools and teachers failing to deliver the required curriculum (Nightingale 2020). Thus, schools are expected to raise the status of CC and/or to embed it within existing curricula so that it serves the purpose of making pupils know more, navigate social situations, and enhance their employment prospects. Teachers now also have the added responsibility to develop CC. In terms of the components of the curriculum, in addition to knowledge and skills, it has been suggested that CC is an alternative to skills in combining with knowledge to "address social disadvantage" (Nightingale 2020, 236).

Moreover, the centrality of the contested and ambiguous term essential knowledge (Christodoulou 2014; Claxton 2021; Kueh 2018; Sherrington 2017), in this enterprise, is unequivocal. Ofsted explained that the definition of CC is realised through the NC, even though the NC makes no explicit reference to CC. Some critics have thus charged this reworked concept to be a new deficit model to blame schools for failing to teach knowledge (Nightingale 2020).

Confining the abstract concept of CC to the NC implies a narrow conception of CC. It is known that interactions between individuals, communities, religions and cultures are complex (REC 2018). This means there are other capitals which pupils embody in the form of knowledge, skills, spirituality, language, and dispositions from their respective communities that are internalized by them to become an integral part of who they are. Thus, from the perspective of considering children beyond the walls of their classroom, it is to wonder whether their learning and experiences beyond their school are positioned as contributing to CC.

Further implication includes the necessity of avoiding the delivery of specific lessons on CC. The clarification about this from Ofsted is to be welcomed. CC is not something that Ofsted will specifically look for as it is the NC which introduces pupils to this essential knowledge, but this is not defined. In the context of this research, a further dilemma needs to be highlighted concerning the subject of RE. According to Ofsted, it is the NC that introduces pupils to the essential knowledge. But the NC is just one curriculum in the education of children in England, RE is another. Pupils enter a rich discourse about the religious and non-religious traditions that have shaped Great Britain and the world. RE enables pupils to take their place within a diverse multi-religious and multi-secular society. At its best, it is intellectually challenging and personally enriching (Ofsted 2021). In the absence of any mention of RE and its role in contributing to CC, this research explored the views of trainee primary teachers about the link between RE and CC. These trainees came from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and provide important insights about how they perceive links between RE and CC which may help schools work towards promoting social equity in the context of RE. Understanding their perspectives might assist ITE institutions better prepare trainees to increase CC while they are on placement. These participants examined activities which might help introduce pupils through RE to the best that has been thought and said and that engenders an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.

Aside from CC being presented differently in these frameworks of education, surprisingly, the *Initial Teacher Education Inspection Framework* (Ofsted 2020) and the *ITT Core Content Framework* (DfE 2019) which defines, in detail, the minimum entitlement of all trainee teachers, make no references to CC. The absence of CC from two important frameworks which impact teacher identity, and the design of their courses seems odd and raises questions of what CC might mean to future teachers, the pedagogies they might use and the kind of curriculum they might design to give pupils CC. Moreover, it raises questions of whether teachers would even consider factoring the development of pupils' existing CC into their curriculum design or if would they see it as a bolt-on activity to be ticked off.

Finally, CC has been used by the English government to promote views of curricular content which they see as facilitating social mobility but the curriculum that is supposed to be the vehicle for it is fraught with challenges not least because it is a narrow curriculum (Barnard 2022; Bates and Connolly 2023). Having critiqued the expectations, definition and implications of CC, the next section returns to the theoretical origins of the term.

Problematising cultural capital

Aside from the multifaceted nature of the term culture, the definition and the explanation of CC appear to be patchy, as noted above. Be that as it may, the deployment of the term CC has implications. Indeed, there is much that academics have said about the concept of CC and its application in education which is beyond the scope of this article, see, for example Jæger

(2011), Claussen and Osborne (2013) and Zembylas (2007). Nevertheless, a few aspects are discussed below to illustrate the problematic nature of Ofsted's adoption.

The origin of the phrase CC is located within the work of the French social theorist Pierre Bourdieu whose theory of cultural reproduction has been highly influential within the sociology of education. His work is in the context of the debates on class inequalities in education and in broader questions of class reproduction in capitalist societies.

Bourdieu (1986) maintained that the dominant class exclusively cultivates skills, knowledge, and dispositions (i.e., cultural capital) that yield institutional advantages. Schools, as institutions, have standards for success, achievement, selection, and admission that are in alignment with the cultivated tastes, practices, knowledge, and dispositions of the dominant class (Cartwright 2022, 319).

Bourdieu (1986) referred to three forms of capital which need to be considered in analysing any educational system. These were economic capital, whose effects are mediated by social class inequalities in the lives of students. Social capital is constituted by different access to supportive social networks. Cultural capital is viewed as resources of knowledge, language, and appropriate social relations differentially available to students in their homes (Grace 2010).

Bourdieu's (1986, 2010) capital theory and within it, cultural capital exists in three distinct states. The embodied, like dispositions and habits, are cultivated over time and are internalized to become an integral part of individuals. The objectified is transmitted mainly domestically and often unconsciously, which materialises in cultural goods like books, instruments and paintings. These are highly valued by dominant institutions and individuals. Third, institutionalised takes the form of educational qualifications that symbolically impose cultural value onto individuals. These three capitals often combine to create situations in which schools reproduce pre-existing social relationships. To Bourdieu cultural capital was not conferred by education as the embodiment of cultural capital was unconsciously mainly in the family and because education for the majority of people was limited. Thus, education simply supported the accumulation of cultural capital in these forms through things like the qualification system (Bates and Connolly 2024).

However, Cartwright (2022, 320) argues that despite many sociologists treating race as secondary to class, they acknowledge that race is an important factor for understanding individuals' uses of (and capacities to use) cultural capital. Hence, in addition to viewing CC as essentially class-based, it should be understood as being racialised. Indeed, Bourdieu attempted to account for how society does not treat people equally and his theory of social and cultural reproduction is one of the most prominent attempts to explain the intergenerational persistence of social inequality. Edgerton and Roberts (2014, 193) observe that Bourdieu contended that the formal education system is a primary mechanism in the perpetuation of socioeconomic inequality, as it serves to legitimise existing social hierarchies by transforming it into an apparent hierarchy of gifts or merit. In other words, this notion of CC seems farfetched from Ofsted's notion of schools "giving" CC to pupils *via* the curriculum (Fautley 2023, 4). For others, Ofsted has misappropriated a concept designed to explain how education reproduces social inequalities (Nightingale 2020).

Moreover, cultural capital appears to have a much broader remit. Bourdieu (1986) argued that it was impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless

capital is reintroduced in all its forms, rather than in the only form recognised by economic theory (Grace 2010). Thus, Bourdieu's writing reveals a further category, i.e., religious capital. It is a matter of power between the public who receive religious capital and specialists in religion who are the givers. In his analysis of the religious field, Bourdieu suggested that religious capital was: "the monopolization of the administration of the goods of salvation by a body of religious specialists...of a deliberately organised corpus of secret (and therefore rare) knowledge" (Bourdieu 1991, 9). This maintained a strict boundary between the priesthood (possessed of religious capital) and the laity (excluded from such capital) (cf. Grace 2010, 118-119; see also Casson 2021, 57).

Rooted in Bourdieu's theory, a fresh perspective on spiritual capital has also been featured. Grace extends and offers a more developed historical and theoretical elaboration of the concept of spiritual capital, as understood in the Catholic tradition in education. Accordingly, spiritual capital may be said to be resources of faith and values derived from a vocational commitment to a religious tradition (Grace 2010, 119). With the rise of secularisation, spiritual capital, with its focus on the individual and looser ties to institutional religion, could be seen to reflect the more fluid nature of religion in the twenty-first century (Casson 2021, 58). Indeed, in the Muslim tradition (Mogra 2022), along the lines proposed by Grace (2010, 119) spiritual capital can be a source of empowerment as it provides a transcendent impulse which can guide judgement and action in the mundane world. Similarly, the embodiment of the Qur'an in the heart by some Muslim children is a form of power-capital located in the *hāfīdh*.

The theorisation of cultural capital by Bourdieu is itself problematic and a range of terms are applied by him. By educational capital, he meant the capacity of middle-class pupils to successfully navigate the middle-class requirements of schooling. Hence, this is the critique of Ofsted's adoption of the term (Bates and Connolly 2023; Casson 2021; Fautley 2023; Nightingale 2020). The possession of cultural capital varies with social strata, yet the education system has tied CC to the National Curriculum. As schools work out what and how best to address this requirement and seek to widen its conception and application, they must also engage with the potential of RE, as an important school subject, in contributing to that end.

The review has shown Ofsted's problematic definition and other different forms of interlinking capital. This means that practitioners would need to be mindful of the reification of a dominant form of CC which reduces knowledge to facts, whereas, in addition to essential knowledge, concepts, habits, dispositions, ethics and civic service should also be developed. RE is well placed to contribute towards CC. This means a continuation of a multidisciplinary and critical approach to the design of RE curricula. RE is in an advantageous position to contribute towards enhancing CC as it provides a lens through which pupils can see all communities, especially religious communities beyond the deficit model. Learning about and understanding faith and culture makes a useful contribution towards creating an inclusive educational environment. The RE curricula should integrate a range of religious and cultural perspectives, rites, rituals, practices, history, art, craft, literature, architecture and music and, with the NC, it assists pupils to feel valued and represented.

Student teachers and RE

This study is situated within a growing body of research on student teachers and RE. Previous research by McCreery (2005) suggested that any effective preparation of trainees needs to

recognise the diversity of their starting points and allow them opportunities to reflect on their views of religion and RE. Recently, (author anonymised) explored the perceptions of early career teachers about the future of RE and reported that divergent views of the RE academic and professional communities regarding SACRE and the proposed Local Advisory Network for Religion and Worldviews are reflected among ECTs. Others investigated the influence of teachers' religious beliefs in religious education (Nelson and Yang 2023), the way they represent difference (Everington, et al 2011) and how teachers attempted to address issues of separation in schools (Everington 2015). In another study, Everington (2016) also explored understandings and experiences of, and concerns about being professional and argued that trainees require the kind of opportunities for reflection and specialist support that are provided in institutions of higher education. The factors that underpin teachers' confidence in the classroom were studied by Law-Davis and Topliss (2023). Teachers' worldviews may impact their practice, curriculum choices and enthusiasm for a curriculum subject, so Flanagan's (2021) study about worldviews revealed variations between teachers' worldview-consciousness and the impact of their worldviews on their teaching of RE. The results showed that RE teaching method courses were the most influential in developing their confidence. These studies mostly relate to RE and teachers of RE, bringing to attention the need to widen the scope of RE and the type of participants used, paving the way for the inclusion Year 1 trainees and the potential of RE in contributing to the contested concept of CC. Having analysed the background and contested nature of the term CC, the next section explains the research method.

Research methods

This research aimed to explore the views of trainee primary teachers about the links between RE and CC. Participants examined 22 pre-determined RE specific and generic activities which are considered valuable for accumulating CC as shown in Table 1. The author acknowledges their selection is subjective and may be contested. However, they have been found to have the potential of contributing to CC of pupils (Montacute and Cullinane 2018, 43-47). The author selected these activities which are shaped by teaching and lecturing experiences. However, this selection is balanced with objective data from research findings which suggest that such activities can be positively related to exam results (Sullivan 2001). They have largely positive effects on education attainment (Jæger 2011), and some are used by parents to aid their children's advancement through the educational system (Montacute and Cullinane 2018).

Questionnaire

Questionnaires are invaluable for collecting quantitative data, especially for exploratory investigations (Tymms 2021). A questionnaire was designed with a 5-point Likert-type scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree for the participants to complete to indicate the extent to which they thought these activities contribute to CC in RE lessons. It was based, with insertions of RE, on the classification of a broad range of activities as arts and culture by young people (AND 2014). The exposure to these activities was deemed necessary so that they know and become familiar with a wide repertoire of strategies available to them in the classroom. In addition, research has shown that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to classify many of these activities as 'arts and culture' and are

much less likely to engage in more formal arts and culture activities (AND 2014). Through this exposure, it is intended that these future teachers will enrich the education and broader experience of their pupils through RE. Evidence also suggests that arts and culture experiences support educational progression (Francis and Hutchings 2013). However, CC is not limited to and restricted by arts and culture. As discussed above, CC refers to knowledge, qualities, characters, behaviours, skills and broader cultural awareness. It is also “closely related to but not the same as social capital, which refers to the networks of people that someone has access to” (Montacute and Cullinane 2018, 43).

The author assumed that RE contributes towards increasing pupils’ CC on the basis that pupils learn about different beliefs, values and practices in RE which helps them understand the diversity of civilisation, cultures and worldviews that exist in England and beyond (Ofsted 2024). RE also develops critical thinking and involves pupils in debates and promotes spiritual, personal development and global and civic awareness (REC 2018). By contributing to these and more, RE plays a role in increasing the CC of pupils.

It is possible that the presentation of the activities in the questionnaire may have led these trainees to conceptualise CC in a particular way. At this early stage, this exposure to Year 1 trainees was deemed useful for developing a wider pedagogical repertoire as economically disadvantaged young people are much less likely to engage in activities such as visiting an exhibition, attending museums/galleries and are also less likely to take part in music and visit historic or important modern places (AND 2014). However, considering that they were asked in group discussions to identify how schools might use RE to enhance CC gives the researcher some confidence to assert that there was limited influence because, for example, their responses included “modelling, questioning”, “to develop moral understanding”, “encourage empathy” and “assembly”, which do not appear in the list of activities.

In terms of RE, as a subject, these trainees had previously learnt that the quality of RE is variable and that many teachers lack confidence, particularly at the primary stage (REC 2018). So, they explicitly became aware of the need to utilise a variety of teaching methods rather than simply painting or sculpting. In the questionnaire, open-ended questions without pre-defined answers were included so that trainees could freely express their viewpoints and perceptions.

Group discussions

Moreover, their understanding of what CC meant to them in the context of RE and a consideration of how schools might use RE to enhance the CC of their pupils was also discerned using another research method. This data stemmed from discussions in group settings applied in real-world interactions (Flick 2018). Two classes were randomly selected from the BA Primary Education with QTS Year 1 cohort. In these, in total 10-12 group discussions were held which stimulated dialogue and used the dynamic of developing conversation as a central source of knowledge. This method was chosen to avoid artificial isolation from the context in which they were occurring (Flick 2018, 256). As a stimulus, question prompts such as, in the context of RE, what does cultural capital mean to you and how might schools use RE to enhance the cultural capital of their pupils were provided.

This Year group was chosen as they were the first cohort to be recruited to the course after Ofsted adopted the concept in its framework. From the point of view of the researcher, the

group discussion participants were anonymous as were the questionnaire contributors. Moreover, they were asked not to record their names. The researcher was aware of their own bias towards RE and therefore adopted the role of an observer of these group discussions to enhance the authenticity of their responses and minimise potential influence. The relationship between the researcher and the participants was that of a lecturer and trainee teachers. This had an impact on power dynamics and could result in the participants feeling compelled to offer responses that they believed accorded with the lecturer's preferences. To mitigate against this, participants were reminded that there were no right or wrong answers and that all views were important. Still, this relationship might have affected the results. However, during the sessions a professional boundary was maintained ensuring that interactions were consistent. The researcher also engaged in reflexive practices examining personal biases, the research process and results to enhance the integrity of the study. Inductive analysis was used for the group discussions as the aim was to explore new insights. Inductive reasoning allowed new concepts and ideas to emerge (Gibbs 2021).

BERA ethical guidance (BERA 2024) were applied to seek ethical approval. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants have been maintained by using pseudonyms. To prevent selection bias, all trainees were given the questionnaire. They completed it voluntarily. Purposive and convenience sampling was used to select suitable trainees. All 209 first-year undergraduates enrolled on the BA (Hons) Primary Education with QTS were targeted for the questionnaire phase.

Findings

Of the 209 students, 157 (75%) completed the questionnaire. An overwhelming majority of the participants 194 (92.82%) were female trainees. The ethnic background distribution was as follows: White 94 (44.98%), Asian 90 (43.06%), Black 8 (3.83%), mixed 5 (2.39%), other 6 (2.87%) and not declared 6 (2.87%). The summary statistics (Table 1) are presented first to reveal the extent to which they thought the activities had the potential of contributing to increasing pupil's CC. The options strongly agree and agree were combined because it was deemed, in this context, not to make a substantive difference when considered from the classroom perspective. Then, trainees' justifications for selected activities in the 'agree' and 'strongly agree' categories are analysed, drawing on responses to the open-ended questions. Thereafter, data from their discursive engagement are discussed. These topics were part of the content of the module.

RE orientated activities

Table 1 shows that specifically RE orientated activities have been selected by more trainees than the generic activities except for the making or appearing in a film or video activity. Nevertheless, the most common activities which they thought contributed to CC were celebrating RE festivals in school and at home (93%), visiting a historic RE building, garden or landscape open to the public (90%) and visiting RE historical monuments or sites of RE archaeological interest (91%). Those related to technology fair amongst the least selected ones for the categories 'agree' and 'strongly agree' such as making, revising, or writing their own RE blogs, RE websites or RE podcasts (54%), using a computer to create original RE artworks or RE animation (55%) and making RE radio broadcasts or programmes (48%). Photography as an artistic activity was the lowest of all (46%). In the category of literature,

written stories was the highest (88%). Below, the two lowest and highest rated activities are discussed to achieve a deeper understanding of their thinking.

Celebrating festivals

Generally, based on these limited data, trainees recognise that all religions have festivals which are celebrated in different ways, and these are cultural capital. As expected, a wide range of justifications were uncovered as festivals are a strong means to explore faith, beliefs and rituals. Apparently, Chloe agreed that festivals “give pupils visual learning experiences.” Mazida noted that they offer opportunities “to experience another religion’s happiness.” Moreover, pupils “can ask questions, explore and gain real-life hands-on-experience as cultural capital”, recorded Shabnam. Importantly, some asserted that whole school activities might add benefits related to cohesion among diverse communities. Hamzah elaborated:

I think celebrating RE festivals will help children understand the religion more and be more accepting of all religions. It will also create social solidarity within the class as the children will make note to celebrate all religions making all children feel comfortable.

Such highly positive responses to celebrating festivals are significant. Doing so in school may enable pupils to learn in-depth from different religious and spiritual ways of life as these are expressed through festivals. Pupils may understand how a celebration reminds believers of key beliefs and how believers mark it in diverse ways in their communities.

Visiting RE landscapes

Interestingly, Table 1 shows that more students agreed that field trips have more potential to accumulate CC compared with children creating their own work in the classroom as part of RE learning. From their responses, cultural capital is gained by appreciating and visiting historic RE buildings, gardens, landscapes, historical monuments, or sites of RE archaeological interest which were open to the public. Thus, it seems that a majority place considerable value on experiential learning as contributing to CC. In addition to being “fascinating”, perceptive comments from those strongly agreeing include, “pupils get new first-hand insight on aspects of a religion.”

Geographically, Jessica appeared to maintain that pupils could “recognise religious elements in the environment and public sphere.” Moreover, some remarked that “it is cultural capital because it is a trip, it is more exciting” and “keeps accurate information embedded.” Yet Chloe noted “I think visiting religious monuments helps children have a deeper understanding of religion and learn things outside which may spark interest.” Moreover, according to Katie, there is a chance for pupils to imagine “what happened there and, when they learn about it in class, they will be able to link it to a place.” Also, according to Peter, “often in these places religions gather, so it helps pupils experience the religion rather than just learn about it.” Only one trainee, oddly, believed it “would not benefit, as it does not support children’s understanding of RE.”

The religious landscape of a community has the potential of making pupils aware of the accomplishments of humans over the years. It can also assist pupils to apply a historical lens in RE so that they can also become aware of change, continuity and the wider socio-political events and significant people and their achievements.

Radio

The data revealed some disagreement on the contribution that creating radio broadcasts for RE made to CC. Surprisingly, some felt it might not allow pupils to “increase their information about different beliefs.” Several trainees appeared anxious as broadcasts “were not accurate in representing cultures which could lead to misinformation.” Aishah was probably sceptical declaring that podcasters “can be biased towards the religion that they believe in, whereas some people may see it as converting.” Practically, it seems to be seen as “time-consuming”, “pointless” and “complicated to produce as pupils would rather learn through fun and visual things to demonstrate their learning.” Nevertheless, in contrast, a few focussed on the development of generic skills. Shamsa suggested it would “be a fun way to perform” and that “pupils would research and design the information they want to talk about in their way.” Linguistically, “it would help them understand the language. So, its cultural capital, the vocabulary, and we talked about it. It’s used in different religions and put this into practice.” The apparent scepticism of using radio broadcasts is understandable considering that technology has progressed and diversified considerably in schools.

Photography

Surprisingly, no open text responses were received which justified any agreement with the use of photography as an artistic activity in RE. The data suggests most responses supported disagreement. Some stated “don’t know” or sounded sceptical. Possible outright rejections featured in statements such as, “I don’t feel that photography will benefit their cultural capital and learning in any way.” Nevertheless, Zayna saw some likely benefits and highlighted that “artistic activities can be useful but only focusing on the art devalues RE, it becomes more of an art lesson so incorporate more RE.” Their responses reflected some anxiety about its application. Jennifer admitted, “it would be useful. However, I’m not sure how I would incorporate it into RE.” Thirteen disagreed by questioning the efficacy of photography itself. Jordan, for example, stated, “I do not think it’s beneficial to learning. Children will not develop cultural capital as it is in the sense of art symbolism.” The scarcity of its application was also recorded. Janet opined, “I disagree as photography in terms of religion is uncommon and rarely used.” Others expressed what appeared to be a distorted view, “I don’t think you can express or interpret RE through photography.” Interestingly, some trainees seemed fixated on certain pedagogies, which was an aim to address through this research. Jaspreet asserted, “RE should allow students to explore text and information only.” One trainee justified its potential, “it depends on what photo is taken and whether it is relevant to the RE lesson.”

In pursuit of CC through RE

Trainees had an opportunity for a discursive engagement to consider the link between RE and CC. Overall, six key areas of conversation emerged. This section discusses CC in the context of RE; literacy and RE; RE, SMSC and CC; concerns about CC; knowledge in RE and the RE curriculum and social mobility.

CC in the context of RE

A group of trainees stated that to be educated citizens, pupils need “to be informed about the religious landscape of their country and beyond.” Such sentiments feature among many of these trainees as noted earlier. Another group proposed that “cultural capital should be thought of in terms of cultural literacy rather than CC.” It appears as though they felt that “cultural capital is less about possessions” and “material capital to expend” and more about “being able to access a wider world of heritage, language, experience and learning, especially outside school.” Thus, several talked about visiting places of worship “as being valuable”, and an “excellent opportunity to increase pupil’s awareness of local and national issues.”

CC is also conceived as a way of gauging pupils’ exposure and knowledge of religion, culture, and society in terms of personal development. Given this structural perspective, trainees were prompted to think about RE in a multi-disciplinary way and offer some ideas. Collectively, a group mentioned that RE apparently had opportunities to incorporate the study of “religious art”, “architecture”, “artefacts” and “music” as cultural capital both inside and outside of the classroom. However, a few trainees believed that RE could draw attention to social structures, with one trainee remarking that pupils might begin to become alert to the “influence of social class on people’s participation or the lack of it in such cultural activities.” It was valuable to notice some talk about not restricting RE to visiting places of worship. They proposed that schools can offer opportunities to their pupils to “appreciate their local area, buildings, food, clothing, people and cultural heritage.” There is usually a wealth of local culture within and around many school communities, which at times is unheeded for enhancing pupils’ experiences which according to them may be exploited for CC.

Language and RE

CC is also about language, vocabulary, and language use. Implicit in this is the consideration of whether knowing essential religious terms in their original languages further contributes to CC. Trainees claimed that “RE opens a world of words for pupils” who might otherwise “not have the background vocabulary to access aspects of religion and non-religious traditions.” Thus, knowing essential religious words in their original languages had the possibility of being CC. Trainees suggested that such language might become “cultural capital when it is taught in their relevant contexts.” In addition to knowing the words, others proposed that the “etymology of words” is explored. Moreover, it was suggested that pupils should learn that the English language has “borrowed words such as saviour, sermon, and virgin from religion.”

However, a group opined that it was important to recognise that although “some pupils will know a term” or “possess the language”, they may not necessarily “understand its meaning” and implication. Therefore, in class, the nuanced meanings of terms may need extracting, otherwise, pupils might be familiar with knowing the term but not necessarily the why. Moreover, providing pupils with a nuanced understanding of concepts can help to create a distinction between similar concepts which exist in other traditions. Nevertheless, this does not imply that a concept is necessarily exclusive to a particular religion; rather it is only to emphasise that there will be a distinction in how it is understood. Moreover, there is scope to recognise that different religions have some unique terms for some of their unique experiences and concepts. For example, the English translation can only ever be an equivalence and, when not attached to the cultural value set can distort and compromise meaning. Thus, apparently, cultural capital in the sense of being implied in the frameworks

and its embeddedness within the NC, suggests a homogenising lens, which could lead to the design of curricula which are narrow and lacking creativity. Therefore, knowledge about religions and cultures and their related linguistic terms should also be valued.

RE, SMSC and CC

Trainees learn that RE contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) development. To this end, trainees suggested in class, they may provide "exciting", "challenging", "creative", "problem solving", "awe-inspiring" and "stimulating" experiences regularly. Interestingly, some mentioned that the way cultural capital is interpreted could impact upon how they perceive their pupils' interests, motivation, and participation in class. These participants seem to be viewing their pupils as having some capital rather than being deficit.

RE has the potential to enable pupils to live and work in a multi-faith society and it may help develop SMSC by providing opportunities for questioning, curiosity, and creativity. In this way, it is possible that the curriculum of RE be conceptualised as building CC, particularly in some of the super-diverse educational school spaces of England. Moreover, since every state-funded school is required to offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and promotes the SMSC and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, the understanding of CC might include SMSC alongside delivering essential knowledge.

Concerns about CC

There appear to be concerns about the introduction of CC in the regulatory framework of education. As noted above, a narrow conception of culture within CC may lead to the idea that some cultures are more valuable than others. In the wake of decolonising the curriculum and the Black Lives Matter movements, trainees reflected on whose and what kind of CC might be referred to. Their other questions included: "Is it the knowledge and experience of the already powerful that is to be determined as essential for a pupil to be regarded as an educated citizen?" In terms of the curriculum, "is the introduction of cultural capital more about privileging or prioritising the knowledge of those with more power?", "How are teachers going to navigate the challenges of unconscious bias?", "What about global perspectives?" Apparently, the kind of RE envisaged by some of these trainees is in line with the changing landscape of England. They appear to envisage an RE that has space for more "critical perspectives", "questions" and "openness."

The RE curriculum is reputed to consist of too much content to teach across religious and non-religious traditions. When trainees were asked what, if any, connections could be made between RE and CC, some were weary of simply "adding stuff" to RE. They maintained that, to begin with, it is important "to consider what is already on offer." Thereafter the temptation to add any aspect of cultural capital for the "sake of coverage" should be re-considered. They proposed that "ultimate questions about human life", "purpose of life" and "what happens after death", not asked by the NC, should be explored. Pedagogically, trainees were invited to reflect on why they teach the way they do. Similarly, they reflected on a curriculum question: why they would teach what they teach in RE. Along these lines, they seemed "surprised" to learn that RE, as a subject, "was not positioned in these frameworks", as adding, or "developing children's CC".

Knowledge in RE

The concept of CC has been deployed in connection with pupils' essential knowledge and to introduce pupils to the best that has been thought and said. In pursuing this line of enquiry, a group of trainees probably expect that "as part of cultural capital, essential knowledge in school should include RE." Moreover, they considered the contributions of out-of-school learning to CC. Some Christians, Muslims and Sikh trainees presented an interesting perspective, most likely resulting from their life experiences. They posited that schools, especially in their teaching of RE, should include "a consideration of the cultural capital that religious communities transfer to their faithful." In other words, in addition to the academic pursuit of studying religious and non-religious communities in England, they indicate that "pupils should reflect on what cultural capital exists in their own religions" and "what pupils consider is worthy of knowing." However, as CC is rooted in the NC, it follows from this thinking that the subjects of the NC might include, in their content, the knowledge and contributions from the global south which influenced European civilizations.

Similarly, the ingrained habits, skills, aptitudes, and dispositions which are acquired and possessed through life experiences are important to value as existing capital. Some trainees appear to wish for the cultural capital passed through "families" and their "out-of-school learning to be acknowledged" as part of their wider learning. Sources of knowledge and authority is a topic in RE. Thus, the trainees were invited to reflect on how pupils can have opportunities to engage at a deeper level with knowledge. They commented that pupils may require appropriate skills such as to "question", "examine information critically", "understand the limitations of human knowledge", "understand how human knowledge developed", "understand the ways of knowing."

RE and social mobility

In this specific context, trainees recognised that religious traditions promote egalitarian values. England is a religiously diverse country. However, Christian beliefs, values and traditions are imbued in society and institutions. There was a hint at this privilege from some trainees. They seemed to discuss the "many ways through which cultural capital within religion gives followers privileges", which, they felt "might weaken meritocracy." Therefore, they suggested that RE could "provide multiple lenses to their pupils" to deconstruct any misconceptions resulting from such perceptions. Thus, in so doing, they claimed that "RE lessons can become more relevant in contemporary times."

Knowledge in RE should be seen as powerful and essential, otherwise, arguably, the very substance of the RE curriculum is questioned. RE, for example, teaches about leaders of religion such as Moses, Guru Nanak, and Buddha. Because of this, trainees were invited to think about faith leaders and social justice. They gave the impression that it might be a disservice to RE if the teaching about these figures were confined "to miraculous and historical knowledge." Some appear to reason that these leaders "tackled injustice in society in different ways." Hence, trainees seem to desire that RE depicts these leaders as "social actors inspiring them to act" and not exclusively as "key figures interested in and concerned about sacred places and God alone."

Discussion

This research aimed to explore the views of trainee teachers regarding the links between RE and cultural capital. The data generated is small and confined to a single institution and therefore cannot be generalised. Nevertheless, these perceptions appear to suggest a different kind of understanding of CC, one which seems to be broader than the controversial and narrow interpretation adopted by Ofsted. These trainees think that pupils asking questions, gaining real-life hands-on-experience and spiritual capital is CC. Moreover, teachers are implementing a wide variety of practices related to CC across England's secondary schools. The broader interpretation by these trainees finds resonance with Riordan's (2024, 922) recent study which reported that for some practitioners CC is more than a constellation of many kinds of things, such as beliefs, knowledge, habits and skills. To these practitioners, these elements are interchangeable and are emphasised differently in different circumstances.

These were first-year trainees who were beginning to understand the relationship between education and humanity and the role of education in shaping social structures, power, inequality, justice and how education is driven by ideological standpoints. This observation implies the introduction of these issues at an earlier stage of their courses so that they are equipped with socio-political complexities in addition to curriculum and pedagogical matters. Importantly, to maximise the potential of RE's contribution to CC, trainees' initial enthusiasm for RE needs to be nurtured and their experiences during their training should foster this enthusiasm (McCreery 2005). Also, knowing what trainee teachers know and understand about CC, and what contribution RE can make to CC, is particularly of relevance in teacher education programmes seeking to provide trainees with that knowledge. More generally, the results also imply that teacher preparation processes provide opportunities to trainees to critique ideologies and policies through a balanced presentation of divergent viewpoints to better understand that things work differently in different educational contexts.

CC has been tied to the NC which is described as the essential knowledge (Ofsted 2019c). It is important to recognise the positive impact that previous learning and experiences have on some pupils. The denial of the importance of what has happened before the child attends school is to "[make] the school career a history with no pre-history" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, 43; cf. Nightingale 2020, 236). It is likely that to acknowledge prior learning, teachers adopt a much richer and more flexible approach to the idea of CC. The data indicates that a multi-disciplinary RE can introduce pupils to the best that has been thought and said and engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement. This may require raising confidence in RE by developing secure knowledge of the RE content (Law-Davis and Topliss 2023) so that trainees understand that it is *through* RE that CC is to be increased rather than through the amalgamation of assorted cultural elements within RE.

RE orientated activities have been selected by more trainees than the generic activities as having the potential to contribute to increasing pupil's CC. Celebrating RE festivals, visiting historic RE buildings, sites, gardens or public landscapes and sites of RE archaeological interest have been highlighted. These perceptions seem to include a generic conception of culture than that intended by Ofsted. In other words, they interpret CC more broadly than the neoliberal discourses they are responding to (Riordan 2024) which has been described by Bates and Connolly (2023) as a positive instinct of teachers to overcome the limited view of cultural capital propounded by Ofsted.

Nevertheless, these participants think that such activities play a part in preparing pupils for their future roles in society by offering them the cultural experiences and knowledge needed

to navigate the complexities of the world successfully. An RE curriculum of this nature might help pupils appreciate faiths and cultures, value diversity and create an inclusive environment which can be elements of CC. In the context of the growing use of social media, it is interesting that those related to technology fair amongst the least selected ones, whereas, in the category of literature, written stories was the highest. Along these lines, in terms of storytelling, sharing personal biographies has positive outcomes for pupils (Everington. et al 2011) and teacher-pupil relationship (Nelson and Yang 2023).

These participants, rather than adopting a deficit model, position pupils as already having CC. They suggest that the CC that some religious communities transfer to their faithful through formal and informal education and in family settings should be acknowledged and celebrated to enhance pupils' sense of belonging which is a feature of CC. In other words, heritage and personal attributes appear to be brought under CC making CC all-encompassing. Practitioners in Riordan's (2024, 923) research discuss CC as if it were a personal characteristic in contrast to Bourdieu's objectified or institutionalised CC and who accepted that wealth was not the only factor which brought academic success.

Data from the discursive engagement reinforces the need for a broad and balanced curriculum through the teaching of RE which encompasses local, national and global perspectives so that it goes beyond academic achievement and includes a wider range of experiences that help pupils to develop a complex understanding of the world around them. RE contributes to CC by existing as a core component of the curricula on offer in schools (Everington 2016). RE can be a vibrant subject which offers enrichment in many ways as shown above. Moreover, the data also suggest that RE has the potential to increase pupils' CC (*vide* McCreery 2005). RE, according to these future teachers, provides pupils with opportunities to appreciate different religious and cultural genres which might not be accessible to them beyond the school. Many schools provide enhancements through visits to places of worship so that pupils experience more than their own cultural encounters. Such pedagogy minimises the valuing of one culture over another. Faith and non-faith representatives often deliver workshops which supplement the formal curriculum as they meet a range of leaders. RE is known to engage with local communities and the environment can develop a stronger sense of identity of pupils. These are some of the features of effective cultural exchanges and processes of enculturation powered by RE. These trainees include experiences of various kinds in their multifarious understanding of CC. Given the looseness of the concept for academics, such varied implementation of the term CC is unsurprising nor concerning in itself (Riordan 2024, 328).

These trainees feel that SMSC through RE has a role to play in promoting CC. One conception of CC relates to achieving social mobility through education and economic means (Casson 2021). However, these participants seem to suggest that with essential knowledge, the development of skills, dispositions, habits and through reflection, civic engagement, ethical living, empathy and artistic appreciation also enhance personal growth which prepares pupils to thrive and contribute positively to society. The type of RE they appear to articulate can help pupils understand that faith leaders and prophets were concerned with justice and social matters and an RE consisting of contemporary issues. This kind of RE curriculum is perceived to provide social capital to pupils who can then aspire to act for humanity as some faith leaders did and do.

The incorporation of SMSC as having a role in contributing to CC implies that these trainees conceive CC as having a meaning more than monetary and social capitals. Bates and Connolly (2023) suggest that teachers' use of cultural capital should be viewed as a *rewording* of the term whereas Riordan (2024) maintains that rather than a systematic replacement of the existing dominant term to control how the discourse is perceived, CC is undergoing a tacit change of meaning. In other words, practice in schools appears to be eclipsing the theoretical and regulatory meanings attached to CC. These findings indicate the need for further research in primary settings to include the perspectives of children.

Nuanced language development is highlighted as widening pupils' horizons and enhancing their capacity to use RE related terms confidently. In this way, RE helps to develop social skills and confidence which relate to CC. Ofsted (2019a) is also concerned about increasing children's vocabulary. Bourdieu (2010) explicitly states the importance of linguistic competence. As the data shows, RE provides its subject-specific terms and discusses the etymology of vocabulary, which develops knowledge and addresses misconceptions. RE can help pupils understand and use 'educated' language which may minimise stereotypes and generalisations in society. Pupils in RE do explore religious festivals, literature, art, music, architecture, historical buildings, and other landscapes and examine artefacts from a range of traditions. These are seen to contribute to CC through RE. Indeed, in multi-faith Britain, many possess spiritual and religious capital derived from a commitment to a religious tradition (Grace 2010). Significantly, learning in RE is critical rather than the passive acceptance of information. In other words, pupils' education success is influenced by many factors (Bates and Connolly 2024). Further research is suggested to account for the perspectives of those from disadvantaged communities using parents and other stakeholders.

These findings have implications for research on ITE. Teacher's beliefs and attitudes are impacted by ITE programmes and the support from experts (Law-Davis and Topliss 2023). At the same time, a lack of subject knowledge and clarity of aims are challenges in teaching RE whereas confidence gives positive outcomes (Flanagan 2021). Further research among trainees should investigate the purpose and rationale of RE and that of CC with the aim of delineating the distinctive features of each and to discern their respective roles. Research can also be conducted on the experience that students have had about CC while on placement. Such a project would have the potential of capturing the practices of many schools across a region. In turn, ITE courses would have research-based examples of CC to deliver to their trainees, who would then be better prepared to increase children's CC. These findings also have implication for ITE courses and teachers in schools in general and those mentoring ECTs in that they become familiar with how some trainees perceived CC and the support they need to give them whilst on placement so that they have more complex and secure understandings of CC and RE.

Conclusion

Recent inspection frameworks expect schools to increase CC of all children. CC is not something that Ofsted will look for distinctly, rather it is a golden thread that is to be woven into the curriculum. The curriculum should be ambitious and consist of essential knowledge. This knowledge should introduce pupils to the best that has been thought and said and that engenders an appreciation of human creativity and achievement. Accordingly, it is the NC

that introduces pupils in England to this essential knowledge. However, this article has considered Ofsted's ill-defined and narrow adoption of the concept. The views of these trainees constitute a contribution to knowledge about the diverse ways in which CC is conceived and implemented and of its intended purpose.

That the NC is but only one curriculum and CC has been tied to it, leaves RE in a precarious role. RE is part of the basic curriculum. In the growing literature about CC, the views of these future teachers are important as they reveal how they think about the potential link between RE and CC and in making them globally educated citizens. However, since the term is not fully defined independently, deliberation may be needed about how the term can be characterised in relation to the RE curriculum and to justify it for inspectors.

These empirical findings help to understand how these future teachers intend to use RE in schools to enhance CC. The most common features contributing to this end are celebrating RE festivals, visiting historic RE buildings and public landscapes, and visiting RE historical monuments. In other words, trainees are more likely to choose these activities for teaching which engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement. Those related to technology fair the least. Therefore, an increased exposure to the use of technology is suggested.

In the context of CC, essential knowledge should include RE as pupils need to learn about the religious landscape of their country and beyond to be better-educated global citizens. RE opens a world of words for pupils to access religions and non-religious traditions as part of their developing nuanced learning. Thus, linguistic terms in RE should be taught contextually and meaningfully. Any ambitious curriculum should add to pupils' existing spiritual, moral, social, and cultural capital. To avoid the risk of a narrow conception of culture within CC, teachers may need to navigate the challenges of unconscious bias. Schools may also consider how they build on the CC that pupils already possess from their own religious and cultural learning outside school contexts so that these community experiences are not seen as a deficit but complement to their success. The curriculum might highlight areas where religious traditions promote egalitarian values and depict religious leaders as social actors.

The absence of CC from the ITE and the ITT *Core Content* frameworks has implication for ITE providers. These, and the Teachers' Standards, impact the preparation of ECTs, their professionalism, identity, and autonomy in enabling them to exercise expert judgement about enacting and enhancing the CC of their pupils. Therefore, trainees may want to use critical enquiry and research-informed practice to develop their understanding of the nature and design of an ambitious curriculum and be able to design curricula that can enhance pupils' existing CC.

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Biographical note

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