

Doing justice to their history: London's BAME students and their teachers reflecting on decolonising the history curriculum

Metadata Appendix: Transcripts of London student and teacher interview-conversations April-May 2018

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2.0 Rationale for including interview transcripts as metadata

The background to this project is explained in the article to which this metadata is linked: Guyver, R. (2021). Doing justice to their history: London’s BAME students and their teachers reflecting on decolonising the history curriculum. *Historical Encounters*, 8(2), 156-174 (see: <https://doi.org/10.52289/hej8.209>).

It was not possible to do full justice either to all of the thirty-three student voices or to the seven teacher voices in the space available for the article. But by including the full transcripts, with a number of curriculum-related or contextual references annotated by the addition of footnotes, those voices are now available in their rich original fullness. The conversational threads are given as recorded, uncorrected. This is also a snapshot of the history curriculum situation in April-May 2018, as it was seen by the students and teachers involved.

3.0 Background information in tables about the interview-conversations: School A, School B, School C, School D, and School E

School A		
State-maintained Catholic Girls’ School (all students female) South London		
30 April 2018		
Interviewer: Martin Spafford		
Year group	Student or teacher identifier	Heritage or heritages of student or teacher
Y9	A-F9A	Nigeria/St Vincent
Y9	B-F9A	Philippines/China
Y9	C-F9A	India/Kenya
Y9	D-F9A	Dominica/Nigeria/ Ireland
Teacher (present)	A-MT1	Male teacher, Black British, West African heritage [Nigerian]

2.1 Table 1: Students and staff School A Y9

School A		
State-maintained Catholic Girls’ School (all students female) South London		
30 April 2018		
Interviewer: Martin Spafford		
Year group	Student or teacher identifier	Heritage or heritages of student or teacher
Y12	A-F12A	Sierra Leone/ Liberia/ Guinea/ Jamaica ...
Y12	B-F12A	Ghana
Y12	C-F12A	Uganda
Teacher 1 (present)	A-MT1	Male teacher, b/Black British, West African heritage [Nigerian]

2.2 Table 2: Students and staff School A Y13

School A State-maintained Catholic Girls' School (all students female) South London 30 April 2018 Interviewer: Martin Spafford		
Year group	Student or teacher identifier	Heritage or heritages of student or teacher
Y13	A-F13A	St Lucia/Zambia
Y13	B-F13A	Sri Lanka/Portugal
Y13	C-F13A	Cyprus
Y13	D-F13A	Ghana
Teacher 1 (present)	A-MT1	Male teacher, b/Black British, West African heritage [Nigerian]

2.3 Table 3: Students and staff School A Y13

School B State-maintained Mixed Comprehensive School in East London (all students in interview group female) 3 May 2018 Interviewer: Martin Spafford		
Year group	Student or teacher identifier	Heritage or heritages of student or teacher
Y11	A-F11B	Somalia
Y11	B-F11B	Pakistan
Y11	C-F11B	Algeria
Teacher 2 (present)	B-FT1	Female w/White British heritage Head of History
Teacher 3 (present)	B-FT2	Female w/White British heritage history teacher

2.4 Table 4: Students and staff School B (one year group, Y11)

School C State-maintained Catholic Girls' School in West London (all students female) 11 May 2018		
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Interviewer: Martin Spafford		
Year group	Student or teacher identifier	Heritage or heritages of student or teacher
Y11	A-F11C	Jamaica
Y11	B-F11C	Ireland
Y11	C-F11C	India
Y11	D-F11C	Kenya/Somalia
Y11	E-F11C	Zimbabwe/Nigeria
Y11	F-F11C	Ghana-1
Y11	G-F11C	Ghana-2
Y11	H-F11C	Ghana-3
Y11	I-F11C	Ireland/Grenada
Teacher 4 (present)	C-FT1	Female w/White Irish heritage
Teacher 5 (present)	C-FT2	Female b/Black East African heritage

2.5 Table 5: Students and staff School C (one year group, Y11)

School D		
State-maintained Mixed Comprehensive School in North London		
16 May 2018		
Interviewer: Martin Spafford		
Year group	Student or teacher identifier	Heritage or heritages of student or teacher
Y9	A-F9D (female)	São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal
Y9	B-F9D (female)	Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia
Y9	C-F9D (female)	Algeria
Y9	D-M9D (male)	Bangladesh
Y9	E-M9D (male)	Somalia/ Yemen
Y9	F-F9D (female)	Montserrat/ USA
Teacher 6 (present)	D-MT1	Lead Practitioner (History) w/White male teacher – British (Jewish heritage)

2.6 Table 6: Students and staff School D (one year group, Y9)

School E		
State-maintained Mixed Comprehensive School in East London		
22 May 2018		
Interviewer: Martin Spafford		
Year group	Student or teacher identifier	Heritage or heritages of student or teacher
Y9	A-F9E (female)	India, Jamaica, Dominica, France
Y9	B-F9E (female)	Ghana
Y9	C-F9E (female)	Jamaica, Cuba
Y9	D-M9E (male)	Vietnam, Cumbria
Teacher 7 (present)	E-FT1	Female Head of History (b/Black British – West African [Ghana])

2.7 Table 7: Students and staff School E (one year group, Y9)

Question number	Student interview questions
1	What examples can you remember of teaching about the history of empire, colonialism and decolonisation, etc?
2	How did you feel about your lessons about empire and the way they were taught?
3	How do you see the relationship between your own identity and history (e.g. the history of members of your family) and being British in your own way?
4	How far do you feel that this is reflected in what you are taught?
5	Would you like to see any changes in what is taught?
6	If yes, what changes?

2.8 Table 8: Student interview questions

Question number	Teacher interview questions
1	Can you please give some examples of <i>what</i> historical themes and events around empire, de-colonisation, and the Commonwealth are taught?
2	What particular pedagogic and professional knowledge do you draw upon in teaching themes related to empire and post-colonialism? (This relates to how historical themes and events around empire, decolonisation, and the Commonwealth are taught.)

3	Drawing on your own experience of teaching in a BAME community can you see any effective practical solutions to address the need for diversity and inclusion expressed in the statement above (perhaps also bearing in mind the question below)?
4	In what ways might it be possible to design history education programmes that address not only the necessity to 'cover' the syllabuses or curricula, but which allow for more personalisation to include diversity, related specifically to the make-up of the students in the classes?
5	Have you experienced the need to give citizenship education for BAME students a historical dimension that they can identify with?
6	Are there any landmark events that relate to the questions above about inclusive narratives and diversity that are transnational, supranational or international that many or all BAME students might be able to identify with?
7	Would some, many or most BAME students believe that they have more than one identity?
8	Are you aware of any links between history education debates in the BAME post-colonial contexts with which you are familiar and wider global discourses about history education?
9	Should professional or other bodies (e.g. the Historical Association, SHP, even the Royal Historical Society, or the Commonwealth) be doing more to ensure more diversity in history education?
10	If they should be, then how or in what way?
Explanatory note for Q3 and Q4	Inclusive narratives: One reason why history education has become a live political issue and a matter of contestation is that traditional curriculum structures involving simple national narratives or 'canons' of events are unsettled by the imperative in the twenty-first century of introducing the complexity of diversity. Examples of these are: (a) plurinational to include sub-national histories within regional contexts; (b) post-colonial in decolonised settings to engage with the histories and cultures of communities of minority ethnic immigrant-settlers, including post-colonial ones; and (c) a consideration of other more distant settings such as the cultural and Indigenous histories of formerly colonised peoples who have not necessarily become settlers but whose sometimes or often traumatic histories related to colonisation might be seen in a more empathetic light.

2.9 Table 9: Teacher interview questions

School year	Stage related to National Curriculum or examination course
Y9	The third year of secondary education (student ages 13-14). It is officially anyway, the last year of Key Stage 3 (KS3), the stage before the GCSE exam course.
Y11	The fifth year of secondary education (student ages 15-16). Y11 is the year when GCSE examinations are taken.
Y12	The sixth year of secondary education (student ages 16-17). The first of the two A-Level years
Y13	The seventh and usually last year of secondary education (student ages 17-18). The second of the two A-Level years. A-Levels (Advanced Levels) are the exams the results of which will enable students to enter university.

2.10 Table 10: Explanation of school year nomenclature

School, year group of students and number of teachers	When the interviews were conducted
A – a state-maintained Catholic Girls’ School in SW London Y9 student interviews	30 April 2018
A – a state-maintained Catholic Girls’ School in SW London Y12 student interviews	30 April 2018
A – a state-maintained Catholic Girls’ School in SW London Y13 student interviews (and interview with one teacher)	30 April 2018
B – a mixed state-maintained Comprehensive School in East London Y11 student interviews (and interviews with two teachers)	3 May 2018
C – a state-maintained Catholic Girls’ School in West London Y11 student interviews (and interview with two teachers)	11 May 2018
D – a mixed state-maintained Comprehensive School in North London Y9 interviews (and teacher interview)	16 May 2018
E – a mixed state-maintained Comprehensive School in East London Y9 interviews (and teacher interview)	22 May 2018

2.11 Table 11: Dates and places of interviews

3.0 The interview-conversations

3.1 SCHOOL A: State-maintained Catholic Girls' School in South London

Year 9:

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent)

Student B-F9A (Philippines/China)

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya)

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/ Ireland)

Interviewer: Martin Spafford

Also present: A-MT1 history teacher (male teacher, b/Black British, West African heritage [Nigerian])

30th April 2018

Q: Q1 Can you think of any examples any time in school – it can be primary or secondary school – of when you have been taught about the history of empire or colonialism or anything like that?

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Well, last year we did when England went to America and discovered it, when they, like, kicked out the Native Americans and stuff, cause we've done it in the context of, like, Pocahontas.¹ That's about it.

Q: Any other things that you remember, about empire, or colonialism, or even, I mean, I'm thinking back to even when you were at primary school ... nothing about the British empire at all? Have you done any history at any time that's been about countries other than Britain, other than the UK?

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Well, in primary school we learned a bit about slavery.

Q: Tell me a bit about that.

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): We just learned about what they did and we were looking at some of the actual sugar – I don't know what you call it –

Student B-F9A (Philippines/China): Sugar cane?

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Yeah, like the actual place and we were looking at where they stayed.

Q: It's not a test, by the way. It's just getting a sense of what kind of things maybe stuck with you, you remember. And actually, if you learned about slavery, that happened as a result of Britain controlling those places, so it was empire in fact. You might not have learned it as empire, but you're quite right that it was. Was that true for all of you?

Student B-F9A (Philippines/China): Yes, in primary we just learned the general stuff about slavery. We didn't get into the deepest areas so ...

¹ *Pocahontas* is a 1995 American animated Disney film. Pocahontas herself was the daughter of the Chief of the Powhatan native American group in Tsenacommacah, Virginia. She was born Amonute and was later known as Matoaka. She married John Rolfe in 1614 and died in Gravesend, Kent, in 1617. She is associated with the Jamestown colony and is reputed to have saved the life of colony leader John Smith.

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): Mm, we didn't do much history in primary school.

Q: No, it's mainly English and Maths, isn't it?

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): We just did, we did the Egyptians, but really really briefly. It was the Pyramids, but we just did one lesson on the Egyptians and that was it. Then we did, like, the Celts, but that was in England, so ...

Q: I suppose you have probably done the Norman Conquest, haven't you? Battle of Hastings, 1066, in Year 7?

All: Oh yeah

Q: That's a kind of empire, isn't it? When you studied slavery, where was that slavery happening?

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): In the Caribbean, like South America.

Q: Apart from slavery, have you studied anything else about the Caribbean?

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Not in school, no.

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): We did for music ...

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Oh yeah, that was like heritage of the Blues ... it came from slavery but it was, like a darker version of soul and reggae that comes from the Caribbean.

Q: Now you said 'not at school'. That suggests that these are things you might study elsewhere.

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Yeah, like, we went to a place in Hull and it was, like, a slavery place, with my family, and ...

Q: I know it. It's the Wilberforce Centre.

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): We went there and, yes, that was really interesting but kind of sad, in Hull.

Q: You know I'm going to come back to asking you a bit about how much of your heritage your families look at. But that's the Caribbean. Has there been any study of any aspect of the history of anywhere in Asia?

All: No.

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): I mean, the slightest we've touched on it is probably in Textiles or DT, just like manufacture and sweatshops and stuff.

Q: So that's about manufacture and textiles *today*? And how about Africa? ... Not at all?

All: No.

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): The only parts we learned from Africa was the slavery, and anything else they don't really talk about.

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Like, anything like the Biafran War in history ...

Q: It may come later in your courses, but not up to now. And how about Australasia? Australia, New Zealand, Pacific Islands ...

All: Nothing

Q: Nothing at all? And North America? Canada, USA?

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): No. Except, like, Pocahontas and stuff.

All: Yeah.

Q: When was that?

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): End of Year 8.

Q: OK, fantastic, so there was that, so you have studied the early British Empire in North America.

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): Yes.

Q: Q2 OK. Now when you were studying those things, when you were studying slavery in primary school, when you were looking at the story of Pocahontas and empire in North America, how did you feel about that when it was being taught? And how did you feel about the way that it was taught?

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Well. It was like ... it was ... because I really, from a young age my parents had already explained to me about this sort of stuff, it wasn't as big a shock as some other people in our class who'd, like, no idea about it, and they didn't really go into, like, deep stuff like my parents have told me about now. And it wasn't really that new to me, so I don't know.

Q: Are you talking here about enslavement or about the Pocahontas stuff?

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Both really.

Q: And you talked about, your parents had taught you. Was the way it was taught in school in a different way from home?

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Yes.

Q: Different in what way?

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Because my parents can relate directly from what their parents have told them, and in school it was, like, based on facts and recounts. They were not really recounts from the people that experienced it, it's from a person that, like, witnessed it happen.

Q: So, you've told me that it wasn't a surprise to you. At the time that you were learning that in school, how did you yourself feel about it?

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Well, it made me angry, sort of, because you don't want it to happen. It should never have happened.

Q: And how about the rest of you? How did you feel?

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland): I was just annoyed, to be honest.

Q: Was this stuff that you'd already heard before?

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland): Yes

Q: When you say annoyed, annoyed with what? About the topic?

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland) About the whole system, about what happened then.

Q: And how about you, [names *Student C-F9A (India/Kenya)*]?

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): I was mostly annoyed about the way they taught it to us.

Q: Why was that?

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): Because they just made us, like, watch the movie, and then they'd talk about certain parts of it. With the movie it obviously not going to be all true, because it's a movie, they've made it more...

Q: Which movie did you see?

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): The animated one from Disney.

Q: Oh? The Pocahontas one, is it?

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): Yes.

Q: So, the teacher played the Pocahontas one and then you discussed it?

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): Yes. And it was more like, other than that they didn't really talk about it again. And it was, like, they should spend more time on it because it's something that not many of us know about and it's actually quite interesting.

Q: So, did you find that there were some questions in your head that you wanted answered about it?

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): Yes.

Q: What sort of things?

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): It was, like, why was, why did they do it? What was their thought process that made them want to go there, make it happen?

Q: I don't want to put words into your head so stop me if I've got this wrong, but my understanding, (names student C-F9A [India/Kenya]), is you're saying that you wanted there to be more analysis so you understood it.

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): Yes.

Q: How about you, (names *Student B-F9A [Philippines/China]*), how do you feel?

Student B-F9A (Philippines/China): I kind of just felt it was a little bit repetitive, like throughout the learning system and that, I felt like there'd be more, we'd get more use if there was an [*unclear*] reference or an autobiography or something as a direct reference, maybe like an autobiography or something, like an actual person from there since. Personally, I kind of feel like we're just learning it from the European perspective, so I think the English perspective a little bit.

Q: I think I'm going to pick up on your point because, you know, behind these questions is a sort of question of, how do you feel about the perspective from which stories of other parts of the world and places that were colonised, how do you feel about the perspective? You're saying you think it was a very European perspective. Again, please don't let me put words into your mouth but do you agree or disagree with [*names Student B-F9A (Philippines/China)*] on that one?

All: Agree.

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): I agree. I get very angry. I get that they're all for, like, racial equality and stuff and they want to stick up for us. But let us tell our own stories. Because sometimes they make it sound either worse than it actually was, or they make us seem, like, really weak and things.

Q: What do you mean? I want to pick up the comment, you said, quote, 'you make us seem really weak'. What do you mean?

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Like, times were hard but they didn't just, like, give up. They kept fighting all the way through and they didn't, like, they make it sound like most of them were really a bit stupid. And they didn't, all the way through Pocahontas they kept referring to them as, like, savages.

Q: When you say ‘them’, just to be clear, who do you mean?

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Like, the Native Americans or Black people in general, or people who aren’t European. And that’s not true.

Q: What do you think of what [names *Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent)*] said? Do you kind of agree with her or disagree?

All: Agree.

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): I haven’t really felt this strongly in my education but they kind of make us feel like minorities. I know that’s not what they are trying to put across, so you can’t just help but feel less.

Q: Just picking up ‘you can’t help but feel less’, who feels less? Do you mean you as young people, or what do you mean?

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): When we’re learning about these things I kind of feel embarrassed because it’s, like, they’re only talking about the bad things about these countries and they’re not really focusing on other things, like what they’ve done well or, like, how they’ve made the world a better place.

Q: This is my time to ask you, what do you think *should* be there then?

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): We know mostly about the English culture and we never really focus on our own cultures, and it kind of annoys me that I don’t really know much about my culture but I know quite a bit about the English culture.

Q: I suppose, [names *Student C-F9A (India/Kenya)*], this is the moment for the sake of the tape, to ask you and the rest of you, what do you see as being your culture?

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): It’s my Indian background. My dad doesn’t know much because he was raised in Africa and he was travelling most of his life, so he never really got to spend time in India with his family. And my mum, she was like, she wasn’t the richest person there so she only knows, like, half of the story, so she can only tell me from her experiences about it. And in school we’re supposed to be learning about these things and not just, like stuff that has happened in the past like world wars. Because they only focus on one side of it, like the English side. They never have anyone else come in and talk to us about it. It’s always, like, the same thing we learn every year. We don’t really learn anything new.

Q: You’re saying that parts of your own history aren’t there, and your heritage is Indian and – East African, is it? Which country in Africa?

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): My dad is Indian but he was raised in Africa because my grandad, he wasn’t that rich so he didn’t really have the money to travel to India or any of his family there?

Q: Which country in Africa was it?

Student C-F9A: Kenya.

Q: And how about you, [names *Student B-F9A (Philippines/China)*]? What’s your heritage?

Student B-F9A (Philippines/China): Well, it’s mostly Filipino but on my mum’s side there’s Chinese blood, Filipino my dad, so ...

Q: What sort of, what understanding of Filipino history do you have at all? Do you have some from your family?

Student B-F9A (Philippines/China): I mean my family just tells me general history, not that much, because I'm not that close with my grandad on my mum's side and I don't really know that much about the Chinese ...

Q: I'm not putting you on the spot, I'm just interested to find out. [to (names *Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland)*)] What's your own heritage?

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland): Well, I'm half Dominican, a quarter Nigerian and a quarter Irish.

Q: That's very rich.

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland): So, like Dominica's from the Caribbean. So, you only really learn from the Caribbean and, kind of, like, the bad stuff. And you don't really learn about anything good, I guess that happens.

Q: In slavery, did you learn about any of the uprisings or resistance to slavery?

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland): No.

Q: OK. And we've got three colonised countries there, haven't we, because we've got Dominica, Nigeria and Ireland! The Brits got to all of them! So that thing that [names *Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent)*] said about kind of, sort of making you feel weak, do you echo that when you learned about slavery?

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland): Yes, like it was quite embarrassing ...

Q: Why?

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland): Because it didn't really show anything good about it and ...

Q: So, do you have access to hearing a more proud history in other ways, like through your family?

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland): Er yes, yes, yes

Q: In the classroom, are there discussions which would make it possible to bring those stories in?

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): I don't think [*unclear*] really, really talked about slavery that much.

Q: Q3: OK, that kind of leads me to a kind of deeper question which you sort of touched on, which is: how do you see the relationship between your identity, OK, and the history of your family and being British in your own way?

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Shall I say where I'm from, first? On my dad's side I'm fully Nigerian, the wealthy side of Nigeria, and then on my mum's side they're from a little island off the coast of Saint Vincent called Bequia, and they've got, they were invaded by the Scottish, so my mum's maiden name is Scottish – it's [*?Tavis*]². It's because they brought back slaves ...

Q: ... they had to take their names.

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Yes and, yes, that's my heritage. And ... what's the question?

Q: Q3 The question was kind of your sense of being British, whatever that is your way of feeling British, and how does that relate to the, kind of, your family history, your sense of identity, the

² It may have been McIntosh as that name is given in the UCL Legacies of Slavery website pages (Jane McIntosh) about families associated with St Vincent. On 18 January 1836 Jane McIntosh was compensated £173 6s 6d, for '7 enslaved', but this does not mention Bequia.

relation... I am really asking you about, kind of, what for you is it about being Indian and British, being Nigerian and St Vincent, you know, Bequia and British, being all those wonderful mixtures that you are and British, being Filipino and Chinese and British – how do you see the relationship of all those things and how do you feel about yourselves?

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland): I feel like I'm more British than, kind of, what I am. I was brought up here, I was born here. I don't know anything about my past life, I guess. And it's just, like, yes, I just feel like I'm just British, you know what I mean, I don't really have anything else.

Q: And do you feel that your sense of identity is different from your parents, or not?

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland): I think it's the same because my parents were brought up here as well, so...

Q: It's interesting because you said that you feel British but you also said that when the story of enslavement is taught it makes you feel embarrassed. So, in that sense, there is a sense of your heritage there too. Isn't there?

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland): Yes, yes.

Q: How about you, [*names Student C-F9A (India/Kenya)*]??

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): Well, we've lived here for most of our lives so we know this, we don't know how it feels to be living in our own countries, because we've been brought up here, we've been given everything that we needed. And sometimes it upsets me to see people in India who are struggling because it's, like, I've had everything a lot easier than they have, and sometimes I wish I was able to understand, like how they feel, like what makes them. Because you always see them really happy and it's just – I don't know how to describe it but it's like if I was in that condition, I don't feel like I would be happy. Because it was like they're struggling to get clean water and food every day and it's like ...

Q: When you say that, is that from the perception of India that you're given at school, or is it at home or on television or ...

Student C-F9A (India/Kenya): It's mostly on TV when they do these, like, fundraising things for different countries who need help. It's like, they do focus on the kids being happy but they also always show how they're always sick, how they're always needing help, how they're always in hospitals, and they never really show how, like, some kids, they do get an education. They mostly say, ok, those kids don't have an education, which I understand is sometimes true, but then it's like, then everyone starts to think that you're less than them because you don't have an education and you don't have everything that they've been given their whole lives, because they've simply lived in England for most of their lives. And it's just really annoying.

Q: Thank you. How about you, [*names Student B-F9A*]? What do you think?

Student B-F9A (Philippines/China): I mean, like quite recently, actually, I've had a talk with my parents, as a family. It wasn't anything serious but the question came up. I was raised in the Philippines instead of here, because the only reason we're here is because my mum got a better job here so we all moved here [*unclear*] obviously I was raised as a British citizen. So, my mum actually said that she thinks I would change in the way that I would look at other people, like, because I actually told my mum I feel like in society today there a silent prejudicity. So, everybody is all about racial discrimination – I mean, not about that, *equality* – but there's always that sense of difference in a group or community. So, in that sense there's an identity but not necessarily a good one.

Q: Are you thinking then specifically for Filipinos in Britain or more widely?

Student B-F9A (Philippines/China): I guess it's to anybody who just doesn't really feel like they're fully in that situation or fully accepted or something like that. But I guess my problem is that in the Philippines most people try and speak English, so my parents never really put in – I mean they're great, but – they never really put in that effort to kind of teach me about language or anything, so I can't speak Filipino but I can understand it fluently. But they've kind of just given up with my brother so he just is practically an English person.

Q: Right, OK. Do you feel in a way that – it's [names *Student D-F9A*] isn't it? – [Student D-F9A] said that basically she feels she's British. Do you feel that, or is it a different feeling?

Student B-F9A (Philippines/China): Well, I kind of feel different when I'm surrounded by people who are somewhat like me identity wise, so I'll be surrounded by, like, culture food, obviously language and, just general things like that. But as soon as it's around society today I guess it's kind of a little bit less [*unclear*].

Q: I remember I did a project with a boys' Catholic school last year in Harlesden and it was, the kind of project they eventually worked on was led by a Filipino boy who said he felt that issues around racism were dealt with less seriously for him than they were when it was white British kids, or Black kids or South Asian kids. That somehow people didn't, kind of, he felt as a Filipino that his cultural identity was more invisible in Britain than some other ones.

Student B-F9A (Philippines/China): Yes, I mean I've kind of felt like that but I don't think I was on that difficult level but I feel like it's because – I may be wrong, but like the Philippines hasn't really had a major impact on the world, like we have the world wars and etcetera but, you know like there's no, like South Asia ...

Q: I guess also Philippine communities are bigger in the States, to some extent. But that's really interesting. And what about you?

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland): So, basically with the whole Windrush thing, I have, like not directly links but my grandma's friends have had issues with that, and that whole thing about them being British. Because, like, they came in the 1960s to work for the British and they was [*sic*], like, threatening being deported and stuff, and it's just been – because my grandma came at the same time as them and came and worked in, like, banks and stuff. But she got her British citizenship, like there and then because she knew something like this would happen. But they all make, like, half of them don't have their Jamaican accents any more or anything like that, and they're all fully British. They don't speak patois or anything like that again any more, like they think of themselves as British. And then all of a sudden, the British government says 'you're not British, go back to Jamaica' where they don't have a life, like their life's been here from the age of twenty.

Q: So how does that make you feel? (Q4)

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland): Well, again it's a bit frustrating but it was inevitable, you knew it was going to happen. And that's what my mum said as well, she said it's like they knew it was going to happen, my grandma knew it was going to happen – that's why she got a British citizenship as soon as possible. Because my mum told me about how she remembered her and my grandad saving up to get it because they knew it was going to happen. And these people, they should have done the same thing, but then again they wouldn't have known, like they didn't have that foresight ...

Q: So, in a way it was their responsibility but then on the other hand I suppose, coming as children, they just assumed it was OK.

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland): That it was fine, yes.

Q: Kind of as the discussion's gone, some of it has got quite, you know, it has been about things that are kind of more negative, about experiences. And sometimes it's easier to talk about the negative than the positive. I don't want us to get completely rooted in ... so before we move on to the next question, are there sort of positive things also that are, kind of, about your sense of identity, your sense of yourselves, the fact that you have those, you know, you're British but you have cultural heritages also that are elsewhere. You know, you've talked about the negative experiences in term of ways things are seen here and dealt with, at least three of you have. But are there also positive things?

All: Yes.

Q: Go for it, tell us about that.

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Food.

Q: Ah. What do you mean?

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Well, because if I wasn't – I don't know, maybe this is a bit stereotypical – but I feel like everything in England is boiled [*general laughter*] Sorry! Like, my best friend is English and Irish and every time she comes to my house the one thing she looks forward to is the food. Like, because we don't fry everything but it's like we have, like, plantain or, like jollof rice or something like that.

Q: Of course, you've got the West African and the Caribbean.

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): And the Caribbean [*unclear*] we cook stews and then fish as well and it's just, it's just great.

Q: I mean, does food at home tend to be from the kind of, have that cultural heritage? Do you tend to have things that – is there a lot of adobo and stuff?

B-F9A (Philippines/China): Yes. [*laughing*]

Q: What about – I bet the spices are pretty strong – so food is a big thing. Is it Irish, Nigerian or Dominican?

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland): My dad doesn't really know his Nigerian side. He only really knows his Irish side which is, kind of, like, plain.

Q: A lot of boiled food.

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland): Potatoes as well. And he doesn't really cook that much, but on my Dominican side there are a lot of spices which is nice. A lot of plantains.

Q: I have to say that I love everything but I do struggle sometimes with Nigerian food! The chilli is so strong, No other spices, just chilli chilli chilli. **Anyway, just to get back to history lessons, OK. To what extent, how far do you think your own – we've kind of covered this, but – your own cultural identity, and it's a mixed cultural identity, fully British but fully other things as well, (Q.4) how far is that reflected in what you are taught in school?**

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Not very, because like, key moments in history like the Biafran War – which Britain was semi involved in ...

Q: Sent arms in.

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): It has, like, no relevance. Like half, most of, like, no class will even know what Biafra was or anything like that, and it just bugs me a little bit.

Q: So, there's a sort of powerful history there that ...

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Yes.

Q: Any other thoughts? No? OK, that's fine. You don't have to. So now I'll go specifically to history.

Q5 & Q6 Would you like changes in what is taught, in the history that is taught in school, yes or no? And if the answer is yes, I want some suggestions.

Student B-F9A (Philippines/China): I don't necessarily think that the topics that we are learning about are bad, it's just like how deep we go into it and I feel like it's more kind of, natives to what we're learning about, like give direct reference from a direct point of view probably would have been more use to us.

Q: So, it's a bit like what [names *Student C-F9A (India/Kenya)*] was saying about wanting more depth of analysis, isn't it, kind of sort of the same point. Anyone else, thoughts about – would you want to see any changes in the history curriculum?

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Yes, I just want to see it, like, broaden so you learn more about world history.

Q: More world history. OK.

Student A-F9A (Nigeria/St Vincent): Yes, because at the beginning we didn't even know, like Australasia, South America or stuff like that.

Student D-F9A (Dominica/Nigeria/Ireland): Yes, like half our class didn't know what Australia was!

Student C-F9A: Yes, like what [names *Student A-F9A*] said, just broaden everything out.

Q: I mean, one of the things that I think the people doing this research think *may* be true – they are doing research all over the world – they think it may be true – is that if you went to Dominica or Nigeria or India or the Philippines, there the history of empire would be taught a lot – in the Philippines it would be the Spanish and Americans, in the others it would be the British. But that here those same stories are not taught so much.

All: Yes.

Q: And they think the same might be true with relation to Portugal, with relation to France, with relation to the Netherlands. Of course, they may be finding, trying to find out, you know, what the differences are. You're all saying yes, so you kind of think that might be true.

3.2 SCHOOL A: State-maintained Catholic Girls' School in South London

Year 12:

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone/ Liberia/ Guinea/ Jamaica ...)

Student B-F12A (Ghana)

Student C-F12A (Uganda)

Interviewer: Martin Spafford

Also present: Head of History (Is this Teacher A-MT1?)

30th April 2018

Q: The first questions are going to be about what you remember from things that you've been taught in schools and that can go right back, it can go as far back as primary school and it can also be here at secondary school right up to sixth form, just what you remember. **Q1: What examples can you remember of when you've been taught about the history of empire, colonialism, independence and decolonisation – anything to do with empire?**

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Well, I remember in Year 8 we didn't really go into that much detail but I remember learning about the Empire and we learnt about like how, I remember it was like at one point the British Empire was almost like a third of the world, and we learnt about how it took over so much of Africa. But we didn't learn anything, like, individual countries and what happened to those countries, we learnt about it in a way as in, like, oh we were so powerful at the time because also we learnt it right after were learning about all the past monarchs, but then [*unclear*] we just learnt about the Spanish Armada is that the first men were all these powerful monarchs and straight after, it was like, the British Empire, third of the world, it was very much, you know, powerful, such a big country, powerful empire, wasn't going into what it did to those countries who were colonised and what countries they were. Literally I remember there was a picture, like the coloured parts of Africa that were taken over, or Europe or America, and it didn't go into it, didn't go into what they did to those countries, how people were slaves. It just went into how it was a big empire, it was really just boosting on the British ego, actually about those countries.

Q: Any other thoughts?

Student B-F12A (Ghana): Well, I went to a different secondary school to [*names Student A-F12A*], and in my secondary school it didn't mention the British Empire. If it did mention it was, like, glorified and they didn't talk about all the negative things [*unclear*] empire, the negative things that happened regarding the British empire and colonisation. They just mentioned, oh, we had a British Empire and, like [*names student A-F12A*], it was always, like, glorified, like, oh, one third of the world, it wasn't gone into depth. We didn't have, like, a whole lesson on it. It was literally just [*unclear*] mentioned in, like, passing.

Student C-F12A (Uganda): I just remember, like, the idea of the resources being taken from, like, countries that were colonised by the British Empire and that's as far as, like, I can remember anything being talked about colonisation. That's all I can remember.

Q: So apart from that – was that all Year 8?

Student B-F12A (Ghana): I think it was Year 8, year 9.

Q: Apart from that, have any aspects of the British Empire or other empires been taught at any time?

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): No.

Q: What about history of places outside the UK that were colonised? So how much of the history of, say, the Caribbean have you been taught?

All: Never in school ... never in my life ... no ... nothing.

Q: And anything about the history of any parts of Asia?

All: No ... no

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica): I think only thing was, like, India: they gave us tea. And that's about it. That is literally it, they didn't go into the country that colonised.

Q: Africa?

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica): They don't, we had the, all like the, erm, not gems, but we had the resources and then gave that to the British and then we were slaves.

Student C-F12A (Uganda): They kept mentioning, like, the, because people in my class were, like, from Nigeria or wherever, like, they would mention in Ghana that they were from the Gold Coast, that was, like, passed by. But apart from that there was nothing really mentioned of, like, the meaning behind it or why it was named that country.

Q: Australasia – Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific Islands?

Student B-F12A (Ghana): I think in my school they [*unclear*] mentioned the *apartheid* in Africa but that was only, like, one lesson in Year 8 and that was it. But it was only, like, negative, they didn't mention the good things about South Africa, just the segregation part of it.

Q: Ireland?

Student C-F12A (Uganda): I think that was briefly mentioned actually, was it the R...?

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica): IRA?

Student C-F12A (Uganda): Yes, that was like, I remember, I think it was in Year 8 or Year 9.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica): I think I learnt that by word, you know, all the Irish kids talking about it.

Student C-F12A (Uganda): I remember it being mentioned, like, once but it wasn't delved into – because they mentioned it, I didn't really get the concept of it, but I've only like recently understood what it actually is, means like the media and stuff, like, and news but I never really knew from school what the meaning of that was.

Q: Anything about the ending of empire, decolonisation, independence, anything like that?

Student B-F12A (Ghana): Not from school.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica): Anything I know is personal.

Q: I mean I'll tap into that, what you might know from family, what you might know outside of this, but we'll start with school for the moment. What about Black British history?

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica): Never. I know American. I know, like, civil rights in America and American Black history. I literally don't know anything. I knew, this year in Year 12 because [*names male teacher*], obviously is putting it in the curriculum for younger years and he mentions it in form, but other than that ...

Q: Are you saying that were you to be younger here you would be studying some of this?

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Yes, I would be learning it now. We didn't get anything and I wish I did because I know more about American Black kids than I do about British, and I'm British, so.

Student B-F12A (Ghana): One thing I do remember being taught, though, in Geography – I think it was GCSE or something like that – we got talking about the quotas of, like, entry and like, I know about the *Windrush*, coming in ...

Q: And that's suddenly, gosh, hasn't it ...?

Student B-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): I remember getting taught that in Geography about, like, you know, the quotas about immigration and stuff, but that's ...

Q: Have you heard today's news?

Student B-F12A (Ghana): No.

Q: Amber Rudd has resigned.³

Q: Have you heard today's news?

Student B-F12A (Ghana): Oh, good, really? That's good.

Q: Late last night she resigned.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): You see I only know about Windrush⁴ recently, only in Geography and I know about quotas in America when all their Italian and Irish immigrants came in. But in UK I didn't know about the Windrush generation until it came up in the news and I did my own research about the Windrush generation. I knew nothing ...

Q: So, let me ask you a bit about your own heritages, OK, as young British students. What are your kind of family heritages? Where do they come from and what are they?

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Well, my mum grew up in Sierra Leone and she has some sort of Ghanaian roots. My dad, on the other hand, he's from everywhere, like Liberia I found out, Jamaica, Sierra Leone, Guinea. I don't know. His family ...

Q: The whole of West Africa!

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Yes, I literally find our every day when new people come from different areas. And I literally know much more of my history from my parents or – because I live with my mum and my mum didn't actually get into education, she didn't even know that much, she just knows what she went through so I sort of have to do a lot of research by my own, and that happened a lot, let's say, during the summer between Year 11 and Year 12. Because that's when I'm old enough and I'm starting to be more interested in my own roots and the world. But before

³ Amber Rudd had been Home Secretary (13 July 2016-29 April 2018) under Theresa May's Conservative government. She accepted a significant degree of responsibility and resigned. The whole situation is explored in Amelia Gentleman's book *The Windrush betrayal – Exposing the hostile environment* (Guardian Faber, 2019).

⁴ The SS Windrush was a ship which arrived at Tilbury Dock on 22 June 1948 with approximately 500 migrant-settlers from the Caribbean. The Windrush Generation is a generic term for migrant-settlers from the Caribbean, who were either descendants of the original Windrush migrants or who arrived separately and later. The Windrush Scandal describes the results of the 'hostile environment' policy towards 'immigrants' which came to a head when *The Guardian* in April 2018 over several days, coinciding with the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London (CHOGM), published details of individual cases outlining the results of this policy.

then the school didn't do much to help us very much in a Western bubble and I feel, like, you have to be old enough to, like, pop out of it.

Q: I will be asking you because that, kind of, comes out from that what you think should happen in schools because that, kind of, comes out from that. It seems to me from what you're saying that the responsibility for teaching you some of that history has ended up resting with family, but it hasn't been easy for family to do it because of not having access to that kind of information. But what about you, [names student B-F12A]?

Student B-F12A (Ghana): Both my parents are from Ghana, they grew up in Ghana and then they came here for, like, university sort of. So, everything I know is from them as well, but I think they've done well to teach me it. Because even when we go back home, they always take me to, like castles, Black museums and stuff ...

Q: So, you learn about history before the arrival of the Europeans as well as, obviously, colonisation, enslavement and all of that ...

Student B-F12A (Ghana): Yes, and during as well –

Q: And during.

Student B-F12A (Ghana): It's really good –

Q: Places like Cape Coast Castle,⁵ I guess –

Student B-F12A (Ghana): Yes.

Q: A book you should read if you don't know it – 'Homegoing' by Yaa – it's an American Nigeri..., American Ghanaian writer, Yaa Asant- I can't remember her last name.

Student B-F12A (Ghana): Asantawa, is it?

Q: Yes, I think it is. But it's called 'Homegoing' and I'll tell you about it later but if you know all of those places it is an absolutely extraordinary book about the generations, and it starts with two women who have come from the same mother, they don't know they've come from the same mother, and one of them ends of married to the governor of Cape Coast Castle and the other one ends up enslaved in the same place. And then it follows their ... each chapter is the child of one of them and then the grandchild, and then it goes through the generations up to the present day, and one strand of the family end up in the United States and the other strand of the family stay in Ghana. And it is the most amazingly beautiful and moving book. Sorry to intrude on the discussion...[laughing]. 'Homegoing' – her first name is Yaa, I can't remember her second, but it's brilliant. Anyway, so you've had a, you've had that historical education from your family and they've been able to do that. [*Editor's note: It is actually Yaa Gyasi*]⁶

Student B-F12A (Ghana): Yes.

Q: How about you, [names student C-F12A (Uganda)]

Student C-F12A (Uganda): I'm from Uganda, both my parents are from Uganda. I don't think the ... my parents ... if I'd ask them questions they would, like, telling me stuff but the most that I know from what they've told me is that the, because Uganda was known as, like, the Pearl of Africa [*unclear*] like during the colonisation, like fertile land and all that lot, but other than that I don't know and Idi Amin

⁵ Cape Coast Castle is on the coast of Ghana (which formerly known as The Gold Coast) and features in Yaa Gyasi's novel. It was a holding and staging post for the transport of slaves, and the scene of much suffering.

⁶ Gyasi, Y. (2016). *Homegoing*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

and that concept. Other than that, I don't know that much about, like, history of Uganda and what happened there.

Q: And it hasn't featured in school at all.

Student C-F12A (Uganda): Yes.

Q: So, my next question is, how do you feel about what you have or haven't been taught in school and the way it's been taught? (Q2)

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): I think it's ... I think it's ... I feel like you don't really feel that at the time, you don't feel that marginalised sometimes. But after, when you come away from it, like now, you feel quite like, oh, feel like my history doesn't matter because, like, I know about Russian history and about American history but when it comes to other people's history I don't know, or, and especially from my origins or, like we don't know anything and, like, people who are from Western countries like North America, Russia or Eastern Eur..., just Europe, you get to know so much more about them. And then when it comes to countries who are colonised, even though we learn about the colonisation, we don't actually learn about the countries in them. And I feel like it allows a lot of people to get away with being ignorant which can be really annoying later on, like now which is when you start to feel that, like, wow, if you learnt about stuff before maybe you wouldn't have been so ignorant, maybe now we wouldn't have to be so different and so much conflict. Because you're ignorant and I'm starting to learn more so there's conflict between us but if we just learnt it in school together there wouldn't be. And I feel like, I feel like it does make a bit of confusion of identity because you learn all this Western history then you're not, you don't feel, I am, I am British but also feel a lot more African and I feel like it's all, it makes, at the time I feel a bit uncomfortable to have that sort of African heritage, I think. I don't know, I went through a really confusing state at the time, whereas, like I don't know which one to, I felt like I had to be one and it's like, it feels, it felt, like, my African heritage and everything about that, it had to be the Western one, we had to all learn about it everywhere and I felt, like, my own wasn't a part to play in anything, if you get what I mean.

Q: And you say you were in that state. Are you in a different state now?

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Yes, I feel like a lot changed during, like, literally after Year 11. I think it does come from maturity actually, after Year 11 when it's a lot more like, I'm a lot more comfortable in myself when it comes to heritage and, I think now that I know more as well because I do my own research which I never used to do, I used to rely on school for everything. Now I do my own research and I go about my own way to learn more. I'm more comfortable.

Q: What sort of things have you been learning? I'm interested, when you say to learn more, are you talking about history, are you talking about politics, what are you talking about? Culture?

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): History and politics. Well, culture I've always been there because I'm raised in a very, very African home, so culture was always there, but a lot more history and politics-wise, like before I'd never known, like, politics in, like African countries. I actually would only know politics, let's say, in the UK or America – and the Soviet Union, we learnt all about it. But now, because now I actually know what the politics of Africa is like. Even sometimes in Asia I read all these different, like revolutions that happened, I didn't know any revolutions except, like, I didn't even know any, actually. Now I know a lot more, like, yes.

Q: A good one to look at is the Haitian Revolution.⁷

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): The Haitian?

⁷ The Haitian Revolution (1791-1804). See under Toussaint de L'Ouverture in next footnote.

Q: Haiti.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Haiti ...

Q: When enslaved Africans on the island of Haiti rose up ...

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica...): Oh, I think I've heard about this ...

Q: ... against both the French and the British Empires successfully.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica): Wow.

Q: They were punished for it. The poverty of Haiti now is a result of that punishment, but it happened. A man called Toussaint L'Ouverture was the leader.⁸ It's a very interesting story.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Wow.

Q: A very different perspective on enslavement. I was quite interested because none of you mentioned enslavement. I'm assuming you probably got taught that at some point.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): No.

Q: You didn't? Ah, that's interesting.

Student B-F12A (Ghana): I did.

Student C-F12A (Uganda): I did. Yes.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): I don't remember if we did, I don't know. It wasn't a big ...

Q: It wasn't a big feature.

Student B-F12A (Ghana): I think it's quite sad because I did that even during what we believe is Black History Month, we don't even get taught what happened for Black history and it's like, I feel like it's being lost even more and more as time goes on, when you'd think that as we're progressing that that would change. And I still think that when we do, if we were ever to get taught it, always, it's good to know the bad things but we don't get to know the successes that happened in Africa, it's always something bad that happened ...

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...), Student C-F12A (Uganda): Yes.

Student B-F12A (Ghana): Africans enslaved that occurred in Africa, not, like, all the resourceful things that happened before the colonisation occurred. There must have been something going on before then that allowed Africa to function in a way that it was so good that they wanted to colonise the continent, so, that's what I think is very, quite poignant about that ...

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Black history starts at slavery and [unclear] but they don't mention any of the kingdoms and the empires or anything.

Q: There's a, it's, I mean, I don't know how historically accurate it is but it's good [unclear] nonetheless, if you Google, I think it's the ten richest people in world history ...

⁸ Toussaint de l'Ouverture (or Toussaint Louverture) (1743-1803), born a slave on the French colony of Saint-Domingue, was a General who led the Haitian revolution which after his death in custody resulted in Haitian independence from France (the former colony was renamed). He is named as a 'Black Jacobin' in C.L.R. James's book, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1938).

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Yes, I think I've heard about Mali. I think it might have been Man ...

Q: He comes top.

Student B-F12A (Ghana): Yes, he comes number one.

Q: Mansa Musa. I mean, it is all relative and, you know, sometimes, I can't put my hand on my heart and say that we know that's entirely accurate because we don't really, really know how rich he was but it's interesting. So, in terms of, kind of, the question that [names *Student A-F12A*] was answering about how you feel about the way things are taught and so on, what are your feelings, [names *student C-F12A*]?

Student C-F12A (Uganda): With Black history, I think it's very, as [names *Student B-F12A*] mentioned I think a bit, like, marginalised, like it does start from slavery. Like, if we were to ever get taught it from the beginning I genuinely they would start from slavery and go from there into, like, the civil rights movement and onwards. But then, other than that I think that we should, like, aim to learn about Africa before it was, like, a topic of slavery and slavery alone, and if that happened, I think we would see, like, a massive change.

Q: Would it surprise you that until, from 2008 through until about 2013/14, the National Curriculum in fact did say that medieval African kingdoms should be taught?

Student C-F12A (Uganda): Very much surprised.

Q: But it no longer says that.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Wow.

Student C-F12A (Uganda): 2008, that means I was seven years old, I was never taught any of that.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): I know nothing.

[Extended conversation between Martin and Head of History about lack of resources, pressures limitations on our teaching, reading recommendations for the students such as Reni Eddo-Lodge, Nikesh Shukla, David Olusoga, etc]⁹

Q: [Names student B-F12A (Ghana)], tell me how you've felt about what's been taught in schools. (Question 2)

Student B-F12A (Ghana): I don't think it's enough and I think when it is taught it's accurate but it's not entirely accurate because all the negative connotations of colonisation and the British Empire are completely ignored, they're not mentioned. And if decolonisation is mentioned, and independence, it's all going to be, like, we did them a favour by giving them back their independence ...

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Yes.

⁹ Eddo-Lodge, R. (2016). Forming Blackness through a screen. In N. Shukla (Ed.), *The good immigrant* (pp. 77-83). London: Unbound; Eddo-Lodge, R. (2017). *Why I am no longer talking to white people about race*. London: Bloomsbury; Shukla, N. (Ed.). (2016). *The good immigrant*. London: Unbound; Olusoga, D. (2014). *The world's war – Forgotten soldiers of empire*. London: Head of Zeus; Olusoga, D. (2015). *Britain's forgotten slave-owners*. Two-part BBC2 Documentary (first shown in July); Olusoga, D. (2016). *Black and British – A forgotten history*. London: Macmillan.

Student B-F12A (Ghana): And it's not the fact that they deserve independence, it's the fact that it's been given back to them, and they sort of ignore all the things that they've stolen, all the people that were killed, all the people that were enslaved, that's all void, that's all ignored. It's all, oh, the British Empire, all these resources, trading, they sort of see it as, like, the people wanted them to be invaded or they were, like, so happy that the British came along and they did that.

Q: It sounds like your criticism is the perspective from which it's taught ...

Student B-F12A (Ghana): Yes

Q: That it's taught from a very, kind of, one-sided perspective.

Student B-F12A (Ghana): Yes, exactly, yes, all other sides are ignored. It's just the one side – even if it is taught at all. So, people are confused. Like, why would my country want, like, British to come in? It's sort of that, like, why? It doesn't make sense.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): I think that leads with what I was saying before about the conflict, like I think if you go out and actually learn the opposing perspective to what you're taught, that leads, like, to ignorance about conflict between people who, like, just get taught what they're taught in school and just leave it at that, and those who go on to actually look for more. And then that ignorance there leads to that conflict about, oh, what actually occurred. And, like, both of the views, I'm telling you both of the views, what I've seen in this type of research, but you're coming in with this, I don't, like narrow-minded, like one-sided perspective of what happened. So, I think if that changes then there's going to be less, like, conflict. Less ignorance about the topic as a whole.

Q: So that's really interesting, so what I think I'm getting from you is, yes you want more of that actual history to be taught, but what's actually quite important is the analysis and having a proper range of points of view and perspectives. Is that right?

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...) and Student B-F12A (Ghana): Yes, yes definitely.

Q: So, if empire were taught so that you, yes you had the perspective of the colonisers, but you also had the perspective of the colonised, and also context that goes before colonisation, to understand that.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): I think more culture, too. Like, even if we understand our cultures, because obviously we're from countries in Africa, to understand the cultures of these countries I think that should be integrated in learning, like, in the history of these countries because that is obviously part of every country, every continent has their own culture. That's what makes us all different.

Q: So just to throw in a, kind of, what would you say if I said 'But hang on a minute, you're in Britain. What's important is to know British history.' What would your reaction be to that?

Student B-F12A (Ghana): But, then, like, a lot of British people aren't British. Like, the first Briton, we found out, wasn't even, like, white.

Q: Cheddar Man, yes.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): We are in Britain today but even look at the classrooms, anyone who [*unclear*] British, even the people who say they are and they're white or whatever, you're Irish or you're Italian or you're European, you're not ... And how come we know American culture, you know, I know a bit, quite enough about American culture, I know quite a bit about Italian culture, French culture, Spanish culture. I know not, maybe, too much but I know a little bit [East] European culture but, say, my peers wouldn't know anything about African culture and that could lead to something being quite offensive. Like, I know once, I don't remember it any more but it

was quite an offensive comment and it was like, wow, they don't actually know they're being offensive because they're so ignorant to other people's cultures except Western ones. It's not that we know, we are in Britain, yes, I agree, but Britain is – especially London, we're so multicultural we should be aware of other cultures too.

Q: It sounds actually as though you're saying that a really important reason for teaching, for example African history and African culture is actually for non-Africans to understand it.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Yes

Q: And, you know, you have access to that information in a way that your white friends don't have. And it's almost that they are losing out also as well in not having that knowledge. Is that right? I don't want to put words in your mouth but ...

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): No, it's very true.

Student B-F12A (Ghana): I think it leads to less, like, when you touch on topics of colonisation, and things, like, topics like that if you're just speaking with your friends or something, because there's a lack of understanding of what happened and, like, the conflict that occurred, I think it leads to, like a – not a discomfort, but in the sense that they wouldn't know what to say, what is right to say, what happened, because they don't actually, like, understand it – they don't want to say something that's wrong.

[The bell rings for breaktime but the students are keen to stay on longer]

Q: My next question was, and it follows on really, how do you see the relationship between your own identity and history and being British in whatever way you feel you're British? In other words, this is asking you about your identity, British and African, and how does history relate to that, and with anything you've, how do you feel about that? Q3

Student B-F12A (Ghana): I see being in Britain as opportunity and I see being African as being myself – me, my history, my ancestors, my parents, my family. I see me being British as an opportunity to do things that my parents wish they could have done and they couldn't do.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): That is so true.

Student B-F12A (Ghana): And also, like, not only have an impact in Britain but also have an impact on those who couldn't, who still can't back in Ghana, still can't do the thing that you do. But now I'm in this position here, I should be able to help them and not be ignorant to my *[unclear]* OK, I'm in Britain, I'm British only. I think the fact that my parents have, sort of, given me a historical knowledge, that allows me to understand that they can't do it and I need to help them and future generations to be able to.

Q: Do you feel that's a hope that they have of you as well?

Student B-F12A (Ghana): Yes.

Q: And, of course, you, from what you've said you clearly have a strong understanding of Ghana as well, you go there and you see what's going on.

Student B-F12A (Ghana): Yes, definitely. Yes.

Student C-F12A (Uganda): I think that's very true. I think that being, having that British passport gives you, like, an advantage that people who are exactly like me but just in a different continent are literally marginalised to an extent that – if they were here, they'd probably progress more than me because they've got the knowledge, they've got the drive, they've got the drive to *[unclear]*...

Q: That's really interesting. You know, it sounds like, *[interruption – being offered tea]* it's almost like you're saying you feel you have this responsibility ...

All: Yes, definitely, very much so ...

Q: That is rea... it's beautiful, actually, but it's a big thing, isn't it, I mean, it's something to carry. Wow.

Student C-F12A (Uganda): And it's quite *[unclear]* I know that people in Uganda that don't go to international schools, that are like crazy smart, like despicable smart, that they, if they do like – because we do GCSEs and stuff, like – they do their exams and stuff but they don't go to international schools, but their knowledge is outstanding, they won't get recognised. Because what they do is, they don't have that, I don't know, that Britishness in them, they don't have that passport, they don't have those qualifications that are recognised.

Q: You're in a position to make things happen in that sense, aren't you?

Student C-F12A (Uganda): Yes, exactly *[agreement from the others]*.

Q: I mean, do you see that primarily as a positive opportunity for you, or do you see it also as a bit of a burden to carry?

Student B-F12A (Ghana): No.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): I think it's a very positive thing. I feel like, literally what you said but I feel like I have some *[unclear]* my mum as an example, like my mum didn't have education after thirteen but, like, her ambition and her drive, she's so hardworking. I'm not even half as hardworking as her, and it's like, you could have done so much if you were just in my position, like – it's making me upset – like, she, everyone in my family has, like, so much to them and just because they were born somewhere else that they couldn't go as far as I'm going now. I mean, it's sort of, like, sometimes a bit sad because all of them look up to my education and, like, but you're just so much more than what I am, and I feel like I work for them, but not in like a burden, I work for them like I have to do what, like I should be grateful, I'm so very grateful for what I have. Like, I'm born here but I still have, like I'm as enriched, I'm just never going to be as hardworking as you.

Q: And your mum's great achievement is to create you.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Yes.

Q: You know, and in all your cases, isn't it, you know, that they, I mean, it's the story of migration that, if you like, the struggle of the migrants is to establish yourself, and the next generation it's to – *[sound and gesture indicating advancement]*

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Yes, definitely.

Student B-F12A (Ghana): *[unclear]* I think that's the constant thing with all, I think, ethnic groups, I feel, because there's the idea that you just need to work that bit harder to ensure that you get somewhere, so you can have a stable, like stable background ...

Q: I'm going to throw in a controversial idea. It's not something that I actually think – just to throw it to you. Maybe it doesn't actually matter that you haven't had a lot of Black history in schools. Maybe it doesn't matter that you haven't done any of these – look how you've turned out. You find these things out yourselves, you've got this heritage from your families. Does it, do you need it in school?

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Yes

Student C-F12A (Uganda): Yes, because some people don't get that background, they don't have those people at home and that's where they're ignorant. And people who do go home and do their research, it like breeds resentment towards people who don't know.

Student B-F12A (Ghana): Yes, it does.

Student C-F12A (Uganda): Because now they're being ignorant, they don't know what they're talking about, and now I'm getting angry at the fact that you're antagonising me. So, there's a problem here because you're going to have two separate groups of people in one school when you should all be together and united in your knowledge.

Q: And back to your point that one of the main reasons for having this in school is that white people understand this history ...

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Yes. And some, even, like, Black, not, BME people, BME backgrounds, like, won't even research it themselves so have that enrichment at home. Like, my mum couldn't enrich me because she doesn't know much, but I taught myself, and some people won't have gone and taught themselves. And they will be a Black individual and ignorant to their own culture and then they wouldn't really understand later on in life, and that inhibits – that doesn't inhibit them but it makes it just a little bit hard for them because they are a Black person in a Western society and you don't even know about your own history.

Student C-F12A (Uganda): Exactly.

Student B-F12A (Ghana): I think it's like any other subject, like you need to get taught it to know whether you have, like, I don't know, a budding curiosity to learn more about it. If you're not taught it how would you know? Like you don't have a desire to learn more, to go on and to, like, become professional in that sector.

Q: I think that's a really, really good point actually.

Student C-F12A (Uganda): If we don't get taught it then there's that risk that it could get forgotten.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Yes.

Student C-F12A (Uganda) If everybody doesn't learn it themselves it gets to a point where your history can get forgotten.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): That's, I think that a point that I read, like, a couple of years ago, it's like if you don't learn history, you don't learn from it, you're condemned to repeat it.

Student C-F12A (Uganda): Yes, ah yes, I've seen that quote.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): You have to know it to know that what mistakes were made so it doesn't happen again.

Q: I'm learning a lot from this, you know. Really, I mean these are such, such, kind of important insights and the fact that you're – you know obviously there's a, I reading a kind of anger that things are not there and they're not happening. But it's a positive anger and one that you're using positively in that sense, you know. But I guess your point [*names Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...)*] that not everybody can do that, not everybody has those resources in that you found the resources in yourself – and some of it you're obviously being driven by the love of your mum and the feeling of responsibility, you're being, you've had that huge, both of you have had that huge thing of the knowledge of the history coming from your own family and background. And you know, [*names student B-F12A (Ghana)*] you've talked very positively about how important that is, and [*names student C-F12A Uganda*] you've talked about that sense of, you know, drive and responsibility to give back,

you know, awareness that your families have migrated but other people have been – in inverted commas- left behind, and also the question of, you know, are things in Africa really that negative?

Student C-F12A (Uganda): That's another thing as well.

Q: There's a thing I used to do in lessons and I used to take in two photographs that I'd taken and show them to kids and say, right – and one of them's a picture of gleaming, wonderful concrete and glass tower blocks, office blocks, and the other one was an arid desert. And I said, which one is in Europe and which one is in Africa? And actually, the gleaming things were in Harare in Zimbabwe and the desert was actually taken on a dry day in Forest Gate in Newham. *[laughter]*. This has been really interesting. I suppose my last question is, if you were sort of saying to your teachers: what would you like to change in what is taught in history, what would you say? This is a school where they are changing things, you know.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Bring the positive, like, definitely teach more of the richness that once was in Africa. Like, teach about that before you delve so much into the negatives and enslavement.

Student B-F12A (Ghana): Because I think you need to learn about the before to understand the impact, understand why it is how it is now.

Q: And the Year 9s I talked to, they kept on saying, we want to know more about why, why have things been the way they are. What's the, you know, more analysis, more of that sort of thing, and that's kind of ...

Student B-F12A (Ghana): Really important.

Q: Really helpful.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): *[unclear]* felt to this day.

[They notice that their history teacher is preparing screen for next lesson for a younger class, focusing on Black British history]

Q: Haha!

Student B-F12A (Ghana): We didn't get any of this.

Student C-F12A (Uganda): Yes, I didn't get any of this.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Really important.

Q: I mean, I think there is a sort of beginning to be awakening of the importance of some of this work and we're in early days, and people like your teachers are some of the trailblazers in this. You know, it may not happen for you so much, but ...

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): I appreciate that younger years are getting what I couldn't get. It's a good thing.

Head of History: Yes, I do agree with you – I was listening as I walked down the stairs – I don't think it's intentional but I think it's, like, ignorant. Even though I did history at uni, and I did a lot of South African history, still part of the British Empire, so I just actually never learnt anything at uni, and then when you come in and then the government isn't wanting – you know, like, there's a lot in those books *[referring to GCSE migration textbooks]*, aren't they, that the government doesn't want...

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): You know when you asked, why is it important to say it? Another thing is, like, there's time. As you get older, like I'm doing my A Levels now, like learning history is a hobby, I'm not only doing it for A Level, learning history is a hobby for

me. It's hard to balance how much you can do, I mean, doing my A Level, doing my work for that, and then next at university, doing even more work for that/ It's going to get harder and harder and then it does get lost and lost over time because I'm running out of time when before, in like Year 7, 8, 9 I had so much time. I had no GCSEs yet, nothing, would have been a perfect time to learn it but now I have to squeeze times in and out of revision and end up doing homework *[unclear]*

Q: So that's a kind of argument for it being on the curriculum.

Student A-F12A (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Jamaica ...): Yes.

Q: And for it just to be there. Really, really interesting. Thank you so much, really. Wow.

[Editor's note: Questions 4, 5 & 6 not really specifically asked but answers arise naturally out of the conversations.]

3.3 SCHOOL A: State-maintained Catholic Girls' School in South London

Year 13:

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia)

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal)

Student C-F13A (Cyprus)

Student D-F13A (Ghana)

Interviewer: Martin Spafford

Also present: History teacher

30th April 2018

Q: Going right through your school education, right back to primary school if you can remember it, and through secondary school, what examples can you remember of being taught about empire, colonialism, decolonisation, anything like that? (Q1)

D-F13A (Ghana): I remember in Year 8 we did, like, a [*unclear*] on slavery, so I think we watched that really graphic film ...

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Yes.

D-F13A (Ghana): Amista ...?

Q: *Amistad*,¹⁰ Yes.

D-F13A (Ghana): Yes, we watched that and just did, like, sheets about how they lived on the ships and stuff like that. That's all we basically did.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): It was a bit daunting in ways.

Q: Why?

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Especially I feel like, there was like, it wasn't a multifaceted, like, portrayal in the sense that you saw, like, kind of the bad, just the bad associated with it. You didn't have history before – for example, when you're teaching the French Revolution you have, you learn about the Revolution and about all the disasters that happened, but also learn about the grandeur of, like, King Louis and all of that. But with slavery you're almost pushed into that disastrous history and it ...

Q: So, you're not told about those places before.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Before and, I think from the onset you get, almost like a tainted version of history when it just starts with disaster, and I feel like, maybe that's a problem with, you know, so yes, it was a bit daunting.

Q: How about [*names Student C-F13A [Cyprus] and Student B-F13A [Sri Lanka/Portugal]*], what do you think?

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): I'm still trying to remember what we learned. Er, honestly, I don't remember ever learning anything along those lines and that's ...

¹⁰ Amistad: 1997 Steven Spielberg film based on events on-board the slave-ship, *La Amistad* in 1839.

Q: Well that's information in itself ...

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): And that's something in itself, like, I feel like no one's ever going to, like, villainise themselves and make themselves seem like. Because, yes, you're not going to want to paint your own history in that way so you don't really get taught that kind of thing.

Q: Can I press you on that? I think I know what you're saying there but can you, sort of say what you mean by that?

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): Like, no country is going to want to portray what they did in a bad way. It's always, kind of, like, covered up behind 'we did it to bring civilisation'. But it's damaging and you're not going to want to teach that, you kind of cover it. And I think that's kind of what does happen because I don't ever remember being taught anything like this.

Q: So if you, you're saying you don't remember being taught about empire at all.

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): Yes, I've not been taught anything about –

Q: And if you don't remember being taught it, are you therefore saying it's just been hidden, or are you saying if taught, it's been taught in a one-sided perspective?

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): Definitely both, I think. It's covered up but then, yes...

Q: So, the only example we can actually remember at the moment is enslavement, is it? But not with anything about African or Caribbean or American history before then?

All: No.

Q: Anything else at all with relation to empire?

Student D-F13A (Ghana): I my school during Year 8 and Year 9 we learned about, like, the Roman Empires and the Egyptian, like, ancient times.

Q: But not the British Empire?

Student D-F13A (Ghana): No.

Q: So, what about any history of the Caribbean?

All: No, nobody learned about that.

Q: Any histories of any parts of Asia?

All: No.

Q: Or any histories of Australasia, say Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific Islands?

All: No.

Q: Africa?

All: No

Q: North America, Canada, the USA?

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Yes, but just now in our Sixth Form, A Level.

Q: Is that USA?

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Yes [*unclear*]

Q: So, it's not the British Empire period at all?

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): No.

Q: What about Mediterranean countries at all?

All: No.

Q: The Middle East?

All: No. [laughing]

Q: All right ...

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): All the things that I know about those places, like, I've done my own [unclear]...

Q: So, what, I'm sort of reading an implication that these, from your faces as you say this, that yet some of these histories are things that you know something about.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Yes.

Q: So how do you know them and what sort of things do you know?

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): I think, like, I've gone out of my way to, like, find out about it, like I've always been interested to find out what happened before, I've always been interested when it comes to history, like, instead of the latter part I've been interested in, like ancient civilisations. And I think it's through that, that's when I've stumbled upon, like for example, ancient African history. So, I would be interested in, for example, the ancient Roman Empire. So, when you're reading about, like, Julius Caesar and Antony I would hear like, oh, there was trade in northern Africa and I was like, oh, I've never been taught this. But then from then I ventured on and read about that. And then, like, with the Caribbean as well, I always thought like, oh, was the Caribbean, did it have no one there until slavery? Until I learnt about the Arawaks, the Caribs, and it's all been from myself.

Q: So, when you say you've learnt it, how have you done that? I mean, where have you found that information?

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Well, I have a lot of time on my hands, so – [laughter]. I don't go out in the day, I go out in the night, so basically I'll be online and I'll be reading something and then I'll see something, I'll read it. And then my mum, she'll usually, like, when I'm interested in something she'll get books about it. And I've always been, like, a bookworm.

Q: So it's also family, you know, your mum's support.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Yes.

Q: And how about the rest of you?

Student D-F13A (Ghana): Pretty similar. Like, I wanted to learn more about Ghana, which is where I'm from, so I read a book called *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi ...¹¹

Q: Ah, that's the one I was telling the others about, yes. Isn't it amazing?

¹¹ Gyasi, Y. (2016). *Homegoing*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): Oh good, so I didn't know, well obviously I knew about the tribes – the Ashanti tribe and the Fante tribe – but I did not know that they actually sold, they like sold people from the other tribe to the white people, I had no idea that was even a thing.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Yes.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): All I'm thinking, all this time I thought that there was this, that the white people came in, that they started taking people, not knowing that there was, like, an actual transaction going on between, these tribes were enemies. I didn't, like, think they would do that to each other. So learning about that was, like, really quite big.

Q: I mean, I remember talking to someone who said that – it wasn't from reading that book but the same thing – said that the trouble with the way enslavement was taught is it makes Black people think they were weak and White people think they were all bad.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Yes, and I, yes, and the thing is as well with slavery, I think also it's like, we also capitalise on one moment in history of slavery, but slavery has been happening for ages. And I think it's more learning the power politics to do with it than that. And then obviously when it was, like, Black enslavement that had, like an edge where race was added into it. But from before there's always been a type, from even before human civilisation. So, I feel like, yes, so it should be taught in a way where it's an extensive history, rather than ...

Q: You want context.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Yes, and I feel like that's the problem where you can go wrong with history. And it translates into, like, social situations today.

Q: We might come back to that in a question, actually. What about either of you, what do you feel?

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): In terms of, like, finding out about that colonis..., colon..., yes, basically the times that I have, like learned stuff is like from my own interests. So, like, for me it was just being curious about, like, my family tree because quite a lot of, like, my culture, Sri Lankan culture is, like, family tree is quite ... not known about. But then I found out by, like, research and stuff that my family are actually Portuguese.

Q: Oh? Right...

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): So yes, we learned that the Portuguese that invaded, like, my parents' part of the area. And that we had, like, a lot of, like, influence on the Portuguese, especially our family. And yes. That's what I learned just literally this from my grandparents.

Q: So, with you it's been a family history journey.

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): Yes.

Q: That's really interesting. And what about you?

Student D-F13A (Ghana): No, mine's very similar. Everything I kind of know about, like, the Mediterranean and stuff comes from what my family have taught me and what, like they can recall. Like my grandparents grew up in a time in Cyprus when it was a British colony, so like they remember British occupation and all that kind of stuff. So that's what I know from it, just the stories and stuff that they tell you.

Q: So, it sounds, certainly in your cases, it was very much a kind of family thing, or your kind of, your sense of your own heritage. What's your heritage, [names *Student A-F13A*]?

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): My mum is from St Lucia and my dad is from Zambia.

Q: OK? Yes, yes, so it's Caribbean and Central African. And has that been part of, have you been exploring those histories particularly?

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Not really. I think with Zambia it's a bit hard to ... like, I can trace back, I can probably trace back until the 1800s with the family history but the thing is, Zambia's quite a peaceful country so there's not drama like in some – *[laughter]* – it's not interesting! Like, everyone just gets along, has a drink so it's a bit – but the things on, like, Cecil Rhodes¹² and when they made it into Rhodesia. Yes, because I think it's the De Beer diamonds and I was like, I was looking up diamonds and I was, like, De Beer's nice, and then I think it was my uncle who said, oh yes, Cecil Rhodes was, like, a founder of De Beer.¹³ And then I started looking into that and, yes, that's an interesting part of history. And yes, that's quite interesting, and then learning about the freedom fighters in Zambia, so like when it arose. So, like, my grandad, he was like, he was head of education at the Commonwealth, so his friends, they were like the freedom fighters, so that was interesting.

Q: The time of Kaunda?¹⁴

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Kaunda, yes and, and St Lucia's history is a mixture of, like, French history and, you know, enslavement, but it's not that interesting, like it's not as interesting as Ghana, the tribes, or like in Nigeria, so ...

Q: OK so my next question is – sir is going like this because you know he's from Nigeria! – my next question is, OK, as we went round the world and I asked you *[unclear]* all we really have got from you that you were studying in school is slavery. That sounds to have been it. You went to different schools, am I right? You didn't all go to the same school. **So ok, so how do you feel about that? How do you feel about the way it has been taught or not been taught in schools? (Q2)**

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): It's clearly a national thing if all of us have the same kind of, or the lack of education surrounding that, and it's not just personal. Like, if you, if it was just, you know, a couple of places you'd just say it's an individual school thing, but clearly, it's not.

Q: That's, yes, I think you're right.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): I found the whole, the whole learning about slavery I found very awkward because the set I was, like, my class, there was only two other Black students apart from me and I remember a group of the white people kind of turning and saying things like 'sorry, sorry we did this' and I was just, like, and you just feel like, you feel ashamed. Because I'm like, I'm thirteen at the time and you don't, you just feel like, because we had a picture, I remember, and it was of a ship and it was just, like, all these Black people on top of each other and you just felt, like, shame and you just, you feel almost embarrassed even, at that stage because you're just being looked at. Everyone was just staring at us the whole time, the whole lesson, we were just getting looks. And it was just so awkward, it was horrible to be honest.

Q: So how could that have been done differently? Is it that it's better not to teach it? Or is it about how it's taught?

Student D-F13A (Ghana): Yes, it's how it's taught. I really feel that they could have first taught about African kingdoms. You need to teach, you can't just start at slavery because you're ignoring everything,

¹² Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902) was a mining magnate who was prime minister of Cape Colony (southern Africa) (1890-96), and founder of Rhodesia and Bechuanaland (at independence in 1966 this was renamed Botswana). He was a firm believer in British imperialism. His reputation as an imperialist and the Rhodes scholarship funding he established have become the source of much controversy.

¹³ De Beers is a mining company specialising in mining and trading in diamonds, and was founded by Cecil Rhodes in 1888. It is named after two Dutch farmers who settled in the Orange Free State.

¹⁴ Kenneth Kaunda (born 1924) served as the first President of Zambia (1964-1991). The territory of what was Northern Rhodesia (from 1911) became Zambia at independence in 1964.

you're ignoring the wealth, you're ignoring the culture, you're ignoring how, you know, how Africa really was at, before slavery, before.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): It's like you're always being bringing in from like an uncivilised group of people.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): Exactly! It makes it look like it was kind of right that they were, kind of, brought up into this west – they brought us into the west, they made us civilised, they made us, you know –

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Yes. And everything since then, like, Africa, obviously we have, like influences from the west. We've gone on to form western democracy, western governments. However, the omission of the knowledge of before, like, that African governments, African trade, I think with that it's almost like we're almost have a people without a history. And I feel, like, history really does empower you.

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): What's difficult is that, like, colonisers would, like go into a country and try and make that country desperately the same as theirs, and that, that eradicates a culture beforehand. And then leaves people, like, very in between because they're trying to live up to the ideals that are being pushed on them, but they can't quite because that's just not how they were brought up. But then where they were brought up, that's not there for them anymore. That leaves you very in the middle, I think

Q: That's a really profound point that you're saying there. And I'm also thinking as you speak, I mean, here we are talking about, you are coming from places, your families are coming from places that have incredibly rich ancient cultures. I mean, incredibly rich ancient cultures. Cyprus, for heaven's sake! You know, and that whole Hellenistic culture. You know, so much of everything we do in Europe is based on that. Sri Lanka, here's a Sri Lanka story. There's a thing called the Sutton Hoo helmet which you find in the British Museum and was excavated, and it's the helmet of a Saxon prince that's regarded as being the great treasure of English history, and the jewels in that helmet came from Sri Lanka way back in the fifth century,

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): I didn't know that.

Q: And, I mean, but then look at the ancient cultures in Sri Lanka, both Buddhist and Hindu, and how much older they both are than anything in western Europe and anything, certainly, that the British brought. Ghana, my goodness! You know, we go back – and actually, though that's not Zambia, the whole story of Great Zimbabwe, which is that Central African culture that included. You know, it was a kingdom that included what is now Zambia. Look I'm saying that because your point about the, in a sense that empire obliterates and almost takes away the memory that people have of their own cultures. I'm speaking too much here so I'm going to go and ask another question. So, we've kind of touched on it. How do you see the relationship between your own sense of your identity as British, in whatever you, being British means for you, ok, and – so it's kind of what does being British mean for you – how does that relate to history and how does that relate to your kind of own sense of identity from elsewhere? Big question. So, who do you see yourself as being and how does, kind of, culture and history relate to that?

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): I think for me, I think because I was born here and everything, that my parents have that really, like, because they're kind of like western, because they're, they've got Portuguese influence also, I wouldn't, I would say I'm kind of whitewashed. You can see that amongst my siblings, it's like because we're used to, like, English culture and Britain as a whole. I don't really relate to my Sri Lankan side as much as, like, other people would relate to their ethnic side.

Q: And do you see that as a positive thing? Or not a positive thing?

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): I mean I don't really consider it anything to even consider, like, it's just, that's just how I am, and you know ...

Q: And do you have siblings?

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): Yes.

Q: Are they the same?

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): Yes, the ones that were born here, yes. They're, they describe themselves as coconuts because they're brown on the outside and white on the inside! But I have an older brother who was born in Sri Lanka and he, he's completely different. He totally sees himself as a Sri Lankan born, proud to be Sri Lankan and all this and that, whereas we're, like, you know, pretty strong where we stand with our culture, I guess.

Q: But yet you were interested in family history.

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): Yes, I was because, like, we don't know much about our family history but there were things before, like, because there was [sic] colonies that were founded in Sri Lanka from Britain and before that we don't really hear much about Sri Lanka as a whole. Like there's no recorded history that I can find about Sri Lanka before Britain and the western parts of the world came.

Q: It's the history, isn't it, when histories are being mainly handed down orally, so it's kind of oral traditions and archaeology that are the only ways you kind of find the history if it hasn't been a written one.

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): Yes.

Q: Anyone else? About sense of identity and how it relates to history. What we're trying to, I mean, don't feel you have to answer this, of course you don't, it's personal, but what I'm trying to, what we're trying to see, in a sense, is in the end how important is it to have diverse history taught in schools? That's what it's all about. So, this question about your own sense of identity is, is really, you know, you were seeing yourself as a coconut – as opposed to an avocado which is the other way round! – the question I'll come to later is, does it matter? Do you need to have a more strongly Asian history and presence in the history curriculum, or does it really matter because you're British? **(Leading to Q3)**

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): Shall I answer that now?

Q: Yes, go on, while they're thinking about what they're going to say.

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): I think I feel like for me, I think because I was really interested in knowing my family history, that I think other cultures should be, you know, taught in schools. Because of course there are so many, like, in everyday life there's like things we use or so many influences that we get from different cultures instead of, you know, just one point in history or, you know, something of the sort. So, I think it's really important to teach about different cultures because nowadays people are really, like, ignoring their culture now, I would say, as compared to how they did many years ago.

Q: And would that include the history of empires? Would that include the history of, kind of how the British came to Sri Lanka and why, and what happened, or not?

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): What do you mean by that?

Q: Well, I mean, I suppose the sense of this question is, you are here because, in the end, because the British came there a long time ago. Is that a history that it's important to understand, or not? Or doesn't it really matter? **(Links to Q3)**

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): For me it's not really that significant, like I wouldn't say that it's made a ginormous impact on my life knowing, but it does really like, it does create interest about empires and everything in general.

Q: I'm not leading you on, I mean it's absolutely fine for it not to matter, you know what I mean. I just want to understand. That's great. Anyone else want to chip in?

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): What was the question again?

Q: The question originally was, your sense of identity, of being British, and also how that relates to your other cultural identity, and how important history is to all of that.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): I think history is important, I think especially, like, right now I don't mind that I haven't been taught, you know, other histories because I've kind of had, like, I've had that within myself, like, to go out and be taught about it. But also, like [*names Student B-F13A [Sri Lanka/Portugal]*] was saying, like, her parents are, like, kind of westernised. I think it's similar for my parents, like, but I think because of my grandparents on both sides I've had, you know, they've been the ones to remind, to say about, like, culture and stuff and you get taught from that. I feel like if I didn't have my grandparents and then there would be that gap in knowledge and I wouldn't really know that much about. I do think for those who might not be that advantaged in having that person to speak about history, family history, it is important but I wouldn't say that it's hindered me in any way. But maybe for others in the sense of those who are not as liberal in thought in the sense of, you know, having that just like one side of history, I feel like there should be options to see the whole of it and not just to learn about British colonialism but learn about other places colonising each other. I think, like, history is just a game of power politics and I feel like if we just teach British colonies, we're teaching of the power politics of Britain, whereas we don't teach about, the, for example in Africa when there was the different tribal colonies, like, ruling over the other, we don't hear about that. So yes, I feel like that might be a problem, and I think in terms of, like, maybe assimilating, I feel like as long as someone wants to do it, it's fine, but I feel like being forced is a bit, you know, like if someone doesn't want to keep culture alive they should be free to, like, evolve it. I think, just yesterday I was watching a documentary and it was about the people in the Amazon, it was an uncontacted tribe, I can't pronounce the name so I'm not going to try. And basically, they only made contact with them in 2015, and they wore no clothes, they literally it was just that, you know, simple lifestyle. But ever since that, like, someone's come in and, you know, to their village, like, and then they're wearing clothes. It's almost like a discarding of their history. But they seem happy with it. So, I think there's also a thing where, yes you should have a liberty not to be forced to that assimilation, but also the liberty to have that choice to do that. It might be sad to let go but, like history and people like ourselves are always involving [*evolving?*].

Q: Interesting. It sounds like you're saying it's important to have access to information –

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Yes.

Q: ... but the freedom to choose what to do with it, to choose where you go ...

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Yes, because I feel like from them, that's when you're pushing on an agenda, for example like the cult of Napoleon or whatever, or like Stalin even, you pick those parts of history and you're projecting it. And if you're thinking of history as a power play, you're almost using that to shine, you know, a light on something. I feel like it should have that vast majority. I know not all history can be taught but, you know, a selection. So not only British colonies but other colonies as well, or other, like dominations within history of people.

Q: That's interesting. One, to have that perspective of seeing things, like, the British Empire in the context of other colonies, other empires. But also, I'm thinking back to things you [*names Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal)*] were saying about the way that you thought that, you know, that the British

Empire is taught in a way that – you didn't say kind of glorifies Britain, but you're kind of meaning that, weren't you? That it's a, we're not seeing a full perspective, we're only seeing the one that reflects well on Britain in that case, and in a sense it's more about having – you [*names Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia)*] talked earlier about the importance of context and, sort of, a deeper analysis behind things that you can choose what to do with. Anyway, tell me about anything that either of you want to say about identity and ...

Student D-F13A (Ghana): I think I definitely see myself as a Ghanaian first rather than British. Like I am British because I was born here, I have a British accent. But my parents are not westernised at all. They only came here for their children to have, like, a good education and a good life, and the minute my youngest brother goes to university they're going straight back to Ghana, no doubt about it. Yes, I grew up listening to Ghanaian music, eating Ghanaian food, that's just who I am. But I also, I do, like I do recognise myself as, like, the Black British, you know, the kind of culture there, but yes definitely a Ghanaian first because my parents, like, they experienced a lot. Like when my dad first came to Britain, he came in the eighties, he experienced a lot of racism from, like, from everywhere, like literally everywhere. You know he was stopped so many times in, like, one year by police for doing absolutely nothing. So, I wouldn't say my parents don't like Britain, because they do, but I would say that there's always definitely been a bit of ...

Q: They don't feel they belong, perhaps ...

Student D-F13A (Ghana): Yes, it's a bit of, they feel a bit of bitterness, and it kind of feeds into, obviously your children. So, a lot of the growing up was a bit of feeling, like, especially coming here because my primary school, like there wasn't a lot of Black students. And when I came here, like, we did have a good, I would say there was a good amount of Black students at the school.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): That was different for me.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): Yes, because you were in the higher set so you probably were the only Black person in your set.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): There was one other.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): One other. I only had two others. But the rest of the sets in 'ace' anyway were mostly Black. So, I definitely, I wasn't comfortable for a, I wasn't comfortable until Year 10 at this school, I really wasn't.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): If anything, that's different for me, like I would say that, like, even I remember when I started in Year 10 and Year 11 for, like Textiles, I've always kind of been in an, obviously it wasn't, like, mixed environment but because I've always not seen, like, my own people when I'm studying. So, when we started in GCSE it was almost a bit like, oh my God, even in sixth form now it was, like, oh my gosh so, I don't know. I think it's good to have that diversity but also there's a strength within unity. So yes, yes, yes.

Q: So, what a privilege, I feel a real privilege being able to hear you talking about these things among yourselves, but also how diverse the experiences and the feelings are just among the four of you. And your thing about diversity and unity, how that we can be, the challenge for us in this country and in this city is how we can achieve both of those. We can have the diversity, and the different experiences and cultures and so on, but also find a way to have solidarity and unity together, and that's not an easy thing to do. But it's the project we've got. [*names Student C-F13A (Ghana)*] I must go to you because we haven't heard much from you.

C-F13A (Cyprus): Yes, like, my family, they are very, they do definitely identify as being Cypriot. I do as well, it's a very, like, big family but it's a very close family, and I feel like there's quite a close, like, Cypriot community as well that I know of. So, I think that's why, like, there's. you can keep your

identity, I think that's why it's such, like one that a lot of people do identify with. And my parents are the same, like, they were born in England but my dad did live in Cyprus and my mum's lived in Cyprus for a bit as well, they came over, like, because there was wars in Cyprus which is why they had to, like, come over here.

Q: Ah, so because it was the 'seventies, was it?

C-F13A (Cyprus): Yes, that was why, so if, it's difficult to say, like that they would've ever come over had that not have happened, I feel like there's circumstantial factors as to why they came here rather than, like, wanting to, like, get away from Cyprus which was why my family does, like, have such a strong Cypriot identity.

Q: And how about you?

C-F13A (Cyprus): I do as well because I've grown up with it. Like [*names Student B-F13A (Ghana)*] says, I grew up listening to Greek music and Greek food, I spoke Greek before English so it's very, like, I do see it like that as well.

Q: I'm going to throw in a question. It's not one of the questions on, from the thing, but it's grown out of what you said and it just reminds me of an encounter, now about fifteen, twenty years ago in my ... I had a Year 10 class in, I taught in Leyton in East London so it was very, very diverse, in fact the one cultural identity we hardly ever had was white British [*laughs*]. And we met a group of same age youngsters from Paris and they had come over, they came from a school in inner city Paris where there had been a lot of conflict with police, and they were coming over to look at the way that things happened in London. And of course, the attitudes to multiculturalism in France and Britain is very different. And we had this discussion where neither group could understand the other. So, the British kids, first of all, were very shocked to hear that in Paris – a lot of the British kids were Muslim and they were shocked to hear that in Paris you couldn't wear the headscarf if you went to school, But the French kids were really shocked to learn that RE was taught in British schools because they thought that was divisive. And in the end, we got down to this discussion, that the French kids said 'We don't bring our cultural and religious identity to school, we leave it at home, we don't bring it into school, we don't discuss it, we're French. Because if we discussed it, if we shared our different cultural identities and things in school, we'd only end up in conflict. So, we live in the land, we don't wear crosses, we don't wear or headscarves, religious things, but also, you know, we don't discuss things.' The British kids were shocked by that and they said 'But how do you know your friend if you don't actually share your difference?' I remember two Nigerian girls and a Somali girl who were very good friends, and the Nigerian girls were very strongly Christian and the Somali girl was very strongly Muslim – and actually they're now in their mid-thirties and they're still friends – but they said, 'but the cultural difference between us is what we often talk about, it's the actual spice of our friendship. And if you do not understand your friend and where they're coming from, how can it be a true friendship?' And the French kids said 'no, no, you'll just end up with conflict' and they said 'well we don't!' And it was a really interesting thing, the different ways of seeing how to deal with that problem that you've talked about, about diversity and unity and the British thing was, in order to achieve unity, you, you actually, the diversity just stays at home. And the east London thing was, you celebrate your diversity and you try to find a way have unity through that. Kind of, what do you think?

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): I agree with that in the sense that, I think when you're talking about multiculturalism, so there's, like, different sections of multiculturalism and one of the branches are, like, pluralist multiculturalism and cosmopolitan, I feel like with cosmopolitan multiculturalism, I think within that, that's where maybe you might find conflict in the sense that you're almost throwing everyone's culture in and trying to make it work. And a culture is a culture, it has its own identity so to throw it in and put it in, almost a mixing pot, I think with that you might have a problem. But if from the side of pluralist multiculturalism, I think it goes on to what you were saying about having that

diversity within unity which is everyone's allowed to celebrate their culture and represent it and, you know, almost have it within society and have that, like, that symbiosis¹⁵ rather than, like, mashing it together. So I feel like, what you're saying, that having those different cultures and learning to work together, but I think there can be a problem if you're trying to push different cultures onto another because that's when, you know, like there's a discussion about shall we introduce *sharia* law into the law. I think with that, you have to, you know, have a real, like, discussion and an equal debate on the implications of that because what you're, even though you're, what you're doing is you're trying to put one aspect of a culture into the law without, maybe not fully understanding that culture. So, I feel like, yes, so you should still have it in mind and influence things but not to completely push it and mix it all up into a melting pot because a culture is a culture for a reason.

Q: Interesting. Ok, I'm going to go back to the question on here. **Q4. What is, how far is your diversity reflected in what is taught in school, and does it matter? Should it be?**

Student D-F13A (Ghana): It's not reflected. I mean, yes, it's not apart from the whole slavery thing in Year 8 we went back to Elizabethan and we went back to the Tudors and whatever. And then, obviously, Year 12 we do British, we do British history but we stop at, what, 1951 so we never get to the sixties when, you know, we had, you had the Bristol Boycott and things, Bristol bus boycott and things like that, we never did any of that. And if we probably did do that period, I doubt we'd actually learn about that, I don't think it's even in the textbook.

Q: So, does it matter? If it's not there, the diversity, does it matter if it's not?

Student D-F13A (Ghana): Yes, because I feel like Britain as a whole wants to act like they didn't do anything. Because a lot of things happened in the sixties and the seventies like it happened in America, and again I have to read about that myself. I would never have learnt that from studying history at school.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): That's funny because in all my other subjects I feel, like diversity is represented. In, like, English I can look at, like, postcolonial texts, that's what I do in my coursework, and in Politics, I feel like that's why I know about the multiculturalism and all of diversity ...

Student D-F13A (Ghana): Not in History!

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): ... but actually all of my subjects except for History teaches about my diversity.

Q: So, you learn your diverse history everywhere except for History lessons?

All: Yes.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): English, they allow us to just do what we want, read what we want.

[General agreement]

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): English is probably the only ...

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): And our teachers are very passionate, they want to push, that's how I learn about, like, those different things, like even, like our English teachers, they'll do book clubs *[unclear]*, like Khaled Hosseini my favourite author, he's, like, on to that ...

¹⁵ Symbiosis – Concise Oxford Dictionary (2011) definition: [Biology] an interaction between two different organisms living in close physical association, especially to the advantage of both. From Greek, *sumbiosis*, 'a living together'.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): I love him so much, I – *A Thousand Splendid Suns*,¹⁶ have you read that?

Q: Oh yes, oh yes.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): That's my favourite book, so he's on the syllabus.

Q: I mean it's rare, isn't it, to get a male writer who speaks for women so ...

All: So, well ... and the narrative voice is, like, it gets, yes ... and the way he's able ... I really am ... I'd really like to meet him ... I cried ...

Q: And of course, it's interesting you say this because his books are history books.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Yes, that's the thing ...

Q: And he is talking about aspects of Afghan history.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): Yes, we did *The Kite Runner*.¹⁷ That's our actual book for our exam.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): For coursework we do a postcolonial section where we're allowed, that's 20% and we're able to choose it, so I chose *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe.¹⁸ Yes, so with that I'm able to learn, like, different aspects of history. The same in Politics, like we go back, we learn different political systems and diversity within them. But History, it's always, like, it almost seems like an agenda.

Q: I have to throw this question in –

[Bell rings but the students are willing to go on for another half hour- general excitement]

Q: Because there is a problem about the diversity of history teachers. History is the subject that has the least diverse, the least diversity among teachers of all the subjects in schools and some of us, including your teacher, are desperately trying to address this. Obviously, you know [laughs] Mr [names their teacher] is an exception, obviously, but also as we'd agree, it is an issue. There's a professor who is a friend of ours who is trying to push understanding why that is and what to do, Professor Hakim Adi. And one of the theories as to why the children of migrants don't choose to become history teachers – they do become teachers of English, they do become teachers of sciences, they do become teachers of IT and so on – is, one theory is that maybe parents, at the time you choose your options when you're younger, think that you can't get a decent job with History, other things will get you a better job, but another theory is that the content of the History curriculum is a turn off.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Yes.

Q: And I suppose what I'm throwing in is – and you're saying yes – is it? Is the content of the History curriculum a turn off or not? How many of you are doing History A-Level. **(Q5 re-phrased; Q6 implied)**

All: We are all.

Q: So, it hasn't been a turn off for you ...

Student D-F13A (Ghana): No, but it's ...

¹⁶ Khaled Hosseini (2018) *A thousand splendid suns*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

¹⁷ Hosseini, K. (2003). *The kite runner*. New York City: Riverhead Books.

¹⁸ Achebe, C. (1958) *Things fall apart*. London: William Heinemann Ltd. This was the first of a trilogy of novels by the Nigerian author Chinua Achebe. The others are *No longer at ease* (1960) and *Arrow of God* (1964).

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): I LOVE history but what we're taught in history, I'm just so disappointed. Like if we learnt about ancient civilisations, the Romans, the Greeks and all of that, like literally, that, I would be in love...

Q: African Kingdoms is on the curriculum.

Student C-F13A (Cyprus): I'm doing it at Uni and I'm excited to actually learn about global history and

–

Q: Which uni are you going to?

Student C-F13A (Cyprus): Hopefully Birmingham, that's the one I've ...

Q: Fantastic, oh, that's where Kehinde what's his name [*Editorial note: Dr Kehinde Andrews*] is, who does, yes, OK.

Student C-F13A (Cyprus): Yes, so that's why I picked it because it was so, like versatile, it was so global. It had a huge curriculum and I was thinking I've never been taught this and I'm excited to learn it.

Q: So, you've almost got to this in spite of ...

Student C-F13A (Cyprus): Yes.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): You see I've just been, I feel a bit of used and abused. I would have done a history degree but I have a feeling they're going to throw a curveball and it's not going to be what, you know ...

Q: It depends where you go.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): How can we learn even more Britain? We don't need to know the stuff. Like Britain, what do we do, 1900 to [*unclear*] it's so boring.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): If we did, like, pre-medieval ages of Britain ...

Student D-F13A (Ghana): Exactly, something.

Q: The places where it definitely would be different are Birmingham, Chichester, where else?

Teacher: SOAS¹⁹

Q: SOAS, of course, yes. And funnily enough, Oxford have now put ancient African history as a compulsory part of their course.

Teacher: And even Cambridge. So, to do my PhD I am talking to Ruth – I can't remember her name, Professor Ruth ... [*editorial note: means Dr Ruth Watson*] I think – she's an expert on Nigerian history and she's at Cambridge, I do know that it's starting to grow.

Q: It's there, it's a tough one. I mean, I get the feeling in your case [*names Student B-F13A*] that this is not so much of an issue for you. Am I right?

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): I feel like there is a need to learn about different cultures, like we should have the option to extend the range of what we do learn instead of just learning solely about Britain. And how Britain really impacted other cultures. What else was the question?

¹⁹ The School of Oriental and African Studies (London).

Q: Well, I'm just throwing in whether, you know, whether the absence of a diverse history curriculum matters, and I'm sensing that it may matter less for you, but I may be wrong.

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): I feel like in the society that we're in today, because, like, what we're taught now in history is so rigid, like people are not really educated on anything beyond Britain really.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): Exactly.

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): Like, we learn about Tudors.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): Henry the Eighth for ever.

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): We learn about what happened centuries ago, you know, what are we really going to do with it?

Q: and you probably didn't learn about the Africans in Tudor England.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): If anything, we could at least be allowed for coursework to pick what we wanted, anything. If we're forced to do Britain for the thousandth time ...

Q: And of course, to be fair, this is not your teachers who are forcing ...

Student D-F13A (Ghana): Yes.

Q: They are forced into what a ... I mean it's a mixture because OCR exam board brought in African Kingdoms as an option but so few schools chose it that they didn't write a textbook for it.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): Why would you not ...?

Q: Actually what happened, there's a course that I helped to write the textbook for which is the history of migration to the UK, I helped to write the GCSE textbook, for one of them, the one that you showed them [*to teacher*], in that one they did write the textbook because when they asked schools 'would you want to teach the diverse history of migration to the UK?' – that includes things like, you know, the battles of Asian youth against racism in the 1980s, and Africans in Tudor England, and Mediterranean migrants during the Industrial Revolution and all of those things, when they asked schools 'would you like to do it?', loads of schools said yes. But when it came to choosing the options the schools didn't choose it and the reason they didn't choose it was because managers put pressure on them to choose things they'd already been teaching before because they thought they'd get better results. So, you know, some of it is the system.

[Discussion about the textbook. They talk disparagingly about the writer of their A Level OCR textbooks. Then interviewer shows them from the Migration textbook examples of Britain's past diversity: an early 19th century Cruickshank drawing of traffic congestion in Piccadilly that includes two Black residents; a painting of the Moorish Ambassador to the court of Elizabeth I; an extract from Wordsworth's 'The Prelude' about the ethnic diversity of people in the streets of London; the image of John Blanke on the Westminster Rolls [with the background story]; a painting of Sheikh Din Muhammad in the Regency period; the diverse geographical origins of people in Roman Britain.]

Q: It's perfectly possible to teach the history of Britain, still the history of Britain over the last two thousand years, and make sure that you include the presence of many cultures as has always been true, let alone teaching the rest of the empire. Sorry. That's sort of by the bye, really. The very, very last question is, if you were designing a school history curriculum, what would you put in it that isn't there?

Student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal): Is this for sixth formers?

Q: I'm really thinking lower down actually, when everybody has to do history. I know that you're thinking more in terms of A Level because that's what you do now.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): I would want to learn more about, like the Mediterranean and Asia and things that you never do, you never do Asia ever.

Q: So, you've not done anything about India at all?

All: No.

Q: China?

All: No.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): I think we did, like, Cold War a bit.

Q: Mughals? Even Gandhi?

All: No.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Politics we do hear [*here?*] mainly.

Q: So, it's back to every subject except History! It's going to be really fascinating to see what happens when these questions are asked, because I think in Ghana these questions will be asked. They're certainly going to be asked in the Caribbean, I'm not sure about Zambia. They're certainly going to be asked in Sri Lanka and they're certainly going to be asked in Cyprus. And will the curriculum in those countries be more diverse than ours? I don't know.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): I'm not really sure because I feel like in Ghana they, a lot of them, like, love the British. Like they love the monarchy and they love the Queen. They don't actually really know a lot about their own history before slavery. So, when I'm telling my parents about how the Ashantis would sell the Fantes and all this kind of stuff, they were looking at me like they didn't really believe me, they were looking at me like really, why would they do that and that kind of thing, like they genuinely didn't know anything about that. So, I'm not really sure if they would feel like their curriculum is not diverse, if they would want to even learn anything but British history, I'm not sure.

[Interviewer explains how the African galleries of the British Museum have a photograph of the looting by the British of the palace of Benin, and how the objects in the photo are now in the glass cases of the gallery.]

Q: What would you put into ... to ... that isn't there?

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Definitely I would put something about, like the ancient world, the ancient civilisations. And then maybe a bit of medieval history. I do think British history is essential, especially just for the sheer facts, you know, table conversation if you want to, you know, seem well rounded. And yes, I think history has been taught just from, like, a one viewed lens. Like from the Tudors and then you're accelerating up, But so much past history and, like, Asia as well. Put Asia in there as well.

Q: Has history been mainly taught where it's about facts to learn, or is it taught where it's about discussion of different perspectives of things?

All: Facts, facts. Facts.

Student C-F13A (Cyprus): I feel like now in higher up history, like in A Level and stuff there's more, because part of our course is interpretations. So that's definitely, like you will have to have a discussion there, but I feel, as you were saying, lower down history where everybody has to be taught it, it is definitely more facts, I think.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): And it's sad for those who don't even do history A Level because you're going away without that.

Student C-F13A (Cyprus): Exactly, it's only open if you're going to continue doing it, and then if you've got a bit of a jaded view of it already it's unlikely that you're going to continue doing it.

Q: One of the most powerful things that's come out of this discussion – I mean a lot of things have come out listening to you actually – but one of the things I'll go away with, and I think it's a fair criticism of history in any school in this country, that you're learning a more diverse history in other subjects than you are in history itself.

All: Yes.

Q: I mean, that's extraordinary isn't it.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): I mean, because in English we have to know context so we need to know Afghanistan to even be able to get the points.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): What we've learned about Afghan history in English ...

Student D-F13A (Ghana): The Taliban.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): We've learned about William Blake ...

Q: Which means of course if you've learnt about Afghan history you've learnt about empire, you've learnt about imperialism. British and Russian.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): I mean (*William Blake's poem*) 'The Little Black Boy',²⁰ we did learn about slavery ...

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): ... related to that. In Politics, every time we learn about for example Gandhi, we learn about the ancient Greeks, their civilisation, how they would do history. Politics, we learn about Africa, we learn about so much history, like, that's the first thing taught in it. Like, I can show you my Politics book, it's all about context for history. In History it's not like that.

Q: But yet you chose History so you must love it.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): I do love history but ...

Student D-F13A (Ghana): I mean I chose it because of the Civil Rights section because I knew at least we were going to do African Americans. I mean it's not the same as learning about Black British history but it's still seeing the familiar face at the end of the day. But I wasn't interested in Britain.

Q: So, seeing yourself in the story matters?

Student D-F13A (Ghana): Yes, you need to be able to, that's the main reason why you don't get a lot of Black history teachers, because they know for a fact that they're not going to be able to identify themselves with what they are even teaching. So, what's the point? You get to that point when it's, like, what's the point? And it is a, obviously a lot of parents do not want their children to do history, that's another reason as well, I think. They see it as a pointless subject, but it's not a pointless subject, but yes.

Q: So, you kind of love history almost, it's back to loving it in spite of it in a way. Loving the subject.

Student C-F13A (Cyprus): It's a sad love, it's like being in love and you know it's not going to work but ...

²⁰ William Blake (1757-1827) wrote this poem which was published in *Songs of Innocence* in 1789.

[Brief discussion about their university intentions – History at Birmingham, Midwifery at King’s, Law at Durham, English at Nottingham.]

Q: Is there anything else that I’ve missed that you might want to say, because this has been really interesting.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Have you also thought about including people who are not from colonies, or who are from Britain, and their perspective and including it?

[Interviewer explains the purpose of this research]

Q: ... but my goodness me, wouldn’t that be interesting? To see what others say.

Student D-F13A (Ghana): I feel like they would say similar, I feel like they would want to learn.

[Interviewer explains what Year 12s said about white students missing out by not knowing this history; referred back to [names Student D-F13A’s comment about white students apologising to her for enslavement.]

Student D-F13A (Ghana): It’s about making yourself a well-rounded person so you’re able to talk to any kind of person in any situation. If you don’t learn about certain histories, you’re going to enter certain situations not knowing how to handle it. We’re going to university ...

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): That’s why history is important, because you see yourself through history. The reason they are saying sorry is because they see themselves through that. So, if you don’t recognise yourself as, you know.

Q: That’s a very good point. It reminds me of something that’s always influenced me about, kind of, my responsibility as a teacher to the white British kids, too, and that was overhearing, now it would be twenty years ago, two boys in one of my classes, they were both friends, they were Year 10 at the time, a white boy and a Black boy. And the Black boy was saying to the white boy ‘It must be difficult for you, not having any heroes.’ Just think about that, Black boy saying it to the white boy. And there’s an issue there, isn’t there, kind of, in a sense, I mean one of the dangers, it’s very important to teach stories about empire, but one of the dangers is you’re telling white kids who had no responsibility for that, and whose ancestors were probably also being oppressed, that it’s your fault.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): It’s happening in America right now. In America there was studies in some schools, they were told, like, everything is down to the white man, this is the problem. And I think with that, that’s where, you know the anecdote that you were saying about the French and the British kids, that’s where conflict is breeding because it’s that sense of thinking, so why am I being painted as the bad guy, why is it like this? And I think, like, because of that, maybe that’s why the Trump administration won. Not for the fact of, because supremacists, no. I think it was the fact that maybe because the Trump administration, one of its main focuses was ‘Making America Great Again’, it really tried to push that nationalist forefront. And I feel, like, some people were so sick and tired of saying, hearing those different sides of the argument, and I feel like that’s a real problem, like the stereotyping of the South and, like, everything. And when there’s a stereotype, sometimes it’s hard to break. Gang violence, you know, if you’re stereotyping one person it’s going to end, you fit in to it. So, I feel like this with history, yes, it’s good to teach, you know, slavery and stuff but I feel like the multifaceted aspect, the Ashantis and the Fante, you need to see it. As mentioned, how slavery has been going on for a long time rather than put in victim and, you know oppressor and suppressor.

Q: If you’re going to be teaching slavery, I like to say *enslavement* because *slavery* implies, to call someone a slave, that is a definition of who you are, but being *enslaved*, that is a definition of what is done to you, which is a different thing. But I always think of a very important way to look at that time of the Triangular Trade is that you have an economic system that the elites in Britain are benefiting

from hugely, but it depends on many different forms of oppression. It depends on the enslavement of Africans to the Caribbean, but it also depends on the near enslavement of working-class white people working in the cotton mills of Lancashire.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Yes, and you don't hear about that in history as well.

Q: And it depends on the destruction of the textile industry in India and people being taken to famine. So actually, you're talking about white working, Asian and Black people all being part of that system that none of them are benefiting from. Or another story which is that the death rate of white sailors on the slave ships was higher than the death rate of Black slaves. And there was a reason for that because the enslaved Black people were valuable to the ship owners because they were going to sell them, but the white sailors, they could just replace them and they won't be getting any money for them. And that doesn't diminish the horrors of what was done to enslaved people at all, but it shows that actually, you know, who were victims of that system were about power and class more than, it wasn't just about race. And that's really important, you know, those white kids who feel ashamed, those white people who vote for Trump, their ancestors weren't the plantation owners.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Yes, yes.

Q: Maybe their ancestors were migrants from Italy and Ireland, you know.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): And being portrayed as that villain, I feel it's really hard not to fall into that, and I feel like that's the problem that we have, you know, in society today, so ...

Q: Yes, that's a really good point.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): And like you were saying about other people, like migrants all in the same boat, like when my grandad came over in the *Windrush*, yes Blacks were treated badly but so were, like, the Irish as well. My grandad would just, like, tell me stories about how it would be, like, 'No Jews, No Irish', so I feel like yes, and there is a problem. And it is good to teach slavery but to always present people of Black heritage as the victims, it can do, it's not that good because not only are you doing the power politics of portraying them as powerless, but also as well it's almost that thing where it's almost like, oh, you know, like everything was done to you, woe is me.

Q: It's also not the truth.

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): Exactly. I was talking to sir just before about, like, the Hausa people and about how, you know, they are extremely wealthy and their wealth extends back to centuries, but some of these peoples were involved in the slave trade, they benefited from it.

[Interviewer relates the case of John Cabess, powerful African merchant on the Gold Coast in the early 18th century, who dealt in slaves and played the British and Dutch off against each other]

Student A-F13A (St Lucia/Zambia): And the problem is, it's not being taught like that, and the whole victim/oppressed/oppressor, it doesn't work and I feel like that is a big problem in history because, even like the victim situation for the Black people, which they were in a bad position and you need to know about that, but they also portrayed that we were powerless, because for one to be enslaved means one to not have power and without that part of history it's almost like, you know, we were helped by Western civilisation when it wasn't really that. And you've got your, you know, your Machiavells²¹ in different parts of the world, they all exist, you know, yes.

²¹ This is a reference to the work of Florentine Renaissance author, Niccoló di Bernardo dei Machiavelli (1469-1527), who wrote *The Prince*, (*Il Principe*) about 1513. Machiavelli discussed in a dispassionate way the range of options open to a prince when acting as head of state, in the exercise of civil or military power.

Q: You know, it's a more truthful, more rounded sense of humanity which is – again it's our challenge, you know. And when you have children it's the challenge of how you bring up your children.

[Interviewer asks about all their parents and establishes that most – or grandparents - migrated to Britain]

Q: The reason I'm saying this is, think forward to maybe your great grandchildren. How important to them will it be to know the story of the people who made the journey? How important will it be? It will be very –

Student D-F13A (Ghana): Very.

Q: Very important. Don't lose those stories before those people pass. Get them down, interview them, record it, write it down, whatever way will work. Because those, the people that to you are just normal, they're your parents and your grandparents, they will be the key ancestors of your descendants. It will be the equivalent of the importance of *Roots* to African Americans, knowing the story of the person who made the – and the great tragedy for so many African Americans is, because of enslavement they can't know that story. You can. You know, yours is a different story. Don't lose it before it's lost because, you know, everyone thinks their own story is not important in history, but it's the history of ordinary people that is the important history. So, if I'm going to leave you with anything, get those stories! Record it, they matter.

[Interviewer asks student B-F13A (Sri Lanka/Portugal) about her religious identity – Catholic – then thanks them and gives a small gift.]

3.4 SCHOOL A: State-maintained Catholic Girls' School in South London

Teacher interview-conversation 1: Teacher A-MT1 history teacher (male teacher, b/Black British, West African heritage [Nigerian])

1. Can you please give some examples of **what** historical themes and events around empire, de-colonisation, and the Commonwealth are taught?

School A

[NB what follows is content introduced recently by the current teachers. Students in their interviews describe their own experiences of an earlier curriculum taught before the current teachers arrived.]

Y8:

- British Empire – India, America, Australia. Why the British started to explore further.
- Planning a unit on Slavery: Ancient Egypt, premedieval African kingdoms, slavery, plantations (Mohamud and Whitburn *Doing Justice to History*)²²

Y9:

- First and Second World Wars – soldiers from around the world (using David Olusoga's book *The World's War*²³ and Stephen Bourne's *The Motherland Calls*).²⁴

Y10:

- Elizabethan paper – Drake, Raleigh and competition with the Spanish.

T1: We have a central planning system whereby all the lessons of the department are planned centrally, and then everyone teaches them. In my department there is enthusiasm to teach all these rich, different types of history – but sometimes there's not that knowledge. My head of department specifically asked the new Key stage 3 coordinators to change our whole syllabus to mirror the [OCR GCSE] Migration syllabus, so that's what we are actually going to be doing from next year.

At my first school we actually taught the *Windrush*, we looked at the Haitian Revolution. In my second school we looked at precolonial African kingdoms, the Benin Empire, India.

The only aspect of decolonisation: the Indian independence movement. Cannot remember any other example of decolonisation in any school.

2. What particular pedagogic and professional knowledge do you draw upon in teaching themes related to empire and post-colonialism? (This relates to how historical themes and events around empire, de-colonisation, and the Commonwealth are taught.)

T1: Not every lesson has to be specifically tailored to a subject. Sometimes within that lesson showing pictures of diversity helps bring things to light. When we were looking at the struggle

²² Mohamud, A., & Whitburn, R. (2016). *Doing justice to history: Transforming Black history in secondary schools*. London: University College London (UCL) Institute of Education Press.

²³ Olusoga, D. (2014). *The world's war – Forgotten soldiers of empire*. London: Head of Zeus.

²⁴ Bourne, S. (2012). *The Motherland calls: Britain's Black servicemen & women, 1939-45*. London: The History Press.

for civil rights, we looked at the Bristol Bus Boycott.²⁵ When we were looking at the evacuations during the Second World War they had stories from all over but they also had the Stephen Bourne *Motherland Calls* evacuation stories. Instead of just having ‘This is Black history, this is Black history’ you could see how diverse they are really. These histories aren’t necessarily separate, they actually work alongside each other.

I improved my subject knowledge through Mohamad and Whitburn’s *Doing justice to history* as well as AQA and OCR Migration textbooks and support from Hakim Adi [Editor’s note: Professor of African History at the University of Chichester]. Sometimes it can be a passing comment. I read Kaufmann’s *Black Tudors*²⁶ and Onyeka’s *Blackamoors*²⁷ and I had to teach my Year 10s about Sir Francis Drake and exploring and sabotaging the Spanish ships. And I said that he had a crew member known as Diego, a freedman that used to be a Spanish slave and a Black man. Having those stories at your fingertips helps. Those are the three ways I have addressed it: either having narratives within the narrative, teaching lessons on it or sharing stories.

I draw on the resources available: Spafford, Adi, Whitburn, Lyndon and also Ben Walsh on empires.

This school has been very fertile ground, very open to this. The Head of History in my previous school said it was important to choose a GCSE syllabus that reflects the students’ demographic. But do I see this happening across the board? Not really. Unfortunately, I feel teachers are more concerned with getting the GCSEs – those are the main pressures that are being placed upon us.

Inclusive narratives (Questions 3 & 4)

Note: One reason why history education has become a live political issue and a matter of contestation is that traditional curriculum structures involving simple national narratives or ‘canons’ of events are unsettled by the imperative in the 21st century of introducing the complexity of diversity. Examples of these are: (a) plurinational to include sub-national histories within regional contexts; (b) post-colonial in decolonised settings to engage with the histories and cultures of communities of minority ethnic immigrant-settlers, including post-colonial ones; and (c) a consideration of other more distant settings such as the cultural and Indigenous histories of formerly colonised peoples who have not necessarily become settlers but whose sometimes or often traumatic histories related to colonisation might be seen in a more empathetic light.

3. Drawing on your own experience of teaching in a BAME community can you see any effective practical solutions to address the need for diversity and inclusion expressed in the statement above (perhaps also bearing in mind the question below)?
4. In what ways might it be possible to design history education programmes that address not only the necessity to ‘cover’ the syllabuses or curricula, but which allow for more

²⁵ The Bristol bus boycott in 1963, led by youth worker Paul Stephenson, saw a city-wide boycott of the bus service in response to an informal colour bar that stopped black and Asian people being employed on the buses.

²⁶ Kaufmann, M. (2018). *Black Tudors*. London: Oneworld Publications.

²⁷ Nubia, O. (Onyeka) (2013). *Blackamoors – Africans in Tudor England, Their Presence, Status and Origins*. London: Narrative Eye.

personalisation to include diversity, related specifically to the make-up of the students in the classes?

T1: (answering Q4) Working with university academics. There is an academic at UCL I got in contact with who is very keen on bringing the history that he knows into the classroom. Because as teachers we don't necessarily have time to do the research and so those stories aren't being taught. So, engaging more with universities, and I think universities should aim to develop a stronger relationship with secondary schools. I think primary schools are quite good at it, actually. They are a bit more open. There is a lot of material out there and I know David Olusoga has another documentary and is doing quite a lot of work. Really engaging with the and drawing on their materials is important because they have the sources that we don't have. Also engaging with institutions like the British Museum that have a wealth of resources and are keen and eager to get schools in.

[The effective absence of a National Curriculum with defined content] is an opportunity because it gives you freedom. Even if you follow the rigid structure of, say, looking at the Tudors or the Industrial Revolution, within both of those periods there is loads of scope to address diverse history. I think it starts from teacher training, from teachers being given the CPD and time to implement. But teacher training in schools is mainly about responding to education policy and not about history, so maybe having actual history teacher training. The community we serve needs that.

From September till May teachers' main concerns are the Year 13s and Year 11s. Because teachers are under so much pressure to get the grades, most other things are ignored. They park things, put them to the side.

There is nothing *[to stop a diverse curriculum being designed]*. For example, at KS3 we have looked at the OCR Migration GCSE and we have literally brought it down to KS3 and what's allowed that is the fact that there is a structure at GCSE for us to follow. Sometimes teachers need lessons and resources that they can just bring down and use.

5. Have you experienced the need to give citizenship education for BAME students a historical dimension that they can identify with?

T1: I think firstly you show the importance of things like the Suffragettes, the US civil rights struggle, the Notting Hill Carnival.²⁸ With history you tell them stories, show them the impact of the change and make them understand that they are agents of social change or political change. You make them aware that this isn't just something you read in your history textbooks, it's something that you actively need to be involved in. one of the best examples out there is Hitler and World War Two. I taught the Holocaust with Year 9s and we had to look at some really deep stuff which was very distressing and I said to them, 'I know this is sad and not pleasant, but we need to remember why we do it, and ultimately we are showing you these things so it doesn't repeat itself, the scapegoating. Making sure you are actively involved in the voting system, making sure you have a voice.' And I think that resonated with them.

²⁸ The Notting Hill Carnival is associated with civil rights campaigner Claudia Jones (1915-1964) who wanted to remember, commemorate and celebrate the life of Kelso Cochrane. She died before the first big carnival which was in 1966, but started the idea with a Mardi-Gras-style event in St Pancras Town Hall in January 1959.

When students are taught about the historical context of [migration, for example of the Windrush generation] they can have a meaningful discussion and debate. It's very important for students to understand, not just Black and minority ethnic students, it's actually for the wider community. Once all students actually understand the context in which migrants came and contribution that they provided, not only does that idea of 'sending them back to their own country' become redundant because you realise that they have contributed to this country just as much as anyone in this country, so they are a part of this country, it forces people to rethink their political stance. Some people out there who have no historical understanding, for them it's 'a number of Africans and Caribbeans came on the ships, they're not really British citizens, they've just taken from our country, let them go back'.

6. Are there any landmark events that relate to the questions above about inclusive narratives and diversity that are transnational, supranational or international that many or all BAME students might be able to identify with?

T1: Independence for many nations; the Biafran Civil War; ending of *apartheid* in South Africa; civil rights legislation in the USA in the 1960s; First and Second World Wars; Rwandan genocide; upheaval in Congo; process of decolonisation; impact of the Cold War.

7. Would some, many or most BAME students believe that they have more than one identity?

T1: I was raised in the UK for all my life so the UK is all I know, but at the same time I recognise that my parents are from another country but at the same time I don't necessarily connect with the country. I can't speak the language. If I go to the country I am seen as British, I am not seen as Nigerian. But then over here some see me as Nigerian and not British. So, it's a hard one, yes you do connect with other cultures but at the same time it's limited in some respects. Not for everyone, some students might be heavily engaged with their culture.

8. Are you aware of any links between history education debates in the BAME post-colonial contexts with which you are familiar and wider global discourses about history education?

No answer

9. Should professional or other bodies (e.g. the Historical Association, SHP, even the Royal Historical Society, or the Commonwealth) be doing more to ensure more diversity in history education?
10. If they should be, then how or in what way?

T1: Schools respond to policy. If something is policy, schools have to do it. There should be more pressure on the government to make those policies because when they make those policies, that's when the heads really listen and that's when things will get taught. Yes, you've got heads of department, like my head of department who is very, very open and forward thinking, but you equally have ones who aren't interested.

I would [prefer a defined National Curriculum that said you had to teach diversity], the reason being that then it has to get done and you have senior leadership who look to implement it. In this school, for example, any time something becomes policy we have a CPD on it and the Head makes sure that's included.

Additional question (directed [only] to Teacher 1, School A)

As a Black student in British schools yourself not that long ago, what aspects of empire were taught to you and how did you feel about that?

T1: It's so interesting – it's shocking because I went on to study History – but all I can remember is 1066, suffragettes, Henry VIII. I don't remember being taught anything about empire, connecting with any history. I enjoyed it, I didn't connect to it at all. And I remember my friends who largely didn't take History being so disgusted with me – 'Why do you like that subject? It's just so boring.' I think it was a genuine curiosity about the past, and as I've grown up I've grown to love it because I've seen myself in history. And I think people don't realise if you don't see yourself in history you think you didn't exist. I would look back and watch old films and think, oh Black people just didn't exist in this time! [*Where I found myself*] wasn't in history, it was in English. It was in A Level English Literature when we studied Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*²⁹ and I still remember how much that taught me about multiculturalism and identity in the UK. Understanding it was through English, it was never through History. It was only later on when I studied History at university, after the first year which I hated because I just thought, what is this? We did a lot of medieval history that we had never done in school. It was only in my second year when I picked modules outside of History that I genuinely began to connect. A Level History was interesting but actually it was the first time I got to do history in Asia. I did Mao's China and I was shocked! I thought, I cannot believe that this man killed more people than any other leader in peacetime and we'd never learned about him. And I thought, we always learn about Hitler, how come we didn't learn about Mao? And I only learned about Mao, actually, because I didn't want to do Civil Rights, because I didn't want to just be the Black student that picked Civil Rights.

²⁹ Smith, Z. (2001). *White teeth*. London: Penguin.

3.5 SCHOOL B: State-maintained Mixed Comprehensive School in East London

Year 11

Student A-F11B (Somalia)

Student B-F11B (Pakistan)

Student C-F11B (Algeria)

Interviewer: Martin Spafford

Also present: Head of History B-FT1 (History teaching staff consisting of 2 female teachers, both w/White British B-FT1 and B-FT2)

3rd May 2018

Q: Q1: Thinking back to all the time that you've studied history, that's primary school and secondary school, can you give me examples of when the history course has included something about empire, or colonies, or commonwealth, or decolonisation or anything like that? Just any examples that you can think of when that's come up.

Student C-F11B (Algeria): The Ottoman Empire, the Mali Empire, the British Empire, also the ...

Q: Ah fantastic. Shall we start with those three examples? So, the Ottoman Empire, when did you study that?

Student C-F11B (Algeria): Back in, like, Year 9. Or was it Mali? I think it was Mali that we were studying –

Q: Mali Empire, Empire of Mali.

Student A-F11B (Pakistan): Was that the 'richest man alive'? Ah ...

Q: Mansa Musa, yes.

Student C-F11B (Algeria): Mansa Musa.³⁰

Q: And that was in Year ...?

All: Year 9.

Q: Year 9. OK. What else have you done?

Student C-F11B (Algeria): I remember in Year 9 as well, we studied about the Scramble of Africa, when like all the European nations, they sat down in a meeting and they literally, they had a map of Africa and they drew lines to say, oh, this part goes to France, this part goes to England, this goes to the Spanish. And I think that, that's how the colonies were created in the, back in the nineteenth century, yes.

³⁰ Mansa Musa (c. 1280-c. 1337) was the tenth Mansa (conqueror or emperor) of Mali, an Islamic West African state. He is associated with reconstructing Timbuktu and re-establishing the University of Sankoré by increasing the staff and developing its library. He is reputed to have had considerable wealth. Mali had goldfields and was criss-crossed with trade routes. The rivers Niger, Senegal and Gambia also ran through Mansa Musa's Mali.

Q: In Africa. And that was in Year 9?

Student C-F11B (Pakistan): Yes [*unclear*] in that year.

Q: Any other examples? You mentioned the British Empire. What was, what have you done from the British Empire, that you remember?

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): Well, we're doing actually, like, kind of now, still, like in the Elizabethan period it's when, like, Britain goes out and then they do, like, they find, they explore the New World and then they make colonies throughout the world because they want to be, like, they want like a base to rival Spain because Spain had a lot of colonies in the Netherlands, something like that.

Q: Wow, this is quite a lot of examples. And whereabouts in the world has that been, that you've studied?

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): Well, they had one in North America for the indigenous people, er ...

Student C-F11B (Algeria): Australia.

Q: Anything else? That's great.

Student A-F11B (Somalia): When they went to India and the Mughal empire wasn't that big any more, so they started trading silk and cloths and tea. That's what I remember.

Q: When did you study the Empire in India?

Student A-F11B (Somalia): Year 9.

Q: In Year 9, OK. Let's go back to primary school. In primary school did you cover anything with relation to empire?

All: No. Not really. No.

Q: Nothing at all?

All: No.

Q: I'm going to throw in another one. Have you, I'm going to throw some different parts of the world. You've already mentioned that you've done some Indian history, some history of India. You've mentioned North America, you've mentioned West Africa, the Mali Empire, and you've mentioned the Scramble for Africa. So, you've clearly – any other African history apart from that?

Student C-F11B (Algeria): Oh, African history, personally for me ...

Q: In school. I'll come to personally but in school.

Student C-F11B (Algeria): Oh yes, I remember it was, it wasn't like in the curriculum but it was a project that we done where we were each assigned an African country, so I remember for me I got Lesotho which is a quite small country in Africa, and then we had to research what effect the British Empire had on that country.

Q: Ahh.

Student C-F11B (Algeria): Yes, and the impact they had, and then we had to present it to, I remember the Mayor was there, and then these representatives from the organisation that organised this project.

Q: Oh, this was a kind of, this was an out of school project but it was organised by the school. Was it? Or ...

Student C-F11B (Algeria): Yes, this organisation got in contact with the school and they organised this.

Q: Oh, right, ok. Were either of you involved in that?

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): Never heard of it.

Q: OK so it was a, that's great. OK so let's take another part of the world. You've mentioned India to some extent. Any other aspects of Asian history that you've studied at all?

All: Not really, no.

Q: That's fine honestly. What about the Caribbean?

Student A-F11B (Somalia): We did, like, transatlantic slave trade, we didn't mention that.

Q: Oh, the slave trade. Ok, and when did you study the slave trade?

All: Year 9.

Q: that was Year 9.

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): everything in Year 9 *[laughter]*.

Q: Ok, no that's fabulous, and so, and when you studied the slave trade it looked at the Caribbean in some ways?

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): Yes.

Q: Whereabouts? Do you remember?

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): I don't remember much, but all I remember was the Caribbean was colonised and then, you know like, the people from Africa that were brought there as, like, slaves, they kind of settled there and after a while, like the Caribbean now is, like, more so known as where more Black people live, so that's kind of the bit that I remember, but not much.

Q: And anything else from North America, that you've studied?

Student C-F11B (Algeria): Francis Drake and Virginia.

Q: Ok, tell me a bit more.

Student C-F11B (Algeria): There was Sir Francis Drake but he circumnavigated the globe and then he came across North America, particularly the Virginia area in the New World, and then he went back to England and the queen, Queen Elizabeth gave this other guy a grant to go and explore, to like take people from England to go to Virginia in order to colonise it. So, this guy, I think it, yes, Sir Walter Raleigh, he brought mathematicians, farmers and people with different skills from England, and then he brought them to Virginia in order to establish a

colony.³¹ And then we learnt that also, they were also bringing diseases to the Native Americans and, like, the natives, they would trick the natives sometimes because, because of the language barrier they would, like, bring a piece of paper to the natives. And then they would, because the natives, they didn't know what they were getting themselves into, they would sign the paper and not knowing that that meant they had to give up their land to England. So, they took advantage of that, they exploited them in that way. And then when Raleigh and the group of Englishmen who came to Virginia, they received quite a lot of opposition from the natives, because they were expecting the natives to do all the work for them and provide food for them. Because they were, these men were like middle class people, they were like rich people, so they weren't used to doing the work by themselves, doing labour, so they forced the natives to do their dirty work for them. And obviously the natives didn't like that.

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): And then John White³² went back ...

Q: John White, yes, yes ...

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): And then he, a few years later he returned and all of them had difficulties and no one was in the city and nobody knows what happened. There was just one message that said 'Croatoan'.³³

Q: Now I suppose I am going to ask you, when you were studying these things, how, at the time that you were studying these, how have you felt, how did you feel, how did you feel about the way it was taught, but also how did you feel about the things you were learning about? (Q2)

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): I felt very much that I was told from a very British perspective and how they branched out and they made colonies, they expanded and how they took over. But you never really learn about the other side and how, what they suffered, what they endured and, yes, that's – I wanted to know, like, how their history integrated into society today.

Q: So, you felt it was a, kind of, one-sided perspective in that way.

Student C-F11B (Algeria): I kind of disagree with [*names student B-F11B (Pakistan)*]. Like, I'm not trying to be rude or disrespectful but the way I feel, like, it was taught, I feel like

³¹ Roanoke experiment(s): this refers to various groups of settlers in an experiment originally funded by Sir Walter Raleigh, who landed in the coastal region of what is now North Carolina. The experiment had several stages. The first stage was exploratory by captains Amadas and Barlow, arriving in 1584. The second was the landing of a settlement led by Ralph Lane in 1585, which was rescued by Sir Francis Drake in 1586. Only two weeks later Sir Richard Grenville landed a third group of about 15 men which was charged with keeping an eye on the original settlement. This small group was apparently killed by hostile Secotan, Aquascogoc and Dasamongueponke warriors, and only their bones were found when another larger group landed in May 1587. This settlement was initially led by John White, but was later left by him when he went back to England for more supplies. The (Armada) war with Spain of 1588 delayed White's return. He had also left his granddaughter, Virginia Dare, who was the first British child to be born in what became the USA. The group of 1587 settlers had numbered over 100, and included Virginia, but they were all lost, none of them being found alive. DNA experiments have been conducted to see if any were adopted into local Indigenous groups. Richard Hakluyt's *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation*, first published in 1589 but expanded 1598-1600, provides a contemporary account, whereas David Quinn's *Set fair for Roanoke – voyages and colonies, 1584-1606* (University of North Carolina Press, 1985) provides extensive context.

³² John White: was appointed Governor in 1587 but also kept a journal and was an artist and cartographer. His work can be seen in the British Museum website: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG50964>

³³ 'Croatoan' was indeed a message found when a group led by John White returned in 1590. It probably referred to a place Croatoan and a local Indigenous group. A search in the area proved fruitless.

personally, yes, the class that I'm in, we're quite lucky in the sense that, like, our history teacher personally, like, she understood the wrongs, she knows, like, she delivered the facts obviously because it's a history lesson. But then she also would always mention how it would affect the natives and she would always bring up the other side that, like [*names Student B-F11B (Pakistan)*] said, it's not really much talked about. So, I feel like for us, I feel like I was quite lucky in the way that I was being taught the topic. Like we always got to know what, how the other perspective felt, and it was always reinforced in us that these ideologies, these beliefs were wrong, the fact that you can just go in and take land from someone. We was [*sic*] always taught that that's not the way it works, that's wrong. So, like, as well as being taught the facts we also got taught morally what's right and what's wrong.

Q: How about you, [*names Student A-F11B (Somalia)*], what do you feel?

Student A-F11B (Somalia): I feel like it's kind of important to understand that when you're learning history, you should know that this is a different time to now. Something that, like, you know when there's like a social consensus and everyone agrees with one thing, it's so different to something that can be agreed ten years later. So, like, when you're learning about a topic that happened a while ago you just have to take it how it is. You cannot change facts because that's what had happened. So instead of just, like kind of mourning and, like grieving for ever, just understand that this happened, learn from it and just move forward. That's kind of, like, my standpoint on it.

Q: That's really interesting. And how about, I mean I'm going to throw in one of the things because in another school I went to where they talked about when slavery, enslavement was taught, they talk about having, kind of, quite complex feelings about that when it was taught. And I was wondering how you felt when slavery, for example, was being taught or when the British Empire in India was being taught, when there was [*sic*] some pretty unpleasant aspects of that. You know, as Black, Asian, African, North African students how did you feel about that?

Student A-F11B (Somalia): I don't know, I just kind of like, I don't really, I felt obviously upset by it but it's, kind of, become normalised to it because my entire life I've heard about this stuff so when someone just jumps it on me, like on one day, I won't really act, kind of, foreign to it because I know this stuff has happened.

Student C-F11B (Algeria): It's something that I've been taught my whole life, like, even at home. Like, I've always known about colonisation, even before I came to school. I always knew, oh yes, we was [*sic*] being colonised by the French or the British. I always knew that so, like [*names Student A-F11B*] said, it was quite normal to me. So, you know, when I learnt about it in school, obviously what happened was horrible but it wasn't really a shock to me. Nothing took me by surprise.

Q: Did you find, I mean, did you find that the learning about it in school was similar to how you'd learnt about things at home, or quite different and in what ways?

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): No, because we haven't really covered a lot of Asia, like specifically India or Pakistan. Pakistan was part of India at first. But you've not really covered that side a lot, so I haven't really heard it from school, I've more heard it at home.

Q: And is that, also, is that a discussion that you do have at home, looking at the history you get?

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): Sometimes, yes.

Q: And you're saying that you have had that a lot.

Student C-F11B (Algeria): Yes, because you was [*sic*] asking how I was taught differently at home than at school. Because in our school it was, like, how did this have an effect on the British Empire? How did, like the British benefit from this and how did it affect them? However, whereas at home I got taught about how it affected, like, the country that my parents were from and how, like, how that country is today, how that can be traced back to these colonies.

Q: That's really interesting. Similar for you? You were nodding away, [*names Student A-F11B (Pakistan)*].

Student A-F11B (Somalia): Yes, because, like, it's kind of similar to, like, Algeria and Somalia. We both have had, like, strong colonies in our country and that's, like, Italy it's like, is so, Somalia was, it's kind of like a weird topic when it comes to our parents speaking about it because they're just, like, very sensitive about it. Like they just understand that it will always be wrong, it's never something that can be, like, ignored for them, so that's like, they will never forget it. When you say, like Italy or something, they will have that stigma of what Italy had once done to Somalia. Do you understand where I'm coming from?

Student C-F11B (Pakistan): I agree.

Q: Yes, I understand. Would you just tell us what your family heritage is? I mean, you have family, your heritage is Somalia, I guess.

Student A-F11B (Somalia): Yes.

Q: That's Somalia, not Somaliland, is that right?

Student A-F11B (Somalia): [*laughs*] It's same people, yes. Somalia.

Q: And how about you, [*names Student B-F11B (Pakistan)*].

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): Pakistan.

Q: Pakistan. And yours is?

Student C-F11B (Algeria): Algeria.

Q: Algeria, yes. I'm wondering, because all three of you have those discussions about history at home, studying – as you have a lot from what you say – studying in school, how has that, has that changed the way you see things or the way you think about them, has it made you think about them in a different way, or not?

Student C-F11B (Algeria): No, for me it hasn't changed anything because, I don't know like, maybe because I always knew it would benefit them, as in like the colonists. And, like, that's all being taught as well in school, like, yes, because you can't change, like [*names Student A-F11B (Somalia)*] said earlier you can't change what happened. We all know what happened, like, one side suffered, the other side benefited. And, you know, that's how I was taught it at

home and, like, that's how it was being taught as well at school. One side benefited and one side suffered. So no, it hasn't changed the way I look at things. The facts still remain the same.

Q: I mean, I'll throw in that though I have the same perspective there are historians who – for instance, in India there are historians who have written recently, Indian historians who have written that the British Empire in India, and by this of course I include Pakistan and Bangladesh as they are now, that the British Empire in India was totally negative and utterly exploitative. But there are other Indian historians who've said that it brought a lot of benefit.

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): Yes, when I've learnt, like heard about it, it's not been, like, how people would describe the transatlantic slave trade, like really serious. It just more sounded like a business opportunity.

Q: Yes. That's interesting. So, would you say, I'm getting the impression from the way you've talked about benefit that quite a lot of the learning about empire has been connected with economics, with wealth. Is that right, trade and wealth?

All: Yes.

Q: That's the context in which you've learnt about it. Was that the context in which you learnt about enslavement as well, or was that different?

Student C-F11B (Algeria): Yes, it was, about trade and cotton and the benefits of slave working, and sugar cane.

Q: Have you studied decolonisation? Have you studied countries after, struggles for independence and when they became independent?

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): Yes, like, what is it called? Gorbachev inside Russia. From the Eastern bloc slowly and slowly, like, when the Cold War was coming to, I guess, a finale, all of the countries in the Soviet Union were, basically, slowly leaving, kind of showing the decolonisation of the Soviet Union in the Eastern bloc.

Q: That's really interesting, and you're seeing that as another form of empire.

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): Yes, technically.

Q: OK. Now I'm kind of going to get a bit more personal, all right. I'll read out the question and if you want me to explain it I will, but the question is really, how do you see the relationship between your own identity and your own history – for example, the history of your family – and being British in whatever being British means to you? What's the relationship between, kind of, your history and your identity and being British and all of that? I mean, it's the big question, isn't it? Kind of talk about it, how is it to you? (Q3)

Student A-F11B (Somalia): For me, like, I don't know. I always say, like, that I'm British first and then I'm Somali because I do love the British culture, I love being here and it's never been the case that I have been negatively affected by this country. Like I've always got a, like, strong, like help from this country which I've always loved. In Somalia I'm not as close to, I mean I love my culture and everything but I've been here my whole life, I was literally born and bred here so I kind of know more about here. But when I'm in Somalia I did feel like this is my second home, I feel like I've, you know when, it's a weird thing but when you go back to your

home country you feel like it's your, like a piece has been, like restored back into you. Because it was like the first time I ever went so it was like, kind of nice. And even though the British did colonise Somalia, with Djibouti, like, it was like taking hold, it's kind of difficult. But, like, my mum always says 'These are not the same people' – like I always take that with me because, like, there's so many things that are happening now, like, I really don't like to talk about, like controversial issues, like. But you know the Black Lives Matter movement? I just believe that, instead of focusing on, like, something you cannot change, like it happened, it's gone, focus on what you can do to improve, like, your race. Because thinking of what happened in the past is always going to bring you down and, like, you're going to be more under the control of, you're going to be under the control of, like, negativity and, like, it's just like it's a whole, like, thing that you'll just go, it's like a downward spiral. So, my mum always says, just like work, you have a benefit to be here, do not take it for advantage [*editor's note: Does she mean 'for granted'?*], and that's what I do. I just don't want to take being here for advantage.

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): Britain hasn't felt very foreign, like, so whenever you, you always hear everybody comes here, I mean you get some family in Pakistan and you're always talking when you go there, it's like there's so many people there as well, it's really cultural, and different ethnicities and races and people speak different languages. Actually, it's actually quite similar to here. It's actually welcoming, the society we live in I think is really accepting and I, if I had to actually choose if I would rather live here than in Pakistan I would actually live here.

Student C-F11B (Algeria): I agree a hundred per cent.

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): I mean, yes, you just, there's so much more – not going to lie – because, like, economically as well, and socially.

Q: And does, would that mean that you would agree with [*names Student A-F11B*] that you, when she said that she feels, sort of, British first, Somali kind of second? Would you feel the same about British Pakistani?

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): I feel equal to both of them.

Q: Somebody once said to me, it was actually a Pakistani friend, and she said to me 'I'm a hundred per cent British and I'm a hundred per cent Pakistani and I'm a hundred per cent Muslim' and she kind of, she said 'all of those things are a hundred per cent, it just depends where I am and who I'm talking to.' Does that kind of make sense?

All: Yes. [*laughter*]

Q: It doesn't make mathematical sense but it makes emotional sense. [*Asks Student C-F11B (Algeria)*]?

Student C-F11B (Algeria): I agree with [*names Student A-F11B (Somalia)*] when she says 'I'm British first.' And then in my case Algerian next because I think like any of us who wasn't born in the country that maybe our parents were born in. For me, like, being here in Britain, it doesn't, like [*names Student A-F11B (Somalia)*] said it's never had a negative impact on me. This country has never affected me, you know, negatively and I don't see, like, being here as, like, oh, I'm in, like, oh this is all foreign to me, like, no because, like, we grew up here, you know like, we become accustomed to, like, you know the culture here. It's like a normal white British person growing up in Britain, and we feel the same way as they do. I bet if they were, if that person was to grow up in another country, they would be accustomed to, you know, the

cultures in that country. But sometimes, like, because I know that my country has been through colonisation, and not only by the French, by the Turkish as well ...

Q: Of course, yes ...

Student C-F11B (Algeria): And then sometimes I think, like I think about my bloodline and then I'm, like, am I really a hundred per cent Algerian or is there like, is there some Turkish in me?

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): I want to get one of those DNA tests.

Student C-F11B (Algeria): I always think about that, like, is there some Turkish in me, is there some French in me? I always think about that but, for example, when I do visit my parents' home country, like [*names Student A-F11B*] says, like, yes, I'm a hundred per cent Algerian, like I've got the blood in me. However sometimes I feel like I'm a stranger.

Student A-F11B (Somalia): Yes, oh my God! I've felt that so much.

Student C-F11B (Algeria): It's weird, like, because we're all British and then we go to like, our parents' home country it's like, their traditions and their customs are different to, you know, what we're used to.

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): Really? Not for me.

Student C-F11B (Algeria): I feel like I'm a bit of a stranger, obviously I'm familiar with the country and the language and all of that of course, but still, I do not feel like I'm right at home. I feel like I'm at home here. And that's so weird.

Student A-F11B: Yes, I agree with that.

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): That's the complete opposite for me because you go there, I mean obviously you don't experience the same things they do in their everyday lives. So, they would take you out, see what's new, everything, it's not like you don't feel a bit foreign to them but you love it!

Student C-F11B (Algeria): Yes, I love it but it's not, like, it's not home.

Student A-F11B (Somalia): You know that feeling where you go, like, to your, maybe your aunt's house and then, in your head you're like, ok when am I going to go home? After you've had your lovely day, but when am I going to go?

Student C-F11B (Algeria): Yes.

Q: [*laughs*] When am I going to have my room with my music ...

Student A-F11B (Somalia): Yes, like back to my own self. That's what I always felt, like, when I went Somalia. Even though I loved it so much but I knew there was something to go back to.

[*unclear*]

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): Because I have such a huge family, it's like the entire family go so we're all together, it just feels like home.

Q: So, this isn't one of the questions in the thing but it kind of interests me. And this is a result of quite a lot of reading that I've done, and talking to people – adults as well who I know. Some

people, I think, will say that that, kind of, dual identity or, you know, the complex dual identity that you have, some people will see that as a burden and some people will see that as something rich. You know, something that they're actually happy with, very happy with.

Student A-F11B (Somalia): I love it! Honestly, you just have this whole other, you have this heritage and culture within you, it's, I think it's really nice.

Student C-F11B (Algeria): I think it really adds to, you know it adds to you. It is what makes me, you know this dual identity because, you know, I can relate to being in Britain, I can relate to here, but then also I can relate to, you know, something else, something completely different across the ocean.

Q: That's interesting. What about you? Are you agreeing?

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): Yes, I agree with both of them, exactly.

Q: So, I'm going to move on. **To what extent – you've kind of answered this – but how far do you think that sense of your, who you are, and that mix of complex, rich thing that you love about yourselves, how far is that reflected in what you're taught in school? Q4**

All: That's a complicated question. What?

Q: Interpret it how you wish.

Student A-F11B (Somalia): I don't think I've ever learnt about Somalia in my entire life, being inside this country, even East Africa, like, the entire East Africa region. I've never learnt one thing about it in being here. But it's not really a problem for me because I already know a lot about it. But it's just, like ... quite ... it's something else to think about, that's it.

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): I think I've learnt more about Pakistan in movies [*laughter*] and that's all I have.

Student C-F11B (Algeria): I mean, I'm going to have to agree with [*names Student A-F11B (Somalia)*]. I haven't learnt about Algeria at school as much as I have at home, but like [*names Student A-F11B (Somalia)*] says it's not really something that bothers me, maybe because I already know, maybe because my parents have already taught me. But, like, it doesn't, even if to some extent, even if I wasn't taught, I don't think it would bother me that much because, like the thing is, yes, [*unclear interruptions*] there's only so much cover you can do in school, there's only so much.

Student A-F11B (Somalia): Yes.

Student C-F11B (Algeria): I mean, think about all the world history, there's only so, you can't do everything obviously. But it's nice to have, you know, to learn about both sides. But for me, you know, not learning about Algeria at school, I don't know, it really wasn't a problem for me.

Q: I mean I wonder – I'm going to throw in a question – because you've told me about several examples of places, you know you've studied medieval African kingdoms, you've studied the British empire in India in the nineteenth century, you've looked at the Elizabethan period and North America – do you find when you're studying those aspects of empire that it also makes you think about Algeria, Somalia, Pakistan, and in that way that you're making connections?

Student C-F11B (Algeria): Yes, definitely. Definitely.

Q: I'm not putting words into your mouth but ...

Student C-F11B (Algeria): Yes, that's what I do. No, that's actually what I do in class. For example, when we were learning about Walter Raleigh going into America, the New World, I kept making parallels in my head. In my head I kept thinking, you know, how was it for the French when they came into Algeria, like ...

Student A-F11B (Somalia): It's so weird.

Student C-F11B (Algeria): I kept thinking, like, in my head I'm like, oh this is what the French done, they came in, you know, they just came in one day and they were like, oh yes, we own this land. Yes, that's how I think about it, I make parallels.

Student A-F11B (Somalia): This is what I was talking about before, like, you have to just, like take it how it is. Because like, it doesn't make sense, how someone could just go into a country with like, yes, this one's mine.

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): I always imagine, I don't want to be offensive or anything, I just imagine a white guy with a beard hopping off a ship and saying, like, hi this is mine.

Student A-F11B (Somalia): Howdy, y'all!

Q: In some cases, that's what happened!

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): That's crazy, man!

Student A-F11B (Somalia): It's just weird.

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): I can't get over it.

[Unclear interjections]

Q: So that kind of makes me feel that you're saying that even though the specific countries of your own heritage are not dealt with, the experience of colonisation that your countries experienced is reflected in what is taught.

Student A-F11B (Somalia): It is, yes.

Q: And therefore, the curriculum does address that issue of your identity.

Student C-F11B (Algeria): It's not what country it was but the treatment of that country. It's not, for me it's just, I mean I'm not saying every country had it equally bad. Maybe some had it worse than others obviously, but I'm not saying, oh, what country, you know colonised, I'm not saying it's the country that's so important. I mean it is important but I'm not saying it's that important compared to, you know, how were indigenous people, how were people other than, you know, the original colonists, being treated? How did the colonists see, you know, other people that were not themselves? How were they being treated? Because, like, you know these days, yes, we have different, we have the saying 'I don't see colour'. It's not, it's not about seeing colour, like, we all see colour. It's how you treat colour.

Student A-F11B (Somalia): Oooh, beautiful, that *[unclear]* like that.

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): So good.

Q: Ok, another question now. Would you like to see changes in what is taught? I'm really thinking about history rather than the whole curriculum. Would you like to see changes? If so, what, in what way? And if not, well fine. (Q5, Q6)

Student A-F11B (Somalia): Actually, I wouldn't change it because we've learnt about so much and I think when you actually follow the syllabus from, like, Year 7 all the way to Year 11, you're so culturally aware. You're really educated about everyone and how their histories and their heritage. I mean you always hear stuff about your own heritage at home and how that affected your family. So, knowing about other people, I think that makes you really educated and it really opens up your mind to other people.

Q: How about you two?

Student C-F11B (Algeria): No, I wouldn't change it.

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): I wouldn't change it.

Student C-F11B (Algeria): I wouldn't change anything. I would just, the only thing is, because like I said earlier, I was lucky in that the way I was taught, we was [*sic*] taught that, oh, this was morally wrong. I just, like, sometimes I think, what about other people in, like, that may not live in London, that may live in other cities and countries? Are they being taught that this is morally wrong? Or are they just being handed out the facts? So, like, I mean that's the only thing I would pick up on. Like, I want people to be taught that this is wrong, you know, so that it's already engraved within them that, you know, we need to learn from this. We need to move on. This is not the right way.

Student B-F11B (Pakistan): You know what I think is important? You know history altogether, like, I'm not going to say is not important to learn anyway, the one thing that's most important is to learn from what you see and not do the same mistakes. For example, the biggest example is the Cold War. Like, with what happened we should, instead of like, students now, even in America, are standing up and saying we think this is, like, wrong. We've seen what happened before. We've seen the tensions and how close the world was to literally crumbling and finishing. Like, with North Korea and the US it is very clear that, like, you know like mutually assured destruction, that will happen one hundred per cent if any of them make a move. So instead of just, like, doing the same thing like we did last time and making another Cold War, why don't we just learn from what happened before?

Q: That's a pretty good way to end it, isn't it, actually?

3.6 SCHOOL B: State-maintained Mixed Comprehensive School in East London

Teacher interview-conversation 2: (Teachers 2 and 3): Teacher 2 (Teacher B-FT1) female w/White British heritage, Head of History, Teacher 3 (B-FT2) w/White British heritage history teacher

1. Can you please give some examples of **what** historical themes and events around empire, de-colonisation, and the Commonwealth are taught?
 - The British Empire under Victoria, Indian Mutiny, Partition.
 - Medieval African societies and beginnings of colonisation by the British.
 - The transatlantic slave trade.
 - Specific work on the British Empire, who they ruled over, people's experiences.
 - Racism in Britain in 1950s and 60s, people previously colonised.

Looking for opportunities from contemporary issues, e.g. *Windrush* work with Y9 and Y8; Stephen Lawrence. Relevance to communities experiencing ongoing racism today.

GCSE: Elizabethan explorations.

1. What particular pedagogic and professional knowledge do you draw upon in teaching themes related to empire and post-colonialism? (This relates to how historical themes and events around empire, de-colonisation, and the Commonwealth are taught.)

Teacher 2: I think I have quite a good understanding of empire, colonisation, decolonisation as a consequence of my degree in Politics and History. I draw on my own personal experience – I regard myself as an activist concerned with issues around race, equality, social justice. I feel in touch to a certain degree with how those issues continue to impact today. Pedagogically I draw on some of the things that I have learnt from my previous head of department and his approach and some of the legacies he has left us in terms of how to approach some of these issues. And I try and remain open, alert to new ideas, new work, good practice.

Teacher 3: I think the idea of perspective and source reliability is really important in this particular topic, because obviously if you are trying to not teach it through one lens and perspective you have to through the whole system of “Where are the sources coming from that we learn, and teaching the students to understand the two perspectives. I had a Year 7 who, we were looking at the Crusades. He’s of Pakistani Muslim background, and he said ‘Miss, why are all the sources from, why is the textbook biased?’ So, I then said ‘The textbook isn’t particularly biased but it’s just presenting a lot of sources from Christian perspectives.’ And I think the fact that a 12-year-old picked that out of a British textbook, that all the sources that they put in the textbook were, was quite interesting.

T2: You’re particularly interested in personal stories, personal narratives, so you have taught – particularly around Partition where you’ve identified personal stories and used that as a theme.

T3: Yes, very much so.

(Questions 3 & 4) Inclusive narratives

Note: One reason why history education has become a live political issue and a matter of contestation is that traditional curriculum structures involving simple national narratives or 'canons' of events are unsettled by the imperative in the 21st century of introducing the complexity of diversity. Examples of these are: (a) plurinational to include sub-national histories within regional contexts; (b) post-colonial in decolonised settings to engage with the histories and cultures of communities of minority ethnic immigrant-settlers, including post-colonial ones; and (c) a consideration of other more distant settings such as the cultural and Indigenous histories of formerly colonised peoples who have not necessarily become settlers but whose sometimes or often traumatic histories related to colonisation might be seen in a more empathetic light.

2. Drawing on your own experience of teaching in a BAME community can you see any effective practical solutions to address the need for diversity and inclusion expressed in the statement above (perhaps also bearing in mind the question below)?
3. In what ways might it be possible to design history education programmes that address not only the necessity to 'cover' the syllabuses or curricula, but which allow for more personalisation to include diversity, related specifically to the make-up of the students in the classes?

T2: I would say some of the following things. The lack of time for us as teachers, increasingly so, the demands of results-driven teaching and all kinds of other things – performance management – keeps cutting against some of what you would want to do: read more widely, research around topics that you're not knowledgeable about, seek out individual seminars, you name it, which could give you a different perspective and allow students to have much more enrichment – leaving school, taking part in activities etc. That just keep being circumscribed. Secondly, I do feel that we are moving away from the understanding of the importance of these issues in history teaching more broadly. Just anecdotally, because we have had to move school with the new build we've had to pack up and unpack, and I find it very hard to throw things away. But it was very interesting to pack up resources that have been gathered, this huge range of diverse resources – I can't throw them away, they are still there – and I bet there's brilliant stuff there on the *Windrush* generation that we've been trying to teach. But one thing is the lack of time to go through them, but then secondly if you look at some of the contemporary textbooks – both for KS3 and KS4 – they are becoming much, much narrower in every sense. Their sources, their pedagogical approach, the underpinning of the choice topics. Clearly that's linked to the changing curriculum, the pushes Gove made etcetera – but it's troubling when the profession regenerates and you have fantastic new teachers coming into the profession, but some of this is potentially being lost at a time when it feels to me more important than ever.

T3: Tying into what you said about losing the issue, I just did a lesson on civil rights leading into a topic to explore civil rights in America, South Africa and then issues in Britain, and I got a student saying, 'Miss, why are we doing Citizenship?' So, the idea that to study civil rights and racism in a quite contemporary setting, the last fifty years or so, students immediately connect that with 'well, this isn't a history lesson, this is a citizenship lesson'. And I think that is quite a good example of, maybe, how the issues are becoming lost a little.

I feel the KS3 curriculum is very free. I don't know if that's because I am lucky enough to work in a department where you have a lot of freedom to do what you want to do, but I think there is the opportunity to tie into the key themes and the key skills students need to learn, and

tailor it to the students in front of you. Hence why certain things I've done – Partition, for example, I chose specifically to do that because of the makeup of the students in the classroom. So, I personally think the KS3 curriculum, you are able to manoeuvre it and go places with it.

T2: It's quite a narrow curriculum on one level. I think, however, there is lots of opportunity within it, and I think possibly the curriculum itself doesn't constrain. I think perhaps what could be constraining is some of the things we spoke about before, either the lack of opportunity to deepen your own knowledge to be able to use the curriculum effectively with an opportunity to have a much more diverse, deeper understanding of the world that we've lived in. So that could inhibit it and if you are just simply following the textbooks – often we're knowledgeable as history teachers but you can't know everything, so you need space and time and you need dialogue and discussion with other professionals from a range of backgrounds to make you think and stimulate. And that's perhaps what is limiting about the curriculum, those things aren't happening.

T3: If you want to go off the curriculum or what the majority of people are teaching, you have to do it completely on your own, in terms of there aren't resources available, you can't find anything online, there are no textbooks, so it takes a lot of time, which is the point we both massively agree on. There is the space for it but you have to do it largely on your own.

T2: There are things that I like about the National Curriculum. I like the sense of a chronology, of building up a knowledge from a thousand years ago to the present day. It was interesting overhearing some of the things the Year 11 students said about how they feel historically knowledgeable having gone through years 7, 8, 9 and building up the knowledge and keeping returning to it. I don't think the curriculum itself is completely constraining but I think the interpretation of the curriculum can constrain. It can be quite narrow, and then the limitations of your own time.

T3: In the textbook on racism, it was America and India – empire in India and then the American civil rights movement – and that is always used, and other than that it doesn't really diverge much.

T2: Thinking about textbooks and who dominates, who makes those decisions. When I started teaching, then I left the profession and then I came back, and then where it is now, one of the things that has changed is that things like opportunities for CPD and who delivers it are much more driven now by the corporate PiXL, [*a system followed by several hundred schools to boost exam performance*], Pearson [*the international company that runs the exam board EdExcel*], whatever. Whereas when I first started teaching it often was much more led from the bottom up, the practice of classroom teachers sharing ideas and resources. You still have the professional bodies and opportunities, network meetings, but it's quite impoverished compared to what it used to be like. You still have the Facebook pages, sharing, I wouldn't say it's completely ...

T3: The EdExcel Facebook page for GCSE is amazing. Then why doesn't that exist for KS3 African history for example? Imagine the resources that people could share if that did exist. But it doesn't because people don't seem to be as interested.

[*At GCSE*] because of the amount of content the opportunity for any in depth discussion that is not relevant to the topic is very limited. There's too much in a too short space of time to allow for much meaningful discussion that might really provoke interest and thought from students

if it's not completely relevant to the specification. The other issue is how much choice there is in terms of the modules.

T2: Potentially KS4 destroys KS3. So far, we have been able to resist [*reducing KS3 to two years*] but there's nothing to say it's not round the corner with them saying 'this year's results aren't very good, therefore we want to'. Because it's a popular subject in the school, because students speak positively about their lessons, the results have been good and ok, they have left us alone to make decisions about how we want to run the curriculum. But I find horror stories of what's happening in other schools. About the content, I would have said that it is quite narrow, but listening to the students it was very interesting what they picked up from the Elizabeth unit of work, it hadn't seemed so exclusive and non-diverse. That was interesting. It was really exciting to hear them speak about some of the discussions they have had [*seeing the Soviet Union as an empire, for example*] [*referring to two sets of comments by Student B-F11B*].

Because of the changes that keep being made, you are constantly running to catch up with it, for what you feel is your own lack of knowledge, one lesson ahead of the kids, just desperately trying to finish the content so they literally walk into the exam having completed everything. Hopefully, potentially, if they don't keep making changes there is space then to reflect on the teaching of the GCSE, to feel more confident with your own knowledge and therefore reflect on how you are teaching it – if they don't keep changing it. That's something to look forward to and if that's the case then it will be interesting. But overall it doesn't stack up well.

T3: When you look at the topics we're teaching they're very Britain heavy.

4. Have you experienced the need to give citizenship education for BAME students a historical dimension that they can identify with?

T2: It is very much part of our work because it makes no sense to me to understand the past if it has no impact on the present. I am interested in a deep understanding of the past because I am interested in the world today and I am interested in progress, change. I am not interested in imposing my views on other young people. I don't want young people to walk out of the room thinking 'I have to think what she thinks' or 'that's the most important thing.' But I am interested in people walking out of the room absolutely understanding, more informed, more knowledgeable about our past as human beings and able to use those insights to inform how they think, feel and act today, both on a skills level and on a knowledge level. And on a motivation level: I do want them to care, definitely, I want them to be informed, to think, to act.

T3: I think also if you're trying to interest young people in things you are teaching them, you are aiming for them to be engaged in what you're teaching them, and we teach a lot of topics which are still relevant today as issues, if your aim is to engage students in an issue – I mean, for example the issue of racism, of discrimination, you would then hope they would bring that forward to their present life, to learn from those things. By teaching them the right, the wrong moral aspect in a past situation, they can then apply that to the present day. And they would become active in standing up or saying something, or if they saw injustice being done.

T2: An unusual experience that I had last year, teaching the unit of work on Germany and the rise of Hitler, and I had for the first time – against the backdrop of the American elections in which Trump was elected – students in the class who were supporters of a right-wing position

and who started to read *Mein Kampf*.³⁴ I described it as a *Mein Kampf* readers group. When I asked them why, they were saying ‘Oh, I’m interested, I want to just read it for myself’ but it was clearly that they were interested in the ideas, they were attracted by those ideas. Most of those students were Eastern European: it prompted me to try and find out about what was happening in Eastern Europe around these issues at the moment. And then it prompted me to think, how am I going to teach in this context, what do I do in this context? Do I just teach without any consideration? Which of course I couldn’t do. It was very hard, though, and it made me think about, we teach in a multicultural school, therefore we don’t expect to be having conversations with students that think racism is ok, think there shouldn’t be immigrants (I’m not saying they aren’t there). But there are many, many history teachers at this moment in time who are having a very different experience with that they teach, and it really made me think. Because the other thing as well that we need to think about is, how do we teach in a context where, both the communities that are affected but also the communities that start being attracted by that explanation of what’s wrong with the world? It was really weird, a complete surprise. I have heard of a lot of schools that are treating it as a disciplinary issue and that is just a recipe for disaster. People legitimately feeling that their ideas are being closed down, and it reinforces all of their viewpoint about who benefits in society, who is being stood up for. Whilst at the same time it is important for me to maintain a clear position.

T3: By exploring these in History rather than in Citizenship, it means you can take the issue off the current issue, explore the idea of feelings students might have without having to explicitly say, ‘well I actually didn’t think immigrants should come into the country’ and this person thinks that immigrants should come into the country. You don’t have to be explicit that that’s your opinion but you can explore with students the feelings by applying it to a historical situation. It does allow them that space, in a way, to take it off them and maybe get the opinions out there and have opinions changed without having to make it about them, now. And also, for them to see the other-sided view, because it might be quite difficult, especially if they are going home to a family that’s quite strongly of one position – Brexit for example – to even consider the point of view. But if you’re learning about it in that context, then you see there are arguments both sides.

5. Are there any landmark events that relate to the questions above about inclusive narratives and diversity that are transnational, supranational or international that many or all BAME students might be able to identify with?

T3: Partition. The issues are obviously still felt today, particularly with Pakistan and India. But I also think just the idea and the concept of this absolutely mass migration, violent situation that happened, that was dictated by predominantly white British people saying ‘We’re going to do this and we’re going to leave and we’re not going to be involved’ is an example of a situation that we see over and over again happening, and there’s a lot to learn from that one event but it also is very relatable for students who have a heritage within either of those countries.

³⁴ *Mein Kampf* (German language; in translation: My struggle, or My fight) was an autobiographical exposition of his ideology, written by Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) when in Landsberg Prison (April-December 1924) after the Beer Hall Putsch in Munich. Published in two volumes in 1925 and 1926, *Mein Kampf* sold 228,000 copies between 1925 and 1932. One million copies were sold in 1933, Hitler’s first year in office.

T2: I feel a bit limited by my own knowledge. My kneejerk would be, yes, transatlantic slave trade, Holocaust because of their significance in terms of global events. But then I wonder how much I really know from a range of perspectives? When I think about Middle Eastern history I am really struggling. China: I did a lesson about medieval England and medieval China, even that, just superficially scratching the surface! I'd done this differentiation, so some kids were going to do England and some kids were going to do China. Of course, I knew in the back of my head that some kids were going to say 'I want to do China' and they did. Who'd want to do boring old England? Everyone wanted to do interesting China. I just think I don't know enough to make informed decisions of what key events would need to be taught to give a genuinely diverse historical curriculum.

T3: I think the most neglected place in terms of historiography as a whole is probably the Caribbean. I've recently come from doing a history degree and at not a single point throughout three years was anything ever offered about the Caribbean. I did China, I did Africa – the Caribbean never. I don't even think I could say anything about the history of the Caribbean.

T2: Sometimes there's a gap in knowledge of people's own histories, perhaps more pronounced that the students you were talking to today who perhaps have a stronger sense of their own history.

6. Would some, many or most BAME students believe that they have more than one identity?

T3: I have spoken to quite a lot of students of different age groups about identity at various points and the one thing I would always say is, even if they are completely British in the sense of born in Britain and British accents, they always are very proud of the fact that they are Caribbean and they're Black. And that almost seems more prominent in discussions I've had with them than the fact they're British. And it's always hit me, the fact that they're very attached to that and very proud of that part of their identity. Today I did this thing where I was talking about race and what race meant, and whether race was different to ethnicity, and what country they associate themselves with, and they all said their country of heritage rather than Britain, apart from the white British kids who said England.

T2: Sometimes I wonder whether they don't see it as the issue that we see it as. So, when we ask the questions, we're almost listening for something that they are not necessarily meaning. Like we say 'How do you identify yourself?' 'Oh yes, yes, my family is Somali.' I sometimes wonder if we hear something different from what they think. The importance that we sometimes give, or society gives to identity, I sometimes feel that they are not that bothered – but not in a negative way, 'I'm just being twelve'.

T3: If you're living in England with parents who have come over themselves, who are speaking your home language, who are cooking your home cuisine at home, who dress maybe in the traditional dress – which we have many parents who do – that's going to be a different experience from somebody who is living with third or second generation parents who speak English with a perfect English accent, who are very assimilated.

7. Are you aware of any links between history education debates in the BAME post-colonial contexts with which you are familiar and wider global discourses about history education?

T2: I'm aware of debates that did take place, for example a few years ago when they tried to remove from the curriculum anything to do with Black history, Mary Seacole, huge petitions – and they were pushed back and it lifted the lid on a debate which isn't very loud or heard very there is people's ideas and thoughts about the situation. Not so much more recently, and I think there's perhaps a paucity of voices, which doesn't mean to say the debates aren't there. In terms of global, no, I'm not aware. I don't know anything about debates globally around history education. In the US, the Charlottesville³⁵ situation perhaps has opened up some of the debate.

T3: I was thinking about university and the issue of diversity and covering these kinds of topics is not brought up at all. And I had six days across the year and I also had those six weeks of training and the session that you did was the only one that even used examples of more diverse topics. And that was, what, a year or two ago?

T2: That's a really massive indictment.

T3: Even the idea of perspective and interpretation we did through an English lens. What an opportunity to do those topics using that kind of thing, and yet we did, I think, the Norman Conquest as the modelled example of how to teach that. I really don't think at all there was any engagement with that. These were also people who are at the top of their field, and the Institute of Education is apparently the best in the world to do education.

8. Should professional or other bodies (e.g. the Historical Association, SHP, even the Royal Historical Society, or the Commonwealth) be doing more to ensure more diversity in history education?
9. If they should be, then how or in what way?

T3: It would be very helpful if they would like to produce some resources that would then be freely available for people to use. I think, because we've highlighted the issue of time, which is a massive issue for us, for everyone, unless this is going to become massively pushed forward and everyone's going to do it and then everyone's going to share things, it's very difficult to make time to really give to these topics that they deserve. And if an organisation or professional body could devote that time – they probably have a bit more of it maybe, I don't know – that would be really helpful for people within the classroom then to be able to deliver and actually cover those topics.

T2: Yes, they should and it's a similar body of people that are moving in and out of the same networks. It's not that large, is it, the history community, it's quite similar groups of people, backwards and forwards into different roles and different capacities. So, I think there's an issue about debate, reopening some debate, because it will be that people won't necessarily share some perspectives that we have, but just the debate needs to be had again and keep being had. Post Brexit, so where's the debate then? What does this mean for us? Was it a racist vote? Is that what we're dealing with? That's just a very narrow way of posing the question, there'll be other, richer ways of coming at it. Trump's election, is this the 1930s revisited? Are we seeing the same kind of processes happening? And then, equally, you've got the Black Lives Matter movement, #metoo, all of that kind of stuff starting to happen around equality and diversity, *Windrush*. Surely the debate has to happen, and it's not happening for whatever reason.

³⁵ This refers to the Unite the Right (white supremacist) rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, August 2017.

T3: I'd be really curious to know what people working in predominantly white areas, what their perspective was, because I think for me, maybe, as a young teacher just starting, the reason why it's really been highlighted to me is that our students are so diverse. And it seems wrong to teach them a narrow, English-based curriculum that's not necessarily their total history. So, I would be interested in what somebody working with predominantly white children would think about how kids would receive a more diverse curriculum. And also, whether they think that it's important for them.

T2: It is interesting that all this is happening and that debate's just not impacting, or it doesn't seem to be. I was looking at some of the literature from the Historical Association about their conference and it just seems very tokenistic. And then you have the ongoing issue of who is doing the speaking, who are giving the keynote speeches, who are giving the seminars, who are they? And that's horribly un-diverse.

T3: Every single person I was taught by at university was white European. I think my university was very diverse. Durham. Not in terms of the people that went to Durham: in terms of the modules that were offered there was a lot of diversity. I got to experience a lot of history from around the world I never saw at school. But it's too late, you can't engage someone in history at university.

3.7 SCHOOL C: State-maintained Catholic Girls' School in West London

Year 11:

Student A-F11C (Jamaica)

Student B-F11C (Ireland)

Student C-F11C (India)

Student D-F11C (Kenya/Somalia)

Student E-F11C (Zimbabwe/Nigeria)

Student F-F11C (Ghana-1)

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2)

Student H-F11C (Ghana-3)

Student I-F11C (Ireland/Grenada)

Interviewer: Martin Spafford

Also present: two female history teachers (C-FT1 (Irish) and C-FT2 (Black British (East African))).

11th May 2018

Q: [Q1]: OK, my first question is just a simple thing. Thinking back on all the time that you've been in school – that's primary school as well as secondary school – can you just tell me any of the things that you remember studying that had to do with empire or colonies or colonialism or decolonisation or anything of that kind? And just tell me some examples of things you remember studying.

Student D-F11C (Kenya/Somalia): Vikings and Tudors.

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): In Year 9 we learned about Claudia Jones and Native Americans, and the American colonies.

Q: So that's quite a big thing. Can you tell me a bit more about what you learned?

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): So, we learned about the way in which Native Americans were depicted by the English, and how the English kind of justified their reasons as to why they went to America and colonised the Native Americans. We learned about the relationship between the colonies and the Native Americans, the Native American people that were originally from there, and then we learned about Claudia Jones, her activism and how, through her, Carnival is a big thing in London now. Yes, that's pretty much it.

Q: Thank you, and you mentioned Vikings and Tudors, so how did that connect with empire?

Student D-F11C (Kenya/Somalia): It was in primary school.

Q: What do you remember of that?

Student D-F11C (Kenya/Somalia): Nothing. *[laughter]*

Q: You can just throw in some topics, that's perfectly fine.

?: We learned about Nazi Germany in Year 9.

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): And in primary school.

Q: Yes, it tends to come back again and again. Any examples that you can think of, of when you looked at empire or colonies, colonialism?

?: I kind of learned about British holidays and why they are important to British people.

Q: Ah, what was that? Can you tell me a bit more about that?

?: Sort of, like coronations and, like, the royal family and *[unclear]*

Q: Excellent, excellent. Anything else? Anybody? So, let me just throw in some different parts of the world and see what's come up in your history lessons at any time, that you can remember from those different parts of the world. So, have you at any time learned anything about islands in the Caribbean?

Student A-F11C (Jamaica): Well, we did learn about how, like specially from the Caribbean, how slaves from Africa were taken to the Caribbean, and that's kind of how the Caribbean islands started. And with Ireland, we did learn about how Britain colonised Ireland and also removed people from, Irish people from Ireland and brought in Scottish people, on the Ulster plantations but, yes.

Q: What's happening now is it's coming back now, isn't it? And that's great because I was going to ask about Ireland. How about North America? I mean, you've mentioned some aspects of North America. Any other aspects of North America, Canada, USA that you've studied?

Student D-F11C (Kenya/Somalia): What's North America?

Q: North America would be USA, Canada, Mexico.

Student D-F11C (Kenya/Somalia): They had a war of independence when they were arguing over, because they didn't have self-determination because the British government was controlling them, but they were in America. They wanted independence from the government.

Q: This isn't a test by the way! *[laughter]*. Some of you look a bit as though I'm trying to find out how much you remember. It's not a test, honestly. It's genuinely just trying to see. And there's no shame in not remembering things, ok? I promise. What about South Asia – India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, what's now India, Sri Lanka? Any of that part of the world? Have you done anything in relation to that part of the world?

Student C-F11C (India): Yes, I learned about how the British came to India and everything what the Indians did to get rid of the British. So, when the British came to India, India was, like, very strong and rich and it was ruled by different kings, like it's a huge place and there's different kingdoms there. So, they were not able to conquer India because they're multicultural. We have different languages and backgrounds. So, yes, the British came up with different ideas and one was 'divide and rule'. So, they started breaking the kingdom, breaking the whole of India into parts, and that's how they conquered India.

Q: And when did you study that?

Student C-F11C (India): Year 6.

Q: That was in Year 6?

[impressed surprise from other students and laughter – 'woo!']

Q: You were obviously different primary schools. Was that a ‘woo!’ because [names Student C-F11C] studied that, or is it a ‘woo!’ because she remembers it so well?

All: She remembers it!

Q: OK, well anyone anything else about India at all, and the empire in India? Let me go to a different part of the world – Africa. Oh, something else coming in your mind, I think.

?: Mangal Pandey?³⁶

?: They made shampoo. *[laughter]*

Student A-F11C (Jamaica): I was thinking of, you when the soldiers, it was with that, I’ve forgotten what it’s called but, like, the gun they were using to fire and how it used, was it beef? Something – ah beef and pork – so it’s easier to do the whole thing with the gun. And how the Indians that were recruited in the army at the time, because due to their religion they couldn’t really use it because it was against their religion. And the British weren’t changing it, so that kind of caused like a, a rebellion, yes that’s what ...

?: I was going to say how the British, they made it seems as if it was, I’ve forgotten what the word is but they made it seem as if it was just the army people turning against them –

?: Mutiny

?: Yes, mutiny, but it was actually a rebellion, yes.

Q: OK – and I saw somebody waving her hand over here ... Fantastic. When did you study that?

?: Year 11.

Q: That was Year 11. Isn’t that interesting, that it’s kind of easier to remember the things from way back sometimes, than the things that are recent? Maybe that’s the effect of all these exam revisions going on at the moment and the three hundred different subjects. At which point I do have to say I appreciate you giving your time at such a moment just before exams. What about Africa? What have you studied that in any way relates to Africa?

[laughter]

?: Want to do it?

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): OK, right, so the English kind of saw Africa as an opportunity to make as much money as they can from resources such as palm oil or maybe gold. So, for example, I know about Ghana is that Ghana was quite rich in gold – I think that’s probably why they called Ghana the Gold Coast. So, they would kind of use us for our gold, and that’s how they made a lot of money. And then they also in other countries in Africa, maybe the Niger region palm oil was a big thing, they used to make just things like – a lot of African food is centred around palm oil – they also used palm oil for, I don’t know ...

?: Chocolate.

³⁶ Mangal Pandey (1827-1857) was an Indian soldier who played a key part in the events immediately preceding the outbreak of the Indian rebellion of 1857, and although condemned at the time by the British East India Company is now seen as a fighter for Indian independence. He was a sepoy in the 34th Bengal Native Infantry regiment (of the British East India Company). He was executed by hanging at Barrackpore. In 1984, the Indian government issued a postage stamp to remember him.

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): No, things like ...

?: Hair.

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): Etcetera, so yes, the British kind of saw Africa as an opportunity to expand their wealth, and then they also used Africa for slaves, so there's a place in Ghana called Elmina Castle,³⁷ and that's the castle where they took the slaves and they kind of sold the slaves around. And a lot of tribes in Ghana used to actually sell people to the English people, so that they can become slaves. So, and Ghana was under English rule until Kwame Nkrumah³⁸ who freed us from the British Empire.

?: And I was going to say that in primary school the only time we learned about Africa was, like, charity and we had to give money to them. But here in secondary school we learned about, like, figures in, like, Ghana like Kwame Nkrumah and how he helped, like, the Ghanaian people and how he started the decolonisation in Africa.

Q: What year was that, that you -?

?: This year.

Q: So, this is your GCSE course.

?: Yes.

Q: Other parts of Africa than west Africa – southern Africa, north Africa, have you studied anything really?

Student H-F11C (Ghana-3): Yes, we did go over South Africa and we talked about how in modern day Zimbabwe – well it used to be called Rhodesia because of Cecil Rhodes who was, kind of, just using Zimbabwe for the, for like the diamonds that they had, not just Zimbabwe but, like, in that region. And he owned, like nine tenths of the world's diamonds and he, like, he was just using modern day Zimbabwe for its resources and to make money, as she said.

Q: Thank you, and was that again in Year 11?

Student H-F11C (Ghana-3): Yes.

Q: So, I know you do the AQA Migration and Empires course. Is that, these have all been part of that?

Student H-F11C (Ghana-3): Yes.

Q: Have you at any time over these primary and secondary, studied anything with relation to the Middle East? Or the Mediterranean. Places like Cyprus, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, anything around ...

All: Egypt, yes.

Q: Go on, yes, tell me.

Student C-F11C (India): So, these Mughals, they're from Persia, somewhere like that, Middle East so, yes, that's how they came to India, along the Silk Road or somewhere, and that's how conquered India.

³⁷ Elmina Castle was, like Cape Coast Castle, a slave castle in what is now Ghana, and for many Africans the last place in their homeland that they saw before being transported. It was originally built by the Portuguese in the 15th century.

³⁸ Kwame Nkrumah: was a pan-Africanist and a campaigner for independence in the British colony of The Gold Coast. He became prime minister of Ghana (1957-1960) while Ghana was a dominion under Elizabeth II, and after it became a republic (attaining full independence) he was President from 1960 to 1966 when he was ousted in a military coup.

Q: Was this Year 6 again, that you're remembering from?

Student C-F11C (India): Yes.

Q: Fantastic and so not so much about that part of the world. What about eastern Asia – China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, that part of the world? Or on towards Australia, New Zealand or the islands of the Pacific. Anything with relation to that part of the world? By the way, no problem if you haven't. It's just to know.

?: Would Singapore, is Singapore included in that?

Q: Yes, sure.

?: Well we just, we kind of covered the fact that, so like, Britain was, had rule over Singapore and was, like, we'll protect you, like they had like a sort of invincible front. And then Japan, you know, wanted to call their bluff and say that, you're lying, you're not as strong as you think you are and, well, that's when the fall of Singapore happened.

Q: When are we talking about? What period of history was this?

?: Oh, I don't remember.

Q: Second World War.

?: Definitely the Second World War. *[laughter]*

Q: OK that's great. The final question of, sort of, what you remember is, have you done any study of anything – you mentioned Claudia Jones and Carnival – what else with relation to Black and ethnic minority peoples in Britain, and the history of the peoples in Britain? Anything that you've studied at any point over the years.

[murmured discussion]

Q: It looks like you're coming up with some ideas. Go for it.

?: I just know names.

Q: Sure, that's fine.

?: Like, I know the surname was Equanu, and there was another guy, his surname was Sanchez, or I could be wrong.

Q: I think you're probably talking about Olaudah Equiano³⁹ and Ignatius Sancho⁴⁰ who were Africans living in Britain in the 18th century and when they were born had been enslaved. Equiano was probably taken in slavery when he was a boy, and Sancho was actually born on a slave ship. And when did you study them?

?: Recently, so this year as well.

³⁹ Olaudah Equiano (c.1745-c.1797) was born in Eboe, in what is now southern Nigeria, and was sold twice into enslavement in the Caribbean. He bought his freedom in 1766, and in 1789 his influential autobiography: *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Or Gustavus Vassa, The African*, was published. He became an active abolitionist.

⁴⁰ Ignatius Sancho (c. 1729-1780) was also an author who made a bid for freedom, but in his case in London. Ryan Hanley has written chapters about Olaudah Equiano and Ignatius Sancho, seeking to re-position them as mainstream writers in his *Beyond slavery and abolition: Black British writing, c.1770-1830* (Cambridge University Press, 2019). David Olusoga has also written about both men in his *Black and British* (Pan, 2016).

Q: OK. Great, well you know, thank you very much for things that you've remembered. My next question is, when – and this question is on purpose aware of your own family heritages, OK? And as you've been listening and studying these topics, how have you felt about, first of all how have you just felt about learning about these topics?

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): Represented.

?: Proud.

Q: Can you expand on that a bit more?

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): Because I don't know about Ghana, I know some stuff, I don't know everything, so then when I'm learning about it I feel proud because I know, like, more stuff and then it's like, because when you learn about other stuff it's, like, ok whatever – not whatever, like *[laughter]* – but, like, I have to learn it. But then I wanted to learn about my country and I felt, like ...

Q: So your family origins are in Ghana?

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): Yes.

Q: OK, because you talked about studying this this year. Was this the first time that any Ghanaian history had come to you, in Year 11?

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): Yes.

Q: And obviously it had a big impact on you. Were these things that you already knew something about?

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): I knew something, like I went to visit his memorial but I was just going there because he was the President, but I didn't know what he actually did. So then, like, I learned more about him.

Q: You said represented.

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): Yes, because before, when, so the thing of history, I'm kind of used to learning about the Tudors etcetera, and then I started, kind of, getting interested in history when I stopped learning about things I couldn't relate to. So, when we started learning about more minorities, that's when I started getting more involved in history. So when learning about Ghana I can kind of relate what I already know to it and, like I can, my mum knows things and when I mention it she knows things as well, so it kind of brings us together and also brings, like, the classroom together because, like, everyone's kind of relating to, maybe, their own culture. So, like how a lot of people here, their cultures are being represented in this syllabus. So, things like that and, yes, it's just mostly that we're being represented in history.

Q: What do the rest of you feel? Do you have similar feelings or ...?

?: More or less similar, kind of the same because even though I learn very little about where I come from even though we do stuff, I still feel happy that people know that, kind of feel like I exist a bit more.

Q: Interesting. So, it sounds as though it's not only about – I don't what to put words in your mouth but you were talking about the importance of it for yourselves but you, it seems, were also saying the importance of it for other students as well. Is that right? Have I interpreted correctly what you're thinking? I suppose this is the moment to go round and ask you actually where your family origins are. So, you're Ghana. Yours are?

Student F-F11C (Ghana-1): Ghana.

Student H-F11C (Ghana-3): Ghana. *[laughter]*

Student I-F11C (Ireland/Grenada): I'm half Irish, half Caribbean.

Q: Which island?

Student I-F11C: (Ireland/Grenada) Grenada.

Student A-F11C (Jamaica): Jamaica.

Student B-F11C (Ireland): Irish.

Q: We'll come back to people of Ireland because I picked up a bit, we didn't do it yet ...

Student C-F11C (India): India.

Q: I'm going to ask you something, [*names Student C-F11C*], because you remembered so much of what you studied of Indian history in Year 6. Is that, do you remember a lot of the other history that you did in Year 6, or is it particularly the Indian history?

Student C-F11C (India): Oh, I learned all of this back in India because my family was back in India, so [*unclear*] need to learn about my country because I could connect to my roots. And then when I came here like two years back and we learned about the Tudors, about the Caribbean and all of the things, the slavery and everything involved in Africa. But then, just about like three or four months back when we learned about India, like oh! That's something interesting. I could connect back to my country and I was like, yes, I know about this and it's going to be fun.

Q: That's interesting, that point about connection. Representation, connection, pride – those different things you are saying. Where were your family origins?

Student D-F11C (Kenya/Somalia): Kenya and Somalia.

Student E-F11C (Zimbabwe/Nigeria): Zimbabwe and Nigeria.

Q: I want to come back to, because I realise that you mentioned Ireland a little bit and I didn't really stress it, but if we're sort of talking about the history of the British Empire a very, very early part of that, of course, is Ireland and I was wondering, to what extent has Irish history been something that you've learned over the years at all?

Student B-F11C (Ireland): A little. We did a little this year, because I don't think many people know about Irish history and the oppressions and the famine. But we touched upon it, on the famine and oppression and the propaganda towards the Irish, because I didn't even know about the propaganda. I knew about the, my mum told me about the famine and the oppression but ...

Q: And so, so you had some Irish history knowledge from your family before?

Student B-F11C (Ireland): Yes.

Q: And did you have the same?

Student I-F11C (Ireland/Grenada): Yes.

Q: And how, I suppose my next question is, you felt, everything here was very positive feelings that people have said about the study. Have there been any negative feelings when any of these things have been studied in school?

Student I-F11C (Ireland/Grenada): I guess negative things, that you see how your country was treated by the British and you definitely feel resentment towards them because in retro-think you see it as, why would they do it to you? Like there was no real valid reason for them to do it to you – or not to you but to your ancestors and whatnot. And so, I guess that's where the negativity comes in. But then again, it's

positive that your history's being talked about and that it's not just based on British history because we're in Britain.

Q: You were going to say something as well?

Student B-F11C (Ireland): It's basically the same.

?: I don't know if it's relevant. I wouldn't say, not when we're learning Ghana, I feel like maybe with other countries when we're learning it this year, obviously there are some people in the class that would connect to it more. And I feel like, maybe for the other people, because we see that they don't have the same, like, connection and, like, interest, you may not feel that good. But not with when we're learning Ghana but, like, other countries.

Q: Some of you clearly, within your own families, have had experience about learning – you've talked about that a bit. Is that common to all of you or were any of you, finding that when your culture's history was being taught in school, that that was the first time you'd come across it? Did anybody have that experience?

[no response]

Q: So, you all had some experience from family, from home, in some way or other?

[general agreement]

Q: OK, so that leads me into the next question which is – I know it's sort of embarrassing because you've got your teacher here, I also know how open and inclusive the history teachers are here – how have you felt about the way it's been taught?

?: Great. *[laughter]*

Q: In a sense it's helpful. These are bits of history that are important to you in the way that you've said that they are. **So how have you felt about the way it's been taught, and how have you felt about the way's been received in the classroom? (Q2)**

Teacher: You can be honest, like, seriously.

[some embarrassed laughter]

Q: It's really helpful to the teachers.

?: I think it was taught well because – well she's there but – I think she has the same enthusiasm for every single culture and, like, the people in our class that were from that culture, she would speak to them about it, it wasn't like she cared more about the Irish one's as she's Irish.

?: Yes, I think Miss was really inclusive, especially like, she tried to encourage the people whose country it was to, especially like to be involved with it. But also tried to, like, teach the other people, whether it was their culture or not.

?: Before we did it she was telling everyone that what we were going to be learning, and it got us excited and stuff, and the lessons were fun.

?: I think her enthusiasm kind of rubbed off on us a bit as well.

Q: Were you all in the same class?

?: No

Q: any other thoughts? I must say that they can be suggestions to improve as well because, actually for us as teachers we don't often get a chance to hear that from students. And remember, the school will

not be named! But it does sound to me as though you've found it a positive experience even though the stories sometimes have been hard.

[general agreement]

Q: OK, so that kind of leads me into another area to think about. Thinking about the teaching of these topics in school and just your knowledge of the history of empire and colonialism – which is a story which results in all of you being here, and your teachers – how do you feel about the relationship between your identity as British and your identity as Caribbean, African, Irish, Indian? What are your kind of feelings about that when you think about the history? Difficult one but an interesting one.

?: I don't really understand.

Q: OK, I might actually, I'll get the actual words of the question from here.

Teacher: It's like the cricket test.

Q: Yes, it is. I'll read out the question in the words they had it here because I think they say it better than I did just then. **How do you see the relationship between your own identity and your own history, like the history of the members of your family, your family history and so on – so your sense of who you are. How do you see the relationship between that and being British in whatever way you feel that you are British? What's the relationship between them? Q3**

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): Kind of, like, I always have discussion about this and how it's interesting if people from other countries will ask you where you're from, you may say 'I'm from London'. But within London if people ask you where you're from you say where you're originally from. So, if people ask me where I'm from I would say 'I'm from Ghana'. So then when learning about it you feel kind of guilty about being – not proud but – you like saying you're British sometimes. But when you learn about what Britain has done to your country you're just, kind of, like, right! Things like, kind of, X-Factor or East Enders, you love talking about East Enders to people. Or like saying 'Ah yes, England has the best TV or the best comedy' and you kind of feel guilty about that because England hasn't really treated your country well but you feel connected to English culture but also to your own culture. So, you're not really, you wouldn't say you're English but you'd say that you were from that country but you are connected to England in some way, yes.

Q: That is really fascinating, and deep actually. I've forgotten your name.

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): [names herself]

Q: *[mishears] [gets the beginning of the name wrong] [laughter]* Do you see that as primarily a positive thing or not?

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): Well, I know I kind of said I feel guilty about it, but I kind of like being English, because in contrast with America and how race is such a big thing – but obviously in London race is such a big thing but I feel like it's more class. But in America it's like, oh you're Black, you're white, but in England – in London especially, going like in the bus, everyone in that bus speaks a different language and everyone's from a different country and I kind of feel proud about that. But like other things, when you think about the fact that maybe the Queen's crown jewels or the Queen's gold is maybe from your country, and you kind of feel resentment towards that. But then you also feel proud about the fact that you live in London, and you'd rather live in London than anywhere else in the world.

Q: So, do you think therefore that as a Ghanaian British person, do you feel more comfortable about being a Londoner, about being English or about being British?

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): Londoner. I think it's more about London. Because London's more diverse than any other – well not any other, like most places in England, yes.

Q: Anyone else got feelings on these questions?

Student B-F11C (Ireland): I mean the similarity that, not a similarity but you're basically your identity because of a British Man, and I feel like if it wasn't because of that British Man we wouldn't be who we are today. I feel like being connected through a British Empire is a big thing because, like, me being Irish, because of the famine, because of a British Man who couldn't, he didn't see the fact that, ah, because of business I need to do this to the farm, that's 'like' because a British Man you needed – like in quotations – to go to someone else, somewhere else to do better for your country. I don't know, I think because of the patriarchal society we still live in today, the British Man thinks he's superior to everyone else.

Q: That's really interesting.

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): Well, I was going to say that sometimes I pick and choose! *[laughs]*. *[Unclear]* like different people, like I show a more Ghanaian side to me, or like I'll – not act London, act British but, like, I act a certain way because being British sometimes gets you places *[laughter]*. I wouldn't say it's like a negative thing but I'm from two countries so then I have to be like that. And then I don't know what it is to be British, I just know I live here so I have to follow a country's rules, but I'm still Ghanaian and I have a Ghanaian community around me, yes.

Q: There's an interesting thing I'm reminded of that a friend of mine once said: 'I'm 100% British and I'm 100% Pakistani, and I'm 100% Muslim. It just depends where I am and who I'm with, which of those I'm going to be. *[general agreement]* They're all 100% even though that doesn't make mathematical sense. For the record, there's a lot of nodding going on round here.

Student F-F11C (Ghana-1): Yes, I agree with that because I feel that when we step out of England, I have family in Germany and when we go there we're always arguing about whether England is better and stuff, like trivial things like whose Netflix is better, but as soon as we come to school and anyone were to ask, that's when you really see, like our Ghanaian side and stuff like that.

Q: So, picking up from that, again I think I know the answer to this but it's a question to you. Does school feel like a place that you can fully express your Ghanaian, your Jamaican, your Somali, Kenyan whatever, your Indian identity, or not?

?: I definitely think so because of how, so we're in London and it's pretty diverse. Not the most but it is, and, because our school's really diverse. Like you have connection to other people who are from where you're from, so you're able to express your ethnicity side or whatever, which I think's really helpful and, yes, you can just meet a lot of people that are like you, which I think is really nice.

Q: Interesting. Anyone else want to throw in some thoughts?

Student I-F11C (Ireland/Grenada): Being mixed race I don't really, like – what did you say? *[laughter]* Like, fitting in, people like you, being mixed-race I don't get that as easily so I feel like I have to assimilate. So, if I was hanging out with a load of Irish girls then I could talk about all Irish stuff but if I was hanging out different friends who are from the Caribbean or African I could talk about stuff we have in common, like it's different depending, or not, like for me, I feel embarrassed talking about stuff that I might have in common with Caribbean or African girls to Irish girls, or vice versa, being embarrassed about talking about Irish things with ...

Q: Do you feel culturally equally both, or not?

Student I-F11C (Ireland/Grenada): Yes. I mean, I go to Ireland a lot more and I see more of my Irish family because it's a lot closer and cheaper, but I still feel completely connected to my dad's side because, I mean I still have family here and we celebrate the culture equally like I do with my Irish side.

Q: And do you feel a particular connection to other mixed ...

Student I-F11C (Ireland-Grenada): I find I'm more, like, interested. Even if I see a mixed-race kid with a white mum, I'm still interested, I wonder what people see. Because it was very emba..., not embarrassing but it was really, I was a really anxious kid having a white mum, and I've grown out of that, I'm completely comfortable but it's still, I still feel empathetic with, I mean the world is changing, there's so many more mixed-race people in the world now.

Q: It's going to be the biggest minority ...

: Yes.

Q: ... in the next census in the country.

Student I-F11C (Ireland/Grenada): So, but, yes, I feel empathetic now with mixed race kids. I wonder what they're thinking when they see me or when others see them.

Q: Very, very interesting. Any other thoughts? Ok, let me move on then. I've sort of got, I think I've kind of covered how far you feel that it's reflected in what you're taught. One further question. Before you got to Year 11 – I mean clearly the teaching, the Migration and Empire course has had a big impact on you, I can feel that from the things you've been saying – if I'd been asking you about these questions before you did that course, say a year ago or two years ago, would you have felt differently about what was taught in school? **Or did you already feel that it was inclusive and that, if you like, you were represented in the curriculum anyway? Q4 (Q5 and Q6 are subsumed in subsequent conversation)**

?: I don't think it was very fair because, I don't know, I'm like, so I just look at it, OK we learn about Vikings, we learn about all these white people, these white men especially, but Black people, Black history isn't taught at all. Black History Month, it isn't something that is spoken about every day, like I actually felt bad for people, like personally because they are, they had a huge impact on history so I don't understand why it's not spoken about more.

Q: Interesting. What sort of things *are* done in Black History Month?

All: Martin Luther King!

Q: So American, basically.

All: Yes.

?: I feel like it's the most popular Black people, the most influential. Well not the most influential but, like, they kind of overlook what other Black people have done to get to that certain point, which I think is not entirely fair. I'm glad that we're doing Black history but can we at least do a lot of it? Not just the front page of it.

?: They just put a poster person, and run with it for years.

?: I feel like it's easier to teach about Martin Luther King⁴¹ because he kind of taught, obviously which is a good thing, that everyone should be equal, so you kind of relate it to your own thing. So, you don't have to really talk about the Black rebellion, or how Malcolm X⁴² believed that we should get civil rights through another route. So, it's kind of easier to teach about it because maybe your students won't get angry, your students won't be like 'Yes, I want to do this too!' I feel like, I think teaching about

⁴¹ Martin Luther King Jnr (1929-1968) chose peaceful forms of demonstration to fight for Black rights in the USA. He led the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott. He is famous for his 'I have a dream' speech (1963) which followed a march on Washington. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964

⁴² Malcolm X (1925-1965) favoured a policy of Black self-organisation and Black-led community action to achieve Black civil rights. He like King was assassinated.

Martin Luther King and maybe Rosa Parks⁴³ is easier than teaching about other people who kind of stood up for Black rights.

Q: I'll throw in here that I was talking in another school and we were talking about how everybody knows about Rosa Parks but very few people know about Asquith Xavier⁴⁴ or Paul Stephenson⁴⁵. Do you know who they are?

All: No.

Q: Well, Paul Stephenson led the Bristol Bus Boycott that, when Bristol bus company refused to have Black drivers, and there was a big bus boycott in Bristol in 1963, and the bus company finally gave in and employed a Sikh bus driver on the day of the 'I Have a Dream' speech in America. And Asquith Xavier was originally from Dominica in the Caribbean and he fought singlehandedly, fought the 'colour bar' at Euston Station. When he applied for a job at Euston Station as an experienced railwayman he was told by letter 'We're not going to employ you because you're Black.' And he fought and won and it had an impact on the changes to the law in this country. So, they're parallel to Rosa Parks, but they're here. But hardly known. Bristol Bus Boycott's known in Bristol but very little beyond that. I mean it's quite interesting that it's, and it's the same right across the country, it tends to be American Black history that people know more than British.

?: I was going to say that I didn't really notice that, like, I wasn't represented, like I thought it was just normal because in primary school you just learned about Vikings and Tudors so it's like that's what you have to learn in History. I didn't know you could learn about other stuff, so then when we learned in Year 10 about Claudia Jones and stuff, that's when I became more engaged in history, like I knew I wanted to pick it as a subject later on because I didn't know you could learn more about Black people.

Q: And Claudia Jones and Carnival is an amazing history, isn't it?

Student I-F11C (Ireland/Grenada): I don't know how Irish people themselves feel but I feel, like, up until we started learning about other Irish people and stuff, I feel like lots of people just thought Irish history was British history, English history. I don't know how they feel but I feel, like, it was cool to learn they had their own separate history, they're not just other English people in a different place.

Q: I think the first answer to any question was your one when you also talked about Irish people who were transplanted to the Caribbean or in exile. It was you? Sorry, I do apologise [*laughs*]. Sorry about that! It does take me to something: you have, you've mentioned that you've mentioned but hardly mentioned, and that's the story of slavery and enslavement. I mean, you talked about it when you talked about the Gold Coast and Elmina and so on. When was the story of enslavement taught and how did you feel about it when it was?

All: When was it done? / I just remember knowing it. I've never –

Q: It hasn't been taught?

?: I don't know, I just, never got taught. [*general agreement*] I just kind of know about it.

All: We know about it, we all know.

?: We just know. It's not really something that we've done, there was never a lesson on slavery.

⁴³ Rosa Parks (1913-2005) was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery Alabama, and this led to a Bus Boycott led by Martin Luther King.

⁴⁴ Asquith Xavier (1920-1980) 'fought singlehandedly, fought the 'colour bar' at Euston Station'. A plaque at the station commemorates his achievements.

⁴⁵ Paul Stephenson (born 1937) (more details are given closer to the beginning of this document) was a youth-worker who was involved in organising the Bristol Bus Boycott in 1963.

Q: The reason I'm interested in that is I filled that in because, that's very interesting because it's unusual. If there's one topic that tends to turn up a lot in schools. I mean, I was at a school two weeks ago and that was the *only* Black history they'd been taught. That was the only thing they ever came across, and it was Black students who were very uncomfortable when it was taught, and so on. But you haven't been taught that, certainly at secondary school. Is that, because that's such a topic that so often is in people's minds and comes up, how do you feel about the fact that it hasn't been taught? Do you think that's a positive or a negative? It could be either.

?: I think sometimes slavery can overtake all of Black history, and we all know that it happened, it happened a lot, and I think learning about other stuff that led up to it or the impact that it had on countries and stuff is – not more important but ...

Q: It seems to me it's sort of, it's been in the background of learning about empire but not in the foreground. Maybe that's as it should be, really. I remember hearing somebody once speak and say 'If you look at African history, and if African history is a line like this, then the period of slavery is a little bit like that; and if you look at history in schools, then slavery is like that.' Not much else. But that's not been true in your case, that's not been true in your experience. You've talked about other things. We've talked, a big part of this discussion, perhaps inevitably because of who's round the table, has been about Black history. And you've talked, [*names student C-F11C*], very powerfully about Year 6, learning about Indian history. Has India been covered since Year 6 for you?

Student C-F11C (India): Yes.

Q: In what ways?

Student C-F11C (India): So, we started, like, from the beginning, about the different regional rulers in the kingdoms, like the Indian rulers. And then ...

Q: I'm going to stop you – but was this here in this country?

Student C-F11C (India): No.

Q: I'm interested, forgive me, what you studied in India is fascinating but just in terms of this country – so you studied all those things in India?

Student C-F11C (India): India.

Q: At what age did you come here?

Student C-F11C (India): 14.

Q: 14, so that Year 6 experience was a Year 6 in Indi ...? So here in Britain, from age 14, has the curriculum covered India at all?

Student C-F11C (India): No. I feel like only the people, like people who have experience or maybe a person of that nationality, can do justice to that subject. So, for me on a personal level, a white teacher or maybe a Black teacher wouldn't be able to explain what exactly happened in India. Only people who experienced that, maybe studied that in depth, would be able to explain that.

Q: So, does that mean that it's fine that you haven't studied it in school because you feel it wouldn't have been taught successfully by a teacher who's not Indian. Is that right?

Student C-F11C (India): mm hmm [*agrees*]

Q: That's an interesting question. I'm going to throw that one round. How important is it that, I mean you have an African and an Irish teacher sitting here behind me, How important? ... You mentioned that fact, you mentioned the fact that Miss was Irish at one point, one of you – what about if you were

being taught these topics and it was a white English teacher, let's say a white English man who was teaching you. [laughter]. Would that make a difference?

?: Yes.

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): My teacher's a white English man. [laughter]

Q: But you still felt represented in the course!

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): Yes, but like a lot of things that I know are because I kind of go out of my way to learn those things, to feel connected to my culture. I feel like the way in which it's taught to me personally in school, I don't know, I don't want to, I kind of feel a bit like robbed of the fact that I kind of can't connect in the class, because maybe our class doesn't really care about that. So, I kind of have to do my own thing and learn it. I remember before we even learned in Year 11 I kind of started watching documentaries about Ghana and stuff just to kind of be more connected to my culture. That's why I know most of the things that I know now. But I feel like the teacher's important but also the class is important, and class participation is really important, and discussions are really important. And I feel like if you're going to teach history you should really kind of take it away from the textbook and have discussion because I feel like history relates to everyone here. It's kind of one of the subjects that's less of a textbook type of work but there's more like discussion and how it relates to you. So, I feel like history's really important to be taught ...

?: Properly.

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): ... through, like, discussion and stuff instead of textbooks maybe. I don't think the teacher's quite ... I don't think getting taught by a white male is ... I don't know because I don't know how it isn't taught. Because I've been taught migration by a white male, I haven't been taught by someone else, so I don't really feel how it might, I don't know how it is not being taught by a white male so I don't know – but I kind of feel a dreadful disconnect sometimes.

?: My class engages.

Student C-F11C (India): Can I say something on that? Way back in India in Year 7 or 8 we learned about Black history but that was like, majority of the syllabus was about India and then it was just like one topic dedicated to African history and about the Caribbeans and the slave trade. So, I felt like, justice wasn't done to this. And then, like, when I came here and I started learning about African history and all of that I was like, oh, there's a lot more than how much I was taught. So yes, it does make a difference.

Q: That's really very interesting. You were going to say something.

?: I think it does depend on the teacher because, as she said, she wouldn't know, she's had him for I don't know how long she's had him, but I feel like when it comes to, like, breaktimes and we've just had history, the way we talk about history and what we've just learned is a lot different to the way she ...

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): I talk about it, ah maybe I have to do this page for history and then they're like, ah, we've had a discussion about this. It's kind of really different.

Q: Why is it different? Just to be clear. I think I get what you're saying but explain for the tape.

?: The way it's taught it's like, obviously what's in the textbook, then, I don't know how to say it, she has like a PowerPoint and then she explains the, like, basic knowledge, and then we discuss it and we all try and relate to it in fact.

Q: Because it's a discussion way of learning, it's a great deal of discussion which is kind of what [names Student G-F11C [Ghana-2]] was saying she wanted more of. Yes? I mean that thing about the

importance of discussion, is that agreed generally? In another school I was at, they similarly said that's what they wanted more of and didn't have in their school particularly. OK, before I get to the final question, one more thing just about you. How many of you are likely to do history as an A Level? Wow, I'm seeing one, two, three, four, five, six, seven – and you're not sure, I think? So out of eight people that's quite a lot. How many of you think it's possible – of course you wouldn't know – is it possible that history is something you might take forward to university? I'm seeing kind of one – and you think you might be a history teacher?

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): Not really. *[laughter]*

Q: I put you on the spot because you're the only one that put your hand up!

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): I don't know about a teacher but maybe something else to do with history.

Q: Sure.

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): Or politics, I don't know.

Q: To explain the background to that one, because we had that discussion about how important was it that, if you like, that your teachers came from backgrounds that experienced colonisation, ok, and you've got an Irish and an African teacher in your history department, and also your teacher who's now on maternity is also a Black teacher, there's a very concerning – in my view – statistic which is in the, if you look at the subjects taught, the teachers who teach subjects, if you break down all teachers in Britain – we know this from government statistics that we requested from a public information request – if you look at the ethnic breakdown of all teachers in schools in Britain, the number of Black teachers for every subject is about right compared with the proportion of Black teachers totally. So, I don't know what the proportion is but I think it's about 11% of all teachers. I'm talking specifically of African and Caribbean origin here, not of Asian origin, Asian it's more equal, but if it's about 11% then 11% of maths teachers are Black, of science teachers, of IT teachers, of business teachers, of English teachers and so on. The only one that's different is history and the proportion of Black teachers goes right down. Your school is really unusual. Really, really unusual. There are very, very few Black teachers of history, in spite of the fact that most Black families are fascinated by history. And we're kind of trying, people are trying to explore why that's true, but it is true. I can see some surprised, intrigued faces there but it's a fact. Whether it's because of what's taught in schools and people not feeling represented in the content, whether it's parents telling their kids when they choose GCSEs and A Levels that history won't get you a job, we're not sure. It's not true, by the way, that it won't get you a job! OK, my final question to you is, would you like to see any changes in what is taught in school, and if so, what?

?: Is everyone doing migration in the whole of England?

Q: No, very few. Quite a few schools in – there are various different migration courses and there's a few schools, but it's still a handful.

?: If it was taught from primary school upwards then that wouldn't be bad, but like if it was compulsory for everyone to do, like, more Black history from primary school and less of Tudors and stuff because we already know it. I think a lot of people in England need to learn about English history more because they kind of say, not stupid but ignorant statements like, 'Ah, you're not properly English' or 'You need to stop coming to our country' like that. I think everyone who's in England needs to learn about English history more and, like, the British Empire and stuff.

Q: I can see some nodding around the room. Any other thoughts? Things that you would want to change. What about in your own school? Because you do study migration and empire here in the school.

?: I would like *[unclear but something about wanting more history lessons]*

Q: How many do you have in the week?

?: Three. Two lessons and one double lesson. Like one period ... three periods. *[general discussion]*

Q: that is generous by most school standards, I tell you. The norm is three hours a fortnight *[NB Martin Spafford note: I was inaccurate, thinking of KS3. At GCSE it's probably five hours a fortnight]*

?: And at key stage 3 we get two hours, two fifty minutes which is a lot.

Q: For a lot of schools it would be an hour a week at key stage 3.

?: I feel like we don't really go into the Ottoman Empire much and I feel like that would be a subject. Like it's not my culture but it's still something I want to learn about because I want to be able to not be ignorant towards other people's cultures, and I want to see where they're coming from. So, I may not be able to assimilate with them but I can still, like, I know enough to not say something stupid.

Q: Because when I asked about the Middle East there wasn't anything. And I mean, I don't know if you do any Islamic history at all.

?: We know about them but we don't really go into them. We know that they created the astrolabe but we don't go so deep into them to know about a lot of things that they've covered. So, kind of what we want for Black history they would want for their history too.

?: I think, obviously speaking from people who chose history, but in Year 7 to Year 9 I don't know *[unclear]* we still learned history but it was about Tudors and stuff and I fell, like, that should be changed, we should learn a bit more. Because when we speak to people who chose geography over history, they're like they don't care, 'we don't care about the Tudors' and it's like, it's more than just what you heard in Year 7.

Q: And actually, if that's the case all the things you've talked about, about the opportunity to study history of empire and Black history, histories of Africa and Ireland and so on, presumably that doesn't, those who don't choose history don't have any of that.

?: No.

Q: So, it's not every girl in the school who gets that kind of history. It's the ones who choose history for GCSE.

Teacher: We've reformed it a lot now though. We've spent a lot of time scrutinising the key stage 3 stuff and we've thought about what history is important to the girls at this school, and what history is important that they leave school with. So, we're going to do an enquiry on, like, Irish history, Irish rebellion. We've got *[unclear]* Islamic science one, so we're trying to – it was too late for you obviously but you don't matter now, so ... *[laughter]*

?: Actually going to primary schools as well, kind of, because from primary school again you're just told about the Tudors and the English monarchy and it's like, you do that and then you come to high school and they just go in depth on the same thing. And if, you know if they, like, touched upon different parts of the world, I think that would be better for even children to be represented, because they will grow up and they will learn about their country and they'll think back in primary school, 'why didn't we learn about our country then?' And assuming they'd want to make that change, they'd want kids in primary school to learn about their own cultures. So, I think that's something that should be done too.

?: There's nothing wrong with learning about Tudors and stuff but I think we went, like we learned too much about it. But the people that were learning about it, most of them weren't even English. Like why couldn't we learn about their cultures as well?

Q: When you did Tudors, I mean Tudors is really the story of the start of the big expansion of the British Empire across the Atlantic and it's under the Tudors that the British start to be in India. It's under the

Tudors that they really expand into the Caribbean and North America. I'm wondering, when you did the Tudors did you do anything about empire?

?: King Henry VIII's wives! *[laughter]* We learned about who was in the Tudor family and about the rose, and that was about it.

Q: When I was teaching, I taught a lot about Henry VIII's wives I confess! All of us as teachers, we're learning how to do these things better. You know, if you went back to lots of things I taught I'm really embarrassed about them and the way I did it, and would do it very differently now. You have made me think of a final question, which isn't one of the set ones but I think is important, and one of you touched on this. But if, instead of this school, we were talking about a school somewhere in England where all the students were white British, would there still be a reason why these stories of empire and diverse histories and so on should be taught, or not? Because a lot of you are saying 'we need it for our own culture' – so if it's a 100% white British school, do they need it?

Several: Yes.

Q: Why?

Student C-F11C (India): They need to be aware of what happened in the history, no matter if it's related to them or no. I feel like everybody should be aware of what Britain did to some other countries.

Student B-F11C (Ireland): I was going to talk about, like, when you're only teaching white history, white British history to white British students, they're going to feel more empowered and it's going to have a really bad effect because if they go down south where there's a lot more diversity they're not going to understand them more and they're going to feel like they're better than everyone else. Because they had an empire, they don't think any of us have even a nation. They think that we just came here, we're just immigrants and we had much more input in history and why they are here.

?: Yes, I agree with her point on understanding. So, with my sister, she's in Newcastle now, so when people spoke to us for the first time they were confused and they were like twenty years old and it's weird that you don't understand about other people's cultures other than what you already know.

?: I think that awareness also is really important to, again, stop ignorant statements. Because without the knowledge of how harsh, how intense it was for the people who were oppressed by the British, you could say something and not, you may know how bad it sounds and how mean it is but they may not know the extent to what they're touching upon. Then if you become angry or just get upset by it they won't understand why you're upset. They'll be 'oh, it's just a joke, what's your problem?' And they don't understand the harsh realities of that joke.

Q: I am glad to say there are some 100% white schools that are studying migration. Places like Norwich, rural Gloucestershire, Maldon in Essex.

?: If it gets taught properly.

Q: That's a good point. I mean, in those cases I think it is because I know those schools. But it's a fair point isn't it? And that takes you round in circles because if you say that it's only going to be taught properly by teachers who share that experience, then it's only going to be taught properly in a very few schools. In the end, people like me are going to have to learn to teach that properly.

?: I don't think that's always going to be true because even though a person, a teacher that's part of an ethnic group, when they teach their history it's more passionate than when a white person does it. But we also have teachers like *[names their female teacher]*. But even though she's, she's not African ...

?: White. *[laughter]*

Q: You can say white!

?: But she still delivers our history passionately, so we still feel agency, we still receive our agency through her. That's my point.

?: It should just be another topic that you teach the students. So, if you're teaching the Tudors you put the same energy into teaching, like other ethnic groups. Because it shouldn't be, oh I have to do this, I have to say it in a different way. Just teach it because it's supposed to be normal. If we have to learn about white history then other people should learn about our history as well because there's not, back in the day there was just British people but now it's everyone included. So, they're ...

Q: And also, every aspect of what Britain is now is a result of empire, almost. I mean, the wealth, the trade, the economy, everything, it's a result of empire.

Student G-F11C (Ghana-2): I feel like history is so important for other things as well, so maybe in terms of government, so a lot of these children who are learning about history, or they're learning about a kind of one-sided aspect of history, they're going to be our future prime ministers, they're going to be our future MPs, and if they don't, if they can't relate to the majority, then why are they in charge of our country? I think it's really important to teach everyone about migration and how the British, how Britain came to be how it is now.

Q: Is there anything else anyone wants to add before we close it? This has been fascinating. I hope it's been interesting for you to talk about it as well. Did you want to add anything? Because you've been the quiet listener taking it all in. Don't feel you have to, but is there anything you'd like to say?

Student A-F11C (Jamaica): Like, the Windrush generation and what you were saying about the white British kids, that they live in a country of so much diversity and with the issue of the Windrush right now, that they're apologising and saying that how, because when they came here their citizenship, and how it's denied them and stuff like that

Q: How has that made you feel? Because you're Jamaican by origin and that's very much a Jamaican story, isn't it?

Student A-F11C (Jamaica): Well it doesn't affect me personally but, like, my dad, since he came here when he was twelve years old and, like, it's the fact that they want to send people back but they've been in this country all this time and lived a British life and stuff like that.

Q: I think some people have commented that the story of the Windrush generation has made them feel that a lot of things haven't changed and that we've got a long way to go still. But I'm throwing a personal opinion in here, which is not the point of this. Thank you, really, thank you so much.

3.8 SCHOOL C: State-maintained Catholic Girls' School in West London

Teacher interview-conversation 3: Teachers C-FT1 (w/White Irish heritage, female) (T4) and C-FT2 (b/Black East African heritage) (T5)

1. Can you please give some examples of **what** historical themes and events around empire, de-colonisation, and the Commonwealth are taught?

KS3:

- Irish self determination
- Sankara⁴⁶
- early empire, e.g. Emma of Normandy, King Cnut in Y7.
- The concept of empire.
- African kingdoms and the narrative of the 'dark continent'.

GCSE:

- *Migration, Empire and the People; Elizabethan England* (both AQA). The British Empire as business enterprise, motives for that.
- Elizabeth looking towards the Americas. Elizabethan exploration. Elizabeth's links with the Ottoman Empire.
- How Ireland was colonised by Britain, seen as 'savages needing civilisation'.
- African colonisation post slavery. Moving eastwards. Macaulay: "We need to tear down Indians' ideas about themselves".
- Vietnam and Korea – America's new imperialism. Ho Chi Minh and national self-determination – 'we've been passionate about explicitly saying that.' The French no longer able to keep hold of their empire.

SIXTH FORM

- Ireland – 'Searching for Rights and Freedom'
- South Africa 1948 to 1994 – the first enquiry is 'Why did Afrikaners feel like South Africa belonged to them?' and the concept of nationalism; also, British involvement
- USA

T4: I think one of the things with Empire teaching is that it's very much from a British perspective, and British people going and civilising. And we kind of teach it like that which is a bad thing, but then we're teaching it in the same narrative. So, we were looking at the KS3 curriculum because obviously there's a lot more flexibility there. And I do think the way we teach the Migration bit ... we've done our best to make it less like 'here's some British history and here's them interacting with others countries'. In KS3 we've tried to decolonise it.

We try our best to put in as many historians as we can and we love giving them extracts of historians' work and helping them to analyse it and see an interpretation. Everything is very much a work in progress – always thinking about how we can make it better.

⁴⁶ Sankara: Thomas Isidore Noël Sankara (1949-1987) was a Burkinabé military officer and socialist revolutionary who served as the President of Burkina Faso from 1983 to 1989. He was assassinated.

We want to have, as much as possible in two years, a world curriculum and not one that's British focused and the story of how the world fits into Britain. We really want to work on how colonisation colonises the mind as well. We want to do an enquiry about the nature of empire but we've got about 20 ideas of how to do it! We were thinking of doing interpretations of empire and how that BBC documentary came out about the British Empire in the 1970s and in the Lords, they were "Oh, this is so terrible! How dare you say these bad things about the British Empire!" And how this thought is coming back into popular discourse today, that the British Empire is a 'good' thing.

One of the things we do is we teach the matchwomen,⁴⁷ and they're Irish immigrants so we start with 'Why were there these Irish immigrants in London?' and we looked at the famine and Britain's relationship that way. But we're changing that now because we want to get across the concept of self-determination and do it with Ireland and say 'Here's the causes of Irish nationalism' and include the famine in that, and then one result is the Easter Rising, and then you've got Wilson's 14 Points. And that feeds into Year 10 and 11 as well.

T5: We're trying to allow girls to understand that before these countries were taken over by empires, they had their own stories before. So that's one of the reasons why we do African kingdoms as there was a story, as a continent. In Africa before colonisation. In India for Year 7 we're going to include the Mughal Empire and say that they had their own identity, they had their own cultures, and then they were taken over. Because I think a lot of children just believe that these countries were dark and barren and uncivilised prior to being colonised.

2. What particular pedagogic and professional knowledge do you draw upon in teaching themes related to empire and post-colonialism? (This relates to how historical themes and events around empire, de-colonisation, and the Commonwealth are taught.)

T4: One of the reasons I wanted to become a teacher was I didn't want to stop learning. And I think you're so lucky that you can do that as a history teacher. So, whenever I'm teaching something or planning an enquiry I will start from the basics, I'll look at the textbook, but they're so limited, they're so small, and it's somebody's interpretation. If you look at the textbooks that I grew up reading at school, it was very much a male history. And the Joanna Fervor⁴⁸ thing, never mentioned in the Peasants' revolt even though she was a leader of it. So that sort of idea of history, I really hate it. I always start on the basic but then I'll get some academic books and articles and kind of build around and fatten that knowledge. The pedagogy, I don't know how I think about that. I always think about, how would I understand this? and go back to the basic. I think my training at the IoE [UCL Institute of Education in London] helped me, and I was an LSA – teaching assistant – before, so I think that's given me such a strength in understanding how to simplify things. I've developed visual ways to get students to understand something, and how best to construct their notes. It's so hard to say what I do

⁴⁷ Matchwomen: in July 1888, 1,400 mostly female matchworkers walked out of Bryant & May's match factory in Bow. Parliament forced Bryant & May to raise their wages.

⁴⁸ Joanna Fervor: On 14 June 1381, in the Peasants' Revolt, rebels dragged Lord Chancellor Simon of Sudbury from the Tower of London and brutally beheaded him. Outraged by his hated poll tax, the insurgents had stormed into London looking for him, plundering and burning buildings as they went. The leader of the group who arrested Sudbury and dragged him to the chopping block, ordering that he be beheaded was Johanna Ferrour. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-18373149>

because I don't know how I do it, I just do it. I do like to start with a *Teaching History* [Editor's note: Regular secondary history journal produced by the Historical Association] article about concepts, and that helps inform my planning around it. Like how do I get them thinking about evidence.

T5: We plan together which is great, and get to throw ideas off one another, or if we're stuck on something just run to one another and say 'how can I get this idea across?' And because we work through enquiries, one of the things that we try to do is at least have a skeleton outline of the enquiry, so together working out what the question is, and what we want them to get at the end of it, and at least that way we're all on the same wavelength, teaching in sync with one another.

T4: Yes, because you know the reason behind it, and that does help actually. I think our thinking is all the same about what we want for the department.

...

T4: I think the whole extremist thing needs to calm down a bit. This whole idea of knowledge base – I'm going to say some stuff, you write it down and answer some questions – I think that's ridiculous. At some points in the lesson it is appropriate to do that because there's loads of different ways to learn knowledge and one way is through lecturing. These kids are going to go to university and they need to know what it's like to sit there, listen and absorb information. But they are never going to debate or have any actual thinking if you don't model that for them in the classroom as well. As a department we aim to have a mixture of these things – content from teacher, content from textbook or from sources – and I think it is about having a nice mix and then having a synthesis of all of it together.

T5: With enquiries, the students here seem to be more engaged with the topic, to want to learn more. That definitely helps in terms of retaining information.

T4: And they link it together. Matchwomen: my Year 9s learnt the matchwomen last year, for example, and they will constantly bring it up. So, we're looking at the 1920s and the Depression and lack of jobs, and they're 'Oh, it's like how the matchwomen felt'. We did an enquiry a few months ago on '100% Americanism' and the girls today made a connection with this idea of preserving the American Way and rugged individualism to FDR's New Deal,⁴⁹ saying 'Oh, he's going against that sort of thing.' ... I approach enquiry questions like I do with a dissertation, and I think that's ultimately what we should be modelling for our students, how to be academic. In an enquiry you are showing them that, the purpose of learning in a longer context. History is enquiry, it's to ask questions. If we have an enquiry question then you think every lesson I see as a chapter in the dissertation. So, if you want to answer a question like 'What was the experience for Black immigrants who were the *Windrush* generation?', you will say, well, what did they expect? Chapter One, the first lesson. What was their reality? Chapter Two. How did they respond to their reality? Chapter Three. Notting Hill Carnival, Claudia Jones. I think that's the right way to do it.

⁴⁹ FDR's New Deal: The New Deal was a series of programmes, public work projects, financial reforms, and regulations enacted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945) in the United States between 1933 and 1939. It followed the Wall Street stock market crash of 1929 and a period of great economic depression.

T5: One of the reasons I liked our enquiry on the West India Regiment⁵⁰ was because it complicates the narrative, which I think is really good to do because it allows children, when they go into GCSE, to not just look at it one dimensionally and say ‘well, because he was a Black soldier, he’s going to hate the British.’

T4: It was an evidence enquiry – something like ‘Who were the West India Regiment loyal to?’ – so we were looking at loads of sources because I was lucky to work with a PhD student so I could get access to those, she did the digging. The first lesson I didn’t introduce the question yet, I said ‘OK, so who were the West India Regiment?’ and got them really curious because they saw that they were these Black soldiers, that disrupted the narrative. So then ‘Why did Britain arm slaves?’ as the first soldiers were slaves. And they were, like ‘This is an absolutely ridiculous idea! They’re going to shoot the guys who have been oppressing them. Why would you give them a gun?’ And then we looked at how the white soldiers were dying of yellow fever and that sort of thing – and it felt more like a journey and I think they really enjoyed that. And from this very specific part of the Empire we managed to pull out the fact that France, Spain and Britain were competing to control parts of the Caribbean, which was why they were so desperate for extra soldiers. And then we were able to look at how the people under empire think, and it’s not as simple as ‘Oh, I’m Black, they’re white, they’re oppressing me.’ I think we lose that a lot, that people are individuals, they have different thoughts. I think the girls were really upset when we looked at Morant Bay.⁵¹ OK, we’ve got this great rebellion, it’s Paul Bogle,⁵² he’s saying this speech – Britain calls in the West India Regiment, what do you reckon they are going to do? And they are ‘Yes, they’re going to go and kill the white man!’ and then they don’t. And they saw that they were on their own, going around killing and burning down the houses of their cousins and their aunties. I think it really disturbed them. We looked at the mutiny as well and they were ‘OK, so they’re not loyal to the British because they mutinied against them.’ And they started to realise that they were laws to themselves because they just didn’t want to be enslaved, they wanted a higher status.

T5: [*Our resources*] are a mixture of academic books, brief clips from documentaries...

T4: The most important thing is not to simplify things for them. If there’s a complicated source you just spend more time reading it. You don’t change the words because then you change the source. For me it’s really important that they can read and absorb and understand text as well. So, for the West India enquiry I would get bits of research together and write my own text for them, and they would read that at home and come to the lesson with it. It takes a lot of time but it’s worth it.

Inclusive narratives (Questions 3 & 4)

Note: One reason why history education has become a live political issue and a matter of contestation is that traditional curriculum structures involving simple national narratives or

⁵⁰ West India Regiment: this reference to an enquiry is about the WIR in the two World Wars.

⁵¹ Morant Bay: this was a rebellion against poor living conditions and a lack of representation for workers in Jamaica. It was brutally suppressed by Governor Edward John Eyre. David Olusoga writes about the rebellion in *Black and British – a forgotten history* (Pan, 2016, pp. 39-395). A number of local Jamaican men were involved, who while taking part in the suppression of the Morant Bay rebellion in 1865, obeyed military orders to deal harshly with the local population, including destructive measures against their housing, and some of these people were their relatives.

⁵² Paul Bogle (1820-1865) led the 1865 Morant Bay protesters. He was a Baptist deacon. He was hanged in October 1865 but in Jamaica now is hailed as a National Hero.

'canons' of events are unsettled by the imperative in the 21st century of introducing the complexity of diversity. Examples of these are: (a) plurinational to include sub-national histories within regional contexts; (b) post-colonial in decolonised settings to engage with the histories and cultures of communities of minority ethnic immigrant-settlers, including post-colonial ones; and (c) a consideration of other more distant settings such as the cultural and Indigenous histories of formerly colonised peoples who have not necessarily become settlers but whose sometimes or often traumatic histories related to colonisation might be seen in a more empathetic light.

3. Drawing on your own experience of teaching in a BAME community can you see any effective practical solutions to address the need for diversity and inclusion expressed in the statement above (perhaps also bearing in mind the question below)?

4. In what ways might it be possible to design history education programmes that address not only the necessity to 'cover' the syllabuses or curricula, but which allow for more personalisation to include diversity, related specifically to the make-up of the students in the classes?

T5: We don't say 'Now we're going to do women's history' or 'Now we're going to do Black history.' We just say we're going to do history. There are times when kids say to me 'Oh Miss, when are we going to do Black history?' and I'm 'There's no such thing, there's just history.' So not marginalising different diversities is very powerful, decolonising their minds that way as well. Also, this idea of having a broad understanding of people's history, so knowing that it doesn't just start when the white man shows up, there's a history before that. Getting them to understand that as well. And also touching on as many different parts of the world as we possibly can. So, we were saying we don't teach enough about Asian history, so we said how about if we bring in the Mughals, teach about that empire? Because there are a lot of girls in our school that are from India or places like Pakistan or Goa, so touching on their background as well. And one of the great things is that they are all keen to learn about one another's diversity as well as knowing that so many experiences cross paths in terms of what happened in one uprising may be similar to why it happened in another one. Not believing there's an isolated history.

T4: The history that we teach is just history and we are trying to touch on as much of the world as we can, not just because we have Black and ethnic minority students in our classroom. We're not going to do Irish history because two Irish girls are sitting at the back and we want to get them engaged. I don't think that's the purpose of doing diverse history. I think it's just about doing the right thing with history and teaching history as it is. History is so politicised and I don't want my students to come out with this British narrative of British being the people who saved the world. Obviously, I'm from an Irish background and I've grown up very anti that idea for my whole life! What's good about working with [my head of department] is she's levelled me in that sense. I would have been very happy not to have done any English history [laughs] but I've grown a lot under her and she is like 'No, they've got to leave school with a certain understanding to have a conversation in the pub with people who are from other English schools. So, teach them about the English Civil War, so they can talk about that.' And it's about this idea of cultural capital. Not to be too extreme, but I think cultural capital is implicitly a very racist term because it is saying, what's inferred is English culture and I think that's really exclusive. And I think for us it's about giving them a cultural capital but a diverse one, and

they could sit in any pub in the entire world and have a conversation about somebody's history and know something about this individual and group. And I think that's what history should be about, understanding the world.

T5: You want them to leave being able to critically analyse things. For example, one of the girls that spoke, when we were doing about Vietnam – national self-determination and the Vietcong fighting to have it back under their rule – she said 'Oh, isn't that like the IRA?' We'd never studied it before but she'd heard that somewhere and as soon as we started looking at the Vietcong, she then made that link. And so, when they leave school you don't want students to just be able to talk about this happened, this happened, this happened. You want them to be able to say 'Ok, well this happened here and that links with this happening here', or being able to link what's happening in the news to something that may not be directly linked to it but may have happened in the past. And being able to bridge that gap. The more children understand the connections they have with one another, the shared history, the harder it becomes to be ignorant towards one another's cultures and to become racist or extremist later on. Because you understand that other people that may not exactly look like you do have a shared history with you.

T5 and T4: [*asked whether we have a moral duty as history teachers*]. Definitely.

T5: When we were doing the Facing History project [a Year 9 module on The Holocaust and Human Behaviour with resources developed by *Facing History and Ourselves*]⁵³ I absolutely loved that because it sets up the whole GCSE – even before that as well – because it makes kids (and I felt like for myself) critically analyse the way you think about something. And I think that's quite powerful because then when you do in to look at empire and all the different African history, you can then not just look at it as someone in 2018 but have that empathy and know that it's not one-dimensional history. It's complicating the narrative and expecting that when you have people such as the West Indian Regiment that weren't loyal to the British, to be able to say, well, after Facing History it's because people are different, people are individuals. There are people that may be bystanders one day and upstanders another day ... It definitely makes them a lot more empathetic and they have learnt to not expect everything is going to be black and white, and to expect the unexpected. Things can take a drastic turn in the last moment. When I am teaching the girls are things 'What's going to happen next?'

T4: They're waiting for us to disappoint them. [*laughter*] Certain things that I've been reading are saying how a lot of Black people feel frustrated that they can only write in Black history, like 'Oh, you're into history, you're Black, so you must be doing Black history.' I want a lot of our girls to be historians and obviously I want to champion Black history, but I also want them to just be historians and not have to have a political agenda behind what they are doing just because they are Black. And the same with women. Just because I am a woman, I have to do women's history – it should just be history anyway.

5. Have you experienced the need to give citizenship education for BAME students a historical dimension that they can identify with?

⁵³ Facing History and Ourselves: see its website for an explanation <https://www.facinghistory.org/about-us>

T4: I think all subjects should have a responsibility to get students active, political and just conscious about the world around them. I don't want to go to the point where we're just doing citizenship and not doing history. I think you cannot separate a historian from politics.

T5: A lot of the times when we are teaching them, very rarely do we teach about kings and queens. We try to teach about the everyday person, allowing students to have an understanding that the average citizen can change the way that people think, impact the world and change policies. Like the matchwomen, these women who were not respected, were believed to be illiterate, working class, what good could they do? They literally started going round the world and changing policies in Australia and London. But knowing that the everyday person can change the global narrative, and I think that then encourages them to do the same. So even doing something like we did with *[Facing History]* where girls got up to influence the opinion of people and the way they think about a particular thing, it was so empowering because when they came back, they just wanted to share their ideas and they spoke out, and people actually listened to them. If we instil in them that at 14 this is what you can do, imagine what you can accomplish when you are 24. Giving them that confidence that you have to be able to speak up.

T4: That word 'empower', I think that is very much our role as teachers and I don't think other teachers see that as their role – not all, obviously, but in other subjects. I'm so proud of the confidence of our girls and how – obviously there's the odd quiet one but you will hear her voice sometimes – how our girls are so articulate and confident in expressing their arguments. History is a great place to do that because it's good for creating ambition for the girls because I think the curriculum that we teach is very much 'I can see myself in this history, this isn't a history that's separate from me, it's not apart from me.' So that should help them to have a higher ambition because you see it, you can be it. Also just giving them the access to complicated arguments and theories and understanding the world.

T5: We do inform them how our curriculum in the school is quite different and how we do it, and the battles that we fight in order to implement it. And also saying to them that the reason we are doing it is because we passionately believe that this is how history should be taught. The fact that they can see that passion in their teachers as well, hopefully it influences them.

We have used *[the fact of not having to follow a National Curriculum]* as an incredible opportunity, but there are schools that don't use it effectively and they only teach what they know. They only teach what they were taught rather than doing what we do and challenge ourselves and say, well, I don't know this but let me learn it because it sounds interesting.

T4: The way we think, I don't think is in line with a lot of people. We've sat down and had really quite a lot of academic conversations about what is the best thing to teach the kids, and not just projecting myself, not being egocentric and saying 'this is the most important part of history in the world and we need to teach it.' But other people in a different school could be saying 'History is British, British people gifted the world with philosophy and civilisation, so let's only learn British history.' So, it is a double-edged sword. I would say this is brilliant but Michael Gove could look at what we're doing and say 'Can you get these people fired, please, because this is horrible, an abomination'. I think that issue of government control of what we teach and that coming into the classroom, it can be a positive thing in a sense. But my goddaughter is half Filipina and half Jamaican and she goes to a school in Hemel Hempstead and she's the only Black kid in her class in primary school, and they were learning about Indian

culture and their version of learning about Indian culture was to put a spot on their heads and say this is what Indians do when they get married. And then naturally the kids started making fun of it. So, then there's that issue too, if people don't understand it, it's going to be the complete opposite effect.

[White teachers] definitely can *[teach about empire and colonialism]* but they have to put in the effort. I was so humbled when the girls said that I treated every single culture with the exact same passion and enthusiasm. I didn't even realise that I was doing that but I think that is because of the way that I viewed history. I didn't view it as Indian history, I didn't view it as Irish history. And I think that in universities, maybe, when university academics start focusing on that more, like just history in general, then maybe it could happen in a few generations I hope.

6. Are there any landmark events that relate to the questions above about inclusive narratives and diversity that are transnational, supranational or international that many or all BAME students might be able to identify with?

T4: That is such a subjective question and I've worked so hard to pull myself away from this idea and that's why I love working here because I feel I've grown a lot. I probably would have said the famine because that was what was spoken about at my dinner tables when I was young, talking about the Irish famine. How do you separate yourself from that? And when you give them significance you're actually giving them your interpretation of significance. Saying that, there are some things that students should have some understanding in. I think the Holocaust, that's something people need to understand. But then, that's not the only genocide. It's not the first time concentration camps were used. It's not the last genocide. The common narrative of the Holocaust really bugs me, it's like, oh no this horrible thing happened but we're never going to do it again! But what about Rwanda and Palestine and everything else? We are still doing it.

T5: The one thing I think that connects so many Black and ethnic minorities is, unfortunately, the British Empire. That's why I've really enjoyed being able to teach migration and empire because we touch on so many cultures and backgrounds. The fact that as a Ghanaian you can learn about Irish history through migration and say, that's quite similar to what happened to us. For an Irish person to study India and say, oh wow, that was a bit similar to what the British did, the idea of divide and rule, divide and conquer. So, I think one aspect should be to teach the British Empire, but doing it obviously quite carefully. Not saying that the British brought civilisation and culture to these countries. But because it spans for so long and touches on so many parts of the world, I think that should be something students are taught about.

T4: I think maybe the concept is a better thing to broach it by rather than the content. So, like self-determination, imperialism, these are the things that have shaped our world. So, let's learn about these things and what's a good example of that? Maybe that's more a helpful way to do it.

T5: One of the things we are trying to do with the Sankara enquiry is teach that there is still modern-day colonisation. Colonialism didn't just end with the Empire. What happens when countries now, today, try to break away? What happens when they try to do what they did in India many years ago, now in today's society when these countries try to break away from their imperialistic rules? It's not that easy to be able to just say, well, if they want freedom they can

just fight for it, they should just say ‘I want to be free.’ It’s difficult because now more than ever it’s economically intertwined and that becomes a lot more difficult. To break away from that is extremely difficult when it’s part of every single aspect of your life from the food you eat to the education, the clothes, the land, everything. So, to some degree I think it’s important that they know about the British Empire so that they can apply it to what is still prevalent in society around the world.

7. Would some, many or most BAME students believe that they have more than one identity?

T5: I think so, yes, definitely.

T4: I thought it was so beautiful the way that (refers to interview with Student G-F11C [Ghana-2]) summarised it, and it was in my head for years but I could never put it like that. In Ireland I’m probably English and in England I’m a hundred per cent Irish. In London I’m Irish, outside of London I’m from London. I think my identity is much more as a Londoner, I think, and I think the reason why I can attach to this idea of a Londoner – it’s the same as a lot of the girls – is because London is a diverse place and there’s so many different groups of people. For example, at lunch today we had Jamaican jerk chicken and we can just walk out of the school and get food from how many different cultures. I kind of identify with that.

When you’re young I think it’s hard. I remember always feeling the sense of not belonging in some senses because – like I think it would have been fairly easy for me to integrate to the idea of being, like, English because I’m white and I grew up in London and my accent is a hundred per cent English. But then I never really wanted to become English in that sense, and my name, I could never really hide it. And there is that feeling that some people will just be able to support England, and then you’re thinking during the football, oh I feel a bit dirty cheering for England, they starved my people! And sometimes I have wished that I didn’t know everything that I knew, because I feel like sometimes it would just be easier to take the opium and then just fall in line. Like, you know when there was *[sic]* the centenary celebrations, and I wanted to go and look at the poppies and be like oh, this is these fallen soldiers. And my dad is half Northern Irish so some of my ancestors fought there as well, but I just felt, but then you’re just killing somebody who’s got the exact same mindset as you. I grappled with it a lot, like in some ways I would like to sing along to the hymns, do the national anthem and stuff, but in other ways I feel like it’s indoctrination in some sense. And I personally don’t like the ideas of patriotism and nationalism because I see them as tools of division. And I think we have more in common with a poor person in Germany than we do with a rich person in England. I’m very socialist!

8. Are you aware of any links between history education debates in the BAME post-colonial contexts with which you are familiar and wider global discourses about history education?

T5: I remember the petitions they were getting everyone to try and sign to teach more Black British history in schools, they had a petition but then it fell through the first time, I think it might have fallen through the second time and they didn’t get enough signatures. I know those campaigns like that.

T4: We were really lucky last year, we got to work with a Fulbright Scholar from the States, and he came over here and he planned the most beautiful enquiry on Muhammad Ali, and it was fantastic. He pulls on the ideas of patriotism and from looking at Ali, looks at Vietnam and race relations. It was beautiful. So that was quite nice working with him, but then I find that really interesting, the similarities between America and us in the sense of this struggle to teach diverse history, and it seems very much the same sort of struggle. But I would like to know more about what it's like, I'd love to sit in a classroom in Ghana, for example, and see them teach the British Empire, or in Ireland and see them teach, even, Ghanaian history.

9. Should professional or other bodies (e.g. the Historical Association, SHP, even the Royal Historical Society, or the Commonwealth) be doing more to ensure more diversity in history education?

T5: Yes, they should be. When I pick up, for example, BBC History magazine, I think one issue out of every five or six has something in there other than British history or World War One or Two. They have such an amazing platform to be able to talk about so many different things. Organisations such as the Historical Association, they have so much of an opportunity to provide teachers with a structure and say, you could be teaching this. Because I think one of the great things about us teaching together is that we come in with these ideas to teach diverse history, but if you're in a school that has been teaching the same sort of thing for the past twelve years and as a teacher you have loads of workload, it just becomes convenient to keep teaching the same thing over and over again. I did my placement at one school in which the resources were literally from 18 years ago. Nothing had been updated.

T4: I think what was good about the PGCE course was that we started it being told you have to have a Historical Association subscription, and I thought it was great the way the Institute of Education modelled the use of these subscriptions, and how the assignments were focused on 'how do you look at what's been done, how do you look at debates, how do you create enquiries?' That was brilliant and I don't think that we need to have a top-down imposing thing 'We have to teach Black history' yet. Maybe in ten years after a lot of work, we can, but I think the first step is to make it so that people have this understanding of the importance of it.

T5: The resources available are quite limited. So, one of the things that I saw when teaching, one of the textbooks is the history of Black Peoples of America, and they were still teaching from there. So, what a lot of teachers will say is even if that gets implemented, a lot of them will just grab that book.

10. If they should be, then how or in what way? (Related to Q9: Should professional or other bodies (e.g. the Historical Association, SHP, even the Royal Historical Society, or the Commonwealth) be doing more to ensure more diversity in history education?) And ... any more comments?

T4: The power of learning your place in history and where you fit in it is not only just powerful for – for example, my goddaughter, I think she was about six years old and this white girl comes up to her and says 'My mum doesn't like you because you're black.' And she went home that day and said to her mum, 'This girl said this to me, what's wrong with being black?' And I think that was probably her first time of really realising that she was Black as well, and that that made her different. And from that moment me and her mum – luckily, by chance, she's a descendant of Mary Seacole as well, it's quite cool – so we have literally just been

pouring on this Mary Seacole, teaching her loads of stuff about Black history. But not in an aggressive way but in a ‘let’s learn some history, let’s do some history together.’ And that’s changed her from thinking, being disempowered by this idea of being Black and being, like actually, no, it’s empowering. And she as a six-year old, well seven now, kept insisting that the school teaches it – her mum did the same – and they refused to back out, and because every lesson she ends up taking over and teaching them about Mary Seacole it’s now on the curriculum. And how empowering is that for a seven-year-old girl who was disempowered and do a big change like that? I think history is so powerful.

T5: I think it’s important to teach students about why it is that it’s so hard to implement these diverse histories, why people are so against having the education, being able to teach about these. For example, when we were teaching about what happened in the Congo, King Leopold, the atrocities, the genocide that happened there, one girl said ‘Are we going to end up learning about the Holocaust?’ And I said ‘Yes, we learn it later on in Year 9. It’s not for long, but we do learn about the Holocaust.’ And she said ‘Oh, why don’t we do it for such a long time?’ Anyway, that ended up evoking a conversation in which another girl then responded and said ‘Why do we have to learn about the Holocaust but we don’t have to learn about what happened in the Congo? There were more people that died there.’ We then had a discussion about why it’s not beneficial to the current government to allow the teaching of the Congo because it’s still going on, because there are still resources being taken.

T4: It’s like the ‘innocent Belgium’ narrative of the First World War as well.

T5: I think that’s powerful as well, telling them why it’s so hard to have these narratives put into the curriculum because there are people who benefit from hiding these narratives and not having it exposed, that will cause unrest.

3.9 SCHOOL D: State-maintained Mixed Comprehensive School in North London

Year 9:

Student A-F9D female (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal)

Student B-F9D female (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia)

Student C-F9D female (Algeria)

Student D-M9D male (Bangladesh)

Student E-M9D male (Somalia/ Yemen)

Student F-F9D female (Montserrat/ USA)

Interviewer: Martin Spafford

Also present: D-MT1 one history teacher (Lead Practitioner (History)) (male teacher – White British (Jewish heritage))

16th May 2018

Q: Q1: Thinking back over all your school experience, not just in secondary school but also previous experience of primary schools, what examples can you give me of when in History you've learnt about empire?

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): What do you mean by empire?

Q: Countries taking over other parts of the world.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): I know a lot about Britain, America. For example, the French army taking over Haiti, I learned about that.

Q: When did you learn about that?

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): I don't remember but I remember learning about it.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): Last year.

Q: Can somebody tell me a bit about that, that you remember from that story?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): I remember how we were talking about how they survived from sharing food and how, like, boats and that's all I remember.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): I remember that the prince had to be, was enslaved, but then he was the only educated one so he was the only one that could have led them out, out of the poverty.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): And I remember that we learned about how America took over some places in Africa, and how Britain took over a couple of places in Africa.

Q: Can you remember which places that you learned about?

Student E-M9D (Somalia/ Yemen): I remember America taking over Vietnam or something like that.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): The Cold War or something like that.

Q: And what year was that, that you did that.

Student B-F9D: This year.

Q: This year, in Year 9?

All: And in Year 8. I don't remember a lot, you see *[laughs]*.

Q: Are you all in the same class?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): No, we're in different forms.

Q: Different forms, different teachers. OK, so you mentioned about Britain – you mentioned France, Britain and America. Any other examples of the British Empire, or the Commonwealth or anything like that?

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Jewish, the Jewish war basically. Germany.

Student C-F9D (Algeria): The Holocaust.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Yes, the Holocaust! Yes, Jewish people being enslaved by Egyptians.

Q: Oh, wow. Was that in History or in RE?

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): History. We learned about these things in History.

Q: What I'm going to do is mention different parts of the world and ask you if you remember – again, not just secondary school, it can be primary school as well – if you can remember any things that you've learned in history about those parts of the world. OK, have you studied anything at all, history about Ireland?

All: No.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Wait, it might not be in school but my mum told me how they kind of took over Montserrat for a while. That's where I'm from.

Q: Oh, because there's always the Montserrat flag on St Patrick's Day – and the Montserratians all wear green, don't they, on the day. OK, yes, there's that very strong link with Ireland. So, what about the Caribbean?

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): Yes, I learned about the Caribbean, how they had to be moved, from some of them, like, moving to Britain ...

Student C-F9D (Algeria): Windrush.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): Yes, that one, and how some of them were enslaved – and I learned it with *[names male teacher]* as well.

Q: So that's two things. You've got the Windrush story and you've got people being enslaved.

Student F-F9D: Also, with the Windrush generation, *[names male teacher]*, he kind of touched on some of the events that happened after people from the Windrush generation came, like racism.

Q: What can you remember of it?

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): We did this, I forgot the guy's name but he was murdered by a white group of people and they didn't get in trouble for it because racism was normal.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): I also remember *[names male teacher]* teaching us about how it was also about this man and this family who were moving from the, like, Jamaica, on the Windrush boat. And they were, like, a victim of racism and how – I can't remember but it was like on the Windrush boat, so ...

Q: That's great. And then you mentioned, the story you mentioned, you couldn't remember the name ... might it have been either of these names? It could have been Kelso Cochrane⁵⁴ ...

All: Kelso! Yes! That one.

Q: I like the way I mention it and suddenly lights go up and everyone remembers it! This is not a test, OK, I'm just sort of getting a sense. Really, it's to find out how much impact these things have on you, because if you remember them, they've had some impact. There's no way you're going to remember everything that history teachers, you're taught in history. You mentioned also slavery, enslavement. What have you done about that?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): We talked about how they were used to make, like, I don't know these cane thingy, and then they were used to, like, mash them together ...

Q: And when you say 'they', who do you mean by 'they'?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): The Britain, like, the British people.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): With slavery I haven't really learned a lot about it in History but I know in Music we were talking about slavery because some of the music that we listen to, it comes from slavery.

Q: Origins of the blues ...

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Yes.

Q: Ok, I'm going to move to a different part of the world. Let's move across to south Asia. So, India and what's now Pakistan and Bangladesh as well. Have you done anything around history that comes from India at all, ever?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): No – in Geography but not in History.

All: Yes, Geography.

Q: Or China, Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): I only remember Vietnam.

Q: And that was this year, was it?

All: Yes.

Q: That's fine. Australia, New Zealand, Pacific Islands, anything?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): I remember the, what's it called? We're doing it in history this year. I forgot the name.

Q: It doesn't matter. Describe it.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): It's about these two types of people, I think in Asia, and they're like against each other.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Oh, the Communists and Capitalism!

⁵⁴ Kelso Cochrane (1926-1959), a thirty-two-year-old carpenter from Antigua, was murdered by a gang of white youths on 17 May 1959 in Golborne Road, North Kensington. No one was ever convicted for his murder, but Claudia Jones (1915-1964), to remember Kelso, put in motion plans for events that developed into the Notting Hill Carnival.

Q: Oh yes, and that would have been relevant when you were looking at the Cold War as well. That's great.

Student E-M9D (Somalia/ Yemen): I remember something that, apparently Australia was a big goal for Black people before it was a country. I learned that in History.

Q: And when was that, what year was that when you were looking at that?

Student E-M9D (Somalia/ Yemen): Not sure, but I remember that fact.

Q: It's great, isn't it? Things start to come up as we're talking about them. I'm going to move to another part of the world, the whole continent of Africa.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): Slavery.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): South Africa, *apartheid*.

Q: South African *apartheid*? This year, in Year 9 was that?

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Yes, we're doing it.

Q: At the moment.

All: Yes.

Q: OK. So, you've done South Africa, looked at *apartheid* in South Africa. Have you looked at any other parts of Africa – East Africa, West Africa, North Africa at all?

Student C-F9D (Algeria): We haven't looked at them, but I just know some of the countries that got colonised by, like, Italy and France and other countries.

Q: Algeria.

Student C-F9D (Algeria): Yes, Algeria.

Q: That sort of knowledge you've got, where does that knowledge come from? It's not from the history lessons.

Student C-F9D (Algeria): It's from, like, my sister and ...

Q: Are you Algerian?

Student C-F9D: Yes.

Q: So that history of French colonisation is, is – so that leads me, although there's a bit more parts of the world I was going to ask, leads me to a question that you made me think of, which is probably the moment to ask you where your family origins are, and I'm going to ask, do you learn any of the history of where your family come from, from your family? So you're Algerian, [*names student C-F9D*]? What about you?

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): I'm from São Tomé & Príncipe but I'm part African and Portuguese. Basically São Tomé & Príncipe where I was born, people used to be slaves there. Basically, people from Portugal just sort of, like, long way, my mum told me the story, basically like, in São Tomé & Príncipe are all Black and, basically, the white Portuguese, they used to come here and make us slaves and do work for them – not me, of course! – and

Q: No, I understand, this is the history ...

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): Because, like, my grandmother went past it, like she was a slave back then and sadly died.

Q: Did you know her?

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): Yes, I did. And basically, my mum told me the story of how they used to, like, chuck the dead bodies into the sea where every year, like on the first of January we go there and we sing, like, this God song. I can't remember what it is, yes, we just go there and, like, every year we sing it. And she was basically telling me how they chucked the bodies there.⁵⁵

Q: So, your main source of that history is your mum, is that right? How about you?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): I'm Somali but I have Yemeni and Saudi in me because my mum's side, their parents, they were raised in Yemen. But they moved to Somalia because of what was going on in Yemen, there was some war or something like that. And then my mum was raised in Somalia but then she moved to Saudi – that's where she lived most of her life – then she came to Britain. My dad, he was raised in Somalia but his parents, one of them was raised in Somalia too, one of them was raised in Yemen. Then they came to this country.

Q: And do you know some of the history of – is it Somalia or Somaliland?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): Somalia.

Q: Somalia, because there's both isn't there? And histories of Yemen and Somalia, were those things that were talked about in your family?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): Yes, my mum said there was a tribe in Yemen that was moving to Somalia, and some of them moved to Saudi as well. And that's what she talked to me about.

Q: Somalia was colonised for a time by Italians, wasn't it? And parts of Yemen by the British. I wonder if any of that comes up.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): My mum told me that she has cousins, some of them can speak Italian because of how Italians came over to Somalia, and some of them can speak it and stuff.

Q: and how about you? Well, you've told us some of it, Algeria.

Student C-F9D (Algeria): Both my parents are Algerian.

Q: And they do talk sometimes about the history and the French Empire, do they?⁵⁶

Student C-F9D (Algeria): Yes.

Q: So that's how you know about that. And how about you?

Student D-M9D (Bangladesh): I'm from Bangladesh. My parents sometimes talk to me about how they had, I think it's like they had a war with Pakistan or something.

Q: In '71.

⁵⁵ Incident in São Tomé: The Batepá massacre occurred on 3 February 1953 in São Tomé when hundreds of native creoles known as 'forros' were massacred by the colonial administration and Portuguese landowners. Many forros believed the government intended to force them to work as contract labourers, to which they objected. São Tomé & Príncipe gained independence from Portugal in 1975.

⁵⁶ Algeria was linked to France: it was a colony from 1830 to 1848. After that and until 1962 it was a Département of France, and although *de facto* a colony, it was in theory as one of France's Départments, an integral part of metropolitan France. In 1962, after a war, it became The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

Student D-M9D (Bangladesh): Yes, and then another country helped, I forgot what it was.

Q: India.

Student D-M9D (Bangladesh): Yes, came and helped and after they beat them Bangladesh got independence.⁵⁷

Q: So that's again something that's discussed in the family. And just to clarify it, but not in school.

Student D-M9D (Bangladesh): No.

Q: How about you?

Student E-M9D (Somalia/ Yemen): My Mum's from Somalia and my Dad's from Yemen. My mum's side of the family, some of them are from Yemen, most of them, and my grandma as well. And I lived, I was born in Yemen and I lived there until 2012 and I was, I went to school there and we learned history. And the history you learned it was, like, only about Yemen. You don't learn about any other country, and I didn't know about other countries that much. So, you learn about Yemen's history and everything they've done since, like 1066 or something.

Q: So, it's only three years you've been here, is it?

Student E-M9D (Somalia/ Yemen): Five years.

Q: Five years, sorry. So, history is taught very differently here?

Student E-M9D (Somalia/ Yemen): Yes.

Q: We'll come back to how it's taught in a minute, but how about you?

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): My Mum's Montserratian and my Dad's from Carolina in the States and I was born there, in New Jersey though. My mum, she left just a few years before the volcano erupted there and most of the information I get is from my grandma. She likes to talk about my family a lot, she says it's important to learn about it. So, she just talks about how we got the dialect, how the Queen went to Montserrat⁵⁸ and things like that. She tells me about her dad and things like that. That's about it.

Q: And another question is, these sort of discussions that we're having now, where you're very kindly sharing some things about family background and so on, are those the sort of discussions that you have in school? Even, not in the classroom, but that you share those aspects of ...

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): Only if, like, someone asks, then we have a whole conversation about it.

Q: So if you've got friends who come from different cultures you might talk about that, yes?

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Learn about their culture too.

Q: One other region I was going to ask about was the Middle East and Mediterranean.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Like Greece and stuff.

Q: Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel

⁵⁷ The geographical area of what is now The People's Republic of Bangladesh was known as East Pakistan between 1947 and 1971. There was a war between March 26 and December 16 1971, involving West Pakistan and the joint forces of India and what became the newly independent state of Bangladesh. Thousands died during this conflict.

⁵⁸ Montserrat is a British Overseas Territory in the Caribbean, and the Queen visited it on 19 February 1966.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): Turkey in RS.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Only to my friend, [*names female friend, not in this group*].

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): I only learn stuff from my mum.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): In Geography sometimes we go off trail so we just talk about different things. So, our old Geography teacher, we used to talk about the Middle East and how Turkey colonised Cyprus so half of it's Greek, half of it's Turkish and in the middle no one goes.⁵⁹

Q: It sounds to me from listening to you, first of all that you're very conscious of your own backgrounds and traditions and history, and that some of that is tackled in school history but quite a lot of it isn't. So, when it is tackled, when things like slavery, South African *apartheid*, when those sort of stories are tackled and discussed, whichever other examples that you gave me of ...

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Vietnam War

Q: How do you feel about those issues when they are discussed in school? Q2

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): I mean, we focus a lot on what happens during the war but after? You know how, like, the Vietnam War everyone protests and they talk about that, but they didn't actually talk about what happens after that. They don't really focus on what happens after all those bad things happened. Because we learn about a lot of depressing topics and I think it's kind of down-putting that they want us to learn about all these depressing things that happen but they don't even highlight the things that were good.

Q: That's interesting. What do others feel about that? (Q2)

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): I think in history lessons we should talk more about how good things that happen in other countries than the bad things because we focus more on the bad things.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): There's no really good things.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): There could be at least some.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): All the good things that happened was because of the bad things that happened as well.

Q: What do you mean?

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): Like, for example we were talking about this guy called Walter Tull⁶⁰ in History, like in Year 9 now. We were talking about how he became the first Black man to become a Lieutenant or something in the World War, and like how it led to some people being confident and to being, for example like he was a footballer, he was the first Black man to be a footballer and be like proud to say it, about other white people, and it led from something bad, people calling the N word and an animal, to something good, like him being a lieutenant and a role model to half of the people in the world, because people look up to him because of what he did. And because it went from him being an orphan which was something, like, nobody wants to be in that position, something bad, not like bad bad, and him being called various bad names and something good.

Q: How do you feel when that's being covered? (Q2)

⁵⁹ Turkey invaded Cyprus on 20 July 1974.

⁶⁰ Walter Tull (1888-1918) was a professional footballer and was a commissioned officer in the First World War. His mother was Kent-born, and his father was from Barbados. Walter Tull's paternal grandfather was a slave in Barbados. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zqhyb9q/articles/zbgxbdq>.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): I feel confident in it, and I feel sometimes irritated. I feel confident because I know he did stuff, and I feel irritated because to get the good stuff you need to get out the bad stuff first. Because, like, first of all there's racism, like you have to kill people, you have to do this to stop racism but I don't like that so it gets me irritated because there's always, something always pops up, somebody just called the N word, someone's just did this, called an animal, blah-blah-blah, like frustrated.

Q: Anyone else want to say how they feel? (Q2)

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): You know how you said in order for something good to happen you have to have something bad? In the process it always has to be something even worse. So the *apartheid* situation, how Black people and white people were segregated, I guess it was kind of upsetting that our teacher wanted to talk about something that was obviously very emotional and I didn't really want to focus on that because I know a lot about my history and I just didn't like learning about all of these nasty, horrible things. Because it still happens and it's kind of depressing, I don't like being depressed, I like being happy.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): But there are [sic] stuff, like, good. For example, Rosa Parks, how she fought for her rights to sit on a bus, and how it led to people being confident that, from one person being confident and standing up just once, like standing up to racism, to millions of people protesting and led to this.⁶¹

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): But I'm not going to lie, it's actually interesting half the time to talk about bad things, because ...

Q: The stories, they grab you more, don't they?

Student C-F9D (Algeria): If you focus too much on the good things then people will, I don't know why but they'll just lose interest, they will lose interest if you're just talking about all the good things, it's more interesting ...

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): They want to know more about – so like we focus a lot on the racism and sexism and all of that, but we don't actually focus an equal amount of time as we focus on the bad things.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): But the thing is, there are more bad things than good.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Yes, but ...

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): I like talking about racism and this stuff, because somebody comes, oh who's this, who's that? So, this, this, that, that, this because I learned this in this, this, this, so ...

Q: So we seem to have got to a discussion about issues like racism. Does studying racism historically, is that something – I'm picking up on what you just said – do you see that as helping you positively or affecting you negatively?

All: Positive because it's –

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): Because if you don't know your history, who are you?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): Exactly.

⁶¹ Rosa Parks – see footnote above.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): Because personally, yes, I think if you don't know the history of, like, racism, how are you going to know what, for example, Rosa Parks comes next to you, you're like 'who is this woman?' and then you don't know that she was actually somebody. Like you're Black, you're both Black but you don't know who is she, you don't know the past of what she did for you to get your rights, for you to get your freedom, for you to get the right to sit on the bus with her right now, and you're 'who's she?'

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): If you don't know your history and things like that... It helps you in society a lot because if racism is still in society and you didn't know what it was you wouldn't survive very long. And also, if you don't know the history of where you came from, what your ancestors went through and how your parents probably went through, how your grandparents went through, people you are close to, it's kind of upsetting because you wouldn't have that, that ...

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): Bond.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Yes, that bond with them.

Q: That kind of takes us back to something we started to discuss, because if that's true, if everybody feels that – you know, what you said, if you don't know that past and that history, then what I've heard from you is on the whole, that you get that history from your families. Some of it you get in school but not ...

Student C-F9D (Algeria): Mostly we get from our parents.

Q: Does that, is that the best way you get it or should there be more of it in school?

All: More of it in school.

Student E-M9D (Somalia/ Yemen): You can learn about it properly with, like, certain dates and more detail.

Q: Can you not get that detail from your families?

All: Yes, but – What if you don't remember? No.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): I personally think it's better to share it, like, more information in school because firstly, there's a lot of people that know, that will find out what's happening or what happened in the world, and secondly, you never know, your mum or dad had to go through that to tell you, like, the story now. And certainly, when my mum tells me I can see that she gets very emotional, when she tells me that her grandmother was a slave. I can tell that, I go all teary and I don't like it because ...

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Sometimes I don't like asking because they get upset about it so you don't ask.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): It's better to get that at school.

Q: So, it sounds to me as though for some of these histories, you've got to kind of negotiate it quite carefully, that some of these things are quite tricky. I don't know, some of you are nodding and some of you are looking like you don't agree.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): If you ask the wrong question, like you don't want to make them upset. It's better if you learn it in school off the history teacher.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Sometimes we learn a lot about things that actually happened that everyone knows about, but we don't learn about the small things that probably affected a lot of people.

Because this is a very diverse school. You probably have people from places that you've not even heard of.

Q: You're very good at coming up with a comment that leads me to the next question I was going to ask. You've done that again! Fantastic, well done, because my next question is: this is a very diverse school, it's a very diverse city. So, there's nothing unusual in this school about the fact that you have family origins in many different parts of the world, OK, that will be your school experience all the time. So, you, as young British people, you're British but you also have those heritages. (Q3)

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): I'm not British.

Q: You're not British? OK, that's going to be part of my question. Can we park that one in a minute, I'll come back to that one. My first question is – if you'll forgive me, I'm going to use an expression – as young people of colour. I prefer that to saying 'people who are not white' as it implies that white is the thing we start from, why should we? As young people of colour, how much do you feel that your identities are present in the history courses that you study in school? (Q3-Q4)

Student C-F9D (Algeria): Half-half.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): Not a lot. It could be more that could be done.

Q: I mean, most of the course that you study in school is the history of Britain, isn't it? Now if I throw in and say 'It's all very well that there should be all these things from different parts of the world, but you're in Britain so you should be studying British history'.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): No.

Student C-F9D (Algeria): It's kind of boring.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Everything that happens, happens, I don't want to sound very rude but it happens because of, kind of, some of the British people. Because America, the white people there, I think their ancestors were British. So British people, English people have a lot of ties and links to all these historical events and things like that, so it's best if you learn about other places.

Q: What I think you're saying, I'm going to put words into your mouth so tell me if I've got this wrong. It's not my job to tell this thing what I think, but to hear what you do. But I think you're saying that to understand British history it's actually a world history, you have to understand what Britain did in the world because that is part of British history and it's part of world – you know, they're not separate. Am I right, is that kind of what you're saying?

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Kind of, yes.

Q: You know America, that was the British, and wherever you go in the history of the world you find the British have had something to do with it.

Student C-F9D (Algeria): Yes.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): They've always taken a big chunk.

Q: And if not the British, you've got the French, and the Portuguese, and you've got the Dutch.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): Every time you say Portuguese she looks at me! [laughter]

Q: OK, so I think I'm getting from you, and I'm trying to make sure it's what everybody feels because if you feel something different please say so, **I think I'm getting from you that you do feel your own identities should be reflected more in the history curriculum in school. Is that right? (Q4, confirmation of Q4)**

All: Yes.

Q: And I'm just going to throw back again, any more reasons why you think that should happen?

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): Because many people have suffered due to it.

Q: Let's say I went to a school in a different part of Britain where every single student in that school was white, should they learn it?

All: Yes.

Q: Why?

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): Because they need to know how other people suffered because of, like, the country they are in. Not being rude, like, Britain has made other countries suffer. So, if you're in a school with all students that are white and they're British, they should know what their culture has done to other countries. For example, like, racism. Again, I'm not being rude. Racism, slavery ...

Q: Just saying what you think.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): Yes, like Muslim, all them [sic] stuff they should know, because there's a part ...

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): And it would encourage them to maybe tell their friends outside of school and tell them what they learned in the lesson, so it might spread good things.

Student C-F9D (Algeria): Do you do that?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): I might.

Student C-F9D (Algeria): Do *you* do that?

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): I tell my sister stuff.

Student E-M9D (Somalia/ Yemen): Also, if they don't learn things about other countries, they won't respect them as much. Because in Yemen we didn't learn about any other country and I didn't know that a lot of countries, for example I didn't know what Bangladesh was, I thought it was always just India. So, it's better to learn about other countries so you can actually know them and respect them.

Q: And do you feel that you learn about other countries mostly through family, mostly from school or mostly from other students?

Student C-F9D (Algeria): Mixed.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Family, to be honest.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): A mixture.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): I didn't know anything that happened in Portuguese until she told me. I didn't know anything that happened in Somalia and Yemen until you two told me. I didn't know anything about what happened in Algeria.

Student E-M9D (Somalia/ Yemen): You learn the statistics and the facts and everything in school, and the personal side you learn from your family. That's how it is.

Q: That's a good one to lead on to a question that is kind of about how you see yourselves. Back to your thing when you said you're not British. I'm going to read out the question so I put it in the exact words here. **How do you see the relationship between your identity and history and your family's history,**

and being British, in whatever way you feel about being British? I want to hear from every single one of you on that, as I have a feeling you'll have different things to say. Shall we just go round the thing, is that all right? Yes. **(Q3)**

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): Since I'm, like, half Portuguese, half African, from both my mum and my dad, I personally think, I'm not trying to dis the Portuguese or anything but I personally think that I'm mostly African. Because once I was in primary, this girl, she came up to me and she was, like 'I never knew Portuguese people were Black' and I was like 'Whoa, that's a bit offending'. And I told the teacher and the teacher went up to her and then she's like 'why are you saying that?' And she goes, like 'because I was never taught that there were Portuguese people that were Black.' And I was like 'OK, there are Portuguese people that are Black', So that's why I think I'm always African. So, if anyone asks me, I'm always, like, I'm African, yeah, but I'm half Portuguese in a way.

Q: And what do you feel your relationship is to being British?

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): I am, I do think that I am part British because I've been here for a very long time and I've learnt how British, like, the British ways, and like so I do think I'm half British in a way. In a way.

Q: It looks to me, you're sort of half British, half African, half Portuguese! Lots of halves – it makes sense though it doesn't mathematically work.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): Yes.

Q: How about you?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): What was the question again?

Q: It's kind of how, what do you see the relationship is between your identity and your family and your history and being British? (Q3)

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): Well, I was born here, I was raised here, so – I don't know what to say but it's a good thing, a good relationship because I was born here and, like, made friends here. 'I **move** [?] British', I don't know, I say it in slang language. [laughter]

Q: It's almost, kind of, what does being British mean to you?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): Yes, I've got nothing to say.

Q: In a sense that's, I'm reading that for you it's just kind of normal.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): Yes.

Q: How about you, [*names student C-F9D*]?

Student C-F9D (Algeria): Same as [*names student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia)*]. It's normal, it's like British, Algerian but – I **move** [?] British! Yes, I am, like, the way I am, I'm more British, like when I go Algeria, like my cousins, we're nothing alike.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): What do you mean, alike? Do you mean personality, or like ...?

Student C-F9D (Algeria): Culture – like even though in classes everyone's different, they're from different places, but always raised in the same place, then we've all, linked somehow.

Q: So, things that you would all have in common with each other, but if you were in São Tomé & Príncipe or you were in Somalia or you were in Algeria, people wouldn't understand that, but you would understand it between yourselves.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): Yes, I understand it more with people that are around me.

Q: I notice you (student D-M9D) sort of nodding a little bit. Bangladeshi friends of mine say that when they go to Sylhet in Bangladesh they, everybody calls them 'Londoni' and they're seen as being, not being the same. What about you, how do you feel about identity and being British and so on?

Student D-M9D (Bangladesh): I don't really get people calling me that but, like, whenever I go somewhere I say I'm Bengali.

Q: And 'how British do you feel?' is another way to put the question.

Student D-M9D (Bangladesh): Like, half. Because I was born here and raised but I'm more Bengali than British.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Where do you get your accent from? Because you have a strong accent, like you weren't born here. I'm sorry ...

Student D-M9D (Bangladesh): My first language is Bengali, that's why.

Q: Is that the, kind of, language that your mum spoke to you, and you grew up with before school?

Student D-M9D (Bangladesh): Yes. When I went to nursery, that's when I started learning English more.

Q: That's great. Thank you. What about you, [names student E-M9D (Somalia-Yemen)]?

Student E-M9D (Somalia/ Yemen): For me, I don't feel British because I wasn't born here, I didn't live here for that long. I understand the language and everything, but ... we came here mostly because there was a war in Yemen, that was mostly the reason, so I wasn't born here.

Q: I suppose my question is that if the war ended in Yemen and it returned to a peaceful situation. Do you see yourself that you would want to live back in Yemen, or would you want to stay here?

Student E-M9D (Somalia/ Yemen): I probably wouldn't because too much stuff was ruined for me to go back, so it wouldn't be, like, sustainable to live there again.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): It won't.

Q: But important words. How about you?

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): I mean I was born in the States, I came here when I was, like, two so twelve years I think, but I've never really fully told myself that I'm British. Because I was born there and I've got a lot of ties there because a lot of my family is there. But I've come to the British customs – I wasn't meant to but I just did, like I got the accent, everything, and I feel like some of that's been taken away from me, it's been stolen by the British. And, yes, so I just never fully told myself that I was British. Obviously, I'm American but I just explain where I am from.

Q: There's a book that I recommend that at some point maybe in the next few years you have a look at. It's called *The Good Immigrant*⁶² and what actually it's a book of, each chapter has been written by a different person, different British person who has, like you, origins in different parts of the world,

⁶² Shukla, N. (Ed.). (2016). *The good immigrant*. London: Unbound.

writing about that complex thing of what it's like when you've got that mix of cultural heritages, and how you see yourself and how people see you. And it's – some of them have very extreme views and different views and it's an interesting book. So, you've all talked about a kind of complex mixture that you feel in yourself, of cultures. Do you see that as a negative, weakening thing or a positive, strengthening thing?

All: Positive.

Q: Why? You know I'm going to say why, don't you?

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): It makes me stronger to know that, like, stronger and confident to know that, for example Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King,⁶³ all these people fought for rights, like, did all of this for all of us, to equally have rights in the society. So, it makes me stronger to know that if they can do that, who knows in the future I can do that too.

Q: You [*indicating student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal)*] talked very positively several times today about the importance to you of the example of people in the past, heroes if you like – some people use the word role models. You've talked about Black people who have been role models for you, and I wonder whether for you [*to the others*] the same is true?

Student C-F9D (Algeria): Definitely, yes.

Q: Or should be, because there are equal people who, things like the struggle for independence against the French in North Africa, the struggle for independence in what was India and is now Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, in the histories of East Africa. There are heroes and people who have done amazing things in every part of the world. Equally there are people in Britain, we've got a Pakistani Muslim Mayor. How important to you is seeing people who look like yourselves doing things that can be admired and you can take from?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): We feel encouraged to do the same.

Q: Those of you who are not of Caribbean or African heritage – because I think you get people like Rosa Parks and Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King⁶⁴ – do you have the same experience, that there are figures that you can identify with in the same way?

Student E-M9D (Somalia/ Yemen): Like in our own countries?

Q: Yes, in your own countries or in Britain, Asian people, North African people, Arabic people and so on – I know that North Africa is Arabic and Berber and it's much more complicated than that. Do you, are you told about such people? Would it be important to know stories like that?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): On social media there's this guy, a football player, Mohammed Salah,⁶⁵ and he comes from Egypt, he's Egyptian and he's Muslim and encourages other Muslims to, like, stand up and don't be afraid of what other people think.

Q: He scored more goals this year in the Premiership than anyone has ever done before.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): How comes I never knew that?

⁶³ Rosa Parks; Martin Luther King: see in footnotes in earlier pages.

⁶⁴ Nelson Mandela (1918-2013) was the first Black Head of State in South Africa (1994-1999). He served 27 years in prison but was released in 1990. In response to years of apartheid which were to come to an end, he promoted his beliefs that that inclusivity, accountability and freedom of speech were the fundamentals of democracy.

⁶⁵ Mohamed Salah: born 1992, a footballer who plays for Liverpool FC and captains the Egyptian national football team.

Q: Who does he play for?

All: Liverpool.

Q: How do you feel when you hear about that, Mohammed Salah, those of you who are Muslim, for example?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): It encourages the youths that no matter, like, who you are, like, where you come from, you can still be as good as everyone else.

Q: You were quite young then but I was wondering if that happened with Mo Farah? Somali runner in the Olympics? You were quite young so you might not remember that.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): To be honest, we never really learn about sport, like how the people, for example like Usain Bolt or Mo Farah⁶⁶ or even [*unclear*]. We never really about hardly deep and stuff.

Q: So that leads me to the final of the questions that I've got to make sure that I ask you, which is: what changes would you want to see in the way that history is taught and in what is taught in school? If any.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Like I said, they focus on bigger countries like the Caribbean, all of the Caribbean countries but they don't focus on the ones that people even forget on the maps, like Montserrat! [*laughter*] They don't teach me about that so I don't know a lot about that part of myself. But I learn about things that happened in America. If they focused on smaller countries, like I didn't even know Yemen was a place, I didn't know the history of it, but now that you've told me things about it I've learned something and I want to know more. So, I want things like that to be happening in History.

Q: You do, do this thing of always sort of planting the seeds for the next question! That makes me think of this question that, just in this discussion, so many things have come out of this discussion which lead to questions. I'm sure that some of you must be sitting round the room thinking 'What on earth has Montserrat got to do with Ireland? What's that about?' And actually, the story of what Montserrat's got to do with Ireland tells you an enormous amount, not just about Montserrat and Ireland, but actually about British and world history. And what's going on in Yemen that means you had to leave? Why would two of you have both Yemeni and Somali connections? What's the reason?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): Tribes.

Q: It's tribes, isn't it, and it's trade, and it's – am I right that actually quite a few Somalis trace themselves back anyway to Yemen?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): Yes.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Wow.

Q: Is it the Bravanese who do that particularly as well, people in Brava?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): Where?

Q: Oh, if you don't know what I'm talking about I'm probably talking rubbish [*laughs*]. And equally, I wonder about, [*names student C-F9D*], if you were in a French school there would be quite a lot of perhaps – I don't know, they're finding out in this project – would the histories of North Africa be taught in a French school?

⁶⁶ Usain Bolt (born in 1986 in Jamaica): Olympic gold medallist 2008, 2012, 2016 for sprinting (100m, 200m in all three Games, and 4x100 relay in the 2012 and 2016 Games); Mo Farah (born in Mogadishu Somalia in 1983): Olympic gold medallist 2012 and 2016 for both the 5,000 and 10,000 metres.

Student C-F9D (Algeria): Do you speak French?

Q: Is French spoken in your family?

Student C-F9D (Algeria): Yes.

Q: When you told me that North Africa hasn't – has it featured at all in anything that you've studied in school?

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Partly – that was just an extra-curricular thing I did for Black History Month.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): We learn it in Geography.

Student C-F9D (Algeria): Do you?

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): I personally think, for example today, in History the thing that we should actually change is we should talk about the littlest thing, even if it's the smallest thing that actually changed the world for better. For example, today in RS, well basically we were talking about this country in Africa – I think it was called Rada or something like that ...

Q: Rwanda, probably.⁶⁷

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): About this mass genocide of how these two ethnicities were basically killing each other because they wanted to be better than each other, and how that changed the world. And basically, like, that's the smallest thing that turned into a big thing because so many people talked about it, they actually came all the way from Africa and America, Britain, all these places that, like, Rwanda people wouldn't even know. So, the littlest thing can even change the world for the better.

Q: I could throw back at you, but come on a minute, history teachers don't have a lot of time, OK. One, we're in Britain; two, how many hours a week do they have in Year 9 history?

All: an hour/ two hours a week.

Q: A tiny amount isn't it, compared with English and Maths and Science. And if you're talking about the whole history of Britain and the world that is, like, woaaaaahh! So, you were saying that there's got to be more of the things you've talked about on the history curriculum, what do you learn that you think you don't need so much?

Student C-F9D (Algeria): The kings and the queens.

All: Absolutely, definitely.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Like, in primary we learn about Henry VIII and stuff. The amount of times they repeated that throughout the year.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): He killed a woman and stuff. Like, we don't want to know about killing women.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): 'Divorced, beheaded died...'

Q: These people ruled and made big changes. Why not...?

⁶⁷ Rwanda: the 1990-1994 civil war involved conflict between two principal ethnic groups in Rwanda, the Hutu and the Tutsi. Military casualties were relatively small (c. 7,500) compared to the estimates of civilian deaths (between 500,000 and 800,000). Rwanda joined the Commonwealth in 2009.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): It's important but it's not as important as, like, racism or slavery or, like, genocide.

Q: Do you agree?

Students F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA), B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia), C-F9D (Algeria): Definitely, yes.

Q: Why?

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): I understand if we learn it once, but then throughout the year, every year.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): He never changed the world. What did he do that changed the world?

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): He killed his wives!

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): He killed his wives and wanted to have a son to rule on the throne. What did he do? Did he, like, did he change slavery? No. He just made people kill each other. Did he change sexism? No. He was basically supporting genocide because just killing, killing, killing.

Q: It raises an interesting theme that's been coming out from you and it's been a different theme, you know a lot of the things you've said have been similar to things that were said in other schools, but what has been quite different coming from several of you is this feeling that you wanted more positive stories. And that's back to what you've just said, you know you always say, rather than the person who goes around killing everybody, the people who actually made a change. And that sense of wanting the positive has been a powerful thing that's come out of what you have said. I'm reminded by something. There was a poet in Germany called Bertolt Brecht and he wrote a poem which was something like this: 'Caesar conquered Gaul. What, did he do it on his own? Did nobody else help him?'⁶⁸ And it starts saying all the famous people who are in history as having done these things, what about the actual ordinary people who actually did all the work, who are not remembered? You know, if you have a war it's not the leaders who do the fighting, it's the soldiers on the ground. Big changes, the Industrial Revolution, the people who actually carry out the Industrial Revolution are all the people working in those factories. Anything else that this discussion makes you feel you want to say?

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): A lot of history, it touches upon other subjects like RS, Geography sometimes and Science maybe sometimes. And it's good to learn things like in RS, because RS and Sociology they're kind of linked with History. So, we can even learn things like that, even if we don't have enough hours in History, we can learn about things like that in RS.

Q: That's interesting. How often do you find that you're in one subject and what you've learned in another subject connects and helps your thinking about it?

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Well, we started talking about America in History, and then in RS – or SRS – we started learning ...

Q: What's SRS, sorry?

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Sociology and Religious Studies. And we learned about the nuclear bombs. We were learning about two American wars. That's kind of linked because America likes to

⁶⁸ Bertolt Brecht: Fragen eines lesenden Arbeiters (Questions of a reading workman), written when he was in exile in Denmark in 1935. Words available here: <https://lyricstranslate.com/en/fragen-eines-lesenden-arbeiters-questions-reading-workman.html>

start wars. There was a lot of other countries. So, it's kind of linked together, so if they can link two countries together in two subjects you can link other countries together in subjects as well.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): For example, what I like about History is that, I was taught this by [*names male teacher*], is that they teach us something that's local around here, so basically the thing about Kelso Cochrane – he was basically killed and there's this carnival around the place that remembers what he did. If [*names male teacher*] didn't teach me that I would not know anything and I would not be at that carnival. So, when I went and I told my mum, my mum was, like, 'We have to go' because somebody died there. And I really like it because it turned something kind of negative into something positive, because it's something that someone celebrates to just, like, remember what that person went through to, like, come to now, to the present. So, it's actually quite nice. So that's what I like about History.

Student E-M9D (Somalia/ Yemen): I would say the one thing that wouldn't be good to add all these topics to History, it might make it harder for GCSE students to remember everything.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): I like writing so it's all good.

Student E-M9D (Somalia/ Yemen): They should add, like, some topics that you won't be tested on but just to learn about it.

Q: So, what's the best thing about studying History in your experience, up to now?

All: It's interesting and I like it. /Yes. It's great fun./ It's like storytime for older people.

Student E-M9D (Somalia/Yemen): You can learn about your local area, like Tottenham ...

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): Our playground was a train track.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Oh, this school used to be a train track.

Q: And what's the worst thing about studying history?

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): The gory stuff.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): Yes. Like the LGBT [*unclear*]

Student E-M9D (Somalia/ Yemen): Learning stuff over and over.

[*various comments all at once, unclear*]

Q: Is this a gender thing? The girls were all going, yeah I hate the gory stuff! But what about the boys?

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): I like it! I like it!

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): Some of the boys don't like it. I personally didn't like it, to be honest.

Student E-M9D (Somalia/ Yemen): I loved it.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): For example, yes, if a person is talking about this person was killed and is doing enough speeches I would be like, oh my God that is so interesting because it makes me think when I get home, what could they have done to stop this.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): And how in History we are learning about how people who are LGBT, they had to get some ...

Student C-F9D (Algeria): Electrocuted.

Student B-F9D (Somalia/ Yemen/ Saudi Arabia): Yes, on their hair. I didn't know how that looked like a so when I googled and I saw some pictures ...

Q: Final final point. These questions home in on how empire, particularly the British Empire but it can be the French empire or thee Portuguese or the Dutch – how that is taught in schools, how the impact of empire is taught in schools. Do you feel, with families coming from parts of the world that have been colonised in their history, all the parts of the world you are from were colonised at some time by European powers – **do you feel that the amount of that history that is taught in school is about right, too much, too little? (Q4)**

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): Some is unneeded, like I don't need to know.

Student F-F9D (Montserrat/ USA): I think anything before the 1800s is just irrelevant.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): For me personally, I'm a person who likes to know it all. For example, if I hear from my friends, this person just died blah-blah-blah ...

All: You want to know why.

Student A-F9D (São Tomé & Príncipe/ Portugal): I would be 'Who is she? How comes I don't know her?' Blah-blah-blah. I want to know, how comes I didn't learn her in my history class?

Q: So, you said it in chorus. 'I want to know why'. I suppose a kind of theme to finish up the way you've been talking is, one of the big why-questions is the question of why you are here, why your family is here. All of your families have made the journey – in some of your cases you yourselves, but if not, your parents or your grandparents. And if empire is taught in schools one of the things that happens is it's looking at trying to answer that question. Why is your school this diverse school that you've described? Because most of the people in this school have families that have come from somewhere else. So, thank you. So much! You've been amazing!

3.10 SCHOOL D: State-maintained Mixed Comprehensive School in North London

Teacher-interview conversation 4: D-MT1 one history teacher (Lead Practitioner (History)) (male teacher – w/White British (Jewish heritage))

School D

1. Can you please give some examples of **what** historical themes and events around empire, de-colonisation, and the Commonwealth are taught?

No explicit teaching of how empire emerged and developed.

- how empire has directly impacted on Britain and its colonies
- we touch a little on Tudor Black presence
- big themes: slavery, abolition of slavery
- the way in which Black presence emerges in Britain

We do not do too much on the height of empire.

- 20th century focus on ‘Windrush Generation’ – experience of Caribbean migrants to Britain from post WW2 through to the formation of Carnival in the early ‘60s. Kelso Cochrane as a case study, Claudia Jones.
- First World War Black and Asian contribution – through the narrative of Walter Tull with implicit links to empire.

Teacher 6: In other schools I’ve taught in we covered Mughal India,⁶⁹ British expansion into India, the Mutiny/First War of Independence⁷⁰ and a little on Gandhi and the move to independence.

2. What particular pedagogic and professional knowledge do you draw upon in teaching themes related to empire and post-colonialism? (This relates to how historical themes and events around empire, de-colonisation, and the Commonwealth are taught.)

Teacher 6: My interest in a more diverse history started at university because I – like most students in the 1980s with few exceptions – we had a typically Anglocentric, Eurocentric curriculum and I was bored with it. I had a seminal conversation with my A Level history teacher who said ‘If you do history you can create your own course and journey through history’, and that appealed to me. So, when I applied to university I applied to the School of African and Asian Studies, so that set me off on the journey, and I studied South African history, Kenyan history, empire, Irish history – an amazing course. When I first started teaching, I wasn’t able to bring in that history to my teaching because I was learning my trade, I didn’t have a head of department who was engaged in those kinds of issues and I was too busy beginning to learn how to teach history. But once I became a head of department that gave me the opportunity to introduce a much more diverse history curriculum. I was introduced to BASA [Black and Asian Studies Association], I read *Staying Power* [Peter Fryer, 1984]⁷¹ and

⁶⁹ Mughal India (c. 1526-c.1857)

⁷⁰ The First War of Independence (the Indian Mutiny or the Indian Rebellion) was in 1857.

⁷¹ Fryer, P. (2010). *Staying power – The history of Black people in Britain*. London: Pluto Press. (Originally published in 1984.)

that kind of history opened up my whole world, and then I started to be very conscious of integrating more multicultural history into the curriculum that I was delivering as a head of department. So, we started looking at Black presence in Tudor times, focusing on the big themes of slave trade, abolition, Black presence from Tudors onwards. So, as the years have developed my subject knowledge has grown, and working on the Migration GCSE took me to the next level in terms of my own subject knowledge. And being an examiner for OCR I had to research very specialist knowledge. That's been incredible because I've been reading letters from the East India Company, reports about slave ships being attacked in the 1670s, and a whole new world has been opened up through the research I've had to do. So, I like to think that I've got a strong subject knowledge, probably more than the average history teacher, but not as much as I could do because there's always so much to learn.

Some of the biggest influences on my pedagogy have been through teachers like Ian Dawson and the whole 'active learning' approach and strong engagement and strong hook to the lesson, and the SHP enquiry-based approach. So, I often try to create small enquiries which the students can really immerse themselves into. So, for example, the Kelso Cochrane lessons I taught are set up as a murder mystery. They have to predict what happens at different stages, they use interviews from eyewitnesses and police from a film clip which is a reconstruction. So, with different elements of the story they are engaged at different levels. I guess, a very active learning approach.

In terms of a more historiographical, pedagogical approach I am influenced by more Marxist-feminist cultural historians where I am looking at 'stories from below', that I am engaged in the individual, the personal, and looking at how that personal is political, and so bring those narratives through my teaching in that way. I don't see myself as a strong – I've never been driven, I'm interested in pedagogy in the sense of how it helps the students to learn and how I can create effective lessons, but that's not the driving force behind me. It's the story, the narrative which is more engaging to me and always has been. That's what I like to share.

(Questions 3 & 4) Inclusive narratives

Note: One reason why history education has become a live political issue and a matter of contestation is that traditional curriculum structures involving simple national narratives or 'canons' of events are unsettled by the imperative in the 21st century of introducing the complexity of diversity. Examples of these are: (a) plurinational to include sub-national histories within regional contexts; (b) post-colonial in decolonised settings to engage with the histories and cultures of communities of minority ethnic immigrant-settlers, including post-colonial ones; and (c) a consideration of other more distant settings such as the cultural and Indigenous histories of formerly colonised peoples who have not necessarily become settlers but whose sometimes or often traumatic histories related to colonisation might be seen in a more empathetic light.

3. Drawing on your own experience of teaching in a BAME community can you see any effective practical solutions to address the need for diversity and inclusion expressed in the statement above (perhaps also bearing in mind the question below)?

4. In what ways might it be possible to design history education programmes that address not only the necessity to 'cover' the syllabuses or curricula, but which allow for more

personalisation to include diversity, related specifically to the make-up of the students in the classes?

Teacher 6: I vividly remember an interview with a senior History Ofsted inspector when I was a Head of Department. Throughout the entire interview we focused very much on relevance and how you make your history curriculum relevant and appropriate and accessible to your students, relate it directly to their experience. That's always been a big driving force for me and that's why I interpret the National Curriculum very loosely and get very frustrated when I hear people say you have to follow the National Curriculum, you can't do this, you can't do that. That's just rubbish. In terms of practical application, you just need to look at the diverse population in your classroom and you need to find a way to mirror some of those histories and some of those experiences within your curriculum. And it's not that difficult to do that because most of the communities that we have fit into broad categories which can easily be related to the British experience because of Empire, because we touch on so many different parts of the world. So, it's not really that difficult a task. And even if you go outside of the British Empire – I've taught lessons about Eastern European migrants coming in, related to Polish experience in the Second World War or even earlier than that, Polish migrants arriving in the nineteenth century and setting up their churches in Hammersmith and so on. Or *[at a previous school]* we did stuff on the Roma community, we did a great project engaging them not just in the history curriculum but the wider school curriculum. So, I think it's very straightforward to create a diverse, reflective curriculum.

It absolutely is important *[in a school without diverse intake, also]*. I remember some reports came out in the mid 90s or so about teaching in monocultural communities and some of the biggest challenges in those communities – or in communities that are not particularly well integrated, in Oldham and places like that – part of the reasons why we don't have strong community cohesion in those places is because there is a lack of understanding of where we've come from and how these histories are intertwined and interrelated. For too long the history narrative has been narrow, Eurocentric, male dominated – but we know the arguments about that. That phrase 'being hidden from history' has happened for too long so it needs to be challenged.

We have struggled in vain for 20+ years, 30+ years to try and ensure at the initial teacher training level that this kind of diverse curriculum is even addressed, let alone shown how to be taught effectively. I think we have come on, I wouldn't say significantly, but there has been progress in the last ten years, or certainly in the last three or four years, with the new GCSE courses that we have been working on. Because finally now we have in place a rigorous assessment which covers the kind of histories which we want to be taught schools, and hopefully there will be a trickle-down effect on that. And there are good people in history teacher training who are very committed to diverse histories. Jason Todd [at Oxford University Department of Education] is trying to pull something together and the model that he is proposing is based on the Holocaust Education programme [at UCL Institute of Education]⁷² is a really strong model because that's a fantastic piece ... and also Mike Maddison [former lead Ofsted inspector for History] doing his research about Migration at KS3. If all of these things can come together then it might see a bit of a shift.

⁷² See <https://www.holocausteducation.org.uk/>

I know that the 2007 National Curriculum has now gone by the wayside to a large extent, but that was an important step forward because again it was about recognising at a national level that these issues should be part of your diet that KS3 students should be receiving. And that recognition that diversity – whether it’s a skill or whatever is immaterial – it should be there.

5. Have you experienced the need to give citizenship education for BAME students a historical dimension that they can identify with?

Teacher 6: I would certainly say that is part of our hidden curriculum. There is a strong recognition that the way in which they are taught history, or what they are taught about in history, has a wider societal impact. From what those students were saying, it is touching their lives, which was really amazing to hear.

6. Are there any landmark events that relate to the questions above about inclusive narratives and diversity that are transnational, supranational or international that many or all BAME students might be able to identify with?

Teacher 6: The First and Second World War because of the vastly significant role of empire. In the First, a million Indian soldiers in the British Army which is hardly ever touched on at all. The first shot that was fired was in West Africa and the last in East Africa. I don’t think you can have any understanding of the modern world without understanding the legacy of slavery. I was just watching that documentary *The 13th* – unbelievable.⁷³ So, you can’t understand racism without understanding about slavery. There is all this debate about whether the emphasis has shifted too much to focus on abolition, and whilst that obviously is a powerful story and if you do it effectively and talk about the active role that Africans played in their liberation, which is not always done. But the question is arising about whether that glosses over the story of enslavement and we end up with this ‘glorious British saviours’. So, I have been a bit more conscious this year on not shying away from what actually happened and the impact of enslavement, and I guess I’ve touched a little bit less on abolition. In any case, I only teach abolition through Equiano’s story, so I do it that way. It’s too obvious to say empire because that’s too broad because that covers all of this. I haven’t really ever taught decolonisation, but again to think about the impact of that, I think would be really, really powerful. I guess the only other thing would be precolonial experiences, whether Africa, Asia. There’s a great KS2 bitesize-type website on Benin and I just got them to – you can split it down into about thirteen different topics – and they did their own little research presentation on that.

7. Would some, many or most BAME students believe that they have more than one identity?

Teacher 6: Absolutely, without doubt. In my Year 10 lesson this morning a student asked me where I come from. I said I was born in London. They said ‘But where are you from?’ ‘My parents were born in London.’ ‘Where were your grandparents born?’ ‘My grandparents were German.’ ‘Oh, so you’re German.’ ‘No.’ And then one of the Black girls was asked where she was from and she said the same thing, right back to her grandparents born in England, and then a great grandparent or one of the grandparents was American and others Jamaican. So, they are quite aware of their differing cultural heritages, and certainly those who were not even born

⁷³ *The 13th* is an American documentary film directed by Ava DuVernay. It is about the links between race, justice and incarceration (imprisonment) in the USA, and is named after the 13th Amendment in the Constitution (1865) which abolished slavery and ended involuntary servitude except as a conviction for the commitment of a crime.

here even more so, and multiple identities. And I think because it's such a diverse school, because they all share that experience, it's a non-issue. It's like it's automatic, it's just part of the mix of who they are.

8. Are you aware of any links between history education debates in the BAME post-colonial contexts with which you are familiar and wider global discourses about history education?

Teacher 6: Recently I was interviewed by a sociology student doing a Masters at LSE who is Indian, and he came to talk to me about perceptions of empire and teaching empire. He was mainly focusing on the research methods, rather than the history angle of it. But he was utterly shocked at how little empire is taught over here, compared to his experience in India where it dominated the curriculum. So that was fascinating. Having worked with other European history teachers I think there was very little touched upon on any understanding of empire – in fact, one thing which I took from that experience was how lucky we are in the UK to have the flexibility that we have in creating our curriculum, because they're all working from state-produced textbooks so there's very little there on that. [*Our free-for-all curriculum*] is obviously positive if you're doing it, but not so positive in that you don't have any control – for want of a better word – or way of exerting pressure. It's a difficult balance. As hard as we have tried – the Migration GCSE is a perfect example, I think there is probably a lot more that could have been done to promote the course, but it's still getting a very small take-up because, for whatever reason, teachers are always nervous about teaching these topics, lack of knowledge. When I spoke to EdExcel yesterday saying if there was anything we could do to change it, I said you should teach Migration history, bring that in to your units.

9. Should professional or other bodies (e.g. the Historical Association, SHP, even the Royal Historical Society, or the Commonwealth) be doing more to ensure more diversity in history education?

10. If they should be, then how or in what way?

Teacher 6: I think we could be fairly positive about what the Schools History Project have done, certainly in terms of their openness towards a more diverse curriculum. We've got plenaries this year by Runnymede⁷⁴, we have stuff that you and I have delivered over many, many years. And obviously Migration came through the SHP course for OCR as well, so there is a commitment on that. We know, having done some of the research on the SHP textbooks in the past, that more could have been done to reflect a more diverse history, but I think there is definitely an openness towards it. I know less about the Historical Association; I've not been to their conference. *Teaching History* [the HA's quarterly magazine for history teachers] has touched on it at times. My article was a long time ago now, in 2006, but I know Nick Dennis⁷⁵ has written about it and I know he's writing another article about it. He's very keen to expand that kind of understanding. I don't know about the top echelon of HA. You could argue that SHP have it as one of their founding principles, which is about a diverse history: I would not

⁷⁴ The Runnymede Trust: see its website <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/>

⁷⁵ <http://www.nickdennis.com/blog/2017/09/30/beyond-tokenism-teaching-a-diverse-history-in-the-post-14-curriculum/comment-page-1/>; more recently: <http://www.nickdennis.com/blog/2019/01/06/absent-from-the-curriculum/>

be able to say the same thing for HA, I'd be surprised if that was the case. I can speak even less about RHS, I know very little about them.

3.11 SCHOOL E: State-maintained Mixed Comprehensive School in East London

Year 9:

Student A-F9E: female (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France)

Student B-F9E: female (Ghana)

Student C-F9E: female (Jamaica, Cuba)

Student D-M9E: male (Vietnam, Cumbria)

Interviewer: Martin Spafford

Also present some of the time: E-FT1 one female Head of History (Black British – West African); also, a different (male) teacher referred to in the interviews (E-MT2) who may not have been teaching this group

22nd May 2018

Q: Q1 OK my first question is kind of an easy one, which is: thinking back over all the history that you've ever studied in schools, primary school and secondary school, just give me any examples you can think of, of when you've studied anything about empire or colonialism or the Commonwealth, or anything like that, just anything you can remember.

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): I guess the American independence because they were, like, colonised by Britain and they managed to get independence from them, so ...

Q: and what year group did you study that in?

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): Oh, right now, we're kind of doing it, so yes.

Q: Anything else that you can remember?

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): In Year 8 we did the British Empire. I was in [*names male teacher... the teacher's*] class and, yes, we learned about the British Empire.

Q: Can you tell us about the things that you remember that you learned about that? Or places that you studied.

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): What I found interesting, sort of stuck with me, is that how during the war, in World War One, they had, like, Britain area, there were so many different areas inside from different countries that had come to help. And so, I found that kind of interesting because I sort of thought, oh well my country didn't go and fight in the war, when really they did.

Q: Which country is that?

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): I come from, like, different places. I come from Jamaica, Dominica and then France as well. And then there's a little bit more but I won't say.

Q: So, you're kind of internationalism in one person.

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): Yes.

Q: So, you were surprised. Why did that surprise you?

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): I always had this image from, in Remembrance Day, I don't know why, I always had this image of, I don't know, it just being British people, white English people in, that just fought in the war. I was quite intrigued to find out that, you know, actually other people of different places, of different ethnicities were part of the war. So, then I, since I learned that in Year 8, when the next Remembrance Day came I was, like, wow, like, some of my country is in there. So, I felt quite proud as well.

Q: That's really interesting. Anybody else got any thoughts? You must have studied the same things.

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): In primary school I studied the Roman Empire and that was, that interested me a lot because a lot of what is here today is because of it. The roads, especially across Europe you can see aqueducts etcetera that all left from the Roman times. And I think the Romans were very important because they brought a lot of, like, the system, like the roads etcetera to Europe, whereas if we didn't have them we might have been a bit slower or it might not have happened.

Q: That's really interesting. Any other things that people can remember? OK, picking up those points that [*names Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France) and Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria)*] said particularly, [*names student A-F9E*] **was talking about how she felt in the way that you learned about – was it the First World War or the Second? (Q2)**

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): The First World War.

Q: The First World War. Presumably you studied the First World War as well. What about the rest of you, how did you feel at the time when that was being done? **Did you feel similar things to [*addresses comment to student A-F9E*], or not? (Q2)**

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Yes, I guess it was surprising that other people participated in the war on Britain's behalf because at that time I think there was quite a lot of [*unclear*]. I don't know, I'm not sure, I think there might have been so it's surprising to see.

Q: Did you study anything else on the British Empire? You said you did the British Empire in Year 8 and you mentioned the First World War. Can you remember any other aspects of the British Empire that you looked at, or other empires?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): We did India. The effect of Britain on India and how India kind of fought for independence against them, and kind of massacres that took place that the British committed to try and stop them, like, getting independence.

Q: OK, right. And did you all study that as well?

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): Yes.

Student B-F9E (Ghana): I don't remember to be honest.

Q: That itself is interesting, what things you remember and what you don't. So, it helps us when you tell us you don't remember it as well. OK, what I'm going to do is I'm going to kind of go round different parts of the world and ask, in primary or secondary school, what you can remember learning about those parts of the world, if anything. And remember, it's fine if it's nothing.

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): Does it have to be related to the British Empire or just anything?

Q: I think I'll ask, anything that you remember from those parts of the world, OK, for the moment because it will help. So, I'm going to start with Africa. Have you studied Africa in any way up to the end of Year 9?

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): Yes, in Year 8 the first thing we studied was slavery, so we were looking at the triangles from Africa, America and stuff. And at first, I thought that it was just people from Britain or from America and stuff that had come to Africa and taken people and enslaved them. But then I started to realise that, yes that did happen also but many Africans were a part of bringing them over. So, I was quite shocked to find out that they exchanged people for weapons and stuff, so I was quite shocked, I was like, so you wanted weapons that badly that you were going to take your own family or people that you see every day, and sell them on to other people. So, I was quite shocked to find that out as well.

Q: I'm interested that it's the second time, [*names Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France)*], that you've talked about quite an emotional response to things that you've studied in history, which is very interesting. Any other aspects of African history – Southern Africa, East Africa, North Africa, West Africa?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): In primary school we read a book, we kind of talked about South Africa and the *apartheid*. So about, we read this book and it's basically showing all the injustices that Black people faced, and we also talked about Nelson Mandela and how he was in prison for, like, fighting to get the *apartheid* abolished. And also, further back, like in maybe Key Stage 1 or the start of Key Stage 2, I did the Egyptians in school, which I still find quite interesting because I'm interested in the mythology of all of the gods.

Q: [*Names Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria)*], you've talked now, twice, about more ancient history, it seems, that you're especially interested in, is that right?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): Yes, I'm very interested in, like, the gods that people believed in. It's quite interesting, all of the crazy things, but also very, just like, the things that they believed in, it's very odd.

Q: Interesting, thank you. I'm going to move to another part of the world. South Asia, India, what's now Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal. You mentioned the British Empire in India, and it sounds like you talked about the time when Britain was ruling India, and the conflict in the nineteenth century?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): Yes.

Q: Any other aspects of Indian history that you've looked at all?

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): I haven't really learned about Indian history in depth in school but my mum's dad was half Indian and so his dad, like his ancestors,

they fled from India and went to, like, different parts. And then my mum's granddad, he went over to Jamaica and started a family in Jamaica. And so, I found it quite interesting, I haven't really pushed my mum to find out, but it will be interesting to see whether, like, why did they move from ...

Q: You should get that story down, it sounds as though it's going to be fascinating, really. And when you're, kind of, as you grow up and you have descendants, and they have descendants, I've the feeling it's going to be really important that the family know that story. It sounds quite special, actually.

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): Yes.

Q: Ok I'm going to move. Australasia – Australia, New Zealand, the islands of the Pacific. Has Britain's involvement, or any aspect of that, has that cropped up ever in history?

Student B-F9E (Ghana): I don't think so, I'm not sure.

Q: Or what is often called, from here, the Far East. China, Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam ...

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Oh, with Vietnam all I know is the Americans because they tried to Vietnam from being, yes, Communist and stuff like that.

Q: And how do you know that, you know that from where?

Student B-F9E (Ghana): History in, yes, this year. A few months back.

Q: So, was that a unit that you did about America, or about Vietnam?

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Vietnam. The Vietnam War.

Q: OK, excellent. Kind of the Mediterranean, places like Cyprus, Malta or the Middle East – Palestine, Israel, Syria, Iraq, Turkey. Any of that, sort of, part of the world come up at all in anything you've studied?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): In RE, I think, last year we did a bit on how Israel was, like, formed and how that has affected, like, now and the conflicts that are going on there.

Q: It was part, it was kind of a historical context to your study in RE?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): Yes, because at the same time we were doing the Holocaust in history, so RE kind of gave us, like, what happened after that, which was quite good.

Q: Maybe when I interview your teacher later, I can see if that was a planned connection or that happened by chance. But it's really interesting that it did. And did you find yourself making connections, therefore, between the two?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): Yes.

Q: Kind of moving to another part of the world – Ireland. Has anything with relation to Ireland? I know it will come up later when you're older, but up to now.

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): We did why some Irish people moved here because of the potato famine.

Q: And that's a British Empire story too. You know, it's very connected with British rule of Ireland. Across to the Americas. You've mentioned enslavement and, kind of, your links with the Caribbean. And I'm just wondering if you've looked at any of the history of the Caribbean or of any part of North or Central or South America up to now.

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): Well, America, we learned about how America wanted to not be part of, I think it was part of the British Empire.

Q: Oh yes, that's what you raised at the beginning, isn't it? Yes, go on.

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): And we also learned that, how America was the country that made, was still with slavery longer than Britain, and stuff like that. That's what we learned.

Q: So, it's been pretty wide, hasn't it, actually? When you think about all the different things that you've studied. Now you've mentioned primary school, you've mentioned Years 8 and 9. What about when you were in Year 7? What sort of things? Was that, kind of, very much, kind of English Middle Ages type history, or was it ...?

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Oh, the Elizabethan era and all of that, yes.

Q: Anything to do with empire in the Elizabethan era?

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): We didn't really start to go into that much depth until Year 8, so with [*names male teacher*] he would make references to the Elizabethan era and how they went, like, travelling to different places and they found different materials in different countries that they brought back and presented to the Queen, such as the potato, and stuff, and sugar, which was why her teeth were black. And yes, just like that.

Q: That's great, I mean that's been fantastic because suddenly to, kind of, dredge up things from years ago is quite hard. You've done fantastically. So, the next question is much more about your own feelings, all right? You've said that you've got these mixed and complex and fascinating origins in your family. What about the rest of you? What about your own origins, [*names student B-F9E*]?

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Both my parents are Ghanaian so it's kind of, like, a simple thing – but they're from different places and, yes, like, but it's the same country but different areas.

Q: So, did your parents migrate here, or ...?

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Yes. Migrated here, like, one year apart from each other.

Q: And you were born here?

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Yes.

Q: And [*names student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba)*], what about you?

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): I'm Jamaican and Cuban. My grandma lived in Cuba but then she went to Jamaica, and then she met my granddad and then they came to England.

Q: So, they met in Jamaica, did they?

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): Yes, and they came to Wolverhampton and then they had children. And then my parents met, and then me.

Q: So, you are third generation as they call it, because it was your grandparents who migrated here. And what about you?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): I'm half Vietnamese.

Q: Half Vietnamese? OK, and was, so one of your parents is Vietnamese?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): Yes.

Q: And is that your mum or your dad?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): Mum.

Q: And was your mum born here or did she migrate?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): She migrated here.

Q: She migrated from Vietnam. OK so, now, in the context of what you've been talking about – you know, there's been some Vietnamese history that you've studied, there's been some Caribbean history that you've studied, there's been some African history that you've studied, the points that [names Student A-F9E] was making about, you know, enslavement from West Africa. And you also looked at many other aspects of empire including in India, and in Ireland, the impact, the effect of that on migration here. So, my question next is, I'm going to ask you first of all, how have you felt about those topics being taught in school, and when they are being taught how do you feel they are being taught? And then the second part of the question would be, how do you feel about the way they were taught? So, those sort of topics, when colonisation, empire and these contexts – and you know, Vietnam wasn't in the British empire but it's been ...

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): It was part of the French ...

Q: Colonised by the French and arguably the Americans – that's very complicated, but certainly the French Empire. What are your feelings about all of that, when these things are studied?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): When we learned about Vietnam, I was quite intrigued because my mum hadn't really gone into depth, she hadn't really talked about it, but when, I could kind of talk to her about it now. And before, I went to Vietnam. So, some the things we did actually came up. What I visited, for example. I went near Da Nang⁷⁶ and that's where obviously the Americans landed, and I saw where the My Lai massacre⁷⁷ happened. And it all kind of, it linked in to what I did. And when I went to Vietnam it wasn't more, I was thinking more of a holiday, I didn't think, this doesn't really, and I don't want to be dragged out of a hotel and I wanted to be in the swimming pool. But once I actually did it in history, it got my interest more. I thought, this is actually really interesting and it's actually important.

Q: So, I don't want to put words into your mouth but it sounds like you are saying that the study of Vietnamese history in school actually spurred and increased your, kind of, sense of

⁷⁶ The Hue-Da Nang campaign in Vietnam War was fought between 5 March and 2 April 1975.

⁷⁷ My Lai – name of a village in Vietnam where there was a massacre of unarmed civilians by American troops on 16 March 1968.

the history of, if you like, the Vietnamese side of you and got you more interested in it. Is that right?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): Yes.

Q: When you say you visited those places like Da Nang and My Lai, was that before you'd studied it here or after you'd studied it?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): Before.

Q: Before.

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): So, when I went there I wasn't really that interested but I kind of remembered what happened ...

Q: So next time you go, do you think you'll be different?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): Next time, I think... I don't think ... er, I'll be more interested, but I'll just try and ... I won't complain as much about going round and stuff ...

Q: You won't feel dragged around those places quite so much! That's kind of interesting. What about the rest of you?

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): We touched a little bit on the Windrush generation, I think it was this year – yes, this year, and my grandma, she would always talk to me about how, sort of like, her generation paved the way for us. So, when they came over there was quite a lot of racism. It was like 'No Blacks, no Irish, no dogs' – sort of equating people, Black people and Irish people, as an animal. And she just used to sort of touch on things and she would just be like to my brother, and we just thought that she was sort of joking. So, she'd just be, like 'Oh, just remember all that I've done for you' and we just thought, oh, we come to your house and you give us food, it's not that hard. But when we went into depth about it, that's when I started to realise that she'd gone through so much for us to just be seen as normal, as – what am I, second generation? – second generation, and so I was quite interested when we were learning about the *Windrush*, I was quite interested, intrigued because she'd never really gone into depth about it but she'd just sit there and say her piece and we'd just, like, 'ah she's joking'. But it was really interesting, like it sort of spurred a bit of emotion in me as well because I get really angry when people aren't treated as people. Like, we are all similar, like we're not the same because all are different, like we have our own personalities that makes us unique, but mainly we're all part of the same family as I like to think of it, and it makes me a bit angry inside when people aren't true to the way they're supposed to be. Yes.

Q: Just bearing that in mind, what both you and [*names student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria)*] have said, does that mean that you are glad or not glad that these things crop up in your history lessons? Do you see that as a, you know it's made you feel some quite difficult emotions. **Well, does that mean that you feel pleased that this was studied in a history lesson, or that you'd rather it wasn't? (Q2/Q3)**

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): I'm pleased because there's that quote from, I've forgotten his name, Santai ... [*probably Santayana, editor's comment*] or something

like that: 'If you don't teach history the you're condemned to repeat it'.⁷⁸ So, I believe that any difficult topic you need to teach because it means that going forward these thing won't happen again. So, we teach slavery so that it doesn't happen again. We teach, like, the Vietnam War so the stuff doesn't happen again. So, I think it's very important that we do teach so it doesn't repeat itself.

Q: Thank you, N. What does everybody else feel? (Q2)

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Yes, I definitely agree with that. Like, when learning about genocides and everything it's, like, really good because, like, although, like not all, we wouldn't want to do a genocide or anything, well I hope all of us, like those of us wouldn't, it's just really good to learn because it's – it's really interesting as well, like, you just see what happened before and how it was resolved an ... how, like, the world took it in and tried to change it and stop it from happening again. It's like, it's really good.

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): And it also helps this generation because it enlightens us of how easy we kind of have it and how everyone else, it makes us really not narrow-minded and it makes us, like, learn about other cultures. Not just oh, because I'm Black I'm going to learn about slavery or how my country developed, but it's more like, because I'm in this world I'm going to learn about how the world developed as one. And it also teaches you how we should go about situations. Because some stuff that we'd think, why do they fight over there, they had a really big war over, so it just shows us that when you work together and when you do, you know, like, learn about stuff, when you learn about stuff that's when you can then better the world.

Q: That's really interesting. Somebody in another school, one or two of the students. It's the last school I went to, they did say: 'Oh, but we keep on learning about horrible, painful, difficult, violent things! Can't we have more happy stories please?' And I just wonder how you'd feel about that comment? Do you agree? Because I'm picking up on what you said, you said 'yes these things are difficult but we have to know them'.

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Yes, because it's like if we just learn about happy things, we don't see the sad things in life, and then when it does happen again, we won't really know how to react to it, or we won't necessarily feel, like, safe or anything, so it's just, like ...

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): You can't sugar-coat everything.

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Yes.

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): History is history and that's probably the reason why it's sometimes sad and quite gory. It's because that's what's made it history. Like, if it was to be always happy or stuff like that people wouldn't really think twice about it. They'd be, like, 'oh yeah, that was a good time', but it wouldn't make it history. It would just be, like, it's just a pass over, like. I feel like we learn more bad stuff in history because that's the things that we need to be educated about, not ... We do learn about some positive things and positive

⁷⁸ Santayana quote: 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it', from *The Life of Reason: Reason in Common Sense* (Scribner, 1905, p.284). George Santayana (1863-1952).

outcomes in a situation but I feel like history overall is showing how a negative thing, how a positive outcome can come out of it.

Q: I mean, from what some of you were saying, it sounds like you feel that there is, almost like a kind of moral reason for studying history. Because you kept saying, I think three of you anyway have said ‘we learn so that we don’t make the mistakes, so that these things don’t happen.’ Some people would disagree with that and they would say ‘no, history is just about learning what happened and trying to understand what happened. It’s not about trying, you know whether things, what’s right and wrong or anything moral. Do you agree with that point of view?’

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): No, because you see when they started, what do you call it [?] ... they started building more stuff and factories and that, they got children to work in the factories. If we didn’t learn about that and look over that, like right now children could possibly be working in those factories again and doing the work that grown men and grown women should be doing. It’s like saying ‘oh, yes, forget about it, that’s fine. Like, it happened then so just shoo it away.’ We’ve got to talk about it and learn from it as well.

Q: Now you’ve said, some of you have certainly said that you think that studying stories of empire and studying aspects of the history that relates to your own family backgrounds, you saw that as a positive thing. What if somebody turns round and says ‘come on, we’re in Britain. We should just be doing British history’.

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): I think that people mistake Britain for just white people that are from either England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. I believe the world is multicultural and that Britain is multicultural, and that seeing as, like, Britain colonised all other areas, all those other areas are now considered British, which is why we have the Commonwealth. So, it’s like, we’re all together. So, I would really strongly disagree with that person because I don’t call myself all the countries that I’m from. I call myself Black British, like I consider myself British because I was born in this country, and even if I wasn’t born in this country, like, I still have a connection with Britain as much as I have a connection with all of my other countries as well.

Q: And we’ll come back to some things about identity a little bit later, picking up from the points that you made. What do other people think? Should we just be doing Britain?

Student B-F9E (Ghana): No, it’s just, it’s not like it’s boring but it’s nice to know about other places because it’s just, it’s nice to know what’s going on in the world and the history of everything.

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): I feel like it’s almost, it’s quite narrow-minded because not everyone here is, like, for example what you said about, even if you wasn’t born in Britain you can still be British, it’s good to learn about other people’s ethnic background and look in other people’s perspective. That’s how you start to become ... like, very, that’s how you have a growth mindset, to grow your mindset and to see different things and to explore. It kind of triggers you to be more vigilant in situations and see, like, different situations, different stuff.

Q: Do you agree with that, [*names Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria)*]?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): Yes, I think that we shouldn’t just be doing British history. We’re not doing British history, we’re doing history. We need to learn about what

happened in other countries and what happened here because, like we were talking about earlier, we learn from these things. And if we don't learn about what's happening in Russia, let's say, then something that happened in Russia that could lead to something that happened, that could happen in Britain for example – I can't think of an event but... for example, something led to something. This is what we learn about, to understand what actually is happening now.

Q: That's really interesting. Thank you so much, all of you. Fascinating insights. Some of the points that you were making, I mean [*names Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba) and Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria)*] particularly, I think, you've been talking about the importance of learning about these, kind of, world history because we should all know it. And you two were also talking about the importance of learning it for yourselves in a multicultural context. What if we were sitting in a school where every single student was white British? And there are many schools like that in this country. OK, would the same apply? Should they be studying histories of empire? Should they be looking at events in Africa, in Asia, in the Caribbean, in the Americas, in the Middle East? Should they be doing that?

All: Yes.

Q: Or if they are culturally white British, should it just be a white British history for them?

All: No.

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): Because in society there are different colours, different races, stuff like that. And it will help them understand certain situations – like for example racism, just they might not understand the concept of racism if they only learned their history because they won't be able to see. If they don't know about slavery they will be, like, why did certain people take certain stuff to such offence. They wouldn't be able to understand or be able to fit into today's society and see why some things are wrong and some things are right. So, they wouldn't really, I feel like they would still have to learn so that they could then also pass it on and start to make it more broad – more the history of all, like ...

Q: And you, [*names Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba)*], you said earlier, you talked about the importance of different perspectives. So, I mean, would that apply to you too, that you need to see a range of different perspectives? OK, now, in this school, and for that matter when you were at primary school, how have you felt about the way these topics have been taught?

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): In primary it was obviously scaled down so that we could understand it, so I think that was good because I still do remember certain things that I've learned in my primary school. And in secondary, in this school, I feel that history is taught very well. I pick up quite a lot of things, like I go home to my mum sometimes and just like 'Look at what I learned in history' and I start talking to her and she's just, like 'Be quiet! Just leave the room, get rid of the noise!' and I just blabber on and I'm like, 'Yeah, [*names female teacher*] said this and then blah-di-blah' and she's like 'Oh, OK' and she can see how passionate I am about history because I do love history and I think it's important in the way that you teach it. So, I will never forget my teacher's name, [*names female teacher*] in my primary school, she taught us about the Victorians every Friday, and I loved it, it was just the way she taught it, it was so engaging, and I think you, people learn differently so you need to make sure that it engages people because some people can just switch off because it's not something that they like or something that they think is correct to be teaching. But if you can

make them, like, you need to find a different way to make them think differently. So as [*names student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba)*] keeps mentioning, don't be narrow minded, so that you do have a growth mindset.

Q: Any other thoughts on this?

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Yes, like, for my history teacher at the moment, [*names male teacher*], the way he does it is, like, he'll start off the lesson, put the title, obviously what we're doing and he'll have a quote up or something or a picture and let us, like, talk about it, like talk about it together and then after he'll give us, like, information, talk us through it, put the points on the board, we'll write it down. Then after he'll give us a choice of, like, three or four tasks to do. You can pick from that and then you do it, and it's really, like, it's good because you don't have to just do one thing, you can choose and it's just really good and it's engaging and I feel like we all, like in my history class I feel like we all enjoy history. You can see that is because the way he does it is really good, like.

Q: That's really interesting. And why is that working for you? Can you analyse why that approach works?

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Because it's not like we're just sitting down and taking notes. Like, we take notes, we talk, like, and we have a choice. I think that's the thing I like the most, we have a choice about the tasks, like, we can do, we don't just have to do one thing, yes.

Q: I mean, is there a danger that somebody can just choose the easier task all the time?

Student B-F9E (Ghana): There's not necessarily like an easier one, it's just like, there's let's say, like you can do a story line, or do something that can, that's more creative for you. It's just, yes, different. It depends what you like, I guess.

Q: Do either of you want to comment on this question at all?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): For me history is taught well because it's not only, like, for example when I was younger my dad used to take me to, like, castles and stuff, just like dragging me out and stuff and I didn't really want to go then, and I never used to understand because everything was on a sign on the door and I read it and there was, like, no context. We were just looking at an old building. Whereas in history you know the context, you know everything about it, you know what all the words mean how they teach you it, and if you don't have the context to learn something then you're not really learning it.

Q: That's a very interesting point, (*names Student D-M9E [Vietnam, Cumbria]*). I think if you've got a certain knowledge about something it becomes real, doesn't it? I mean, you talked to me before we started about football, and to enjoy a football match you need to understand the rules. You know, you need to have a sense about what this is about. You need some kind of framework, it seems to me that you're saying. [*Names Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba)*], what do you think?

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): And I think one thing that makes me really engaged in history is how we relate it to today's society. Like, when you look back at it, like, your mindset now and the mindset like, looking in, putting yourself in their shoes, what interests me the most. Because it's like, wow, people actually thought like this, people actually did certain things like that. So, I feel that it's the way that we are now that, it's kind of like we're in that era when we

learn about it. It's put into so much detail and it's so relatable that you can then start to understand how they actually felt rather than, oh, they felt about this in a textbook. It's more like you've learned it, and that's why I remember history a lot because it's something I do look up for.

Q: Wow, that's really interesting. Is there anything that you'd, is there any aspect of the history teaching that you might give advice and you'd say, well, this could change or maybe this is a way to improve it, that you can think of?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): I know that some of the topics aren't, like, chosen and you have to do them. Some of the topics are really, like, slow and they're kind of, you do too much of it and it just becomes a bit, some of the knowledge is just a bit ...

Q: Can you give an example?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): For example, I think last year we did the slave trade for, like, a term and a half or something like that and it was just really, some of the information just was going in through there and going straight out, like I already knew what was happening. It was just a bit ...

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): It might have felt a bit dragging to you because some people might not really understand it. I feel like with stuff like that you have to be sensitive. You can't just be, like, oh that happened and that happened and that happened. I feel like people might feel as if, oh, you're not looking into further detail, you're not being, you know, very, like, sensitive to the subject because some people might take it differently, rather than ... Like, you might take it into consideration, like, ah I understand what's happening. But other people might be, like, oh I don't get it, I don't know why that happened, etcetera.

Q: Picking up on that, all of you have experienced history lessons that have dealt with issues that could be sensitive to yourselves because they touch on your own family histories. All of you have that experience from what you've told me. **So how successfully, for you, have your teachers tackled that in history lessons? Have they tackled that in the way you would have wanted that to be taught, bearing in mind that these touch on your own histories, your own families? (Q4)**

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): Yes, I think they teach it well because obviously you need to get that information to everyone in the class so the information goes there. But what I really like about history in this school is that it's— of course you've got a lesson plan, but it's a bit flexible in the lesson, so it's like, you can ask questions, you can have, like, a lengthy discussion with the class. So, if you want to know something more, so during slavery I used to ask [*names male teacher*] quite a lot of questions and he used to, like, sit down there with me and talk to me, just like answering my questions. And I felt that that was quite, like, good because I'm finding out more. So, it's not only yes, I do know what I need to in order to pass my history GCSE, but also I've got actually some personal information or just a little bit more knowledge that I could pass on to other people, or I could just keep it to myself. But I just have, like, different options with what I know.

Q: So, it's that kind of openness to debate and discussion and questioning and enquiry that you definitely like. Any other feelings about how these, kind of, quite sensitive, difficult issues are tackled?

Student B-F9E (Ghana): I think they're tackled well but obviously the teachers are trying to tread carefully because they can't really just say everything about the subject and go into detail about certain things because it's, like explicit. Like a video we were watching, we couldn't watch the full length of it because, like, the programme was, the truth was – not the truth was too much but, like, what was in the video would be ...

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): They have, like, some photos of lynchings and stuff like that so they just needed to take it off.

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): We can't obviously see the whole truth because of the school and ...

Q: And your age.

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): The school does make it, like, they do make it quite obvious that you can do your own research. I feel like they do tell you, oh you can go on YouTube and you can find this. They do give you resources and you can do your own research, which is good.

Q: Kind of leads me to another question because it came up. This isn't one of the questions on here but it came up strongly in one of the other schools. And that is, I mean in that other school the three history teachers all themselves came from colonised backgrounds – two Black teachers and one Irish teacher. And so, the students in that school were sort of thinking, were trying to ask 'How would we feel if these issues were being taught by teachers who were not, did not have that experience' – if you like, teachers who look like me. And is that an issue? There's a teacher here who's of Ghanaian heritage and origin, so will have a direct family understanding of empire and colonisation because of that, in the same way that you have of the French or British empires. Does that matter?

Student B-F9E (Ghana): No, I don't think so as long as you get the message across and you teach it, and you're not, like, biased towards your own race. Obviously, the teachers wouldn't be because, you know. As long you can just, like, get it across, say the truth instead of, like, hide anything that doesn't need to be hidden. Because my teacher, like, he's a white English male [*laughs*] and when he talks about it, like the Vietnam War and the slavery and everything, he would, like, tell us, like he wouldn't leave anything out that doesn't need to be left out, so you know ...

Q: So essentially his ethnicity and his gender is not an issue.

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): Is not, yes.

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): I think also that it doesn't matter what race you are when it comes to history. You just need to be able to sympathise with what's going on, be able to empathise with people that were in their situations. Essentially that's kind of what we're doing, so we're seeing things in Vietnam without, 'oh my days, that would be just so horrible if that happened to us!' So, I think that it doesn't matter what your race is, to be honest. Because, like, personally I really love learning about Victorian Britain, I love Elizabeth the First, I love all of those but I'm not white. I just, I could say quite a lot about Elizabeth the First to someone, and about Victorian Britain, but I wasn't necessarily there at that time and I'm not the same race as those people.

Q: No, that's really interesting because in a school I was in yesterday I was interviewing a teacher, and it's a Black teacher and she was saying 'I'm not just interested in Black history, I'm interested in all kinds of things' you know. OK, now this question I'm going to read out to you as you might interpret it in really any way you like. But actually, before I do, a question. Some of you talked a little bit about this – you have the most, P. How much do you talk about, kind of, family history or your cultural history in your family at home? And in both your cases it's going to be a mixed cultural history - and yours actually, as well, and yours as it's two different parts of Ghana – when I think about it, all of you have that mixed history!

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): I talk about it regularly with my mum. She's really a fan of slavery, she's gone on many courses and she likes to educate us about it. Even about other history as well, like British history sometimes as well. She likes to really educate us so that we understand as well.

Q: So, in fact you bring historical knowledge of your cultural background from your family, and you have that. How about the rest of you?

Student B-F9E (Ghana): My mum just touched on certain subjects like, I think, the Gold something, I can't remember ...

Q: Gold Coast?

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Yes, the Gold Coast, that's really embarrassing, I should know this, but she does, like, with her and my brother, they're – my brother does history as well – and they like to talk about it and with the family. And so, yes, my mum is interested in her history and her origin of course, and we do talk about it, but sometimes I don't pay the best attention, which I should do but, yes.

Q: What about you, [*indicates Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria)*]?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): My mum always used to tell me the stories to try and make me not do something. For example, if I did something bad she would, like, 'Back where I used to come from we couldn't do that or we'd do this'.

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): Oh yes, definitely.

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): And she always uses to use that to make me not do something.

Q: Does it work?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): Sometimes. It depends how, kind of – because I think, relating to it just kind of makes it more understandable. For example, if I think, 'ah that can't happen and then she's just lying to me' or 'yes that could happen', so then I won't do it again.

Q: And out of interest, what about your dad's side? Because your dad's white British, is he?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): Yes.

Q: And does he share any aspects of history or your family history? Or your grandparents?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): My dad likes to say he's from – I can't remember the – it's the native Sweden, and that kind of area.

Q: Scandinavia.

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): He came, he thinks he's Viking because where he's from, 90 per cent or something ...

Q: Where is that?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): Cumbria.

Q: OK, yes, yes.

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): Near Carlisle. So, he always says, well 90 per cent of here is from there. Oh, because you've got '-son' at the end of your name that means there's a high chance you're *[unclear]*.

Q: So, it's a migration story on your dad's side.

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): Yes, but he likes to talk about history. He's very informed. My mum is less so, she just uses it more to stop me doing something. But my dad and me sometimes, sometimes I talk to him and he's like 'No that's wrong, you shouldn't be saying that, I think it should be this' when we've got told this in class.

Q: Right, here comes the question. **How do you see the relationship between your own identity and history – and the history of your family, your sense of identity – with being British in your own way, whatever the way? So it's kind of how British do you feel? How is that related to your histories?** *[unclear]* Where do you stand on that? And you can just interpret that question any way you like. **(Q3)**

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Do you mean like how British we are?

Q: Well, that's within it. **What's the connection between your own identity and your history and being British? So that can include How British do you feel?** That's how a lot of people have understood that question. It can be that if you like. **(Q3)**

Student B-F9E (Ghana): I don't know, I feel like I'm just British. I've been told that, like, I don't know how to put it, I'm quite like – eek – like ...

Q: You can say the word!

Student B-F9E (Ghana): A coconut. *[laughter]* Because, like – he's laughing because ...

Q: It's the other way round from an avocado, isn't it, because an avocado is white on the outside and black on the inside.

Student B-F9E (Ghana): How did that happen?

Q: Black stone inside a ...

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Oh.

Q: Anyway, let's go on. We've got that word out there.

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Like because I like quite, like some of the stuff I watch is like, oh – I don't know, apparently I'm just very, like, British I guess you could say, and I'm not ...

Q: So that being the case, in the last few weeks I've talked to loads of people who've said the same thing, you know, and – does that mean that your Ghanaian identity, how do you feel that? In what ways do you feel that?

Student B-F9E (Ghana): I feel like I love my culture, like I feel it's beautiful, it's amazing and I would like to know more about it and stuff like that. And I am, I don't know, I'm just, like I'm Ghanaian and I'm British. You know, it's mixed.

Q: I'm going to throw in – I've done it in the other groups because this exact same thing keeps on – and I'm going to ask you, is that a positive thing or is it a negative thing? And I'll repeat something that a friend of mine once said to me, and she said 'I am 100% British and I'm 100% Pakistani and 100% Muslim – it just depends where I am'. You know, and being 100% Pakistani doesn't mean she isn't totally British, because she feels totally British. But she also feels Pakistani.

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Yes.

Q: And the maths doesn't work but humanly it works. But anyway, that sense that you have of this thing that you can't really explain – that you feel totally British but you're proud of being Ghanaian as well, is that a positive thing, or is it a negative thing for you? Or neither, or both?

Student B-F9E (Ghana): I don't really think about it in depth. Like, when I go to Ghana it's like they know, like she's obviously not from here, she's – you know – British and, like, it's just, I am British but then I'm Ghanaian. So, I just feel I'm both, it just, yes it does depend where I am. At a family gathering there's obviously, the music's there, the colours are there, it's very African culture. But then at school it's just, I don't know, English.

Q: Can I field that out to the rest of you, see how you feel?

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): I feel like I'm, yes, I do feel, I just feel that all of my identities, I feel like just makes me. I was born in Whipps Cross Hospital⁷⁹ so I'm British but, like, I always honour my descendants so it's like, oh they've made me who I am today. So, I wouldn't be me if I didn't have my Dominican side, or I wouldn't be me if I don't have my Jamaican side. So, I feel like I don't really change when, like, in certain situations. Maybe I will try and be less loud in certain situations but I don't think that has anything to do with my culture. I always embrace my culture no matter where I am. So, like, my granddad, he's half French so he eats snails and all sorts. I'm not going that far into the culture, I'm not eating a snail, but I still – like, everywhere I go there's just different people. It's like they're all your family and I feel quite privileged because, as I said before, I believe that the whole world is one big family and that we all experience the same things. We all go hungry, we all go thirsty, we all cry, we all laugh – like, we all do those things and I believe that we're a big family. So, identity, what I would call myself, is just part of human nature. I would not call myself British, this and that, although I am. I'm just part of the world.

Q: What you're saying then reminds me why it is that whenever anybody tries to define what being British is, they always give up. You know, what is it?

⁷⁹ Whipps Cross Hospital, Leytonstone, East End of London.

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Oh yes, when I'm like 'oh you drink tea?' It's like, if you're from England, you're British, tea is – that's how like, on TV I feel like it's presented, like 'have a bit of tea'...

Q: 'I'll put the kettle on.'

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): They think that people all wear those bowler hats and walk around the streets, that's weird.

Q: I think a lot of Americans must have been surprised by that royal wedding, actually.

Student B-F9E (Ghana): Yes

Q: [*Indicates students C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba) and D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria)*], anything you want to say about that?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): I definitely feel British and although I don't really do what Vietnamese people do as in ... I don't really share the values – for example British people watch football and they do that, and I'm very much part of that. But I still don't feel like I'm not Vietnamese. I still eat the food, it's still part of me. Like, whenever I go to my grandma's house she's very, she cooks me food all the time. I always have to go to her house to think about - but that part of me, like, I'll always eat that food and my mum's trying to teach me to cook it and stuff, so I always feel Vietnamese but I definitely don't apart from food have, like, the cultural angle ...

Q: Do you speak Vietnamese?

Student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria): No, so I don't really share much with it but I still feel that I am.

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): I feel the same as well, I feel like I'm British but I feel like my culture has a lot to do with the way I interpret being British. I'm not 100% British, like I'm 50% British and 50% Jamaican and I feel like it definitely has – like, certain things I would say and certain things I would do, does link back to where I'm from or what I've been taught because of where I'm from.

Q: And does your Cuban identity come in at all?

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): No, not really.

Q: Less so.

Student C-F9E (Jamaica, Cuba): Yes.

Q: I suppose also, it's very easy to have connections with the Jamaican community here anyway. A last question. **This complex, fascinating mix of cultural identity that is you, and so many people in this school and this community – how far do you think that is reflected in what you're taught in history? (Q4)**

Student A-F9E (India, Jamaica, Dominica, France): I feel like it's reflected well. Any type of history that we learn I always know, like, there's someone in our class that that's personal to them. So that even when we were learning about Vietnam I knew, I was thinking about [*names student D-M9E (Vietnam, Cumbria)*] when we were learning about Vietnam. Like him getting

in touch with his, like – then we were learning about the Americans and the Russians, how it was a fight between – another boy in my class came to mind as well. And I was just, like, this is quite interesting how you learn different parts of history but it's personal to someone in the class. Because I feel that makes us like one big family, like we're all here together because we all sympathise with each other.

Q: That's a pretty good place to stop, actually. Wow, oh my goodness!

3.12 SCHOOL E: State-maintained Mixed Comprehensive School in East London

Teacher interview-conversation 5: Teacher 7 (E-FT1) (b/Black female Head of History of Ghanaian heritage in her 20s who came through the Teach First scheme and has been teaching for four years)

Interview questions

1. Can you please give some examples of **what** historical themes and events around empire, de-colonisation, and the Commonwealth are taught?

Year 8:

- Africa before the slave trade; how the slave trade led to industrialisation.
- India, Ghana and independence.

‘We try to look at empire from different countries’ perspectives.’

GCSE:

- Elizabethan England and exploration.
- Conflict in the Middle East from Palestine under British mandate right up to the 1990s and attempts at peace.

T7: America gaining independence from Britain is taught very separately – as part of a Revolutions module – and maybe it shouldn’t be. Revolutions: American, Industrial, French, Haitian, Russian, Cultural. It raises an interesting question as to why we teach American independence as a Revolution but not Indian independence.

I feel that you can’t *not* teach empire, especially if you want to teach anything like industrialisation. It’s a key moment in British history that has to be taught.

We have quite a few pupils of Indian and Pakistani heritage and so we look at India in a bit more depth than we would another area. We will always try and pick something that we hope interests our pupils.

2. What particular pedagogic and professional knowledge do you draw upon in teaching themes related to empire and post-colonialism? (This relates to how historical themes and events around empire, de-colonisation, and the Commonwealth are taught.)

T7: I remember that during my own training I was very much against how we were taught the pedagogy behind it because it felt that we taught everything from when the British arrived until they left, and from the British perspective. So, in teaching history and in schemes of learning I always try and ensure that we think as the people at the time. So not just ‘how could they do these horrible things?’, or maybe because they had this wide belief in social Darwinism, it was pretty normal at the time, and also from the perspective of not just British people, because I think it’s very easy for our pupils to think about things from their perspective and from our time. So, in our approach we will always try and get our pupils thinking as the people of the time. Why did they think that? Why did they think that was ok? How might they have felt? And making sure that pupils feel free to say whatever they need to say. So, before the start of any module it is: ‘We’re going to be studying a difficult and interesting topic. Please feel free

to say anything that is on your mind, but please also understand that we will challenge anything that maybe everyone might not agree with. And I do believe that history lessons are where pupils feel free to say whatever they want, but also are sensitive of one another.

[Asked whether there will be weight given to arguments both negative and positive aspects of imperialism and empire.] Yes, definitely. A lot of my Year 8s wrote essays saying colonialism was a good thing, it brought things like Christianity and railroads. So, we do present those arguments to pupils. But also, just terminology: for Indians [1857] wasn't a revolt, it was a war of independence. How things are considered in different parts. It's our duty to also present both sides of the argument.

[Asked whether, rather than presenting a story of empire, they are asking children to conduct an enquiry into what the impact of empire was.] Yes, definitely. And then leave it them to reach their own judgements. It's hard sometimes, you have to keep your personal views out of it and let them reach their own judgements, something that I have found whilst teaching.

My issue *[with teacher training]* was that I felt that teaching different histories wasn't given enough importance and it was one session. The histories of different countries weren't given enough importance and I don't feel I was given the tools to have difficult conversations with pupils or how to really get them to drive the conversation. I would love it when pupils actually took the reins and guided a lot more of the learning. But I don't feel I was given the tools to do that because I don't think it was considered important. A lot of training was given to me about second order concepts in history and how to organise causes. I don't think that is as important as dealing with sensitive topics in history which we do an awful lot.

I have a pupil in my Year 8 class who is of Caribbean heritage and I knew we'd be teaching slavery, and I knew for her it would be the first time she had heard that African people had autonomy and that there was some agency in selling slaves. And she was adamant that she just wanted to blame it on the Europeans. So, in that instance I feel that the tool is to present the facts and just leave pupils to have some time to process it, and then engage with them and have a discussion. And you could see the process, and her realising, having to almost rebuild everything she knew about herself as well. And I knew that would be difficult for her. And I had a weird experience as well when I was growing up, not hearing that side. In her assessment she then gave a very passionate argument that didn't answer the question, so I did have a conversation with her. It was difficult because her emotions had clouded her so much that she didn't do well in the assessment. And then she went on to hate history. She's ended up taking it for GCSE through much convincing, but it was really interesting how she actually felt really connected to the history, but it didn't make a difference in that instance. I'm still learning about how I take that passion to what we see as performing well in the subject. Because as far as I am concerned, she engaged with that, she presented arguments and she was a historian once presented with the facts.

I nearly said history isn't science, but then I realised even in science they have to consider different people's religious views. I feel that any historian who doesn't consider the moral consequences of their topic is, in a sense, blind. *[Points to a quotation from Cicero on her wall: 'To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child.'].⁸⁰* They

⁸⁰ Marcus Tullius Cicero, a Roman orator known for his rhetorical skills (100 BC - 43 BC). See full page of this quote in the online Loeb Classical Library here: https://www.loebclassics.com/view/marcus_tullius_cicero-

are still a child in my eyes because they are not considering the impact of what it is that they are doing. And I do feel that it is my duty as a history teacher to present the facts, to enlighten, to give pupils knowledge. Because I think without knowledge that's when we're incoherent, and a lot of issues in society are stemming purely because people do not know their past and what happened in the past. In Year 10 we are doing conflict in the Middle East. I felt it my duty to tell the story of the conflict between Palestine and Israel because I know I have pupils who are from backgrounds where they are being told one side of the story – and that whole thing about the dangers of a single story. And I don't want that to be my pupils, I want them to have a balanced argument and to understand how things are interpreted. So, I knew that they were going to do the creation of Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict because it's still going on now and they need to understand and be able to put it in context. It was so important because I don't think the students realised how much Britain was involved. They are shocked! Even today, we were doing the Six Day War and we were arguing what countries were responsible. England was not included because by this time it had sort of faded off the world stage, but they said 'Miss, it's still Britain's fault because they promised the land to two different groups of people.' And there have been protests in Gaza this week and last week and I feel that my pupils need to know that this is connected and that we played a part. And I say 'we'; because it was very difficult for me to accept things that Britain had done in the past but I feel that if I am considering myself British today, I am also, I guess, responsible and share the national responsibility of anything that has happened. So, I wanted them to also feel that this is all of us. This is our responsibility. So, the GCSE class is finding it really difficult, and I think it is because we never teach anything on that side of the world, so I have to explain to them where Syria is, I have to do a bit of geography. I have to tell them Egypt is considered an Arab country and it is also in Africa. Because everything that has led up to that point has failed them in terms of making sense of the wider world. They know Europe and Africa and a bit of Asia, but that's about it. I'd like, moving forwards, that we could do a bit more South American history, just bringing in a lot more.

We did a trip to Ypres in October and pupils were shocked that there was a Black soldier and there were Chinese soldiers, and there were Sikhs.⁸¹ They could not believe it, and you could see that students were looking for their own names. And that was a Black student, he found his name!

Inclusive narratives

Note: One reason why history education has become a live political issue and a matter of contestation is that traditional curriculum structures involving simple national narratives or 'canons' of events are unsettled by the imperative in the 21st century of introducing the complexity of diversity. Examples of these are: (a) plurinational to include sub-national histories within regional contexts; (b) post-colonial in decolonised settings to engage with the histories and cultures of communities of minority ethnic immigrant-settlers, including post-colonial ones; and (c) a consideration of other more distant settings such as the cultural and Indigenous histories of formerly colonised peoples who have not necessarily become settlers

[orator/1939/pb_LCL342.395.xml?readMode=recto](#). An approximate reference is Chapter XXXIV, section 120, Orator Ad M. Brutum (46 BC).

⁸¹ Ypres War Memorial. It would be possible by doing Internet searches to find: (a) Black soldier examples (b) Chinese soldier examples (c) Sikh soldier examples.

but whose sometimes or often traumatic histories related to colonisation might be seen in a more empathetic light.

3. Drawing on your own experience of teaching in a BAME community can you see any effective practical solutions to address the need for diversity and inclusion expressed in the statement above (perhaps also bearing in mind the question below)?

4. In what ways might it be possible to design history education programmes that address not only the necessity to ‘cover’ the syllabuses or curricula, but which allow for more personalisation to include diversity, related specifically to the make-up of the students in the classes?

T7: I don’t even think there are techniques because if you truly do teach the history of Britain there is no way you can avoid the history of everyone else. It is about being a bit more explicit and I think as history teachers we love to complain about time and resources, so that is the only obstacle to it. I actually don’t think that there are barriers. We do the GCSE in Year 10 and Year 11. Year 9, we’ve decided we just want our kids to love history. We’ll practise some of the skills. We studied Vietnam, we absolutely loved it, they loved learning about Vietcong tactics, the Domino Theory⁸² – that was just pure enjoyment of history. Because we knew we don’t have to teach anything else, we’re not going to just drag the GCSE course a year earlier, I just think that’s a punishment. Our pupils love history. The current Year 10s were the first year where in Year 9 they just got to learn more history and they are throwing themselves into Conflict in the Middle East. They find it hard but they are really trying to learn it because they love history.

Practical solutions are embedding it in your curriculum. It’s not just when it’s Black History Month, doing something very tokenistic. For me Black History Month isn’t even as relevant anymore because their history is so diverse in terms of what they learn. So, I think history teachers and departments, if they just take a step back and look at curriculums and create that big picture because I don’t think it’s difficult. I think it’s very, very easy to address the diversity. And even get pupils to lead. Last year we did the Irish Troubles: my Irish pupil, he taught the lesson. He stayed after school and he went ‘Miss, oh my goodness, you do this for five lessons in a day!’ He taught the lesson, though, the next day. It was his history and he was so connected to it. So, I honestly do think that it’s easy to do.

As a Black teacher, I don’t want my pupils to only know Black history as civil rights and slavery. But I also need to understand that they haven’t heard about those things so I still need to cover it. I’m very conscious now about moving forward: next year I’m going to change the order we teach things and not just learn about Africa in terms of western history – postcolonial, precolonial. They are just going to do kingdoms in medieval Africa and it’s going to be stand alone. And for me it’s very important that they do that but it’s also very funny because we did do the civil rights movement and I didn’t plan it – another colleague planned it – and one of the pupils felt that I was pushing my own agenda. And I found that really funny because I hadn’t even planned the lesson or the scheme of learning! So, I do feel that pupils pick up on who is teaching them history and I do think they feel a bit more comfortable to say things in

⁸² Domino Theory: reflected belief in some influential political circles in the USA that if one country in a region ‘fell’ to communism, other countries would shortly follow. This would apply to why it was decided to send troops into Vietnam.

front of me and challenge things. As a department I think it's the type of learners we have created, they do feel comfortable. And I think history is a safe space for them.

It was an active decision that it was important to us that our pupils did get a broad sense of history in this country – which is also very, very important, they should learn the history of this country – and also around the world. That was an active decision. But also, the fact that nothing is compulsory – apart from the Holocaust which we do teach – we took that on board and I think there is too much pressure of examinations. Because of that, diversity and issues that engage our pupils are side-lined, and I don't think that the GCSE options are that diverse. You have created one [OCR thematic units on *Migration to the UK* (spec A)⁸³ and *Migrants to Britain* (spec B)]⁸⁴ that addresses that but the options that have been established, that people have the resources for going back years, are not very diverse. I do know that all the work we do at KS3, aside from the conflict in the Middle East and Germany, we pretty much do just British history. I do think the stresses of exams *close down teachers putting a limb out*. Current Year 11s, bless them, don't like history that much and that is because with the previous head of department they had a different experience and they didn't learn much else apart from what they considered to be British history, and they hate history. It makes me really upset because I'm thinking, what? History is great, all the other year groups love history. And then I remember that in Year 9, I think they were supposed to do something about multiculturalism in the UK since 1945 and then we changed that module. And then they did slavery and that was it, slavery and Indian independence, and those were the only two modules that they did outside of British history. So, I think they just feel that they've learned the same things again. It's unfortunate.

[*Through Teach First*] the depth of training that we had was very limited. It was a six-week summer programme with six days of training throughout the year. I understand the time issues: they were mainly focused on behaviour management and survival in the classroom but I do think that throughout the year – aside from a session on teaching more diverse histories – it wasn't very important. So, I do feel that as a part of teacher training it needs to be addressed. I think the reason is because history teachers are not diverse enough. Even when I raised the issue it didn't seem that big an issue. I was actually in tears that day, and there was another participant who was upset who was of mixed Indian and British heritage. And it was very interesting that we were the only two people who saw that there was a problem with what was going on. But it upset me so much and made me feel like an outsider as well, and made me feel that some of the teachers that were being trained and going into these schools already were, maybe from their own personal backgrounds or histories, maybe weren't as prepared. And then the one opportunity we had to equalise the playing field, it wasn't addressed then. So, it's the main reason why I have tried to get involved in as many things as possible outside of school and see how that can be brought into the classroom, because it wasn't done during my training at all.

[*Responding to an observation that while Teach First trainees have good History degrees, few will have studied diverse histories at university*]. I went to Birmingham University and ended up in the African Studies department in my second year – not the History department – because of all the modules that I took, because I felt that the History department wasn't that diverse.

⁸³ Adi, H., Lyndon, D., Sherwood, M. & Spafford, M. (2016). *Migration*. London: Hodder Education.

⁸⁴ Spafford, M., & Lyndon, D. (2016). *Migrants to Britain c. 1250 to present*. London: Hodder Education.

So, I personally learned about South Africa and I got to do my dissertation on my family's history in Ghana and got to fly out there, but I don't think that was necessarily the case for the majority of people who have trained to become history teachers.

5. Have you experienced the need to give citizenship education for BAME students a historical dimension that they can identify with?

T7: I definitely see myself as a citizenship teacher. I'll give you an example. In Year 8 during Holocaust and Slavery we looked at resistance, so for the pupils it was 'Why didn't anyone help the Jews?' or 'How could people allow slavery to occur?' So, we looked at active and passive resistance and actually there were Jewish resistance groups and there were non-Jewish people who also resisted and, yes, slaves resisted. And my current form group, they are being divided in their forms and they have decided to resist this, and they are doing a petition. And I am so proud of them because I feel that we were teaching them that they can speak up and stand up against things, and they are doing it in their school and they have chosen their form of passive resistance, nonviolent. So, I do feel that I am a citizenship teacher as well and I actively encourage my pupils to engage and speak up and participate in what is going on in their school. I think that is the first instance where they will be citizens. They can't vote yet, but in a school setting they are definitely actors.

6. Are there any landmark events that relate to the questions above about inclusive narratives and diversity that are transnational, supranational or international that many or all BAME students might be able to identify with?

T7: I don't know why we don't teach about the Haitian Revolution enough, why enough people in the world don't know where Haiti is, the world's first Black nation. It is so interlinked to everything that was going on at the time as well, so I do think to me that's a stand out event that should be learnt. Decolonisation can be looked at across the entire globe as a way in to looking at these countries prior and post, because actually we don't learn about Ghana in the seventies, we learn it prior to that. We don't learn about Jamaica in the late 1900s. I taught a lesson on decolonisation about Ghana and I was kind of upset but I still taught it because it was a song, I was teaching Ghana's independence as a song, so I thought, in history we love to do very serious activities – write a paragraph, explain the causes – and this is a song! But my pupils sang that song for two days later and were so interested in Ghana.⁸⁵ There are so many

⁸⁵ The Ghanaian song taught to the students is: 'Yoo ko miishi kelewele ye Afrika', sung to the originally South African (post-independence anthem) tune of 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika' ('Lord bless Africa'). It is a folk song in the Ga language about a girl seeing a woman cooking fried plantain and asking her mother for money to buy some, but by the time she gets to the shop she finds it all finished. At one level it is a children's story. At another it embodies a pan-African spirit of aspiration towards liberation, which came to be seen as just right for Ghana. It is fascinating to speculate how this melody travelled and found its way from South Africa into a West African children's song. Reading an article by Coplan & Jules-Rosette (2005) about the history of the tune, it might be that the means of travel was communication between churches.

The lyrics (with translation) are:

Yoo ko miishi kelewele ye Afrika [A woman is frying kelewele in Africa]
Miyabi Mami kaple {should be mimami=my mother} [I am going to ask my mother for money]
Mike yahe eko [to buy some {of the kelewele}]
Be ni mishe jeme akee etã [when I got there, they said the kelewele was finished]
Eeetã kelewele etã [x2] [It is finished, the kelewele is finished]

countries, we don't learn about India today or Indian history aside from independence from the British. What issues did they face starting their new country? The we could learn about India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, how did these countries form? Which would be very relevant to lots of pupils across the world. Understanding where the 'Third World' came from. We learn about the Cold War and capitalism and communism, but what were these other countries doing at the same time?

7. Would some, many or most BAME students believe that they have more than one identity?

T7: Definitely, and as a BME teacher I also can identify with them because when I was a BME student I would never forget the realisation and the conflict within myself of 'where on earth do I belong to? What am I?' And growing up in London it's very interesting because if someone asks you 'Where are you from?' you don't assume they are being rude and saying you weren't born here. And I will straight away say Ghana. But I went to university in Birmingham and asked a colleague where she was from and she looked at me in disgust and went 'I'm from here!' And I asked her because she was Black, so hoping to find out some ... and so I said 'Ok, so where are you parents and grandparents from?' and then she said Jamaica.

8. Are you aware of any links between history education debates in the BAME post-colonial contexts with which you are familiar and wider global discourses about history education?

T7: I found it very interesting about how history is taught in Australia, with the Aboriginal community, and for me that was something that was really striking. And there are lots of pupils – I'm not sure if I am getting this right – made to say sorry, and there was a day, saying sorry for what had happened before. I found that really interesting. I found it strange because I think it links back to history being a national identity and a national consciousness and having to be embedded in something we are all part of. Because I remember on a visit to Palestine it was linked to the Balfour Declaration⁸⁶ and 'You guys did this!' and I was 'It wasn't me! That was nothing to do with me.' But having to accept that as being part of it. I think that in history education in general, I feel that with the shift to the new GCSE there is a lot of content – and I don't have a problem with content actually, I love letting pupils learn more – but then the way that they are examined, content actually weighs less. So, I think it should never be about what you know in history, but I do think that the way we examine our pupils has taken away completely from the importance of history, from creating them as historians. I don't know any historian who has to write their book in a day or in timed conditions. So, I think it's taken away from actually being historians and how we teach it is very parrotty. Today I did a lesson looking

Note: Kelewele is a night-time fast food delicacy which used to be sold predominantly in Accra. It is prepared with chopped ripe plantain which is seasoned with pepper and ginger and deep fried in oil.

⁸⁶ Balfour Declaration (2 November 1917): His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

at the causes of the French Revolution. Pupils were given a list of different things, for example that the price of bread rose, and they had to explain how that linked to the Revolution. And they struggled because they had to use their brains. We've got it very, very wrong and our pupils aren't actually analytical. I teach history so that I send my pupils out into the world so they can challenge things and read the newspaper and not take it for gospel, be able to understand this is the reason why this paper has presented this argument and this is the other side. So, I think history education here has a problem. I remember being taught that in America a lot of the history they learn is simply American history, and I found that interesting because America – in comparison to a lot of other countries – has a very short history, but also I felt from what I had read that pupils still didn't feel that they were getting the real history of their country. That interested me because I think there is an argument that in Britain we don't teach enough history of the rest of the world. Even if we ignored every other country and we were taught the history of these islands we would still touch on every other part of the world. So, I have absolutely no problem with anyone saying we should teach British history, I will teach it exactly how it was! But I found that very interesting too.

9. Should professional or other bodies (e.g. the Historical Association, SHP, even the Royal Historical Society, or the Commonwealth) be doing more to ensure more diversity in history education?

10. If they should be, then how or in what way?

T7: Yes. I do think there is a lot on there, though, and I don't think the problem lies with them. I've found some great resources on the Historical Association website, on SHP. I think exam boards, we need to be doing a lot more checks and balances on what exam boards are providing. I mean Pearson [the company behind the exam board EdExcel], don't they run prisons in America? That is ridiculous, I can't believe a company that does that is who we are allowing to dictate the topics taught to us.

Any more comments?

[No answer]