



TIDE-Runnymede report

# Teaching Migration, Belonging, and Empire in Secondary Schools

Kimberly McIntosh, Jason Todd and Nandini Das

**TIDE** is a 5-year European Research Council funded project (2016-2021) that investigates how mobility in the great age of travel and discovery shaped English perceptions of human identity based on cultural identification and difference. Trade, diplomacy and politics, religious schisms, shifts in legal systems, all attempted to control and formalise the identity of such figures. Our current world is all too familiar with the concepts that surfaced or evolved as a result: foreigners, strangers, aliens, converts, exiles, or even translators, ambassadors and go-betweens. By examining how different discourses tackled the fraught question of human identity in this era, TIDE opens a new perspective on cross-cultural encounters.

**Runnymede:  
Intelligence for a Multi-ethnic  
Britain**

Runnymede is the UK's leading independent think tank on race equality and race relations. Through high quality research and thought leadership, we:

- Identify barriers to race equality and good race relations;
- Provide evidence to support action for social change;
- Influence policy at all levels.

**Disclaimer**

This publication is part of the Runnymede Perspectives series, the aim of which is to foment free and exploratory thinking on race, ethnicity and equality. This edition is a collaboration between The Runnymede Trust and the European Research Council funded TIDE (Travel, Transculturality, and Identity in England, c. 1550-1700) project at the University of Liverpool.



ISBN: 978-1-909546-28-8

Published by TIDE and the Runnymede Trust in July 2019, this document is copyright © TIDE and the Runnymede Trust 2019. Some rights reserved.

**Open access. Some rights reserved.**

TIDE and the Runnymede Trust wants to encourage the circulation of its work as widely as possible while retaining the copyright. The trust has an open access policy which enables anyone to access its content online without charge. Anyone can download, save, perform or distribute this work in any format, including translation, without written permission. This is subject to the terms of the Creative Commons Licence Deed: Attribution-Non-Commercial-No Derivative Works 2.0 UK: England & Wales. Its main conditions are:

- You are free to copy, distribute, display and perform the work;
- You must give the original author credit;
- You may not use this work for commercial purposes;
- You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

You are welcome to ask TIDE or the Runnymede Trust for permission to use this work for purposes other than those covered by the licence. TIDE and the Runnymede Trust is grateful to Creative Commons for its work and its approach to copyright. For more information please go to [www.creativecommons.org](http://www.creativecommons.org)



---

# CONTENTS

<b>Key findings and recommendations</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Why teach migration, belonging, and empire?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>What is on the History and English curriculum and how is it taught?</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Teaching difficult topics: the need for training</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>What could teacher training look like? Lessons from the TIDE Beacon Fellowship</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Conclusion and recommendations</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>16</b>

## Key findings and recommendations

- Migration and empire have shaped Britain and our relationship with the world.
- At Key Stages 3 and 4 (GCSE level), migration, belonging, and empire **can be taught as part of the History and English curriculum.** However, this is largely dependent on the modules, topics or texts selected by schools.
- According to the Department for Education, the secondary school History curriculum should ensure that pupils know and understand **‘how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world’**, ‘the diversity of societies’, ‘their own identity and the challenges of their time’. **Migration, belonging, and empire are central to understanding these processes.**
- Research shows that **the curriculum is narrow in scope.** The new English curriculum launched in 2014 moved the subject into a more ‘traditional’ domain, and was branded a backlash against ‘multicultural texts’ by experts and commentators.
- About **4 per cent of pupils taking GCSE History are taking the ‘Migration to Britain’ option** (which also covers some empire) with exam boards AQA and OCR. Given these numbers, migration, belonging, and empire should be covered at Key Stage 3 level across different disciplines.
- The number of schools teaching migration, belonging, and empire is unknown. **Academies, which have increased in number, do not have to follow the National Curriculum.** Flexibility within the curriculum makes it hard to gauge what is being taught.
- Further research is therefore required to make an assessment of what is being delivered and what is absent. This research should evaluate students’ knowledge of migration, belonging, and empire, as well as teachers’ interest in and concerns and ambivalences about these topics. **The government should commission this research and reform the curriculum in response to the findings.**
- **Teachers need more support to equip them to teach migration, belonging, and empire sensitively and effectively.** A survey of teachers carried out by the Runnymede Trust, University of Manchester and University of Cambridge project Our Migration Story found that **78 per cent of those surveyed wanted training on teaching migration and 71 per cent on teaching empire.**
- Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses do not provide the space or skills to enable teachers to confidently cover sensitive and controversial issues with young people. Scholarship has found that **some teachers avoid topics they deem controversial.**
- The **UCL Centre for Holocaust Education offers a useful blueprint for a future programme to support teachers with migration, empire, and belonging.** It provides a national programme of ITE for early-career teachers, online materials and resources, continuing professional development (CPD) days, and a Masters accredited online distance-learning course; 90 per cent of participating teachers say that the CPD course is excellent and 10 per cent that it is good.
- **The preliminary findings of the TIDE Beacon Fellowship** with 12 selected History and English teachers **further support the need for teacher training.** Future CPD should engage with academics and draw on the expertise of and lessons learnt from teachers already engaging with migration, belonging, and empire.
- **The government should fund a new ITE and CPD programme for migration, belonging, and empire** in collaboration with universities.

## Executive summary

Migration and empire have shaped Britain, and our relationship with the world. The Roman Empire and Anglo-Saxon invasions, the Norman conquest, and the rise and fall of the British Empire helped forge our institutions, language, literature and culture. Cross-cultural contact throughout centuries have shaped our perceptions of identity and belonging. The current secondary school curriculum should ensure that pupils know and understand ‘how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world’; the ‘the expansion and dissolution of empires [and] characteristic features of past non-European societies’; ‘the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups’; and ‘their own identity and the challenges of their time’ (DfE, 2013a, 2013b). This cannot be fully achieved without a thorough understanding of migration, belonging, and empire.

The vote to leave the European Union in 2016 has brought our relationship with migration, belonging, and empire to the fore. Migration was a major fault-line during the Brexit campaign. Talk of a forward-looking, confident ‘Global Britain’ has followed, bringing renewed relevance to the Commonwealth, as Britain searches for new, post-Brexit allies in once-familiar places. This has exposed a chronic misunderstanding among our political leaders of Britain’s relationship, past and present, to its former empire. The Windrush scandal of 2018 laid bare the dearth of understanding of successive British governments about the ‘winding up’ of the Empire. Further, discussions over a potential border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland during the Brexit negotiations have shown that there is little understanding of Britain’s past relationship with Ireland among some of our elected representatives. The need for a realistic appraisal of our past and present relationships with the wider world is evident and urgent.

How migration, belonging, and empire have been taught in schools and represented in textbooks has shifted with changes in government. Until the 1960s, the curriculum implicitly supported the merits of empire and remained evasive on its exploitative or violent realities for colonised people (Tomlinson, 2019). The most recent iteration of the National Curriculum, launched in 2014, does provide some opportunities for migration and empire to be taught

as part of History and English lessons. For example, the exam boards OCR and AQA launched GCSE-level units on ‘Migration to Britain’ in 2016, which include some coverage of empire. These are, however, optional modules. Further, at Key Stage 3 (KS3) level, migration and empire are signposted as ‘suggested topics’.

For English, reforms to examinations in 2015 narrowed the curriculum – something commentators branded a backlash against ‘multicultural texts’ (Goodwyn et al., 2018). The new curriculum moved the subject into a more ‘traditional’ domain: a Shakespeare play, the English Romantic poets, a 19th-century novel and modern British novel (Alexander, Weekes-Bernard and Arday, 2015).

This means that it is up to teachers, heads of department and curriculum leads to decide whether these topics are covered or not. The result: wide variations in the teaching of these crucial topics across the country.

In 2016, the Runnymede Trust, University of Manchester and University of Cambridge launched the *Our Migration Story* (OMS) project to provide teachers with classroom-ready materials for the new GCSE History module ‘Migration to Britain’. The initiative was built in collaboration with 80 academic historians and has since won two awards. However, a survey of teachers carried out by the project in 2019 found that 78 per cent of those surveyed wanted training on teaching migration and 71 per cent on teaching empire.

In response, the TIDE (Travel, Transculturality, and Identity in England, c. 1550–1700) project, funded by the European Research Council (ERC) and based at the University of Liverpool, joined forces with the Runnymede Trust to create a fellowship programme to support secondary school teachers who are already teaching migration, belonging, and empire as topics. The TIDE Beacon Fellowship, run for the first time in 2019, is an innovative 12-week programme of professional development for a group of 12 selected English and History secondary school teachers. It provided the teachers with three cumulative masterclasses, one a month from March to May. Each masterclass introduced the teachers to leading experts and the latest scholarship, as well as providing

time and space to think through the issues raised. Masterclass 1 introduced fellows to best practice in delivering what can be challenging and sensitive topics. Masterclass 2, held at the National Archives, aimed to develop teachers' subject knowledge and work alongside experienced teachers. The final masterclass, held at National Museums Liverpool, sought to help teachers think through how they could apply what they had learnt and develop materials for their classrooms. In between masterclasses, teachers took part in online forums hosted by the TIDE project, and undertook specialist subject training under the guidance of the TIDE project team subject experts.

The National Curriculum explicitly calls for pupils to be taught 'tolerance', as part of the British values agenda. It calls for young people to understand their own and others' cultures 'as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain', in which 'they understand, accept, respect and celebrate

diversity'. Teaching the long, diverse, often-fraught history of migration, belonging, and empire would partially achieve this. To adequately prepare students to be tolerant, confident citizens, these topics must be understood as integral both to our history and to the richness of British culture. All children and young people need to feel a sense of belonging, and understand their identities. Migration and empire are not marginal events: they are central to our national story. As it stands, the story we are telling is incomplete.

This report explains why teaching migration, belonging, and empire matters. It outlines what is currently available on the curriculum and what is missing. It assesses the barriers teachers face in grappling with sensitive topics. Finally, it gives recommendations for change so that we can address the gaps in the curriculum for the benefit of students of all backgrounds.

## Why teach migration, belonging, and empire?

In its current form, teaching on the history of migration, belonging, and empire at school and university level is available, but limited. A recent survey by the Royal Historical Society of around 700 university-based historians highlighted that the curriculum at school level was narrow and limited, with consequences for black and minority ethnic (BME) under-representation on UK history undergraduate courses (Royal Historical Society, 2018).

British schools are increasingly diverse, raising further questions about not only what is taught in schools but also how.

Nearly 17 per cent of children aged 0–15 in England and Wales are from BME backgrounds. BME young people make up around 27 per cent of state-funded primary and secondary school pupils in England (DfE, 2018). For a curriculum to be truly ‘national’, it needs to reflect the reality of over a quarter of the pupils populating our classrooms. A curriculum that takes little account of the long-standing presence of minorities in Britain and why they moved here, and fails to offer a comprehensive evaluation of their treatment, will do little to end the stereotyping and racist attitudes that continue to hinder the life chances of BME adults.

Research by NatGen and the Runnymede Trust in 2017 found that racial stereotypes are still a pervasive part of popular beliefs. It found that 44 per cent of those surveyed believed that ‘some races are born harder working than others’ (Kelley, Khan and Sharrock, 2017). All ethnic minority groups experience higher unemployment rates (Ethnicity Facts and Figures, 2018). Although the causes of this disparity are complex, widespread racial stereotypes are not a welcome addition to the job prospects of minority populations. To build a fair society that works for everyone in the long term, we need to start with education.

This is underscored by a legal obligation, under the Equality Act 2010, for schools to have ‘due regard’, when considering practices and policies, to removing or minimising disadvantage and also to encouraging participation when it is disproportionately low. Finally, dealing with inequality is a moral obligation: it is simply the right thing to do (Royal Historical Society, 2018). The teaching of migration, belonging, and empire offers scope to address some of these issues of representation.

Inclusion and representation are important. However, teaching migration, belonging, and empire is not relevant to students from current ethnic minorities alone. It offers all young people the opportunity to better understand the dynamic world they inhabit. It will give British students of all ethnic backgrounds a fuller understanding of the varied and wide-ranging cultural inputs that have contributed to the making of Britain. It is important to recognise that the complex, diverse, and often fraught history of Britain’s engagement with other nations, races, and cultures happened both within its shores and beyond. It is not an addendum to British history, literature, and culture, but an intrinsic part of it.

In recent years, debates on expanding the curriculum have gained more traction and recognition in public debates and academia. In higher education these debates can be seen in calls to ‘decolonise the curriculum’ (Bhambra, Gebrial and Nişancioğlu, 2018) but have also been stimulated by thoughtful scholarship looking at the legacies of the British transatlantic slave trade (Draper, 2010; Hall, 2014). Such scholarship acknowledges that these topics are fraught with complexity and controversy. To teach them well requires a great deal of knowledge, skill and sensitivity. It also demands coordinated planning, resources and support, for students and teachers alike.

# What is on the History and English curriculum and how is it taught?

At Key Stages 3 and 4 (GCSE level), migration, belonging, and empire can be taught as part of the History and English curriculum. However, this is largely dependent on the modules, topics or texts selected by schools. This discretion has notable pros and cons. It gives schools and teachers the flexibility to tailor what they teach based on their expertise and their pupils' interests. But it also makes it difficult to map what is being taught and allows for large variations in knowledge.

## Key Stage 3

### English

At Key Stage 3, there is scope for teachers to cover migration, belonging, and empire – but this is dependent on the interests and choices of the school.

Pupils should be taught to read increasingly challenging fiction and non-fiction including whole books, short stories, poems and plays from a variety of genres, historical periods, forms and authors. It must include:

- English literature, both pre-1914 and contemporary, including prose, poetry and drama
- Two Shakespeare plays
- Seminal world literature.

This allows for flexibility but makes it difficult to assess the extent to which migration, belonging, and empire are being covered in English lessons in classrooms across the country.

### History

Currently, the Holocaust is the only statutory topic at Key Stage 3. The curriculum provides a list of non-statutory, suggested topics that can be selected by teachers to ensure their pupils understand Britain's past and that of the wider world, some of which cover migration and empire.

During their study at this level, students should be able to understand:

- How Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world

- The expansion and dissolution of empires; characteristic features of past non-European societies and achievements and follies of mankind
- Abstract terms such as 'empire', 'civilisation', 'parliament' and 'peasantry'.

### Department for Education, 2013

Some of the non-statutory topics suggested by the DfE to enable pupils to reach this level include: Norman conquest; the migration of people to, from and within the British Isles (before 1066); the Act of Union of 1707; Britain's first colony in America; the development of the British Empire; Britain's transatlantic slave trade; and Indian independence and the end of empire.

What is covered is largely dependent on the discretion of the school. Notable historical developments, such as the colonisation of the Caribbean, Irish Home Rule and migration to Britain following the Second World War, are missing even from the non-statutory suggestions.

## GCSE

A reformed GCSE in English has been taught since September 2015, with History reforms the following year. A key feature of the reforms was new and demanding content, with both History and English reforms being influenced by the work of the US cultural theorist E.D. Hirsch. His concept of 'cultural literacy' prioritises teaching the 'traditional canon' of knowledge (Hirsch, Kett and Trefil, 1987).

### English

The new English curriculum is more restrictive than its predecessor. Pupils must cover:

- A Shakespeare play
- The English Romantic poets
- A 19th-century novel
- A modern British novel.

### Department for Education, 2015

Research found that some English teachers who wanted to teach a wide range of texts to their pupils



struggled to balance this desire with the need to adapt to the new GCSE exam regime (Goodwyn et al., 2018).

## History

Similarly, in the 2018 annual survey by the Historical Association, many History teachers voiced concerns about the appropriateness of the new curriculum specifications. However, new opportunities to study migration, belonging, and empire were introduced at this level. A new history breadth study, 'Migration to Britain', that also covers some aspects of empire was added by the exam boards OCR and AQA. The largest exam board in the UK, Pearson (which owns Edexcel), made no such offer.

### Low GCSE migration history uptake

As GCSE History is optional, the number of students taking these modules is limited. In 2018 there were 248,925 entries for the GCSE History examination across all boards, and about 38 per cent of students take History to GCSE level (Ofqual, 2018).

At the same time, the numbers taking up the new 'Migration to Britain' module are smaller still. In 2018, figures show that 10 per cent of AQA GCSE History entries took this option. This compares with 73 per cent opting for the 'Health and People' option and

16.6 per cent for 'Power and People'. The proportion opting for the migration study at OCR is similar, with 8 per cent taking this GCSE History B syllabus, again about 1,500 students out of the total 248,925 entries. Overall, about 4 per cent of pupils taking GCSE History are taking 'Migration to Britain' with AQA and OCR.

Given these numbers, if we are to ensure migration, belonging, and empire are widely understood, they should be covered at Key Stage 3 level across different disciplines.

## Academies and the National Curriculum

Academies – schools that are publicly funded but run independently of local authority control – do not have to follow the National Curriculum (Gov.uk, 2019). They must follow a 'broad and balanced' curriculum but they otherwise have autonomy over what is taught. This acts as another barrier to assessing how many schools are teaching migration, belonging, and empire.

As a result, making a convincing case to major academy chains so they cover these topics as part of their curriculum is essential.

## Teaching difficult topics: the need for training

The public discussion of migration, belonging, and empire is loaded with potential controversy. Teachers, who may not have been taught these topics during their own time at school, may need support to feel confident delivering such material.

In 2016, the Runnymede Trust, University of Manchester and University of Cambridge launched the *Our Migration Story* (OMS) project to provide teachers with classroom-ready materials for the GCSE History module 'Migration to Britain'. The initiative was built in collaboration with 80 academic historians and provides downloadable lesson plans and supporting online content. A small survey of 112 teachers launched by the project in 2019 found that respondents very widely agreed that further training in how to teach both topics would be valuable. For example, 78 per cent of all teachers who answered the question wanted training on migration, while 71 per cent wanted training on empire; of History teachers, 83 per cent wanted training on migration, 74 per cent on empire. The responses were mostly from White British teachers (69%) who taught History, English or Geography (or multiple subjects).

Working with trainee History teachers over a three-year period, Richard Harris found that some teachers avoided topics they deemed controversial. Others would engage with sensitive issues but did not encourage pupils to engage with the causes of the controversy, while a final group seized opportunities to tackle challenging topics head-on. Teachers who felt history education had a wider purpose beyond the classroom were more likely to engage with sensitive issues (Harris, 2012). Teachers, across subjects, need support and training that equips

them to cover these topics in their classrooms and reinforces the importance of history beyond examinations.

Recognising this need, the Historical Association produced a leaflet, *TEACH*, offering teachers guidance when covering emotive and sensitive issues. They suggested that teacher-quality CPD be introduced to give teachers the support and tools they need (Historical Association, 2007).

The Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses currently on offer do not provide the space or skills that would enable teachers to confidently cover sensitive and controversial issues with young people.

The proposed CPD would also equip teachers to fulfil their requirement to promote basic important British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. This requires young people to understand their own and others' cultures 'as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain', in which 'they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity'. Currently, teachers are not trained to deal appropriately with difference or to evaluate how their own beliefs and biases might affect what they teach and how they teach it (Harris and Clarke, 2011; Harris, 2012).

Third-sector organisations like EqualTeach offer such training for educators. The government should consider streamlining such provision into ITE programmes. As Bhopal and Rhamie (2014) have argued; 'greater training is needed in relation to the practical assistance that student teachers require in terms of increasing their understanding of diversity'.

# What could teacher training look like? Lessons from the TIDE Beacon Fellowship

The TIDE Beacon Fellowship, run for the first time in 2019, is an innovative 12-week programme of professional development for a group of 12 selected English and History secondary school teachers.

Funded by the European Research Council (ERC), the TIDE (Travel, Transculturality, and Identity in England, c. 1550–1700) project is based at the University of Liverpool. It looks at how mobility in the great age of travel and discovery shaped English perceptions of human identity and difference. With support from the Runnymede Trust, they created a fellowship programme to support secondary school teachers who are teaching migration, belonging, and empire as topics.

The programme delivered three cumulative masterclasses, one a month from March to May 2019. Each masterclass introduced the teachers to leading experts and the latest scholarship, as well as providing time and space to think through the issues raised.

Masterclass 1 introduced fellows to best practice in delivering what can be challenging and sensitive topics. Masterclass 2, held at the National Archives, aimed to develop teachers' subject knowledge and work alongside experienced teachers. The final masterclass, held at National Museums Liverpool, sought to help teachers think through how they could apply what they had learnt and develop materials for their classrooms.

In between masterclasses, teachers took part in online forums hosted by the TIDE project, and undertook specialist subject training under the guidance of the TIDE project team subject experts.

The applicants to the Beacon Fellowship were an atypical group in several ways. The application process meant that participants already had a strong interest in migration, belonging, and empire and wanted support with engaging students, expanding their knowledge or introducing these topics in their schools. Nevertheless, preliminary findings from our pre- and post-fellowship survey and interviews with teachers provide some useful insights into what might be needed in terms of supporting CPD in this area.

## The value of working with scholars and scholarship

Having access to online material alongside the training proved useful for the teachers who took part in the fellowship programme. It stimulated new ideas and revelations, even among those who considered their knowledge of the topics to be strong. Some fellows really valued the access to online primary resource material that challenged their thinking. Particularly, the opportunity to take a long view of the topics of migration and empire, often setting them within more familiar frameworks such as the Tudor period, complicated notions of belonging. The matching of university scholars with teachers was useful and productive. However, any future iteration of the programme should consider the fact that the different teachers taking part will have different needs, determined by their students, their schools and their own life experiences.

## The need to recognise teachers' and students' contexts

Beliefs and attitudes played a significant part in teachers' motivations for doing the fellowship. The fellows' planned responses each week reflected both their own experiences and interests but also those of their students. Students will have varying levels of knowledge, and teachers need to meet them where they are. Fellows took into account their students' interests, misconceptions and levels of knowledge and incorporated them into their reflections. The fellows' passion for the topics and personal investment in the programme – in which they were taking part in addition to their teaching – made the planning work involved exacting on an intellectual and emotional level.

## The importance of sustained collaboration, shared expertise and dialogue

In Masterclass 2, the fellows had the opportunity to speak to a panel of teachers experienced in teaching migration, belonging, and empire, about their

experiences. This proved useful and helped to shape the fellows' lesson plans, from micro considerations such as which language to use to broader considerations related to how to frame the enquiry.

## Lessons learnt: what we can take forward

Future CPD should engage with academics and draw on the expertise of and lessons learnt from teachers already engaging with migration, belonging, and empire. Further, it should recognise that the context in teachers' classrooms will vary widely across the country. This should be reflected in the course content, so it can equip teachers to meet their students where they are and to consider their own biases and how to teach emotive and contentious topics sensitively.

A full, follow-up evaluation will be available later in 2019.

## A blueprint for change: UCL Centre for Holocaust Education

The TIDE Beacon Fellowship sought to study other successful models of teacher development, such as the Historical Association fellowship, sponsored by Agincourt 600 (Burn, 2019), and especially the work of the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education (CfHE). The CfHE was established in 2008 with joint funding from the Pears Foundation and the Department for Education with the stated belief that 'education practice should be informed by academic scholarship, empirical research and practical classroom experience'. The momentum for this work was made possible because the Holocaust had been made a compulsory part of the curriculum. Given a range of shared characteristics between the Holocaust and the topics of empire, migration, and belonging, such as the continued resonances in popular culture and political discourse and the resulting need to approach with sensitivity, the work of the CfHE offers a useful model for supporting the professional development of teachers.

Drawing on its world-leading research, it offers support for teachers, free of charge, at all stages of their careers. This ranges from a national programme of ITE for early-career teachers, online materials and resources, CPD days and a Masters accredited online distance-learning course. In addition, the

CfHE has a programme of beacon schools (not to be confused with our Beacon Fellowship) that helps to develop the leadership potential in teachers who take responsibility for teaching about the Holocaust.

The impact of this approach is impressive and broad-ranging, as the latest end-of-year report makes clear: 90 per cent of teachers indicated that the CPD course was excellent and 10 per cent determined that it was good. Teachers commented favourably about the thought-provoking nature of the training, the quality of the resources and the way in which they were now enabled to challenge widespread misconceptions. One teacher, commenting on the value of the CPD, said: 'Making the Holocaust accessible to KS3 students is not easy feat. It is a harder feat to do so whilst still also maintaining great sensitivity and compassion. This CPD, in both its resources and delivery, achieved both those feats exceptionally well.' These issues of access, sensitivity and compassion are no less applicable to the topics of empire, migration, and belonging.

The impact on student knowledge is equally impressive. In 2018/19 the CfHE surveyed 886 Key Stage 3 students whose teachers had attended the Centre's CPD. They found that 70 per cent of students in a sample of classes where the teacher had attended the CPD were able to correctly answer a range of core knowledge questions about the Holocaust (Foster et al., 2016). Further, the impact study also demonstrates how the acquisition of this core knowledge helped the students in the sample 'to develop deeper and more informed understanding of the Holocaust' (UCL CfHE, unpublished annual report, 2019: 17).

The Centre's work is pioneering, extensive and impactful. The identification of both teachers' and students' issues, concerns and misconceptions is vital. What the CfHE shows us is that having this sort of research agenda in relation to the teaching of empire, migration and belonging, is vital if we are to find ways of better supporting the teaching of these subjects in schools. In its interim assessment report to the DfE, the CfHE highlights the following: 'The Centre's success in improving how teachers teach, and students learnt, about the Holocaust is in large measure due to the careful way that all its programmes are uniquely responsive to the national research studies' (UCL CfHE, unpublished annual report, 2017: 4). Well-targeted support, regular evaluation of impact and a strong link to both academic scholarship and the classroom have made the Centre a success.

## How do young people understand migration, belonging, and empire?

There is limited research on what young people believe and understand about migration, belonging, and empire. A 2014 YouGov survey found that, out of 1741 British adults surveyed, 59 per cent reported that they were proud of the British Empire. While imperial pride was higher among older people, about half (48 per cent) of 18–24-year-olds felt pride in the Empire (YouGov, 2014). The survey did not include an evaluation of how BME people felt about the Empire.

Small-scale studies in English secondary schools shed some light on how students feel about how migration, empire and belonging is covered in History. Research by Adam Burns (Burns, 2014, 2016, 2017) has found that students across a range of sites thought that having empire as a focus of study was important. They felt it helped to explain the types of relationship Britain has currently with other parts of the world, and the contemporary British multicultural society they live in. However, Burns found that the life experiences and existing beliefs of the students had more of an impact on their views about empire than what they learnt in the classroom. The beliefs of

parents and the messages propagated by the media will also have an impact.

For ethnic minority students, the focus on slavery and the Tudors at the expense of other topics was a theme highlighted in some small-scale studies (Runnymede, 2015). A study by Kay Traill (2007) found that students of African-Caribbean descent and their families expressed that history should, among other things, provide a means of feeling proud about oneself. If slavery is the only major representation of black history that black pupils see featured in their studies, this is unlikely to engender a sense of pride.

It is evident from these small studies that teaching migration, belonging, and empire helps students from all backgrounds better understand the country and its relationships with the wider world. All students, irrespective of background, need to understand Britain's long history of contact with other cultures, and its identity as a site of such cross-cultural engagement. For minority students, this can also contribute to the development of self-worth and pride. Further research is needed to properly understand what is being taught and the level of young people's knowledge of migration, empire, and belonging.

## Conclusion and recommendations

The teaching of migration, belonging, and empire across disciplines is desperately needed. The question of belonging – who we were, who we are and who we want to be – has taken on a new urgency. The Brexit campaign and negotiations, and the national conversation that has ensued, have exposed divisions and fault-lines about what migration and belonging mean to us. Teaching these topics is not solely a matter of inclusion of minority student groups, but is equally important for the entire student body, to impart a full and complete understanding of the country and the culture that students inhabit, as well as the history and heritage that lies behind that culture.

But teachers need support to teach what can be controversial and uncomfortable topics sensitively and effectively. They need structured, tailored support and teaching methods and training in handling difficult topics, as well as in recognising conscious and unconscious biases both for themselves and in their students and in addressing these biases.

The development of such support needs to be co-created with the teachers themselves so that it is practical and meets the needs of a wide range of classrooms. And teachers need to be supported at an institutional level. Teachers and schools are under immense pressure with limited resources. As a result, this kind of institutional support is difficult to achieve without a pragmatic allowance and encouragement built into the curriculum, and championed by exam boards and the statutory curriculum framework.

### Recommendations

A comprehensive CPD programme for migration, belonging, and empire

- Learning from the success of the Centre for Holocaust Education, the government should fund a similar initiative, in collaboration with universities, for migration, belonging, and empire. Like the CfHe, it should provide a national programme of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) for early-career teachers, online materials and resources, CPD days and a Masters accredited online distance-learning course.
- This should include a CPD programme that should engage with academics and draw on the expertise of teachers already engaging with migration, belonging, and empire. It should be empirically based, scholarly and reflect the needs of teachers.
- A model that encourages conversations and collaboration across subject areas should be developed in schools. This can both gain from the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of research on these topics, as the TIDE Beacon Fellowship has demonstrated, and lead to more coherent and practically efficient teaching.

### *Evaluating the extent of the problem: areas for further research*

- Not enough is known about how migration, belonging, and empire is being taught, or which schools are delivering such content. A coherent picture is needed, particularly at Key Stage 3 level. Equally, not enough is known about institutional constraints and the impact that they have on curriculum choices.
- Research is needed that evaluates teachers' knowledge of empire and migration, their interests and motivations for teaching empire, and finally their concerns and ambivalences about doing so.
- Research is needed that evaluates students' knowledge of empire and migration, and the sources of that knowledge.
- In response to the evidence, the government should make reforms to the National Curriculum.

### *Exam boards*

- Pearson (the owner of Edexcel) should consider a GCSE option in line with the OCR and AQA GCSE History option 'Migration to Britain'.
- AQA and OCR should continue to promote their new GCSE options 'Migration to Britain' and support schools to adjust to what is a new thematic study.

## Bibliography

- Alexander, C. and Weekes-Bernard, D.** (2017) 'History lessons: Inequality, diversity and the National Curriculum', *Race, Ethnicity and Education* 20(4): 478–494.
- Alexander, C., Weekes-Bernard, D. and Arday, J.** (2015) *The Runnymede School Report: Race, Education and Inequality in Contemporary Britain*, London: Runnymede Trust.
- Barton, K.C.** (2009) 'The denial of desire: How to make history education meaningless', in Symcox, L. and Wilschut, L. (eds) *National History Standards: The Problem of the Canon and the Future of History Teaching*, Charlotte, NC: Information Age.
- Barton, K.C. and Levstik, L.S.** (2004) *Teaching History for the Common Good*, Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates.
- Barton, K.C. and McCully, A.W.** (2005) 'History, identity, and the school curriculum in Northern Ireland: An empirical study of secondary students' ideas and perspectives', *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 37(1): 85–116.
- Bhambra, G.K., Gebrial, D. and Nişancıoğlu, K.** (2018) *Decolonising the University*, London: Pluto Press.
- Bhopal, K. and Rhamie, J.** (2014) 'Initial teacher training: Understanding "race", diversity and inclusion', *Race, Ethnicity and Education* 17(3): 304–325.
- Burn K.** (2019, in press) 'The power of knowledge: A study of the impact of history teachers' engagement in sustained subject-rich professional development programmes', in Chapman, A. (ed.) *Building Powerful Knowledge in School History: Challenges and opportunities*, London: IOE Press.
- Burn, K., Hagger, H., Mutton, T. and Everton, T.** (2003) 'The complex development of student-teachers' thinking', *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* 9(4): 309–331.
- Burns, A.** (2014) 'The jewel in the curriculum: Teaching the history of the British Empire', *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research* 12(2): 109–121.
- Burns, A.** (2016) 'My empire is of the imagination: History student perceptions of the British Empire in secondary school', *International Journal of Historical Learning* 14(1): 93–112.
- Burns, A.** (2017) 'How Britannia ruled the waves: Teaching the history of the British Empire in the twenty-first century', PhD thesis, University of Leicester.
- Clarke, D. and Hollingsworth, H.** (2002) 'Elaborating a model of teacher professional growth', *Teaching and Teacher Education* 18(8): 947–967.
- Dahlgreen, W.** (2014) 'The British Empire is "something to be proud of"', YouGov. <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2014/07/26/britain-proud-its-empire>
- DfE (Department for Education)** (2013a) 'English programmes of study: Key stage 3. National curriculum in England'. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/244215/SECONDARY\\_national\\_curriculum\\_-\\_English2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/244215/SECONDARY_national_curriculum_-_English2.pdf)
- DfE** (2013b) 'History programmes of study: Key stage 3. National curriculum in England'. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/239075/SECONDARY\\_national\\_curriculum\\_-\\_History.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239075/SECONDARY_national_curriculum_-_History.pdf)
- DfE** (2018) *Schools, Pupils and Their Characteristics: January 2018*, London: DfE.
- Draper, N.** (2010) *The Price of Emancipation: Slave-Ownership, Compensation and British Society at the End of Slavery*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Epstein, T.** (2009) *Interpreting National History: Race, Identity, and Pedagogy in Classrooms and Communities*, New York/London: Routledge.
- Equality Act** (2010), London: The Stationery Office. [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/pdfs/ukpga\\_20100015\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/pdfs/ukpga_20100015_en.pdf)
- Foster, S.** (2005) 'The British Empire and Commonwealth in World War II: Selection and Omission in English History Textbooks', *International Journal of Historical Teaching, Learning and Research* 5(2): 72–90.

- Foster, S., Ashby, R., Lee, P. and Howson, J.** (2008) *Usable Historical Pasts: A Study of Students' Frameworks of the Past, Full Research Report*, Swindon: ESRC.
- Foster, S., Pettigrew, A., Pearce, A., Hale, R., Burgess, A., Salmons, P. and Lenga, R.-A.** (2016) *What Do Students Know and Understand about the Holocaust? Evidence from English Secondary Schools*, London: UCL Centre for Holocaust Education.
- Goodwyn, A., Durrant, C., Sawyer, W., Zancanella, D. and Scherff, L.** (2018) *The Future of English Teaching Worldwide: Celebrating 50 Years from the Dartmouth Conference*, London: Routledge.
- Gov.uk** (2019) 'Types of school: Academies'. [www.gov.uk/types-of-school/academies](http://www.gov.uk/types-of-school/academies)
- Hall, C.** (2014) *Legacies of British Slave-Ownership: Colonial Slavery and the Formation of Victorian Britain*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Harris, R.** (2012) "Purpose" as a way of helping white trainee history teachers engage with diversity issues, *Education Sciences* 2(4): 218–241.
- Harris, R. and Clarke, G.** (2011) 'Embracing diversity in the history curriculum: A study of the challenges facing trainee teachers', *Cambridge Journal of Education* 41(2): 159–175.
- Harris, R. and Reynolds, R.** (2018) 'Exploring teachers' curriculum decision making: Insights from history education', *Oxford Review of Education* 44(2): 139–155.
- Haydn, T.** (2014) 'How and what should we teach about the British Empire in schools?' in *Yearbook of the International Society of History Didactics*, Schwalbach: Wochen Schau Verlag.
- Haydn, T.** (2016) 'How is "Empire" taught in English schools? An exploratory study' in Gorbahn, K. and Grindel, K. (eds) *Colonialism and History Teaching*, Oxford: Berghahn Press.
- Hess, D.E.** (2002) 'Discussing controversial public issues in secondary social studies classrooms: Learning from skilled teachers', *Theory and Research in Social Education* 30(1): 10–41.
- Hess, D.E.** (2005) 'How do teachers' political view influence teaching about controversial issues?' *Social Education* 69: 47–48.
- Hirsch, E.D., Kett, J.F. and Trefil, J.** (1987) *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs To Know*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Historical Association** (2007) *Teaching Emotive and Controversial History 3-19*, London: Historical Association.
- Holland, D.C.** (2001). *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Jivraj, S. and Simpson, L.** (2015) *Ethnic Identity and Inequalities in Britain: The Dynamics of Diversity*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- Kelley, N., Khan, O. and Sharrock, S.** (2017) *Racial Prejudice in Britain Today*, London: NatCen Social Research/Runnymede Trust.
- Kello, K.** (2016) *Sensitive and controversial issues in the classroom: Teaching history in a divided society*, *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* 22(1): 35–53.
- Kennedy, D.K.** (2018) *The Imperial History Wars: Debating the British Empire*, London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Kitson, A. and McCully, A.** (2005) "You hear about it for real in school": Avoiding, containing and risk-taking in the history classroom, *Teaching History* 120: 32–37.
- Klein, S.** (2017) 'Preparing to teach a slavery past: History teachers and educators as navigators of historical distance', *Theory and Research in Social Education* 45(1): 75–109.
- Mohamud, A. and Whitburn, R.** (2016) *Migration, Empires and the People*, London: Hodder Education.
- Ofqual** (2018) 'Entries for GCSE, AS and A level: Summer 2018 exam series'. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/712450/Report\\_-\\_summer\\_2018\\_exam\\_entries\\_GCSEs\\_Level\\_1\\_2\\_AS\\_and\\_A\\_levels.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/712450/Report_-_summer_2018_exam_entries_GCSEs_Level_1_2_AS_and_A_levels.pdf)
- ONS (Office for National Statistics)** (2012) 'Ethnicity and national identity in England and Wales: 2011'. [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/ethnicityandnationalidentityinenglandandwales/2012-12-11](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/ethnicityandnationalidentityinenglandandwales/2012-12-11)
- Riley, M., Byron, J. and Culpin, C.** (2004) *The Impact of Empire: A World Study of the British Empire - 1585 to the Present. Teacher's Resource Book*, London: John Murray.
- Royal Historical Society** (2018) *Race, Ethnicity and Equality in UK History: A Report and Resources for Change*, London: Royal Historical Society.



**Spafford, M., Lyndon, D., Sherwood, M. and Adi, H.** (2016) *Migration: 'Migration to Britain' Thematic Study. Explaining the Modern World*, London: Hodder Education.

**Tomlinson, S.** (2019) *Education and Race from Empire to Brexit*, Bristol: Bristol University Press.

**Traille, K.** (2007) "'You should be proud about your history. They made me feel Ashamed": Teaching history hurts', *Teaching History* 127: 31–37.

**Van Straaten, D., Wilschut, A. and Oostdam, R.** (2016) 'Making history relevant to students by connecting past, present and future: A framework for research', *Journal Of Curriculum Studies* 48(4): 479–502.

**Virta, A.** (2009) 'Learning to teach history in culturally diverse classrooms', *Intercultural Education* 20(4): 285–297.

## Acknowledgements

This report is based on the findings of a collaborative scheme of work undertaken by the TIDE Project and the Runnymede Trust, and supported by direct and indirect funding from the European Research Council, the University of Liverpool Knowledge Exchange Fund, and the University of Liverpool Research Development Fund.

The authors are grateful to Dr Malachi McIntosh for his crucial involvement in the initial stages of the study, to Sundeep Lidher and Martin Spafford for their continuing support, and to the members of the TIDE team for their involvement in the workshops and TIDE Beacon Fellowship: Dr Roger Christofides, Dr João Vicente Melo, Dr Haig Smith, Dr Lauren Working,

Tom Roberts, Emily Stevenson, and Emma-Louise Whitehead. Further support was provided by Abigail Bransford (University of Oxford). They would also wish to thank the educators and teachers who contributed to the workshops and discussion panels, the twelve 2019 TIDE Beacon Fellows, Dr Glenn Godenho and the Continuing Education Team at the University of Liverpool, as well as the National Archives (Kew) and National Museums Liverpool. They are also grateful to Professor Claire Alexander, Professor Joya Chatterji, Dr Omar Khan and Debbie Weekes-Bernard, the core project team members of the *Our Migration Story* project and long-time contributors to work on migration, belonging, and empire.

### **'Travel, Transculturality, and Identity in England, c.1550-1700' (TIDE)**

ERC Project  
School of the Arts  
19 Abercromby Square  
University of Liverpool L69 7ZG  
**E** [tide@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:tide@liverpool.ac.uk)  
[www.tideproject.uk](http://www.tideproject.uk)

### **Runnymede Trust**

St Clement's Building,  
London School of Economics,  
Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE  
**T** 020 7377 9222  
**E** [info@runnymedetrust.org](mailto:info@runnymedetrust.org)  
[www.runnymedetrust.org](http://www.runnymedetrust.org)



## Runnymede Perspectives

Runnymede Perspectives seek to challenge conventional thinking about race in public and policy debates. Perspectives bring the latest research to a wider audience and consider how that research can contribute to a successful multi-ethnic Britain.

### About the Authors

**Kimberly McIntosh** is Senior Policy Officer at the Runnymede Trust. She is a co-author of the report *Intersecting Inequalities: Austerity and BME women*, *Integration for All: Why Race Equality Matters* and *Reframing Race*. Kimberly also wrote a report for the KIN network. She sits on the Mayor of London Equality and Diversity Advisory board. She has appeared on Sky News, BBC News 24, and BBC Radio 4 and written for the Guardian, the Washington Post and The Metro.

**Jason Todd** is a PGCE History tutor at the University of Oxford. Previously he taught for 20 years in a number of schools fulfilling a variety of roles including Assistant Head of a

Special Needs school and Advanced Skills Teacher. His research interests include work on children's wider engagement with history, through social remembering, and its impact on their historical consciousness. He focuses on developing complex and multi-perspective history that takes into account student's diverse backgrounds and gives all students access to the history curriculum.

**Nandini Das** is Professor of English Literature at the University of Liverpool, and will be Professor of English Literature and Culture at the University of Oxford from October 2019. She is Director of the ERC-funded "Travel, Transculturality, and Identity in England, c.1550-1700" (TIDE) project. She works on sixteenth and seventeenth century European and English literature and cultural history, and has published extensively on travel and cross-cultural encounters. As a BBC-AHRC New Generation Thinker, she regularly contributes to wider dissemination of this research and discussions of migration, identity, and heritage in media.

### Runnymede

St Clement's Building,  
London School of Economics,  
Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE

T 020 7377 9222

E [info@runnymedetrust.org](mailto:info@runnymedetrust.org)

Registered in England 3409935

Registered Charity 1063609

[www.runnymedetrust.org](http://www.runnymedetrust.org)



**RUNNYMEDE**