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EXPLORING EXPERIENCES OF A GROUP OF BRITISH MUSLIM WOMEN IN INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING AND THEIR EARLY TEACHING CAREERS

By

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A Doctoral Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of

Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

1998

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My greatest debt of gratitude must go to the Muslim women who made this thesis possible, especially to the group which stayed with the research for four years. In addition, I would like to thank the many individuals who have contributed to the thesis via discussion, critiques, encouragement and support, above all by sustaining my confidence to achieve this goal. Most notably I would like to mention the constant encouragement and positive tutoring received from my supervisor John Evans, and director of research Ian Henry. Thanks must also go to Haifaa Jawad, Charles Jenkins and Eric Dunning for their substantial part in helping me along the road. Last but not least, thanks to my husband Barry who has been the light through the highest and lowest points of this challenge. The thesis is dedicated to my parents, Mavis and Donald Shallish.

ABSTRACT

The experiences of a group of Muslim women were explored over a four year period whilst they were students on a Bachelor of Education initial teacher training degree course in 'Greenacres' College of Higher Education, and teachers in their early careers. The interpretive, qualitative investigation involved systematic gathering and analysis of data from seventy in-depth interviews, diaries and observations. Seventeen volunteer, self-declared Muslim women participated in the early stages of the research, reducing, as a result of various unplanned and unforeseen occurrences, to seven individual case studies of teaching experiences by the end of the research period.

Theoretically, a process-theory of identity underpinned the thesis, focusing the research, analysis and interpretation on the changing dynamics affecting self-perception, notions of identity and professional development. Shifting power balances in the 'Greenacres' figuration led to changes in courses and environment which enabled the Muslim women to live more comfortably, embodying and expressing Islam which was becoming increasingly significant to them during this period.

Once in the teaching profession, experiences were more diversified, success or failure in particular schools being dependent on many factors related to real and perceived power differentials in their new figurations. Regardless of the predominantly Muslim communities, pupils and parents, served by their schools, the Muslim teachers were most affected by interactions with colleagues. Where they met open attitudes towards Islam, felt included, valued and 'accepted', respondents thrived. More commonly, particularly for the women who had adopted the hijab and therefore most visibly embodied Islam, colleagues' islamophobic attitudes affected interaction and professional development. The interconnectedness of embodiment, habitus and identity contributed to understanding the struggles between constantly shifting layers of consciousness within complex multiple identities.

There were incidents of respondents defending their right to be Muslim, meeting suspicion of their motivations and objectivity as teachers, and adopting coping strategies such as 'identity stasis' in order to survive in staffrooms. Respondents most seriously affected in terms of their teacher-identity were those whose Muslim-identity was predominant in their consciousness, constantly underpinning their striving to be 'good Muslim-teachers'. In terms of the process theory of identity, where there was a dominant we-identity balance in terms of 'being Muslim', the constraints, tensions and demands of the State education system were most problematic because they affected the individual's ability to live her life as a Muslim. This offered one explanation for the fact that by the end of this research only 35% of the early respondents were full-time 'Muslim teachers' in the State education system.

Challenging the system at Greenacres had resulted in respondents being able to live more comfortably as both students and Muslims. The relative isolation and power differentials experienced by Muslim teachers in State schools led to a retreat from, rather than challenge to, the system which was constraining their ability to live their lives comfortably as both teachers and Muslims.

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

> Only because people live in society with other people can they perceive themselves as individuals different from other people. And this self-perception as a person distinct from others cannot be separated from the awareness that one is also perceived by other people, not only as a person like them, but in some respects different from all other people.
>
> Elias (1991, 195-196)

This investigation traced the experiences of a group of self-declared British Muslim women whilst they were studying for a Bachelor of Education Degree (B.Ed.) at one institution, 'Greenacres College' (pseudonym), and during their early experiences as primary school teachers. The students were involved in the research over a four year period from the academic year 1993/4 to 1996/7. The purpose of the investigation was to increase understanding of how Muslim women experienced and negotiated their cultural distinctiveness in a secular State education system as students and teachers.

In 1991 Greenacres College instigated a unique Islamic Studies main course option in the religious education route of a four-year B. Ed. Degree course. There were many reasons which led to this (Benn, 1994). These included: (i) Government pressures to attract more ethnic minority teachers into the profession (DES Circular 24/89) following the Equal Opportunities Commission Report on initial teacher training (EOC 1989), (ii) the situation of 'Greenacres College' in a Federation of Colleges which included a Postgraduate Centre for the Study of Islam where the idea of an Islamic Studies course for intending primary teachers was first muted (Hewer 1992), (iii) the College's Christian 'free churches' roots reflected in theology courses pertinent to a

modern multi-faith society, and (iv) the involvement of a respected Muslim co-ordinating committee to oversee the development of the course. Government, the College and the Muslim community had something to gain as a result of this pioneering initiative.

The lack of collection of data on religious affiliation or sense of religious identity by public agencies makes precise estimation of numbers of British Muslims difficult, estimated at two million. However, the majority are from Bangladeshi and Pakistani backgrounds. (Runnymede Trust 1997b, 32). With B.Ed. primary orientated courses being most attractive to women, it is not surprising that the Islamic Studies route led to an increase in the number of Asian Muslim women entering Greenacres College. White, African, and African-Caribbean Muslims have also been recruited. The religious / cultural requirements necessary for many of these women to live their lives comfortably at Greenacres were not foreseen in the first instance. Students entered on the same conditions as all B.Ed. students committing themselves to a four year teacher training course including a range of curriculum and school-based experiences that would equip them to join the teaching profession within the State education system.

Personal interest in the specific experiences of the Muslim women arose as a result of issues raised by the women themselves in December 1992 concerning their unacceptable experiences in physical education (PE). At that time I was lecturing in a department which worked across two College campuses. Professional circumstances changed in 1993 giving me responsibility for PE on the Greenacres site and direct responsibility for the tensions that had arisen between course demands / delivery and the requirements of the Muslim students. I undertook a research project to increase my understanding of the physical education situation, the tensions and resolutions that were occurring (Benn 1994). The current four year study started with the data collected during that project: interviews, diaries, school-experience and course observations,

but more significantly with the relationships established during the researcher / researched contact time facilitated by that early research.

The study continued to track the experiences of the students involved in the initial investigation, not only in physical education but in their life-experiences as students and as teachers. The reasons for this were: the positive relationships that had developed between the researcher and researched, deepening personal interest in exploring the experiences of Muslim women in a predominantly secular State education system, and the respondents' willingness to spread knowledge and understanding about their experiences for the benefit of Muslim women entering Greenacres and other teacher training institutions after them.

All the students in this research were 'black' in the sense of the word used by Siraj-Blatchford to describe respondents of Asian, African and African-Caribbean origin in her study of students' perceptions of racism in Initial Teacher Education (1991). The majority of students involved in my research were of Asian origin, second generation Pakistani women, with one African-Caribbean, one of mixed-race and two African-Asians. The fact that all the respondents were black added the dimension of 'race' to that of gender and religion in the dialogue of the research.

The major defining aspect of this study was identifying ways in which these people perceived and negotiated their distinctive identities as Muslim women in the process of training and teaching in the English State education system. The complexity of the investigation cannot be underestimated. It was necessary to increase my knowledge and understanding of Islam and of Islamic practices required of Muslim followers. Since Islam offers guidance on 'a whole way of life' it was anticipated that some tensions might emerge between State education requirements and those of Islam. Sample indicators of potential and real tensions were: publications offering advice to British Muslims within the State education system (Sarwar 1994), guides for teachers about meeting the needs of Muslim pupils (Parker-Jenkins 1995), evidence of tensions with

secondary school physical education requirements for Muslim girls in particular (Carroll and Hollinshead 1993), criticized by Siraj-Blatchford 1993(a), and demands for the recognition of Muslim schools indicating dissatisfaction and a preference of some British Muslims to educate their children outside of the State system (Independent 11.2.96,11). Whether these or other tensions were real for the Muslim women in this study, and, if so, how they were resolved as the women moved from being pupils, to student-teachers, and finally to teachers within that system, would emerge through the investigation.

The status of the Muslim community in Britain does not match that of Sikhs and Jews (and Romanies). The latter are recognised as 'racial groups' in the Race Relations Act and are therefore protected by law from discrimination. Religious discrimination is not covered. There is no consensus or political recognition of Muslims as a 'racial' or 'ethnic' group meaning they do not share the same protection as other similar groups. (C.R.E. 1994). Yet there is evidence of increasing discrimination against Muslims. (Runnymede Trust 1997 a & b). The recent public recognition of islamophobia in Britain, defined as "... dread or hatred of Islam and of Muslims" (Runnymede Trust 1997a,7), brings issues related to lived experiences of British Muslims to the forefront of academic debate and policy-making. Owen (1996) and the Runnymede Trust (1997b) recommended that a change in the Census Act to permit the collection of data on religion in Britain would yield quantitative information on an emerging dimension of disadvantage.

> ... (islamophobia) has existed in western countries and cultures for several centuries but in the last twenty years it has become more explicit, more extreme and more dangerous.
>
> (Runnymede Trust 1997a, 7)

Some data on religion has been collected in Education. According to the D.F.E. (1995a) 3.3% of the State school population are Muslim. This compares with 21.6% of Birmingham pupils in 1995, the City in which this research took place. 7.3% of the population of pupils within the State system are of black or South Asian origin, with 5.6% being of Pakistani, Bangladeshi, or Indian origin. Evidence from the Research and Statistics section of Birmingham City's Education Department (1995) revealed that 75% of pupils in Inner City wards were from black or minority ethnic groups, whilst 35% of the total school population were from these groups, 27.2% being of South Asian origin. It was estimated that by 2001 one in three of 16 year olds in the City will be from black and ethnic minority groups because of the current younger age profile of these pupils. It can be assumed that the Muslim population will also increase. In the same research only 5% of teachers in the City were found to be of black or ethnic minority origin. (Data on the religious denomination of those teachers is not available). These figures illustrate that the training of both Muslim and black teachers is urgent and is particularly significant for Cities such as Birmingham and London where the largest numbers of people from these communities, and therefore of potential teachers, are concentrated. Encouraging more Muslim women into any profession is portrayed, through Western images of Islam, as problematic.

The position of women in Islam is particularly undermined, for example with Western media regularly sending stereotypical messages such as that expressed in the picture in The Independent 1.5.'95,14 and Mail on Sunday 10.8.'97. Research by the Runnymede Trust (1997b, 5) suggests that this is brought about by 'closed views' of Islam: as monolithic, static, inferior and manipulative, not 'open', that is: diverse, dynamic, different, sincere. One source of evidence is in the media. Muslims suffer many antagonistic media representations in text, pictorial and cartoon forms. (Appendix A).

> If you look for articles which refer to Muslims or to Islam you will find prejudiced and antagonistic comments, mostly subtle but sometimes blatant and crude. Where the media lead, many will follow. British Muslims suffer discrimination in their education and in the workplace. Acts of harassment and violence against Muslims are common.
>
> (Runnymede Trust 1997a,5)

A small but growing literature on British Muslims is helping to share lived-experiences with a wider audience (Lewis 1994), and research such as that by Brah (1992) on Asian women helps to broaden understanding of the dynamics of cultural practice and interpretation. Understanding Islamic cultural practice by examining guidelines for Muslim women about: gender relations, pertaining to participation in physical exercise, and to educational aspirations for women, was important for interpreting the experiences of the Muslim women in this study. Much of the contents of chapter one, section two, on the context of Islam, was researched for the initial study (Benn, 1994). It has been developed, and up-dated, with additional sections on Islam and 'race', and Islam and education, for this study.

Just as the researcher could not ignore the interface of culture, religion and gender that was central to the investigation, aspects of ethnicity / 'race' would also affect the lived-experiences of these black British Muslims. The context of education in relation to pertinent issues of this study: culture, gender, 'race', Islam and physical education, is addressed in chapter 2. There is much written on the disadvantaged position of black children in the State education system (Gill et al 1992, Griffiths and Troyna 1995). The specific experiences of Muslim youngsters is under-researched. Recent attempts to link 'race' and gender thinking (Haw 1991) are reflected in emerging literature on 'race' and gender in initial teacher training including school-experience, and teaching careers (Blair and Maylor 1993, Crozier and Menter 1993, East et al,

1989, Siraj-Blatchford 1991, 1993(b)). (Throughout this study the terms 'initial teacher training' and 'teacher education' will be used interchangeably.) Evidence suggests a need for greater awareness and action for change. Again in this literature the experiences of Muslim women are particularly under-represented. Whilst other courses are targeting ethnic minorities in higher education (Appendix B) there is a lack of empirical research into the specific experiences of Muslim women.

The research is a theoretically informed empirical study. The paradigm was interpretive. The underpinning theoretical basis was multidimensional but most strongly based in a process theory of identity (Elias 1991, Mennell 1994). Mennell built on Elias's theory making 'creative use' of interactionist and process theories, such as recommended by Maguire (1992). As researcher I was concerned with how these women formed and maintained their identity through interaction with others, how they were influencing and influenced by those with whom they were interdependently linked in the period of this research. The study involved four years of their lives, focusing on experiences in initial teacher training and their early teaching careers. Where helpful, other theoretical perspectives were called upon to increase understanding of emergent issues, for example body theory, the notion of 'embodiment' and 'physical capital' in relation to the significance of the symbolic dress forms some of the Muslim women adopted (Bourdieu in Shilling 1993, 21).

As researcher I acknowledge the potential difficulties of being non-Muslim and also white. Attempts at 'cross-structural' research have been criticized, for example on the grounds of white researchers being unable to fully understand black experiences, or men to fully grasp the experiences of women. There is clear lack of consensus, for example with Essed (1991,67) suggesting "... black informants are reticent about discussing their experiences of white racism with a white interviewer" and Rhodes (1994) suggesting "Black people will not necessarily talk openly about their experiences and opinions with other black people, especially black researchers." (cited in Mirza

1995, 176). Whilst some might criticize my capability to understand and appreciate the experience of black Muslim women, others would see the position as having greater potential for 'object-adequacy' preferring to believe in ...."the power of reason and the possibility of dialogue." (Walkling and Brannigan 1987,67)

In this study being a woman enabled the dialogue between researcher and Muslim women to start and it was the strength of relationships, developed during the early part of the research, which led to extending the investigation across a four year period. The advantage of being non-Muslim was in ensuring no kind of judgemental threat on religious grounds to the actions or values expressed by the respondents. The disadvantage was the risk of misunderstanding through insufficient knowledge of Islam. Being white and outside of the predominantly Asian culture and lifestyle of the Muslim women was where my greatest fears of misrepresentation lay. Haw (1995b) spent time exploring the educational experiences of Muslim girls which raised, for her, the question 'should the white researcher stay at home?' Her answer was 'No'. She suggested the issue was much more about sensitivity of process. That the future of research should be open to possibilities rather than closed by the creation of restricting boundaries:

> ... it is about travelling sensitively, judiciously, continually being aware of your limitations, reflecting critically, making your limitations explicit and admitting when you are wrong.
>
> (Haw 1996, 329)

The methodology used was qualitative, a case study approach including interviews, observations and diaries for the College-based section of the study and interviews and diaries once the respondents had left College. Increasing trust and familiarity enabled my interview method to slip easily and acceptably into conversations. Silverman (1993, 95) quotes exponents such as Denzin

(1970), Burgess (1980), amongst others, as favouring open-ended 'conversational' interviews as a way of gaining more depth in the research situation, allowing respondents to define their own world and raise issues significant to them. Interviews were always based on a loose structure to ensure that common areas of focus were covered in each interview but they remained flexible. Order of questions / topics was not significant, and respondents were able to take the interviews / conversations in different directions. Since the greatest trust and confidences had been gained and exchanged in one-to-one interviews and personal diaries during the College-based research, it seemed logical to build on the strength of these aspects of the work in pursuit of deeper insights into the lives of these Muslim women as qualified teachers. Individual interviews were held at key points in their professional development: after the final school experience in their third year of study, at the end of their fourth year just before graduation, and thereafter at the end of each term of teaching.

All Muslim women students, on Islamic and other main courses, from the 1991/2 and 1992/3 intakes were initially invited to take part in the research (n = 17). The reason two cohorts were used was that the first cohort had reached the third year of their course before raising any issues regarding tensions for them as Muslims. It was with the second intake that a group felt able to speak out about issues that were unsatisfactory. Reasons for this included the arrival of individuals with strong, outgoing personalities, prepared to be pro-active, and to lead, for example with establishing an Islamic Society. Perhaps the most significant reason was simply the increasing numbers, enabling collective strength to be drawn from the opportunity for Muslim women to be together, to meet over coffee, to live in close proximity and to begin to share concerns and ideas for bringing about change. Muslim concerns only became public at senior management level in the latter cohort's second year, hence the initiation of my research in 1993/4. The study followed

the first group through two years at Greenacres and two years in schools, the second through three years at Greenacres and one year in schools.

The research started with seventeen subjects, twelve for the school-experience and end of College stages but had dropped to ten volunteers, five from the first cohort and five from the second, for the post-College, early teaching profession research. Unforeseen circumstances took three volunteers, of the latter cohort, out of the research before their 'early careers' interviews started. The remaining seven students saw the research through to the end of four years. Reasons for the overall decline in respondents included: changes in preferred course from teacher training to Bachelor of Theology, illness and injury, written responses indicating a preference not to continue with the commitment, as well as non-responses to letters.

Of the five volunteers who graduated in 1995 four held full-time posts for the two years of the teacher-based research and one could only find employment as a supply teacher throughout that period. The five volunteers who graduated in 1996 were beset with unforeseen difficulties. Twins' mother was taken seriously ill at the end of their B.Ed. course which led to both respondents moving back home in September 1996. Whilst they did some supply teaching it was not a priority in their lives, neither was my research. Their mother died in the summer of 1997. Another student from the cohort failed to secure a job and eventually accepted invitations from her brothers to return to Mozambique and South Africa in autumn 1996 to start a new life out there. Despite promises to keep in touch she has not contacted me, or responded to letters, since she flew out of England. The African-Caribbean student found a job in the State sector but had a crisis in relation to her Muslim identity. She decided at the end of her College course in, July 1996, that she could not call herself Muslim any more. Nevertheless she stayed in the research and that crisis, its causes and her experiences in teaching were tracked. The fifth student, for a variety of reasons, accepted a post in a private

Muslim school as a National Curriculum teacher for the infants. She also stayed in the project.

As indicated the research finished with an entirely unpredicted group. Following the relative stability of the first cohort, it was anticipated that the second cohort would contribute respondent accounts to add depth and breadth of experiences in the State teaching system, such plans were shattered by unforeseen circumstances. Nevertheless the research project continued and the experiences of a group of Muslim women in a particular time and place were systematically tracked across a four year period. The diversity of responses and experiences within the group are as interesting as the points of consensus. There was no intention to treat Muslim women as a homogeneous group or to suggest that all other Muslim women would have similar experiences.

The 'life-span' period and situations captured within the time-scale of this research shaped the structure of the project into two major sections: firstly an exploration of experiences of these Muslim women in initial teacher training and secondly, in their early teaching careers. As a result of the initial research interviews on physical education in College, the students raised other issues in their conversations which became the focus areas for subsequent interviews. These shaped the sub-sections of the 'initial teacher training' analysis and the interviews for the 'early teaching careers' research.

<u>Initial Teacher Training:</u>

i) Experiences of teaching practice. (The terms teaching-practice (TP) and school-experience (SE) will be used interchangeably in this study although it is recognised that the latter is the most recent term).

ii) Specific focus on physical education, experiences in College-based courses and teaching practice.

iii) Identity and change in initial teacher training.

Early teaching careers

i) Early teaching experiences in the profession.

ii) Specific focus on teaching physical education in the primary school.

iii) Identity and change in teaching.

The relatively longitudinal nature of the project enabled the researcher, in interviews, to pick up threads from previous interviews or diaries in an attempt to identify continuity or change in perceptions. As data was analysed, for patterns of consensus or contradiction, themes of shared experiences were identified. As a result of the unforeseen development in the 'early teaching careers' research, data was analysed as a series of seven case studies on the individual women who remained in the project.

Initial Teacher Training:

i) Experiences of teaching-practice were either positive or negative for these Muslim women. The nature of interactions with significant people contributed to these positive or negative experiences and included: class teacher, colleagues, Head, tutor, children, 'other students', and parents. The study revealed that the situation of the school, 'all-white', mixed multicultural or predominantly Asian did not determine the level of success achieved by the Muslim women. The style of management and 'inclusive' actions of people were much more significant. Racial and religious prejudice was present in all situations with detrimental perspectives of Islam affecting the students most seriously. The power differential between most of these people and the student-teacher meant many students accepted prejudiced comments in order to 'survive', that is to pass the course. Students shared a strong desire to be 'accepted' in schools but were frequently having to defend Islam and consequently their identity as Muslim women. (Chapter five, section one)

ii) As a compulsory subject in the National Curriculum and therefore an essential part of all initial teacher training courses, physical education offered a particularly interesting case study of negotiated change because of the visibility of the tensions and resolutions. Initial insensitivity to the requirements of Islam, on the part of staff, led to embarrassing experiences for some Muslim women in these first two cohorts. Working in mixed-sex groups, with male tutors, participating in contact activities and occasional requests to remove the hijab in a public space, offended the students. They were affected differentially, depending on their religiosity, but the process of change and accommodation that occurred within that subject resulted in a more comfortable environment for Muslim women coming through Greenacres in later years. Interviews about physical education held in the students' second, third and fourth years, observations of College-based courses and school-based teaching practice experiences, along with student-diaries, contributed to the investigation into the experiences of these Muslim women in physical education in initial teacher training. Data revealed concerns shared by many potential teachers of primary physical education but also concerns related specifically to being Muslim such as changing, moving in a mixed-sex environment, and the continuing dilemma of dance (see chapter 5 section 2).

iii) In relation to 'identity' the Muslim students at Greenacres were conscious of their 'difference', particularly in terms of dress and colour, the effects of 'difference' on interactions with others, and of the struggle to maintain the balance between reinforcing their Muslim identity and being 'accepted' by those 'outside'. They shared their interpretations of how others viewed them, staff and students, all of which influenced the way they felt about themselves. They recalled incidents which affected their own perceptions and behaviour, struggles for changes which enabled them to live their lives Islamically, increasing 'consciousness' of Islam, and new tensions that such changes were creating, for example with non-Muslim peers, and in some families. Interviews collected at end-of-year points during the B.Ed. course

revealed that the Muslim women had the greatest personal and professional confidence at the end of their third year but the end-of-fourth-year transition point between College course and teaching careers was a time of insecurity and indecision for many.
(Chapter 5 section 3).

Early Teaching Careers

Data in this section is presented as seven individual case studies. All include reference to: those people who were most influential in the professional development of individuals, personal perceptions of their developing professional skills, reflections on their experiences of teaching physical education, the effects of their black / Muslim identity on teaching and vice versa, the effects of teaching on their lives and changing personal and professional ambitions.

Jamilah spent her first two years of teaching in two different schools but she experienced racial and religious prejudice from the hierarchy which made her feel uncomfortable, particularly in the first school. By the end of the two years she had recognised the compromise she was making in terms of her Muslim identity in order to sustain her job in State school teaching. She had made a conscious effort to hide her Muslim identity when she moved to her second school in order to avoid tensions with colleagues. This was not done through changing her dress but in terms of deliberate silence about Islam in conversations with colleagues. She did not wish to continue moving down this line of accommodation. For this, and other reasons, she left teaching at the end of the research period.

Rabiah had felt pressured to take the post at the school in which she spent her first two teaching years, and the resentment never left her. She often felt isolated, undervalued and under-used in her school. Relations with other

members of staff were sometimes problematic. Rabiah attributed this to the differences between the white teachers and herself which permeated all aspects of their lives, including culture and values. Effects were most noticeable in staffroom conversation between teachers which were often permeated with Western values, perceived as antithesis to Islamic values. Opportunity to move schools at the end of the two year period of the research prevented an early career change.

Salima had a more positive experience whereby, in her particular school, she developed self-confidence and a sense of value which, in turn, brought commitment and dedication. Tensions at home were often compensated, for Salima, by her friendships at school, particularly with her mentor. The decision to adopt hijab in the Easter of her first year brought interesting responses from school, home and community. Like the other teachers in this research, PE was not a priority in her early teaching career but it did happen. Salima finally found the confidence to bring the apparatus out for gymnastics in the summer term of her second year. Ofsted brought many pressures but ensured expectations were clear and policies useful. The style of management ensured a supported professional environment for Salima's early career.

Hana also had positive early career experiences but the support systems for an NQT (Newly Qualified Teacher) did not match those for Salima. Lack of confidence was a common theme in the data for many of these teachers and was overcome by a process of trial and error rather than established and successful support systems. Hana's background of living in an Asian community until the age of eight years, then living in an all-white community until she went to College, probably led to the fact that she had the most comfortable teaching experience, the most positive social relations with colleagues and consequently the most optimistic outlook on a long-term career in teaching. Also, the fact that she was the only non-hijab wearing Muslim teacher in this part of the research was significant. The heavy workload of an

NQT was a key feature in all case studies, but a happy work environment and strong family support enabled Hana to cope well.

Asma's first two years of teaching were very unhappy because she desperately wanted, yet failed to gain, a full-time teaching post. She worked as a supply teacher for most of this time, moving from school to school, always leaving her curriculum vitae, and ensuring head teachers knew of her desire for a job. Whilst there were some benefits of being in different schools there were many disadvantages, particularly for an NQT, since there was no support for a supply 'visitor'. Asma had none of the help her friends were receiving from mentors, in-service courses and other colleagues. She was expected to know everything, and found the same when she undertook two terms as a language support teacher. In her penultimate interview she was in despair, deciding that if she failed to secure a full-time post for the following September she would give up and try another career. Immediately prior to the final research interview she had secured a full-time post and was delighted.

Nawar failed to be accepted onto the pool during her final year at College and in her first year of teaching. (The pool in this context means the City's quota for teachers which is sorted every spring term in relation to vacancies arising. Acceptance onto the pool means a guaranteed job but at any school offered by the local education authority, not selected by the teacher.) Nawar took a full-time teaching post in a private Muslim school in order to work as a teacher when she had been unsuccessful in gaining a State school position by the start of the school year. This case study tracks her experiences in the Muslim school during her first year of teaching. Whilst some of her experiences matched those of her friends who had graduated from Greenacres the year before, many differed. Sharing her perceptions of the situation offered rare insight into life in a Muslim school.

Cath declared herself Muslim on entering Greenacres in 1992 to study Islam on the four year B.Ed. By the time she graduated in 1996 she had decided she could not call herself Muslim any longer. Nevertheless, her

struggles with the mismatch between the rhetoric and reality of the Islam she had met, and her new role as teacher, were tracked through her first year of teaching. Although there were problems, Cath was in a very supportive environment in which the mentor system was given every opportunity to succeed. She felt entirely 'at home' in the school. By the summer she reflected on a challenging but rewarding year which she hoped would be the first of many, not only in the teaching profession, but in that school which had turned out to be very special for her.
(All case studies are in chapter six.)

By the end of the research it was evident, from vicarious accounts in conversations with the remaining respondents, that many Muslim women who had started with the research in 1993 were no longer in full-time teaching. Many had opted to undertake supply teaching instead. In order to pursue a more direct, reliable source of data to help explain motives for opting out of teaching I distributed a questionnaire in the summer of 1997. The results are also analysed at the end of chapter six.

Following the analysis of the data a dialogue between theory and findings led to the conclusions of this research. Whilst the project was small-scale in terms of numbers, it was a means through which this group of Muslim women could share their concerns, tensions, failures and successes over a four-year period of their lives.

Trying to do justice to their 'knowledge' and to offer theoretical interpretation has been a constant struggle with conscience. Could I, as a privileged white non-Muslim, ever do justice to the experiences of black Muslim women? Could I hear what they had to say and be sufficiently informed in interpretation? There were many issues to consider such as 'representation' and questions of 'voice' (Sparkes 1992, 1995). Power differences raised particular concerns, especially during their College years since I was a tutor, but understanding power as relational and recognising the power the Muslim

women had over the very existence of this research helped (Georges and Jones 1992).

Pessimistically, I lived with personal fears that the research might collapse at any time because unplanned and unforeseen things could and did happen, for example subjects opting to drop out, not securing teaching posts, or moving out of the country. Before each interview there were always personal doubts about whether the students / teachers would turn up or be willing to share depth of experiences. After each interview there was always the resurgence of confidence and assurance that those who remained really wanted to be part of the research, were enthusiastic about it and, particularly with the final group, committed to seeing the project through. No interview, once arranged was ever changed and, despite heavy workloads, at no stage did any respondent complain or give the impression that my interview requests were intrusive or problematic for them in any way. Nevertheless, once completed there was a sense of relief on my part once the final interview was taped and transcribed in July 1997. On reflection this was related to the personal investment that had gone into the research and gratitude that neither people nor technology had prevented the completion of seventy interviews over four years. There had been difficulties along the way but a large element of the original intention, to share the experiences of Muslim women through four year of their lives, had been achieved. Research that is people-dependent and longitudinal must necessarily be high-risk and therefore full of such anxieties. The research process itself has been a valuable learning experience involving much personal reflection and learning.

Whilst I believe the Muslim women always regarded me as 'other', they did see me as being 'on their side'. I regard myself as privileged to have been given the trust and support of this group of women and to have had the opportunity to gain more insight and understanding of their experiences in a predominantly white, secular, society.

1.2 ISLAM - CULTURE, GENDER, 'RACE', EDUCATION AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

> Islam is not a religion in the Western understanding of the word. It is at once a faith and a way of life, a religion and a social order, a doctrine and a code of conduct, a set of values and principles and a social movement to realize them in history.
>
> (Mawdudi 1989,12)

According to the IQRA Trust one fifth of the World's population is Muslim, that is, followers of the religion Islam. Over two million Muslims live in Britain and over 250,000 pupils are educated in this country (Ibid). Since there are a small number of Islamic schools, currently private establishments with no 'legal' status within the British education system, the majority of British Muslims are educated in the state school system and therefore follow the National Curriculum. There is a dearth of literature examining the interface of Islamic culture with the British education system.

One reason for the lack of related research within Britain could be the sensitivity of engaging with a culture based on religious belief, of focusing on the social processes that result from Divine revelation, and, as a non-Muslim, of trying to understand the significance of values, attitudes and behaviours from 'the outside'. Such reservations are exacerbated by media coverage of particular versions of Islam and incidents such as the Rushdie affair in contemporary Britain. Wilson (1982 12-13) offered advice to the sociological researcher involved with religion:

> The researcher is not concerned to test the 'truth' of belief ... the efficacy of rituals ... to judge between divergent interpretations of a tradition. He does not challenge the claimed legitimation for practices and ideas ... All these things he must accept as part of the data. He proceeds at the emergent social level, with a body of information ... he should at least seek to understand exactly what it is that a disciple learns ... and must seek to acquire an empathetic understanding of their commitment and their beliefs.

ISLAM

Islam is regarded by Muslims as the "... universal and eternal religion" (Mawdudi 1989, 11). World-wide fundamental beliefs include Tawhid (the oneness of Allah), Risalah (prophethood), and Akirah (life after death) (M.E.T. 1994). Commitment to Islam means "Complete submission and obedience to Allah." (Mawdudi 1989,17), acceptance of one God - Allah, and Mohammed as His messenger. From that moment of acceptance God-consciousness permeates every action and thought as the Muslim tries to live life in line with the sacrosanct Arabic texts of the Qu'ran and the Hadith. The Divinely inspired Qur'an was delivered through the Prophet Mohammed, and the Hadith was the record of the Prophet's sayings, and the principles and practices which guided His life, recorded by His companions. Reward for this life of obedience lies in the promise of Paradise as God's Angels, who record every individual's action and thought throughout that life, then report on the Day of Judgement. The alternative is hell.

Throughout the history of Islam, as with all major religions, human beings committed to the pursuit of real understanding in the scriptures have, through reasoning and interpretation, produced varying "directives for everyday life" or cultural practices that enshrine religious belief. (Wilson 1982,73). These differences have shaped sub-cultural sects within Islam such as the Sunni and Shiah branches. Simply, today there are the Islamic

contained absolute truths and should be strictly adhered to, modernists who use modern values as a starting point for interpretation, and revivalists who seek a middle way, trying to understand tradition, to sift and organise meaning in relation to modern values.

> The debate as to which voice to hear and what kind of society Mohammed meant to institute has gone on throughout history.
>
> (Ahmed 1992,66)

ISLAM AND CULTURE

In conversations with Muslims it has become clear that some find the term 'culture' applied to Islam and Islamic traditions quite offensive. They describe Islamic practices as religious and other practices, often socially transmitted, as 'unislamic', as 'Pakistani culture'. It is therefore necessary at this stage to attempt to define the complex concept of culture and the reason for its suitability in this study. The notion of culture involves shared meanings and understanding, as well as divergence and conflict, produced through the process of socialization, through interaction with other human beings. Individuals make sense of their world in relation to the meanings created by and within social groups. Attitudes, values and beliefs are passed on within cultures, but culture is dynamic, the rate and resistance to change varying in different cultures at different times.

In an ethnographic sense culture means a :

> ... whole way of life of a particular group of people ...
> (when) work, leisure, family religion, community etc. are woven into a fabric of tradition consisting of customs, ways of seeing, beliefs, attitudes, values, standards, styles, ritual practices etc.
>
> (Hargreaves 1986,9)

Culture can also refer to the activities, institutions and processes that reproduce systems of meaning such as schools, religion, the media and the family. The reality-base for culture can be in geographical, social or metaphysical environments. The survival of a culture, of maintaining a distinctive identity, is always dependent on an active process, utilizing power within and between cultures (relational power), in the process of negotiating power positions.

In these macro and micro senses it is appropriate to use the term 'culture' in relation to the meanings inherent within the guidelines Islam offers to its followers' life-styles, symbolic dress forms, attitudes and behaviours. In the same sense the culture of education will be addressed in the next chapter to facilitate a deeper understanding of the interface of Islamic culture and the education system in the lives of the Muslim women in this research.

Islamic culture refers to the lived experience of being a Muslim. The code of living is expressed through Islamic laws laid down in the Shari'ah - the law God revealed through His Prophet. These codes permeate Islamic culture, they give meaning to the way in which Muslims make sense of their lives: choose to lead their lives, behave, dress, act and interact. A major difficulty of research in this area is the lack of cultural homogeneity, (Verma 1990,45), the impossibility of using: "the term Islam as a unified and self-evident analytic category" (Kandiyoti 1992,238). Acknowledging the power of culture in society and the complexity of 'the cultural fabric of the Muslim community' reveals an intricate web of overlapping practices spanning country of origin and host society for many (Raza,1991,1).

Common beliefs and practices within Islamic culture can be identified, whilst acknowledging that overlays of local cultural influences bring about differences. In relation to the interaction of males and females, free mixing of men and women is not permitted after puberty, gender specific roles are attributed. Men and women must avoid physical contact outside of marriage and fixed glances. Simple, modest dress is required. Men must be

covered from naval to knee and women in loose garments, covering everywhere except for hands and face. Public nudity is forbidden. "The style of dress depends on local customs and climate." (M.E.T. 1994)

Care of the body and self-discipline are important aspects of Islamic culture. Ritual ablutions precede the disciplined praying requirements, five times a day, facing Mecca, with set ritualised gestures. Muslims are required to take responsibility for keeping their bodies healthy, eating a controlled diet, avoiding particular types of food and not taking alcohol. Sawm, or the annual fast in the month of Ramadan, is a basic duty of all Muslims. Once in a lifetime every Muslim should take part in Hajj, the journey to Mecca. The process involves many rituals before, during and after the event, covering every aspect of behaviour, action and dress.

There is no room for excessive individualism, selfishness or personal aggrandizement in the culture of Islam. Zakah, or the welfare contribution is the duty of every Muslim who must donate money for distribution amongst other Muslims. This process of sharing wealth amongst the community is a fundamental principle of Islamic economy. The importance of the family and each person's role in the hierarchy is important. Obeying and treating parents with respect throughout life is a key directive. Humility and politeness are valued qualities in all interactions and stem from a major premise of Islam, peace. Violence is only permissible in the Jihad or Holy War in defence of religious principles.

In relation to positive use of time all Muslims are required to pursue knowledge and to fill their leisure time with pastimes that engender "... activity and quicken the spirit of life and adventure." (Mawdudi 1989,113). There is disapproval of pastimes, entertainment or recreation which "... tend(s) to stimulate passion and vitiate the canons of morality." (Ibid.). Any forms of immodesty and moral deviation must be avoided at all times. Muslims are striving along the 'Straight Path' depicted in the Qur'an, towards oneness with God.

ISLAM AND GENDER

Unfortunate stereotypes of Muslim women in contemporary Britain are not peculiar to the 1990's (Lyons, 1989). The relative positions of men and women in Islam have characterized debate throughout the history of Islam. In terms of the balance of power between the sexes the early years of Islam are viewed by many writers as halcyon when compared with pre-Islamic periods or the decline of Islam between mid-thirteenth and late nineteenth centuries (Faruqi 1991, Jawad 1991). Islamic reform in the twentieth century has involved an attempt to rid the early 'pristine Islam' of "alien accretions" which had obscured the "genuine and authentic core of the religion of the Prophet" (Turner 1983,213). With the reform came a shift towards greater equality of the sexes again, for example in the education of women (Jawad 1991, Faruqi 1991, Mernissi 1991).

Ahmed's (1992) critical perspective of gender and Islam offered one insight into apparent contradictions in the treatment of women within Islamic traditions. She suggested the tension was rooted in the contrast between 'ideological Islam' and 'establishment Islam'. Whilst she recognised the undoubted ideological ethical and spiritual messages of equality between the sexes within the Qur'an and the Hadith, the conflict was with the dominant 'establishment Islam', the political / legal Islam in which women's position was "fixed as subordinate". Alongside the relatively egalitarian gender ideology of early Islam men's legal rights exceeded those of women and included polygyny, child-marriage, sex with slave women outside of marriage, divorce at will and male proprietary rights to female sexuality. (Ahmed 1992,45).

'Derogatory' perspectives of women in Islam have created serious tensions for some Muslim women. Faruqi (1991,34) suggested the goals of researchers using some Western frameworks such as feminism and ethnography were incompatible across some cultural boundaries. She criticized researchers, with little understanding of Islam, convinced of

'scores of Islams' existent in the world, and descriptions of the role and status of women in Muslim society uncritically as "Muslim" or "Islamic" ... "even if we as Muslims may hold some of these practices to be distortions of our principles and beliefs by the misguided and misinformed among us."

Faruqi countered such problems by addressing "Women in Qur'anic Society" (Ibid 33-46) because of her belief that only the Qur'an could provide a proper, undistorted version of women in society. She identified five characteristics: firstly, there was equal status of the sexes in regard to many aspects of life such as education, property and inheritance; secondly, the notion of role division was based on notions of equal value and therefore were not derogatory to Muslim women. The third and fourth characteristics of Faruqi's analysis of women in the Qur'an related to positive notions of the extended family, the benefits and responsibilities for everyone within the network. Fifthly, she acknowledged that a patriarchal structure was established through the Qur'an but that this was not regarded by Muslim women as it might be from a Westernized perspective "... the subjugation of women to men in a gender-based dictatorship." (Ibid,44).

Maududi (1974,141) described the unique equality of men and women revealed in the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed. Whereas Christianity teaches that woman was created from man and was responsible for bringing sin into the world, Islam teaches "Allah created you of a single soul" , that daughters bring honour and dignity, not shame and disgrace and that women's rights in Islam, for example in choice of husband, rights of legal separation, divorce, protection of life and property, honour and reputation, are equal.

The position of Muslim women in Britain is receiving a higher profile. Lewis (1994, 195) suggests "Many Islamic authors writing in English agree that an 'oppressive patriarchy' obtains within Islamic culture." Raza (cited in Lewis 1994, 194) encourages Muslim women to study the Qu'ran and Sunna themselves in order to challenge the South Asian patriarchal customs over which a 'veneer of Islamic culture is spread thinly ... to lend it legitimacy', and that such study and interpretation is vital to

halt the 'social distance and estrangement of Muslim women from the community...'

In summary stances within the literature on gender relations within Islam vary according to the perspective and situation of the author. Some writers have been critical and outspoken about the 'subordination of women' in Islam, some have suggested certain 'Western' frameworks, such as feminism are totally inappropriate for understanding what the balance of power between the sexes actually means in the lives of Muslim men and women. Whatever the underlying explanations for the largely segregated lives led by some adolescent and young Muslim men and women, dress and the ability to move freely in mixed-sex public spaces are more tightly restricted for women than men. Werbner (1996, 94) attributes this to "Islamic high culture (that) expects young women to hide their sensuality and exhibit extreme modesty and bodily control. Music and dance are usually prohibited, and the only permissible expression of sexuality is in marriage." The implications for Muslim women's participation in physical exercise will be pursued in the section on physical education.

ISLAM AND 'RACE'

The term 'race' is problematic since it is based on a socially constructed categorisation of people by genetically transmitted traits such as skin colour (Coakley 1994,240). Ethnicity, that is the definition of groups based on shared cultural backgrounds might be a more applicable term in this study of Muslim women. However, it does not offer sufficient delineation of the fact that those within the ethnic group studied in this project were all 'black', members of a 'disempowered' minority group within Britain because they were Muslim (Haw 1995a,59) but also because they were 'black'.

The term 'black' is used mainly to refer to visible ethnic minorities

> The term 'black' is used mainly to refer to visible ethnic minorities of African-Caribbean and South Asian origin; it is also used as a political term which denotes the experiences of racism ...
>
> Siraj-Blatchford (1993a,6)

Therefore the term 'race' is used, held in inverted commas to emphasize the problematic nature of the term but incorporating cultural notions of ethnicity, following Siraj-Blatchford (Ibid.) It is recognised that whilst cultural difference is important the significance of racism bringing about modes of oppression cannot be ignored. The racialization of religion, particularly Islam, is a phenomenon of the post-Rushdie era in Britain. (Sahgal and Yuval-Davis, 1992,15).

Within Islam "distinctions of race, colour, wealth and power disappear."(Mawdudi 1989, 11). Muslims are united in following their belief in God and the exemplars offered in the Hadith, but they are not a homogeneous group:

> ... The Muslim community in Britain is a multi-racial, multi-linguistic religious community ... The UK-Muslim community comprises Arabic-speaking Arabs Pakistanis speaking Urdu, Bengali and a number of other Indian vernaculars, Africans speaking Hausa, Swahili and other African languages, Turks speaking Turkish, Iranians speaking Farsi and so on, as well as a significant number of native British Muslims.
>
> The Cambridge Group quoted in Hiskett (1989,24)

Whilst ideological Islam speaks of equality and 'sameness' the reality of 'living-Islam' will be influenced by factors of situation. With increasing globalization Muslim communities can be found throughout the world. All Muslims, for example British, American and French followers will be

influenced by their immediate situations. The emergence of a British Muslim identity was the subject of Lewis's investigation of the Muslims of Bradford. He recognized the complexity of speaking with one voice whilst recognising differences in communities throughout the country. Any 'voice' would have to reflect the diversity of "... sectarian, regional and linguistic backgrounds of the Muslim communities." (Lewis 1994, 207) This complexity was reflected in the range of Muslim women involved in this study, with Asian, African-Asian and African-Caribbean representatives. The aspect that united their lives was religious belief, but differences in background, languages, dress and religiosity ensured that some life-experiences would be 'the same' but others would be 'unique'.

ISLAM AND EDUCATION

The position of women in Islam has changed over the centuries, with a more positive return to early Islam, the original teachings of the Prophet Mohammed, and therefore greater equality for women in Islam during the twentieth century. Change over the centuries has affected the education of girls and women. In pre-Islamic societies female infanticide was common and women were poorly treated. The early Islamic period changed that with a re-defined position for women. Men and women were regarded as equal in humanity, with different but equally respected roles. Whilst men have always benefited from such convenient definitions, and this positioning is not unproblematic, there were ways in which rights for women in early Islam preceded such recognition in other contexts. The rights of women were safeguarded in law and the Islamic perspective of education for girls and women was positive:

> Knowledge and education are highly emphasised in Islam ... (in) religion and other branches of knowledge.
>
> (Jawad 1991,3)

Demonstrated through the words and actions of the Prophet education was available to all, rich and poor, old and young, men and women, "Treat equally poor and rich students who sit before you for the acquisition of knowledge", "seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave" (Ibid,4). The prophet Mohammed used to teach women along with men, His wife Aishah taught men as well as women (Ibid.6). Research into early Islamic civilizations has revealed the highly valued status of education for men and women, with evidence of many famous women influencing others through education, for example in religious studies, literature, medicine, and the military service. Skills of debating and discussing were highly valued. Women's political contributions were respected (Ibid.7).

> ... in so far as the acquisition of knowledge and cultural training is concerned, Islam does not allow any distinction between man and woman.
>
> (Maududi 1974,139)

Whilst women were in principle wives and mothers these roles were highly valued and respected in early Islamic societies. Consequently appropriate skills formed part of their education but they were encouraged to expand their knowledge, social and political involvement. The position of women in Islam declined with the assimilation of other attitudes as 'norms' as groups travelled, fought and re-settled, particularly during the Abbasid period. Early Islam became coloured with -

> ... inherited socio-cultural norms - assimilated from non-Islamic cultures or re-emerging out of pre-Islamic practices.
>
> (Jawad, 1991,13)

Between the thirteenth and the nineteenth century, with historical and geographical differences, the position of women in Islam declined.

They were prevented, by the interpretations of the (male) jurists, from leading public lives, sharing status, subjected to heavy veiling, excluded from public worship and treated as sex objects. According to Jawad (Ibid,9) the worst deprivation of all was the denial of women's right to receive education.

Consequently until the twentieth century female education has been constrained by social custom in some Islamic countries, unrelated to traditional Islam. Perspectives of women, their role and education, were distorted, feared and confused. Widespread illiteracy of Muslim women resulted, 95% in Afghanistan, 70 - 90% in Iran, 90% in South Asia, with the worst deprivations in the Middle East, more formal education for girls starting as late as the 1960's (Ibid,11).

In Britain the law requires that all children are educated from the age of five to sixteen. Equality of opportunity for Muslim girls and boys is treated with suspicion by some in the dominant predominantly white, secular British society. Sarwar (1994) calculated that half a million Muslim children were of compulsory school age in Britain, whilst Parker-Jenkins (Op.Cit.13) suggested that 1% of Muslim children are educated in the small number of private Muslim schools around Britain, 99% remain in the State system. Muslims comprise the third largest religious minority after Roman Catholics and Anglicans (Parker-Jenkins 1995,3). Attempts to gain state support for Muslim schools, voluntary-aided status, have been regarded as problematic rather than constructive. (Runnymede Trust 1997b).

Perspectives of Muslim schools range from derogatory to outstanding. Assumptions about the purpose and processes of Muslim schools have been viewed with suspicion, particularly in relation to the education of Muslim girls:

> The education of Muslim girls has less to do with schooling than with the exercise of control by Muslim men over the lives of women in the community family and wider community.
>
> (Khanum 1992,130)

The debate about the possible incongruence of anti-sexist and anti-racist strategies in the education of Muslim girls and women is unresolved. Recent research is beginning to open more empirically-based insights into ways in which the needs of 'Children of Islam' can be better met in the State system, (Parker-Jenkins 1995) and how British Muslim girls experience their education in both the State system and private Muslim schools (Haw 1995b). More research is required on the experiences of Muslim girls and women in Britain.

ISLAM AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Literature on the Islamic position on PE is limited. There is more reference to sport, which will be helpful, since sport is encompassed within PE:

> ... Islam exhorts its followers to take up sports and to inculcate this practice in their children at an early age ... For nothing in religion or tradition bars this.
>
> (Naciri 1973,600)

Examples from records of the life of the Prophet are used to support the positive messages about sport and exercise. Mohammed's public participation in sports such as archery, wrestling, horsemanship and footraces, His encouragement of women to participate, with records of races with His wife Aisha, and His encouragement of children, both boys and girls to participate in sport (Sfeir 1985). Similarities between 'ideal behaviour' of good Muslims and athletes have been recognised, for example in the disciplined use of the body and concern for control of food and drink, with the proviso that, for a Muslim, sport should not absorb all time

and detract from the 'interface with other essential obligations', or lead to immoral behaviour such a gambling. (Naciri, Op.Cit.)

The evidence of Muslim women's participation in sporting activities is erratic and constantly changing in relation to political situations, but, in general, it does not reflect a liberal or supportive position. Sfeir (1985) identified the social restrictions imposed to protect women's 'ird' or virtue, which did not stem from Islam, but from particular interpretations of 'Islam', as a source of difficulty for women's participation in sport and PE. The situation is uneven in Muslim countries throughout the world but evidence of Muslim women at top level international sport, for example in the records of the Olympics, clearly indicates their absence. For example the work of 'Atlanta Plus' "...calling for the exclusion from the Atlanta games of all countries that discriminate on the grounds of sex. These are almost exclusively Muslim countries." (Independent on Sunday 7.7.'97, 11-14). It is not the participation per se but the nature of Western sports clothes and the mixed-sex environment that is problematic.

In some Muslim countries it is the very nature of physical education which is problematic. If the perception of the subject is one of a 'play' activity and not an 'educational' activity it is regarded as corrupting and therefore a distraction from higher order pursuits. Kamiyole (1993,30) suggests the physical educator in some African Muslim societies is regarded as 'an agent of Satan':

> Play is associated with corruption and misbehaviour by the Muslim. No respect or position of dignity can be accorded to somebody who indulges in play.

Another example of inconsistencies regarding the position of Muslim women and sport / physical education was reported in 1983 when leaders in Sokotu State, the seat of Islamic power in Nigeria, legislated against female participation in sport, (Kamiyole 1986). At the same time authorities in countries such as Egypt, Turkey and Tunisia have reduced restrictions on

women's dress and behaviour and encouraged greater participation in sport. (Zouabi 1975). In Britain there have been several Sports Council initiatives directed specifically at improving understanding of, and appropriate opportunities for, Muslim women to participate in sporting activities (Lyons 1989). The provision of separate classes taken by and for women in 'private' spaces are on the increase.

> ... the only condition to be taken into consideration is that practising sport does not contradict with performing any divine precept of Islam.
>
> (Daiman 1995,21)

In relation to PE there seems disparity between rhetoric and reality world-wide. Sfeir (1985) suggested that in the twenty-nine Muslim countries she investigated sport was acceptable, at least in the rhetoric, within the educational context. Kamiyole's research (Op.Cit.) found that lack of PE or sport for children in Nigeria, "Throughout the Islamic school system ... there is no provision for the teaching of physical education", led to disturbing differences in levels of fitness between Nigerian Muslim, and Western children. Anahar et al (1992) found wide disparity between the rhetoric and reality of sport and PE for children in Jordan.

In England all children are entitled to PE within the National Curriculum. As indicated in recent research into Muslims in the West:

"... physical education and school-sport activities ... are often the only type of sport parents allow their daughters to take part in " making this context particularly significant. (De Knopp at al. 1996,153). Provision in English State schools is known to be uneven in relation to time, activities, facilities and quality, particularly at primary level. Directives of bodies such as the Muslim Education Trust recommend that Muslim children do participate provided Islamic requirements are met: those are dress, (track-suits are considered acceptable,) changing and showers, (privacy is paramount and communal nudity forbidden), single sex provision after puberty, (with

appropriate staffing), and avoidance of contact activities between sexes. The dress conflict is particularly problematic for Muslim pupils in swimming. Where Islamic requirements are not met the recommendation is that Muslim children should be exempt from PE (Sarwar 1994,11-14). This creates a direct dilemma between Islamic and State education requirements.

Whilst there is no research into the experiences of British Muslim teachers in relation to dress codes and the teaching of PE, the available secondary phase research into experiences of Muslim adolescent girls (Carroll and Hollinshead 1993) and that of Kamiyole (1993) into African Muslim teachers and PE, suggests there might be a problem for some Muslims:

> In Muslim countries where (PE) is in the curriculum, it is not taught because a good percentage of the Primary and Secondary School teachers are women, who would not like to wear the normal dress for teaching physical education (e.g. in Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya).
>
> (Kamiyole 1993,30)

Dance, as has been mentioned, along with music and certain types of art, causes moral dilemmas. One version of the threat to Muslim values associated with pursuits in British gymnasiums and dance halls is summed up by Doi (1993,25): (the activities)..."may so easily prove the first step towards greater evils such as adultery and fornication." Hiskett (1989,12) suggested some Ulamas would demand that music and dance "should be banned in any school where Muslim pupils are on roll, for fear they might be influenced." He believed such views posed the "...most serious cultural impediment to the unreserved acceptance of Islamic education in Britain", raising an important question which is indicative of struggles both within and beyond Muslim communities in Britain:

"... is it acceptable that ... a national government should maintain an education that deliberately cuts many of the nation's children off from activities central to the cultural life of that nation, and of the European community of which they will become citizens?" (Ibid,15)

In relation to gender and PE / Sport, one area worthy of investigation in this debate is the significance of control over the body. As indicated women in Islam are 'controlled' or control themselves in terms of religious requirements through bodily discipline concerning where, when and how the body must appear in public to 'embody' Islamic principles. Similarly "Sports, as embodied practices, are one of the arenas within which the social struggle for control of the physical body occurs." (MacClancy, 1996, 15). The struggle in the arena of Muslims in sport and PE, then, is related to conflicting tensions for control over acceptable ways of using the body. To add to the complexity, both 'control mechanisms' have been described as 'male domains'. This point will be further developed later.

In conclusion it is difficult to gain an objective view of historical or contemporary Islamic culture. Despite a unified vision of faith, there is diversity in precise interpretation of Islamic religious texts leading to continued conflicts and tensions within and between Muslim groups, as well as between Islamic and other differentially related cultural groups. This chapter has illustrated some of the complexities of studying aspects of Islam such as culture, gender, 'race', education and PE.

The British Muslim women in this study, with the exception of one, were born Muslim and have been raised as Muslims in a predominantly secular society. They have been through the English primary and secondary schools system. This research probed their reflections on experiences as Muslims within the English education system, during their preparation as a teacher and their early careers as they assumed the role of teacher. The nexus of their lived-experiences as Muslims meeting the requirements of

Islam and of the education system, was at the root of the investigation because that was where struggles over preferred identity were occurring. It is therefore necessary to examine the context of 'Education' relevant to this study in the next chapter. Firstly, issues such as the culture of education, gender, 'race' and Islam, along with background literature for later case study investigations into physical education, will be examined. Secondly, more specific literature relevant to these black, Muslim women in initial teacher training and the teaching profession will be explored.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 EDUCATION, CULTURE, GENDER, 'RACE' and PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The respondents in this study have multiple identities as black Muslim women from a diversity of backgrounds. Whilst there is some research into 'being Muslim' in the state education system (Haw 1995b), there is evidence of the disadvantage experienced by ethnic minorities within the education system and much research on gender related issues of interest to this investigation. Whilst most literature relates to children in primary and secondary school stages the implications could have relevance for black Muslim women in higher education:

> What (black) groups share from the past is a history of oppression by British colonialism and racism. What they share in the present is their situation as minorities that are subjected to different forms and degrees of class, gender and racial oppression.
>
> (Mama 1992,81)

Whilst the issue of class is significant in any study of human beings it does not have a central position in this research. Issues of gender and 'race' / ethnicity are more 'visually' central. If parents occupation is still an indicator of class it is evident that respondents in this research cover a wide spectrum (App.H). However, issues of class are multi-faceted. All respondents have chosen to enter higher education and a career in teaching, which is regarded as a middle-class profession. Essed in her study of Black women of African descent in the Netherlands and America "... minimized the role of class exploitation indirectly by selecting only women with higher education" (1991,5), although she did not ignore the fact that class

oppression played an indirect role in their lives. A similar stance was taken in this study to enable a tighter focus on other aspects.

In this section pertinent issues relevant to the educational context of this investigation will be explored. Firstly the significance of education as a cultural phenomenon will be raised, identifying the power of dominant groups to determine and control subordinate groups in a plural society, particularly through the inculcation of culture in the National Curriculum. Secondly, issues of gender and 'race' / ethnicity will be addressed. This will involve historical and contemporary analysis of ways in which the education system has addressed the changing face of post-war Britain. Finally the literature for the case study investigations into physical education will be examined.

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

> If the power of culture were acknowledged in its institutional and conceptual control, we would be nearer to explaining the power of the dominant culture in structuring the experiences of ethnic minorities.
>
> (Saifullah-Khan 1987,229)

This project explores the cultural interface of Islam and Education as experienced by one group of black, Muslim women in a predominantly secular, white society. At a macro level Islam and Education are dynamic institutions which carry specific inherent values and meanings and pass them on from generation to generation. At a micro level individuals cope with the 'everyday', with shaping and interpreting their lives according to their interactions with others (Essed 1991). The micro is not separate from the macro, they are reciprocally influenced and influencing. Therefore the experiences of the minority group in this investigation reflect the wider, plural but unequal, society in which they occurred.

According to Bullivant (1981) the pluralist dilemma in Western societies results from the juxtaposition of different, but unequal, cultures within a democratic and liberal society. Discussing Muslims in a plural Europe, Nielsen suggested:

> The Muslim communities, always a religious minority and usually also an immigrant and ethnic minority, are relatively powerless communities in the face of the majority economic, social and political structures ...
>
> (1986,37)

Education within a pluralistic society is problematic. Values, attitudes, skills and beliefs are transmitted through legitimised notions of knowledge in the education process. All knowledge is socially constructed "shared, developed and learned by groups or figurations, not by isolated individuals." (Wilterdink 1977,111). Therefore the 'knowledge' made available in the traditional subjects of the education system, is one way in which particular groups of people give status to privileged forms of knowledge. These favour cultural preferences of the dominant groups:

> The curriculum is a selection from a socio-cultural group's stock of valued traditional and current public knowledge, conceptions and experiences.
>
> (Bullivant 1981, 5)

The 'New Right' political shift towards engendering a notion of 'National identity' carries with it a particular notion of 'Britishness' embodied within State politics and the law, for example through the 1988 Education Reform Act, and its subsequent changes (Hardy and Vieler-Porter 1992). Not only have aspects such as the 'subject boundedness' and hierarchical nature of the National Curriculum been criticised, but also the narrowly white and English concept of 'National' in the National

Curriculum. Subject content has been criticised, for example in History, and aspects such as 'traditional British dances' which slipped into the post-Dearing Physical Education reforms. The re-affirmation of Christian traditions were also legitimised through the Education Reform Act, another demonstration of the way in which "the British state privileges Christianity" (Sahgal & Yuval-Davis 1992, 3). Attempts to exercise rights to make alternative arrangements, where preferred, for predominantly non-Christian schools have received some negative treatment from the Press.

> Schools are required by law to teach that Christianity is the dominant religious tradition in Britain, while taking account of other faiths. But Moslems - the nation's second biggest growing religious group - claim this ignores their children's needs. Thousands are boycotting lessons.
>
> Daily Mail 22.2.96

In terms of meeting the needs of Muslim children in schools the evidence produced by Parker-Jenkins (1995) indicates an increased understanding of their cultural and religious needs. But there is not a uniform picture across the country. The introduction of national testing with the cultural and linguistic bias embodied in that process, perpetuates the myth of homogeneous English culture and disadvantages particular groups including many Muslim children, for example Asian Muslims, who face racial as well as religious prejudice in schools.

> ... the education system, as part of a wider system of structural and institutional racism, helps to promote the educational failure of black pupils through teacher attitudes and expectations and the routine (historical) processes and procedures of the school culture.
>
> (Gill et al 1992, 3)

Attempts to accommodate the changing face of plural post-war Britain in the education system have been criticised by Troyna (1992). He traced the development of curriculum strategies to accommodate the changing face of post - war Britain from assimilist to multi-culturalist, cultural pluralist to anti-racist strategies. He suggested no real change resulted from any of these, that recent "radicalised policies ... (were) pretentious, promising more than they could deliver" (Ibid. 86). Policy-makers had failed to recognise the education system as a "... site in which the reproduction of racism in Britain is confirmed and achieved" (Ibid.74). Political distractions, such as verbal 'attacks' on teacher competence, side-line attention from systems and service provision. More significantly such distractions obscure the recognition of self-implication, as whites, in perpetuating racism. Much wider social and political change needed to occur to address the question of inequality. Troyna identified the need to re-educate whites in order to demonstrate cultural justice for blacks. Policy and political discourse were informed by what Gilroy (1987) termed a '..coat of paint theory of racism' failing to acknowledge the way in which racism is "... integral to the way society is organized, structured and legitimated" (Cited in Troyna 1992,87).

Education is a facet of culture through which future generations are initiated into particular ways of knowing, values, interpretations of meaning and significance. The introduction of a content-based National Curriculum has been criticised as a symbol of the myth of monoculturalism within a plural society, with the potential to further disadvantage minority groups who share different cultures. The education system, its teachers, content, processes and rewards, provide perhaps the most powerful means of shaping the institutional and conceptual experiences of marginalised cultures in a predominantly secular society. (Elias, 1991). There has been much evidence to suggest the head teacher and style of management of a school can be enabling and facilitating in terms of teacher and pupil progress and quality of educational experience:

> Head teachers are the crucial figures inside schools and the schools' climate will largely depend on the style of leadership exerted by them.
>
> - (Boyd 1984,112)

Empowering management through which individuals are respected, valued, guided in professional development, given appropriate responsibilities, and time and space to develop these, offers the best environment, providing a climate for professional growth. (Campbell 1985, Whitaker 1983). There is little evidence that members of minority groups have much influence in such educational process as teachers or heads. (HEFCE 1993 & 1995, Swan 1985).

Research has indicated that children from minority cultures, for example black children, are differentially disadvantaged within the education system. The recent Ofsted report on pupil achievement indicated that advances in the success of Asian pupils in British schools are not matched by those of African-Caribbean children (Times 1.9.'96, 5). Both groups are often victims of racism from a very early age, for example the prejudice against Asian children and teachers identified in Wright's study (1992). The women in this study had been educated in the State system and were training for teaching within the system. Therefore, issues of gender and 'race' that have been raised in the literature are significant to the context of this research.

GENDER and 'RACE'

The complexity of multiple identities and structural inequalities has increasingly been recognised in the literature, for example articulations of 'race' and gender (Calhoun 1994, Connolly 1995, Haw 1991, Mama 1992, Rutherford 1990,). As with 'race' and evidence of social, economic and political disadvantage, there is evidence that girls and women have unequal access to resources and opportunities in a patriarchal society. Also,

evidence indicates that such inequalities are perpetuated rather than challenged by the education system, for example the problems of gender stereotyping, teacher attention, classroom distractions and teacher expectations. As indicated, researchers also have evidence to demonstrate the perpetuation of racial inequalities throughout the education system, in terms of access to opportunity, recognition of cultural values, linguistic skills, suitable role models, teacher expectations and levels of achievement. The position of black girls and women in the education system requires acknowledgement of complex overlays of gender and racial disadvantage. For Muslim women in Britain, most of whom are Asian, three significant factors interface. To appropriate a statement from Brah and Minhas (1985,23) "... when (researchers) address only (religious difference as problematic) then the experiences of (Asian females) is rendered invisible."

Ways of looking at issues such as 'race' and gender and other forms of oppression have come under scrutiny and criticism in recent years, with growing recognition of the importance of context, the wider social systems which perpetuate inequalities, and of relations both within and between different forms of oppression such as class, sexuality, religion, 'race' and gender (Mac an Ghaill 1990, 1992, Troyna and Hatcher 1992). Some recent studies in education have moved towards considering areas of multiple disadvantage together (eg Haw 1991, Brah 1992, Siraj-Blatchford 1993a, Connolly 1995). These studies have spanned different stages of the education process but there has been little research into 'race', religion and gender in higher education.

Debates about 'race' and gender in the discourse have moved from an assimilist / patriarchal perspective, through a liberal multi-cultural / equal opportunities position, towards a radical anti-racist / anti-sexist rhetoric. This totally inadequate, simplistic over-view is thoroughly tackled in Haw (1991), and Gerwitz (1991). Recent trends have moved the debate towards identifying 'new racism' which takes cultural difference as an acceptable basis for separatist policies (Donald and Rattansi,1992). Moving beyond this thinking Nielsen proposed the possibility of making room for

difference, recognising that: "Differences have to find a place within an overall political, social and legal consensus" (1986,37). There is consensus, most forcibly expressed by the Runnymede Trust (1997b), that religion must be recognised as a category of potential disadvantage and that religious discrimination occurs and needs urgent public and legal acknowledgement.

In relation to the National Curriculum there is a rhetoric versus reality gap. The discourse supports equal opportunities and multi-cultural perspectives. Issues of equity now replace former more simplistic notions of equality of opportunity but specific guidelines on addressing these issues within the National Curriculum and the organisation of schools have not emerged. It appears easier for the Government to move in a traditionalist restorationist direction than it does towards addressing sensitive issues. For example, there is the possible dilemma of anti-sexist / anti-racist policies in relation to female Muslim youngsters in education (Walkling and Brannigan, 1986), or, more generally, the quest for recognition and valuing of 'difference' in a plural but unequal society in which insidious racist mechanisms exist:

> ... you can see it in a gaze, or hear it in the solecism of a still silence.
>
> (Bhabha 1994,236)

This study is part of that quest to search for the reality of the lived-experiences of a group of Muslim women who have spent most of their lives in the State education system.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

As with the 'Islam' part of chapter one this section is developed from material written for the initial investigation into the physical education experiences of Muslim women at Greenacres College (Benn, 1994, 1996). Physical education shares some characteristics of all curriculum subjects. It

is the product of human interests, different and preferred notions of what is correct knowledge. Subjects form sites of struggle in the reproduction of a particular culture. (Kirk 1992, King and Reis 1993):

> Physical Education is a social construct, a selection from culture, which contains explicit and implicit values about appropriate missions, goals and objectives ... an 'ideological statement', a way, and not the only way, of classifying, organizing, legitimating and transmitting knowledge in society. (Evans 1988, 2)

Hargreaves (1986, 166) has described PE as the most culturally ritualistic aspect of the school curriculum. Implicit in what and how the subject is taught are non-verbal communication systems, expressing coded messages. These include messages of control over pupils' bodies, relating to where and how the body moves in space, how the body 'looks' via rules on kit, how it is 'maintained' via hygiene practices, all serving to discipline the body by exerting power over the presentation of self, public actions and behaviour. This links with growing interest in the literature on the social significance of the body, such as the work of Loy et al 1993, Shilling 1993, Featherstone et al 1991, Synnot 1993, and Turner 1996. The interconnectedness of culture, body and PE is clear. It is important to recognise that:

> ... social and cultural contexts exert pressure on people's choices, options, experiences and actions.
>
> (Jarvie 1991, 3)

Traditionally primary teachers who deliver PE are 'generalists', that is responsible for one class of children, across the curriculum, as opposed to 'specialists', usually secondary, who have subject responsibility across many classes. For primary teachers working with 7 - 11 year olds, at key stage 2, the breadth of PE is at its greatest: dance, games, gymnastics, swimming, athletics, outdoor and adventurous activities. All primary student-teachers

have to undertake preparation for teaching PE and are expected to teach the subject throughout their careers.

In relation to the reality of primary PE there is research evidence that generalist teachers lack confidence, (Evans 1988,100), that the role expectation of curriculum leaders is virtually impossible, (Campbell 1984), and that initial teacher education lecturers have insufficient time to develop confidence, content knowledge and organisational skills to ensure high quality teaching / learning experiences in the schools (Mawer and Sleap 1985). The National Curriculum brought nothing new to the primary State physical education programme except its statutory nature. (Evans et al 1996b). Research by Evans et al (1996a, 30) indicated that:

> ... unless teachers in the primary sector are in future better equipped both professionally with skills and understandings and economically with financial and material resource they are unlikely to be in a position to provide the forms of quality physical education that the NC demands: a physical education that is broad, balanced and differentiated to meet the needs of all children and which coincides with their interests.

More recent moves towards school-based training are unwelcome in the majority of schools (Laws 1996, 184). One perspective of such practice suggests: "... the key stone of the training process is based on the goodwill of an untrained (for supervision), unaccountable, unrewarded and overly busy classroom teacher." (Ibid,183). Reflexive research results suggest that teachers survive constant daily problems and limited resources with 'coping strategies' providing the best they can in the circumstances rather than preferred ways of teaching. (Evans and Davies 1986,16). There is little evidence to suggest that there is sufficient space or desire in the professional lives of practising teachers for increased workload in terms of responsibility for teacher training, even in 'Partnership with Higher Education'.

Developments within the subject of PE itself are relevant to this project, particularly issues of equality in terms of opportunity for all and gender / ethnicity tensions. Kirk and Tinning (1990) have suggested that attempts have been made to change the emphasis within the PE curriculum towards a more personalized, egalitarian subject. These have permeated primary as well as secondary PE, for example, new approaches to the inclusion of health related exercise and to 'games for understanding' (Armstrong and Sparkes 1991, Colquhoun 1990, Thorpe 1990, and Armstrong 1990,1992). There is little to suggest sensitivity to cultural differences within these innovations. The near 'disappearance' of those innovative ideas in the revised National Curriculum and subsequent Government publication 'Sport - Raising the Game' indicate 'cultural restorationist' thinking which does not reflect the cultural diversity of contemporary Britain. (Penney and Evans 1994, Evans and Penney, 1995).

Current trends towards elitism in schools, and a politically and economically weighted take-over of PE by the 'Sports lobby', are evident in a number of indicators. A National Academy of Sport, Sports schools/colleges, lottery funding for facilities covering capital and revenue costs, individual sponsorship, Governing Body / Education partnerships to identify and nurture sporting talent, Youth Sport Trust initiatives, and 'fast-tracking' of teachers into coaching, are all indicators of 'sport hegemony' within education where PE teachers are encouraged to "Catch the Wave" (Clay, HMI, 1996), or, perhaps more cynically, are challenged to:

... BE IT or MAKE IT (HISTORY) ... the choice is yours!

(Campbell 1996)

Whilst professionals within PE are concerned about the drift "... towards sport education rather than Physical Education..." (Talbot, TES 2.2.'97, cited Spencer 1997) the growing political and economic power differentials are making influence from within the profession increasingly difficult. With the first ever HMI publication placing PE and Sport on the

same platform in 1995 (Ofsted) those who take a process view of change can recognise how things have 'come to be' and speculate about where things 'might be going'. The danger is that: "... 'resistance' (on the part of schools or individual teachers) does not challenge the polices. Rather it places in jeopardy teachers' and schools' own future." (Evans et al, 1996a).

The new Teacher Training Agency proposals for the training of primary teachers (TTA 1997) demonstrate a stark contrast to the 'ethos of Sport' implied by recent resourcing of the Sports lobby. Reading between the lines PE as a subject can be legimitately dropped from the training of some teachers provided they have sound grounding in core subjects (English and Maths at present) with one subject specialism, which may be core or foundation. Presumably, then, a teacher can take up a primary post having been trained in English and Maths. If teachers 'untrained' in PE are expected to start teaching posts and 'pick up the subject' on the job there will be serious safety and legal ramifications. Perhaps the proposal paves the way for the PE specialist to take responsibility across primary PE, or perhaps sports coaches will be invited in to 'fill the gaps' of the 'untrained teachers'. The future of primary teacher training and primary teaching is assured of only one thing, more change.

Competing gender tensions permeate the history of PE in Britain. PE has always provided an arena for displaying and reinforcing control of the body, and culturally determined, gender appropriate, behaviour. The single-sex roots of the subject in teacher training have led to constant struggles to legitimize preferred views of appropriate activities to be pursued by young people within education.

The preferred curriculum visions of the early female pioneers in teacher training, were challenged when, in the 1930's, the men's colleges started training teachers (Kirk and Tinning 1990, 43-66, Kirk 1992, Talbot 1990). Struggles between the culturally determined 'feminine appropriate' aesthetic activities such as dance and gymnastics, and the 'masculine appropriate' purposive activities such as games (Best 1980), have continued ever since. (Leaman. 1984, Scraton 1986, Evans 1989, Evans and Davies

1993, Williams 1993). With the introduction of compulsory secondary Schooling and PE in the Butler Act of 1944 the male and female specialist training colleges and secondary school PE departments took on greater significance for a few years.

The move towards comprehensive education in the 1960's, with increased co-education, had repercussions for some women and girls in former single-sex educational environments. Power struggles within new mixed-sex departments centred around control of resources, and preferred views of PE. One outcome has been a detrimental effect on the careers of some women within the profession and of some girls within secondary mixed PE. (Pollard 1988, Scraton 1992,1993, Sparkes and Templin 1992, Talbot 1993). Whilst primary schools have always had mixed-sex education and a 'less important' and therefore 'less contested' status amongst some physical educationalists (particularly men); notions of gender-appropriate PE behaviour is evident in children as young as four, and male / female teacher provision, particularly in extra-curricular time, is still dominated by this gendered cultural heritage (Williams 1989, 1993).

Dewar (1990) and Flintoff (1993) have found that in higher education secondary specialist PE teacher training establishments gender related tensions between men and women in mixed-sex student groups could be problematic for the women, particularly activities such as swimming where they could be subjected to 'body scrutiny' by males. (Flintoff 1993,85). No similar work has been replicated in primary colleges such as the College in this study.

Personal experience in secondary and primary higher education environments has suggested that the 'culture' in primary training has similarities and differences to those described by Dewar and Flintoff. The greatest differences are in the attitudes and behaviour of the non-specialist PE students who entered their vocational training to be generalist class teachers, and undertake PE as a compulsory part of that course. The greatest similarities are between the student-behaviours of main course PE

students and the masculine / feminine reinforcing behaviours that occur in practical sessions.

Research into the problematic relationship between ethnic diversity and PE is also scant and yet the need to understand the struggles and tensions that exist for different cultural groups in a pluralistic society is vital. Early PE National Curriculum rhetoric supported equal opportunities and multi-cultural perspectives (DES 1991b). Post-Dearing documentation emerged with specific reference to such issues, and support for teachers, being omitted (DFE 1995b). Contradictory messages are sent through current policy on education for example:

> ... the National Curriculum attempts to homogenize the educational experiences that children receive in the state schools; it sets out to make individuals 'more the same'.
>
> (Evans et al 1996a,3)

whilst other aspects of policy celebrate 'choice and diversity'. (Ibid.)

Specific guidelines to help teachers and pupils to cope with "... the identities, opportunities and challenges of new and exciting times" (Ibid.) have not emerged and sensitive issues, such as the possible dilemma of anti-sexist / anti-racist policies in relation to female Muslim youngsters in British education remain inadequately addressed. (Walkling and Brannigan. 1986). In fact, ethnic diversity has often been regarded as a source of celebration in PE, particularly through dance, (Arts Council 1993, Brinson 1991, Semple 1993). The arts are acclaimed as the means by which cultural diversity can be shared but nowhere in the PE or arts literature have I seen the Islamic position on dance as stated by the Muslim Education Trust:

> Although it is one of the activities listed under PE, (in the National Curriculum) it is our view that dance has no academic significance or value, nor does it contribute positively to meaningful human knowledge. (Sarwar 1994,13)

Some elements of the Post-Dearing 'slimmed-down' PE curriculum might be described as both racist and sexist. The dance programme of study suddenly requiring "... some traditional dances of the British Isles" (DFE 1995b,4), relies heavily on imaginative interpretation to warrant justification in contemporary Britain. The privileged position given to games at all key stages, regardless of research evidence indicating girls' preferences for other activities (Penney and Evans 1994, Williams and Woodhouse 1996), alongside 'flexibility' which allows dance and gymnastics to be optional activities after the age of eleven, indicates bias in favour of traditional male dominated versions of the PE curriculum:

> Findings confirm the continuation of a curriculum which privileges the experiences of boys over those of girls and of those boys for whom competitive team games bring success, satisfaction and self-esteem.
>
> (Williams & Woodhouse 1996, 212)

Evans et al (1996a,4) point to the text of the National Curriculum for PE, alongside other 'post-ERA' provision, including legislation on initial teacher training, to surmise the unlikely fostering of "... either equity or quality in PE in schools". Again the Sport / PE power differentials in terms of resourcing, personnel, finance and voice have meant greater progress of equity issues within Sporting Bodies:

> The reality is that the many and heavy demands of the NC implementation have meant that most teachers have simply not had the time to think about the development of equity in PE in recent years and initiatives driving towards equity are, for the moment, coming less from teachers in education than from providers. (Evans et al. 1997,42-43)

Addressing the needs of ethnic minority pupils in PE was recognised by Ofsted as a weakness in both secondary and primary schools. (Clay 1997). In relation to ethnic minorities and PE / sport most research attention has been on black African-Caribbean youngsters. The value of specific research on different ethnic groups has been recognised (De Knop et al 1996), with one under-researched area being that of Muslim girls and women in the West.

In a project on British Muslim secondary girls in PE, Carroll and Hollinshead (1993) found the following issues were raised as problematic by the pupils and teachers of 'Borin High School': kit, showers, Ramadan, and provision of extra-curricular activities. Siraz-Blatchford. (1993a), however, has criticised this research, for example in failing to recognise the institutional racism that underpinned the apparent lack of concessions on the part of the school.

With the majority of British Muslims being Asian research related to PE / sport and Asian communities is relevant. In some Asian communities PE and sport do not have the same cultural significance as in the dominant culture. (Williams 1989, Figueroa 1993). Carrington and Williams (1988) found, for example, that: ethnicity accentuated the differential rates of sporting participation between males and females; that some Asian parents do exercise greater control over their daughters' participation in community sport because of cultural conflicts, and that some actually withdraw their children from PE. Brah and Minas (1985,24) found that Asian girls often found their own 'coping strategies' to survive social conflicts, as an example, an Asian girl chose not to tell her parents about her selection for the school sports: "I wanted my parents to be proud of me, but asking them and getting a refusal was too big a risk to take." (in Husband, 1982,200).

It is interesting to note changing trends in evidence produced from research within the British Asian community. In 1980 the Commission for Racial Equality reported that there were signs of stress and strain as Asian youths were growing away from the norms and expectations of their elders. In 1992 Madood revealed a different picture: "Reports from all over the

country suggest that Asian Muslim youth are deserting the bars and clubs and returning to the mosques and religious classes." (Madood 1992,271) This endorses Ghuman's (1991) research which found that Asian Muslim adolescents were least in favour of the processes of acculturation or a bi-cultural outlook.

In summary this section has focused on foundation issues important to the current investigation into experiences of Muslim women in the British education system. This has included a discussion of 'education as culture', including dilemmas of increasing centralisation of curriculum and processes in a plural but unequal society. The complexity of interrelated issues such as gender and 'race' have been raised to sensitize the context of this research. Finally, a detailed review of Physical Education and the significance of culture, equality, gender and 'race' within this context has been discussed to underpin the case study investigations into the 'PE experiences' of the Muslim women in this research. The next section will focus more closely on the specific context for the project by examining literature most relevant to black British Muslim women in initial teacher training and in the teaching profession.

2.2 BRITISH MUSLIM WOMEN IN INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION - TOWARDS AN EXPLORATION OF EXPERIENCES

INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

Teacher education has been 'under siege' in recent years in the United Kingdom, and has received constant criticisms of its content, emphasis and product. Common amongst suggestions for new and better ways to produce teachers is the emphasis on 'training' rather than 'education', (the terms will be used synonomously here) the 'how' rather than the 'why', not least with the arrival of the Teacher Training Agency (Sikes and Troyna 1991). The purpose here is not to examine the how or the why but the 'what' - the experiences of a particular group of students during a four year period spanning initial teacher training and their early teaching careers.

Whilst 'Muslim women' have not been the specific category group in similar research projects, they have been included in the samples of respondents involved in research exploring the experiences of black women in education. Singh (1988,31) reported on 'Asian and White perceptions of teaching' including particular reference to the dress and prayer requirements of Asian teachers. Blair and Maylor (1993,57) described the disproportionate underrepresentation of Muslim women on degree courses. Studies of the initial teacher training and school-based experiences of other black women will provide a useful context from which to begin to understand the experiences of the Muslim students in this research. The degree to which racism and sexism revealed in other research were experienced by them, and the particular significance of 'being Muslim' for these women during their College studies will emerge through the data analysis.

Tomlinson (1983) carried out the first study into the 'double oppression' of eight black (West Indian) women in English Universities. She found feelings of isolation, alienation from black and white groups and 'cultural schizophrenia', but recognition of their 'role model' status. Siraj-Blatchford (1993a,35) acknowledged that 'The experiences of black students (Asian and African-Caribbean) in higher education have been largely ignored' attributing this to the limited nature of any such sociological research on higher education. Research on 'other' sites remains more popular than critical reviews of 'within' site perspectives. She also suggested that research in this area is sometimes seen as a distraction from the main issues of black underachievement in primary and secondary school sectors. Neal (1995b,12) has suggested the 'whiteness' of gender has contributed to rendering the position of black women in higher education 'invisible'. Whilst there is not a wealth of literature some researchers, particularly black feminists, have started to make the position of black women more visible, education is one site where this is happening.

The research of Blair and Maylor (1993) did set out to 'make explicit a black female point of view' with students in initial teacher training at 'Fairways College', 'black' referring to all students of African-Caribbean and South Asian origin. They found that black students were differentially affected by cultural factors, such as the degree of patriarchal control experienced by South Asian women, and by experiences of racism but:

> As a general rule, black teachers continue to feel undervalued, their skills unacknowledged, their careers stunted and their contributions marginalized.
>
> (Ibid.57)

Black students did not always share the same pleasures for evening and weekend entertainment as white students, and communal living sometimes led to difficulties. Racism caused black students anxieties about their professional chances, despite strong convictions of their potential to

become positive role models for children in schools. Relationships between white students and lecturers were also affected by racism. One example was the assumption made, by lecturers and teachers in College and schools, of black students' role as 'professional ethnic', or multicultural 'expert'. In contrast some black students also experienced 'colour-blindness' when staff and peers deliberately ignored their ethnicity, for instance stating 'I don't see you as Asian'. Acute sensitivity to the potential of racist behaviour was also evident in school-based experiences where the attitudes of class teachers, tutors and mentors became crucially important.

Blair and Maylor's recommendations included widening the often exclusive focus on 'ethnic minority recruitment' to recognise other potential obstacles to black students in initial teacher training, and the need for policies and programmes that ensured all students increased their awareness and capability in recognising and handling racism in order to support their pupils and peers. Discussion forums where students could share common concerns and a means to voice those to senior management, without threat, were considered important.

School-based teacher training experiences often turned out to provide "... the worst experiences of racial discrimination for many black students" (Siraj-Blatchford 1991,46) facing comments from pupils, colleagues, tutors and teachers. Other tensions, including the quality of relationship with tutor and class teacher were significant to success or failure. In the school-experience triad of student, teacher, tutor:

> It is (the student) who is in the weakest position. It is she who is learning and who is being assessed.
>
> (Crozier and Menter 1993,99)

The balance of power inside the triad varies for a number of reasons but in a patriarchal, white dominated society, sex and 'race' are factors that could influence power differentials. Crozier and Menter acknowledge the 'silence' surrounding gender and 'race' imbalance and school-experience

supervision. In line with acknowledged imbalance in promotional opportunities for women in the work-force, men outnumber women in institutes of higher education

> The majority of teachers are women and the majority of supervisors are men.
>
> (Menter 1989, 465)

Even more significant for black women in teacher training is that white tutors outnumber black.

'Stasis' or avoidance of conflict or confrontation of any sort during the period of initial teacher training reinforces existing practice, good or bad, and obstructs innovative, reflective, enquiring practice (Menter 1989). Students who might want to challenge attitudes or behaviours risk upsetting that stasis and diminishing their chances of success. Beyond the triad the quality of the partnership between the College and the schools is also significant in determining the support offered to students in schools.

As mentors increasingly assume responsibility for overseeing the development of students in their school-based training the balance of power shifts. In relation to the needs of black students Blair and Mayor (Op.Cit.) recognised the need for mentor training that would increase awareness of ways in which racism might be recognised and tackled. All the available research evidence suggests that many black women students do experience racism and that they do not receive the support they need to 'cope' with the attitudes they meet in the field, in addition to the many shared traumas of school experience. In conclusion they noted that:

... black student experiences ... are complex and not confined to racism. However, a denial of racism or resistance to deal with this problem denies black students the right to a fulfilling experience of teaching, can lead to student drop-out, discourages potential black teachers from entering the profession, and is wasteful of the valuable talents that black teachers bring with them to the teaching profession.

(Ibid. 70)

Despite the 1985 Swann Report's appeal for urgent action to attract black teachers into mainstream schools, there is still concern about the relatively small number moving into initial teacher training. The Commission for Racial Equality suggested that racism and racial discrimination within and beyond the education system was responsible for the lack of vast improvement in the number of black students recruited for initial teacher training.

In her study of black students' perceptions of racism in initial teacher education Iram Siraj-Blatchford (1991) suggested that Institutions can alienate black students rather than welcome them. She indicated that procedures for dealing with racism must be taken seriously by the institutions, and departments running the courses, and that factors influencing the perceptions of students are as diverse as accommodation, course content and presentation, and school placements. The limited evidence available and trends within the teaching profession itself indicate there is a need for further research and action in this area.. There is consensus in the literature that the education system needs more black teachers for both children and teachers.

Research indicates much discontent for black students in a system that seems to perpetuate barriers. Evidence expresses numerous negative experiences of black students. One positive experience noted by East et al (1989,44) was the perceived value of encounters between black teachers and black pupils that benefited from sharing the same skin colour:

> Children confide in me all over the place ... a lot of issues to do with black kids need first-hand experience.

In summary there are issues raised in the literature which may be supported or contradicted in this research into the lives of black Muslim women in initial teacher training. The emphasis in studies carried out to date highlights experiences of racism, in the College environment, in the teaching and learning experiences provided at College and in conservative rather than transformative school-based teaching practices which form a major part of the training. Gender has not had such a high profile in 'race'/gender research, perhaps due to the predominance of women students and teachers in the primary field or the lack of recognition of inequalities (Sikes 1993). Aspects of gender and 'race' are not easily separated. With the strict requirements surrounding the mixing of Muslim men and women the students in this research might have a higher consciousness of gender issues.

EARLY TEACHING CAREERS

Research concerning black teachers in schools is equally under-developed (Arora 1992). That which is available suggests many have experienced negative situations. A study carried out by the Commission for Racial Equality in the mid 1980's indicated a range of ways in which ethnic minority teachers were disadvantaged, for example in terms of responsibility, career encouragement, and experiences of racism (Ranger 1988).

Singh's (1988) study revealed that ethnic minority teachers often had stressful experiences in securing and maintaining jobs, were checked more frequently than their white counterparts in their early careers, and often felt discriminated against (Ibid,6). The respondents in that project felt Headteachers had unrealistically high expectations of them. They felt

'exploited', used for their bilingual skills when it suited the schools but never receiving recognition of their bilingual skills, for example by promotion. They were frequently expected to take on issues of multiculturalism which sometimes caused resentment with other staff. The teachers in the study did not feel they had 'normal teacher status' in the eyes of others. In turn this affected their careers by marginalising them from mainstream positions. 'Asian teachers felt a sense of total isolation in 'all white' schools, with little support from colleagues, advisers or Heads. They considered themselves to be under pressure constantly, stressed, never able to make a mistake, under close scrutiny. Asian parents expected them to take better care of their children, and whilst they did respect and value the Asian teachers this sometimes caused tensions with other teachers. They faced difficulties trying to 'fit in', accents and requirements such as praying and dress were often problematic, but:

> Racism in schools, overt and covert, was one of their major concerns and made them seriously wonder about recommending teaching as a career to young black people.
>
> (Ibid. 31)

Similar findings and concerns were also expressed by Khan-Cheema (1992) who highlighted the under-representation of ethnic minority teachers, their disproportionate weighting on the lowest salary scales and the concentration in particular subjects and 'roles' such as ethnic minority pupil support. He also noted a lack of parity in career-progression when compared with white teachers and many personal accounts of racial discrimination. None of the research on ethnic minority teachers focuses specifically on the interface with gender difference and yet in teaching:

Gender is an important division. Men and women are both well represented ... but they are distributed differently in relation to the ages of their pupils, the subjects they teach and their achievement of promotion posts

(Evetts 1990,5)

Whilst there are more women than men teaching in primary schools the balance of power in the promotional stakes falls firmly with the men. For the small number of black women in management positions experiences of racism and sexism converge. They face challenges to their authority and credibility, particularly from white men, related to stereotypes of 'black women' as sexual creatures. (Al-Khalifa, 1989, 91).

For women, perceptions of opportunities and constraints in their 'public' teaching careers are closely interrelated with aspects of their personal life. Marriage and children are important for many but not everyone. The effects of teaching on personal life and vice versa cannot be ignored in any study of teachers, particularly women, who still bear the major responsibility for home and the up-bringing of children. (Evetts, 1990).

The development of teachers through stages of their professional career has been researched, for example Nias (1989).Using interactionist perspectives she traces the development in their 'sense of self' and strategies used to cope with the stresses of the early experiences of work.

> It matters to teachers themselves, as well as to their pupils, who and what they are. Their self-image is more important to them as practitioners than is the case in occupations where the person can easily be separated from the craft. (Ibid, 203)

Essed (1991,58) offered a useful classification of 'experiences' in her study of 'everyday racism'. She described experience as multidimensional, existing on different levels from the personal to the structural, and in

different forms, witnessed, reported, mediated and cognitive. i) Personal experiences included racism directed against oneself, ii) vicarious experiences, witnessed or reported, described racism directed against other blacks, iii) mediated experiences involved racist events directed against or affecting a larger (sub) group of blacks, often communicated through the mass media, iv) cognitive experiences involved the impact of the knowledge of racism upon one's perception of reality.

Racism is a set of beliefs based on the notion that human beings can be divided into racial or ethnic groups which are ranked superior / inferior in relation to each other morally, culturally, physically and intellectually. This ranking can lead to discriminatory practices or prejudiced beliefs. Levels or dimensions of racism were identified by Figueroa (1991, 1993) and, via application to the term 'ethnicism', offer a useful framework for theorising data in this research. Racism is rooted in the 'racist frame of reference'. This is related to the concept of 'race' as a social construct defining a group of people usually 'linked' by phenotypical features (Figueroa 1993,92). Ethnicism is closely related to racism but achieves definition by ethnic features, which means largely cultural features ..."real or supposed and often distorted" (Ibid. 94). 'Ethnicism' is a key concept in this study. Whilst the respondents were black they were selected because they shared a religion. Defining Muslims as an ethnic group is not unproblematic but is one way of examining the effects of ethnicism on lived-experience. For the purpose of clarity the dimensions will be explained using the linked terms racism / ethnicism.

Application of this framework is useful in a figurational / process study because:

> Racist (and ethnicist) frames of reference are developed, realized, embodied, enacted and maintained through concrete processes of interaction and interrelation.
>
> (Figueroa 1991,36)

Firstly there is racism / ethnicism at the cultural level or the operation of a shared 'racist (/ ethnicist) frame of reference' including values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. Secondly, at the individual level racism / ethnicism may 'manifest itself as attitudes, stereotypes, prejudice or hostility...' (Figueroa 1993,93) but can operate without hostility for example via the ambiguity of racist thinking in pushing black youngsters into sport.

At the third level, interpersonal, racism / ethnicism is revealed through 'interactions, communication and interrelations rooted in a racist (/ ethnicist) frame of reference' (Figueroa 1991,31). These interactions may be intra or inter 'in' / 'out' group members. For example choices about preferred forms of behaviour or relations lead to friendship patterns often following 'ethnic' group boundaries (Ibid.32). Sharing a racist joke 'in-group' about a racially defined 'out group' '... is a form of racist interpersonal relations' (Figueroa 1993,93). Fourthly, at institutional level certain groups are advantaged or disadvantaged by maintaining and perpetuating 'the racist (/ ethnicist) frame of reference' (Ibid), failing to take action to recognise the rights and needs of minority groups. Figueroa describes the former apartheid laws as extreme examples of institutional racism. Recognising more subtle, unintentional forms which may occur, he used the example of giving National Curriculum assessment tasks to minority ethnic children in an 'unthinking' way, and the using of reading texts with no reference to or illustrations of black people.

Finally, structural racism refers to differential distribution of, for example, power, resources, rewards and status along racist (/ ethnicist) boundaries, in the case of this research along intersecting boundaries of disadvantage. ...'several factors - such as social class, cultural difference, sexism, ethnicism, and racism - intersect in complex ways so that sub-groups (e.g. East African 'Asians', Bangladeshi, Sikh girls) (in this case Muslim women) ... are differentially placed' (Figueroa 1991,32). All five levels are interrelated and do not occur in isolation. All are embedded in the 'racist (/ ethnicist) frame of reference' which affects interaction and therefore 'race relations'. This frame:

... is embodied in, gives rise to, maintains, reproduces, justifies, and is produced, sustained and reproduced by social relations, social practices, social institutions and social structures ... especially structures of inequality, subordination, exploitation or oppression.

(Ibid. 32)

In summary this section has explored the literature available on ethnic minority women in higher education and early teaching careers. In order to move towards an investigation into the experiences of Muslim women the nature of 'experiences' was developed. Finally, a framework for understanding oppression, from personal to structural levels, whether rooted in racist frames of reference, ethnicist and / or, more precisely perhaps for this study, 'religious prejudice', was described. The next chapter searches for an appropriate theoretical sociological perspective to underpin the research.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The purpose of embedding an empirical study in a theoretical framework is to ensure clarity of focus and to sharpen insights that emerge from the data. The appropriateness of the theory might be judged by its adequacy in fulfilling that role. The plethora of social theories, even restricted to studies into ethnic relations (Mason 1986), offers wide-ranging perspectives. Every theory has limitations raising the question of adequacy with regard to any explanation:

> Theories are ... selective in terms of their priorities and perspectives and the data they define as significant. As a result, they provide a particular and partial view of reality.
>
> (Haralambos & Holborn 1991, 765)

Similarly every theory is well-critiqued and counter-critiqued having strengths and weaknesses which might be seen to flaw any project before it begins (Dunning and Rojek, 1992). Recent trends towards globalization ensure there is a "...lowering of theory's capacity to speak for people in general, to a greater acknowledgement of the limited and local nature of its associations." (Featherstone 1995,10). Even the overarching paradigms debate is not without problems, having been described as a 'turbulent landscape' by Sparkes (1992,9) who goes on to write that:

> ... different paradigms often use the same words but give them different meanings so that different discourses produce different truths.
>
> (Ibid.273)

All interpretations of social phenomena are coloured by a particular view of the world. Selection of a paradigm reflects a particular ontological and epistemological position, it indicates certain underlying beliefs about the nature of being and the nature of knowledge. This world view has implications for the kind of questions and answers researchers seek, the truths they seek as well as the methodology they adopt (Sparkes 1992). Contrasts can be seen between the positivist and naturalist, or interpretive, perspectives.

Positivist or empirical-analytic inquiry is based largely on the belief that human behaviour is measurable, predictable and controllable. Researchers place high value on quantifiable data, strict rules of conduct, claiming objectivity and particular concern for reliability and validity. What is valued is a nomothetic approach based upon 'systematic protocol and technique'. (Sparkes 1992,14). Methods used include surveys, questionnaires, systematic observation, statistical analysis, and particular experimental design procedures including hypotheses. The role of knowledge and therefore the purpose of research is prediction and control. (Schempp and Choi 1994).

Naturalistic or interpretive inquiry is based on a belief that the social world is full of multiple realities and interpretations of reality, and cannot be understood in terms of broad generalizations. Social meaning is based in human action. People are not just 'acted upon' by external influences but interact, interpret and create their own realities. The researcher is the 'research instrument' and he or she seeks information about a person's perceptions, interpretations and understandings of behaviours, events and situations. There is a preference in this paradigm for qualitative methods, an ideographic approach based on gaining first-hand knowledge of the subject, and a different concern for reliability and validity. Methods include interviews, diaries, participant observation in ethnographies, case studies, life histories, and fieldwork. Knowledge is perceived as a human construction:

> Knowledge is taken to be created in the course of human interaction. Of particular interest is the knowledge of the negotiated interpersonal rules that underlie social life.
>
> (Cornbleth 1990 cited in Schempp and Choi 1994)

The role of knowledge and therefore the purpose of research in the naturalistic paradigm is understanding social meaning and everyday life. In other words every piece of research is underpinned with a particular view of social reality, knowledge and truth. There is no such thing as neutral, value-free research.

I had no doubts that this research project would fall within the interpretive paradigm. The essence of the investigation was to capture the experiences of one group of Muslim women over a four year period, to examine their progress through initial teacher training and their early teaching careers. The naturalistic perspective of a world of multiple realities, and of social realities created and re-created through human interaction, was entirely appropriate. The different theories within the interpretist paradigm proved problematic, however:

> ... if we take just the interpretive paradigm we find Jacob ... drawing upon the work in North America of six traditions that range from human ethology to cognitive anthropology while Atkinson et al ... review seven approaches that have been used in British educational research that range from symbolic interactionism to neo-Marxist ethnography, and feminism.
>
> (Sparkes 1992,17-18)

To be useful for this research, a theory had to be flexible and open to enable ideas and themes to emerge in the process of the research. The perspective could not be deterministic. The theory had to match the potential and limitations of the research, providing legitimacy and intrinsic value to the time and effort invested in a small group of women over a

relatively long period of time. According to Wright Mills (1959,66) "There is ... much generous comment in all schools of social science about the blindness of empirical data without theory and the emptiness of theory without data" but finding a 'best-fit' theory proved very difficult.

Given the existence of difficulties such as these, a more eclectic, interdisciplinary theoretical approach was adopted for this research. It is rooted in a process theory of identity (Elias 1991, Mennell, 1994) but acknowledges and utilizes the strengths of interactionism (Mead 1934, Blumer 1962, 1969), as used in the study of teachers by Nias (1989), and theories of the embodiment of cultural capital. (Bourdieu 1984). Essed (1991,8) used an interdisciplinary approach covering structural, interactionist, black women's studies and theories of experience to underpin her study of black women which called for "... creative use of concepts originating from different fields and paradigms." I did not want to restrict the possibility of theorising emerging data in other helpful ways. Snyder (1986) admitted that one theory may be inadequate to provide a complete explanation of reality. The search for a suitable theory is made more complex by the process of change in sociological thinking which creates multiple and overlapping versions of theories. However, the main intention here is to produce a theoretically informed empirical study not to attempt a treatise of theoretical innovation.

Wright Mills (1959, 143) offered the vision of 'sociological imagination' achieved via the 'study of biography, history, and of the problems of their intersection within social structures'. He suggested this could be achieved through avoiding rigid sets of procedures and employing a combination of method and theory which released rather than restricted the sociological imagination. Process sociology offered one means to start searching for a valuable interpretation of the phenomena studied.

Process sociology is attributed to the work of Norbert Elias (1897 - 1990) described as one of the most outstanding contributors to the development of sociology in the twentieth century. Much of his work is still being uncovered, the implications and applications of his theories are

relatively new with inevitable disciples and critics. Every road I took to extend possible theoretical avenues of exploration for this study, such as exploring notions of 'habitus', 'identity' and the significance of the body, led back to the work of Elias, (eg Elias 1994 (1939, 1978), 1991).

Initially I had reservations about the appropriateness of continuing with a process approach as used for my early investigation into physical education and Muslim students in initial teacher training (Benn 1994, 1996). (In the present study the terms process and figurational theory will be used interchangeably.) Concern was related to the nature of the continuing research. Method would be heavily dependent on the perspective of the Muslim women, through interviews and diaries, as they moved through College and into teaching. There was no plan to gain perspectives of other key people in their figuration such as parents, head teachers, pupils or colleagues. The reason for this choice of research method was to avoid any threat that might be felt by the Muslim women. As new teachers I believed it would seriously undermine our relationship if I asked to interview their head teachers, for instance, because the obvious focus would be them, their Muslim identity and their professional development. Similarly, moving into their family circles for interviews would change our relationship and the aspects of their lives they were willing to share through our one to one meetings. Gaining a one-sided perspective of the experiences of Muslim women, and the relatively short-term nature of the research (four years) led to my concerns about the appropriateness of a process approach. Further reading on the use of process theory in the understanding of individuals and particularly their identities, finally persuaded me that a process theory of identity could help in analysing and understanding events that were unfolding in the lives of the Muslim women. (Mennell 1994, Elias 1991, Elias and Scotson 1994, and Dunning (in press).

A limitation of process or figurational theory is that it has rarely been used to study micro situations, although figurationalists do not hold a micro, macro distinction. Examples of application to small-scale situations

can be found such as in the 'Established-Outsiders' theory, and the study of manners in the Civilising Process. More frequently, following the work of Elias, Dunning, Maguire, Murphy and Waddington et al, the approach has been used to explain long-term, usually large-scale continuity and change, for example identifying processes of state-formation, globalization, politicization, civilization, and sportization. The fundamental premise of the theory relates to development occurring through power struggles within dynamic human figurations, networks of mutually orientated, differentially related, interdependent people. In an increasingly globalised world, figurations are increasingly tied to other figurations. In the tension-balance within figurations, people are constrained or enabled by the actions of others in the process of development. Axes of tensions within figurations result in human societies being subject to constant changes in one direction or another, civilising or decivilising, integrating or disintegrating but the predominant direction of change from the Middle Ages to present day in Western societies has been in a civilizing and integrating direction.

Elias refuted tendencies to separate the individual and society in sociology. Rather he looked for relationships and functions of individuals in the changing structures of society. He offered many such conceptual tools which might be useful in the present research project for example: the notion of social habitus, the process of individualization based on changes in the balance between I-We identities, insight into long-term processes of integration - tribal to state, nation-state to post-nation state and more recently towards a globalised state of 'humankind', and a theory of established - outsider relations.

One fundamental condition of human existence is "... the need to love and be loved ... affirmation of self for and from others... giving and finding friendship ... giving and receiving in affective relationships to other people" (Elias 1991,201). It is the relational nature of human beings that is the key to understanding Elias's theories. He describes four ways in which human beings differ from other species and they are all connected to social relations. (Ibid.192 - 195). Firstly humans use society-specific as opposed

to species-specific language to communicate, secondly we are the only species in which the face gives unique, individual and life-long recognisable identity, thirdly humans are the only species with the ability to transfer a symbolic record of social knowledge from one generation to another which means that it is changeable and capable of growth. Finally humans have the only form of communal life that can be changed with learning processes and therefore is capable of development.

Elias's theories are processual and based on the significance of human relations. He offers the example of the process of 'growing up' and how development of the person is dependent on relations between the self and others. Another example is seen in ordinary conversation where:

> ... the ideas of either party may change in the course of conversation ... Then something from one passes into the other. It is assimilated into his or her structure of ideas. It changes this structure, and is in its turn modified by being incorporated into a different system ... The special feature of this kind of process, that we might call a network-figure, is that in its course each of the partners forms ideas that were not there before, or pursues further ideas that were already present. But the direction and the order followed by this formation and transformation of ideas are not explained by the structure of one partner or the other but by the relation between the two.
>
> (Elias 1991, 24-25)

The relational, processual nature of this development, the continual state of flux of the network of interdependent human beings, leads Elias to continue by clarifying that:

> (it is because of)... the fact that people change in relation to each other and through the relationship with each other, that they are continuously shaping and re-shaping themselves in relation to each other ... characteristic of the network in general.
>
> (Ibid.)

Such a state of flux ensures continuity and change as individuals assimilate generationally and interface with a transient present.

Whilst this study is based most closely on process theory the intention is to chart a "... relatively unexplored landscape ... " recognising the potential of "... dialogue between different perspectives ..." (Maguire 1992, 118). Maguire suggested that in the search for a sociology of the emotions, figurational theorists would benefit from reference to insights from other perspectives including symbolic interactionism, for example "...face-to-face interactions in which the presentation of self and the management of impressions are central" (Ibid.117). He mentioned other interactionist concepts of self-realization and identity formation, social life as drama, the presentation of self and management of impressions, for example in the work of Goffman (1971). It might be argued that Elias is a 'historical Goffman'. Figurationalism and interactionism are not the same but recognition of a relationship could help to extend the potential of theoretical investigation:

> Human beings have never .... been solitary animals: their self-images and we-images have always - since the acquisition of the uniquely human capacity for self-reflection - been formed over time within groups of interdependent people ...
>
> Mennell (1994,176)

Symbolic interaction, or interactionist theory, also acknowledges the significance of the face-to-face encounter, for the way in which an individual sees him or herself, behaves, makes judgements, shares meanings

and interprets surroundings. Interactionism seemed a feasible and appropriate perspective in relation to the planned research. However, it is a much criticized perspective, not least because it usually ignores wider social settings, and it might also be described as a dated theory.

In searching for positive ways in which this theory might inform the current study, use was made of the ways in which interactionist theory focuses on the microsociology of human interaction. It helps to explain the search for meaning in everyday life, the significance of symbols in communication, the importance of 'role-taking' whereby a person responds to another in relation to his or her perceived reaction to the other, and the development of self, both subjectively in terms of self-concept, and objectively in terms of personal reflection on self as, for example, 'a good Muslim' 'a good teacher', a 'popular student'. Elias (1991,190) described the same phenomenon as the 'mirror effect' the 'mirror of (an individual's) consciousness', being able to see themselves as 'other' and attributed this to the process of individualization. This ability was a 'precondition of passing on knowledge of self', and presumably of the Muslim women's participation in this particular study!

Interactionist perspectives shed light on how social roles are shaped by others, how cultural practices are built into socialization processes by the actions of others and therefore how an individual learns to make sense of the world(s) in which they live. As Blumer (1969) states, interactionism recognises:

> ... persons constructing individual and collective action through an interpretation of the situations which confront them.

Like figurational theory, this perspective acknowledges the significance of process and recognises the need to refute any suggestion of a static or fixed notion of the individual. Individuals take 'active' roles as they are enabled and constrained, shaped and shaping, influenced by and influencing, other human beings. (Elias, 1991,55).

Sometimes called symbolic interactionism this theory is founded on a notion of the human social world as 'symbolic action', that is involving the active use of significant symbols, for example language, gestures, dress, adornments, in the process of sharing meaning and communication with others in a group. The meaning given to a symbol, for example a word, action, gesture, item of clothing, is never inherent in that object but always created in and through social interaction. Shared meanings are imperative for co-operative behaviour to occur. Individuals 'role-take', that is put themselves in the place of others, to interpret and understand the others' actions and respond accordingly. Meanings are not fixed but are constantly subject to redefinition, in groups or sub-groups, through social interaction. The process of defining and re-defining meaning is a reflective, interpretive process. One not only gathers meanings of the social environment but also of oneself in particular situations, for example identities of self in relation to family, job, school.

As Snyder (1986) suggests "identities" are part of one's self-perception that are announced, defined and re-defined in social situations. These identities are developed and verified through social interaction. Multi-layered identities may be inconsistent and in conflict with each other. Significant others may threaten or change one's self-perception by signalling different meanings. The introduction of the notion of identity enables the relationship of more recent work on 'identity formation' and interactionism to be theoretically explored. First the original interactionist notion of the link between the 'individual and society' must be made explicit.

According to Blumer (1969,75) social structures such as gender, 'race', class, religion, do not have a determining role but are "... important only as they enter into the process of interpretation and definition out of which joint actions are performed." This notion would be criticized, for example by radical feminists, for not acknowledging the deep and real ways in which sexism, racism and other forms of prejudice affect lives. But the recognition of 'joint actions' connects with Mennell's suggestion that we can

stride the 'entirely abstract' macro-micro gap in theories of identity, by recognising the I-we relationship

> ... the whole symbolic interactionist tradition has stressed the way in which each person's self is formed by a reflexive process, in which our perceptions of how others see us plays a paramount part, it is easy to see that individual self-images and group we-images are not *separate* things.
>
> (Mennell 1994,179)

Key to this study is the fact that Mennell moves, from the above point, towards a 'process theory of identity' linked to the work of Elias (1991), and developed from important aspects of interactionism. The balance of I-we identity is the core of the theory and is rooted in an individual's perceptions of relations within figurations. The I-we identity balance influences and is influenced by wider social structures.

Mennell (1994) cites an interesting dictum to explain group identity and difference (Kluckhohn and Murray 1948), acknowledging the now sexist phraseology):

> Every man is in certain respects:
>
> a) Like all other men
>
> b) Like some other men
>
> c) Like no other man.

Mennell uses the concept of 'habitus' (Elias 1939, 1978, Bourdieu 1984) to explain what he regards as the most interesting of these three statements - 'Like some other men'. According to Mellor and Shilling (1997, 19-20):

'Habitus' refers to those pre-cognitive, embodied dispositions which promote particular forms of human orientation to the world, organise each generation's senses and sensualities into particular hierarchies, and predispose people towards specific ways of knowing and acting.

Habitus as a concept dates back to Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas but has been developed, in slightly different, but not opposed, ways in the work of Elias (1978, 1991) and Bourdieu (1984 Ibid.). Bourdieu emphasises habitus in terms of 'taste' or people's conscious preferences for day to day 'lifestyle phenomenon' such as food, dress, reading material, TV programmes, sports and arts participation. This relates to Smith's (1986,193) view of an ethnic group whose members will "... share a common set of understandings, values and attitudes that reflect their common culture and community ... those axioms that provide the common foundations of collective thought and morals."

Elias refers to 'individual habitus' and 'social habitus', describing the latter as 'self-image and social make-up' emphasising the learned accomplishment of using the body in socially acquired preferred ways, body techniques, internalising an individual make-up that is shared with certain others and that 'grows out of the social script' (Elias 1991,182).

> ... using (habitus) in Elias's (1939) sense to refer to the ways in which learning becomes embodied, that is, how 'habituation' leads over time, through the imitation of others at different levels of consciousness and through adaptation to particular social and physical spaces, to the deep internalization of traits, attitudes and movement styles which become 'second nature'. Apart from obvious and superficial differences such as skin colour which <u>are</u> genetically inherited, it is reasonable to hypothesize that many popularly perceived 'racial' differences between human groups are, in fact, differences of habitus and hence learned and bodily ingrained at this deep level.
>
> Dunning (In press)

Both Elias's and Bourdieu's perspectives acknowledge the significance of historical and generational influences on habitus. Linking his theory to the 'civilizing process' and his notion of functional democracy, Elias recognised that changes in the structure of relationships '...demands of the individual a greater circumspection, more conscious forms of self-control, reduced spontaneity in action and speech in the forming and management of relationships.' (Elias 1991,204). This occurs in increasingly complex societies characterised by monopolies of violence, increasing specialization, longer, more complex and denser chains of human interdependence and consequential reciprocity. Elias recognises this change in human beings as producing a 'peculiar form of social habitus' (Ibid.). Bourdieu and Elias's usages of habitus are not contradictory, 'tastes' and 'lifestyle preferences' being essential to embodied learning. Elias's usage indicates internalization via different layers of consciousness. A perspective developed by Mennell (1994) and related to the notion of identity.

Mennell suggests that the notions of 'Identity' and habitus are closely linked, the former being at a more conscious level, the latter residing more in the sub-conscious. He describes the multi-layered habitus as 'more-inclusive layers of identity', suggesting development is related to

'changing balances between different layers of habitus and identity'. (Ibid,179). The complexity of the modern world, where people belong to more than one group, results in multiplicity of identities and habitus, affected by circumstances of time and place, what he calls 'the filo pastry of identity':

> ... the trend-line in the development of human society has been towards larger and larger networks of interdependent people organized in more and more interlocking layers.
>
> (Ibid.177-178)

Elias's (1991, 183) notion of differentially important layers of habitus is also significant, as is his link between habitus and society:

> It depends on the number of interlocking planes in his (or her) society how many layers are interwoven in the social habitus of a person. Among them, a particular layer usually has special prominance. It is the layer characteristic of membership of a particular survival group.

('Survival' in this context relates to maintaining a group identity which is threatened rather than physical security. The concept will be developed more fully later.) Multi-layered habitus must be evident in the black, Muslim women, raised in a predominantly white and secular society, who form the subjects of this research, although the layer of 'special prominence' might be more difficult to identify and might differ between individuals. An example of the complex multi-layered identities of the Muslim women in the research can be seen in their diverse use of 'we' to include at different times: Muslim women, Muslim men and women, their own family, their community, the community at Greenacres College, fellow teachers, fellow Asians or blacks, Muslim children and adults within a mixed school

community and so on. This process of increasing globalization and multi-layered identities can also be seen in, for example the former Yugoslavia:

> In the transition to a new level of integration ... there are conflicts of loyalty and conscience which are at the same time conflicts of personal identity.
>
> (Elias, 1991, 178-179)

The link between habitus, identity and increasingly higher levels of synthesis in the process of integration, is further explained in the concept of the we-I identity balance and the process of individualisation. We-I identity is an integral part of social habitus, and consequently open to individualization. "There is no I-identity without we-identity. Only the weighting of the we-I balance, the pattern of the I-we relation, are variable." (Ibid.184).

Any use of the term 'I' presupposes the existence of others. Changes in the 'I-we identity balance' have been allied to increasing integration in societies (Elias 1991). In simpler existences people depended for survival on immediate groups such as family or tribe. In terms of personality structure Elias described individuals as developing 'we-identities'. In more complex, modern societies ties with immediate groups have been distanced. Individuality and independence have become more highly valued and dependency for survival has shifted from family to state and more recently has begun perhaps to shift to 'humankind'. I-identities characterise the personality structure of this type of society. In Elias's theory of the civilising process he recognised a 'tilt' in the identity balance from predominantly 'we' in the European Middle Ages towards 'I' in the post-Renaissance period. Of twentieth century life he described a further shift towards 'homo clausus' or the 'we-less I' resulting in much voluntary and involuntary loneliness. (Ibid.199) Elias called this process 'individualisation', attributing differences in extent and pattern of the process centrally to power differentials between rulers and ruled. More scope for individualisation exists in democratic states with strong reciprocal control. Such a shift in the I-we identity

balance is not unidirectional or experienced at the same level by all groups. Again the human relations theme is central to understanding since the origin of the balance shift is not in the 'nature of individual people but in the communal life of many.' (Ibid.45).

Mennell (1994) went on to explore Elias's 'established-outsider' model in which processes of meaning and power can be developed to foster and sustain particular belief-systems between groups. Behaviour to demonstrate adherence to the norms of one group can lead to the creation of distorting myths about another. Competing discourses of 'group charisma' and 'group disgrace' grow and are more likely to be vehemently sustained where a group feels particularly threatened or insecure. Retaliation depends on relative power positions. When the power balance shifts in the direction of the oppressed group, positions are challenged. (Elias and Scotson 1994). Established-outsider theory has been applied in a variety of spheres to offer new explanations of inequalities for women, blacks, homosexuals and children. (Dunning in press).

Group relations form the nexus of established-outsider theory and in advice to potential users Mennell (1992, 138) suggests the following procedure: i) look at the past and how one group came to "impinge on the other", ii) identify how groups are interdependent in order to understand the central balance of power in the figuration, iii) examine the goals, objectives and requirements being pursued by both sides, iv) establish the degree to which either group has the ability to enable or constrain requirements needed by the other group to achieve their goals. The more uneven the balance of power, the less realistic the established group's image of the outsiders is likely to be, 'group charisma, group disgrace' operation is probable, and an absorption of the established group's perception of outsiders is probable in the conscience and we-images of the outsiders, but:

> Where the balance of power is becoming more equal, expect to find symptoms of rebellion, resistance, emancipation among the outsiders ... after an intervening period of heightened tension and conflict, the more nearly equal is the balance of power, the more favourable are the conditions for more mutual perceptions and the more likely a high degree of mutual identitification.
>
> (Ibid.)

The established-outsiders theory grew out of Elias's work on the tensions of the long-term trend towards social integration. The notion of 'outsiders' seems to link with Rutherford's description of 'otherness':

> In the hierarchical language of the West, what is alien represents otherness, the site of difference and the repository of our fears and anxieties.
>
> Rutherford (1990,10)

Migration groups - outsiders - often find it difficult to feel comfortable in a host country because '... their social habitus creates a specific kind of distance between them and members of the host country.' (Elias 1991,236) Elias went on to explain that a means of escaping the difficulties was '... by settling near members of their own group ... people with the same social habitus.' Whilst first generation people seek to safeguard their habitus, conflict often arises for second or third generations who are in an in-between situation because:

> ... the readiness and even the capacity of the established members of the host country to accept them is limited - of the host country, one must add, that is now the native country of the second and third immigrant generations.
>
> (Ibid. 237)

Attempts to retain individual and group identity meet dominant pressure for state integration. Elias suggests one means through which this pressure is realised is through public education:

> In all nation states the institutions of public education are dedicated to an extreme degree to deepening and consolidating a we-feeling based exclusively on the national tradition.
>
> (Ibid.210)

Using examples from the world around him Elias explained three options for migrant groups: firstly preserving identity as a kind of unreal, static 'museum piece'; secondly renouncing part of the identity and social habitus of group members and finally; the encapusulation of groups within a society powerful and tolerant enough to allow this to occur. (Ibid.214-217). The latter option is rare and Elias uses examples of the German Hutterer in Canada, and the American Mafia, to illustrate the necessary life-long permanence of human relationships in such groups, and the essential we-balance identity requiring unconditional subordination of I to we, of individual to group. The degree of integration or resistance depends on the social habitus of individuals and social shift in the we-I balance. Greater resistance is found where there are strong we-identities, long generational chains, and deep-rooted habitus. Differential change in habitus is also dependent on those factors but Elias also acknowledges the 'drag effect' whereby the social dynamic is usually ahead of a slow-to-change social habitus. (Ibid.211).

Whilst group survival usually does not mean physical security any longer, a key feature of group resistance to integration is related to meaning:

> It is the feeling that the fading or disappearance of a tribe or state as an autonomous entity would render meaningless everything which past generations had achieved and suffered ... a kind of collective dying... (in which) the identity of we-image is threatened.
>
> (Elias, Ibid 223)

Survival of a group identity, according to Elias, is about surviving 'in the memory of the chains of generations', maintaining continuity of language, history and cultural values, a collective memory which retains meaning. Consequently, the process of integration, changes in the individual habitus brought about by past and present influences, lead to conflicts of loyalty and conscience.

The individualization, established-outsider and integration-resistance theories are all linked to Elias's 'civilizing process' which traced individual and societal changes in Europe from the Middles Ages to the present day. Long-term trends towards greater self-restraint in terms of manners, behaviour, the body, and self-consciousness controlled by changes in levels of tolerance, shame and guilt were centrally involved. These changes were influenced by the process of state-formation, centralising of control, for example of the use of violence and parliamentarization. Industrialization and modernization brought further changes in societal trends.

"Elias's theory of 'functional democratization' is inherent in his concept of power as deriving from interdependence." (Dunning, 1991, 275). It helps to explain more equalizing societal trends, particularly in the twentieth century. The process of functional democratization occurs when unplanned, unforeseen increasing specialization leads to increasing reciprocal influence and control between people.

> The power-chances of specialized groups are further enhanced if they manage to organize since then they become able by collective action to disrupt the wider chains of interdependence on which a modern society depends.
>
> (Ibid.)

Shifts in the power ratio are reflected in the construction of identity or we-images. As people come into closer contact with others they change the way in which they perceive others:

> The individual's image of other people .... becomes more permeated by observation and experience. Perceptions of others become richer in nuances, and freer from the instant response of spontaneous emotion.
>
> (Mennell 1994,185)

As is evident from the subject, process and outcome of the present study increasing integration means that: "...more people are forced more often to pay more attention to more other people." (Goudsblom 1989 cited in Mennell Ibid.)

Tackling this study from a predominantly process theory approach, informed by interactionism, helps to avoid the major criticisms of symbolic interactionism. One advantage the use of process theory has over interactionism is that it avoids hodiecentrism. Whilst the amount of empirical work generated on meaning, identity and interaction indicates the value of interactionism. the focus on the personal without acknowledging or identifying wider influential historical and social processes is a weakness. (Coakley 1994, 47, Maguire 1992, 112). Symbolic interactionists have been accused of failing to analyse:

> ... how ... everyday interaction is part of the interconnectedness of wider, longer-term chains of interdependence. It is the probing of the interconnectedness of 'micro' and 'macro' worlds that the Eliasian (process) perspective is better placed to examine than research within a symbolic interactionist framework as it has been conceived of and conducted up to now.
>
> (Maguire, 1992,112)

Another advantage is that the process-theory use of the term 'interdependencies' opens up possibilities for recognising influences that are beyond face-to-face interactions but equally significant as influencing factors. An example in this research might be the interdependency between the Muslim women in my research and the working parties that shaped the National Curriculum they were to deliver as teachers. Coakley (1994,47) suggested that symbolic interactionism has rarely explained behaviours 'grounded in processes other than rational problem-solving and choice making' which might be significant in this study involving the subtleties of religious and educational processes.

Coakley criticises symbolic interactionism for the focus on development of self which has led to people ignoring 'the importance of the body and physical experiences in social life' (Ibid.). The recognition of the significance of the body in this study, particularly the body appearing and moving in social space for these Muslim women, ensures this area cannot be ignored. It is interesting to note that Elias recognised the particular social significance of the head and face as playing:

> ... a central part, perhaps the most central part, in his or her identity as this particular person ... no part is so unequivocally at the centre of a person's I-identity both in the consciousness of others and for the person himself...
>
> (Elias 1991,189)

He described the face as the 'display board of the body'.

Finally, the concept of power is another major advantage of a process versus interactionist approach. It is crucial in this research since the experiences of a minority group are being investigated. The notion of power in process approaches follows that of Weber (cited Dunning in press, 274) '...power means any chance within a social relationship to realize one's own will, even in the face of resistance, regardless of the basis on which this chance rests'. This relational notion of power was used by Elias to develop his theory of 'balances' or 'power-ratios'. Power is seen as 'polymorphous', present in all human relationships, and is 'multi-polar', evident in differentially related figurations of interdependent human beings. Power resources such as skin colour or sporting prowess might be power resources of positive or negative value (Ibid, 275) as indeed might gender, dress and religion in the particular social contexts found in this research. Dunning equates this with '... 'embodied power', part of a person's habitus which gives them what Bourdieu (1984) calls 'cultural capital'. ' (Ibid.).

'Embodied power' links with other potentially useful sociological theory on the body in consumer culture in Western society (Featherstone 1991), control of the body in postmodernism including the significance of appearance and 'body maintenance' work carried out to sustain physical capital (Bourdieu 1986), and on the notion of embodiment of culture (Shilling 1993). Whilst all of these notions appear to be opened through Elias's use of the term habitus the insights of other theorists might be useful in this research, for example in assisting with understanding the social significance of the hijab (head covering) and dress code adopted by some, but not all, of the Muslim women in the research. The symbolic and social significance of their dress code was raised by the respondents as an issue from the earliest stage of this research and entered discussions throughout.

The concept of 'identity' has interested more sociologists recently as modernity, post-modernity and globalization processes have raised new questions:

> Just now everybody wants to talk about 'identity'...identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty.
>
> (Mercer 1990, cited in Woodward 1997,15)

Whilst there is "... greater acknowledgement that people can live happily with multiple identities" (Featherstone 1995,9), trends of "... mixing of codes, pastiche, fragmentation, incoherence, disjunction and syncretism" (Ibid.118) have ensured a lack of passivity from migrants to absorb the dominant culture. This, in turn has led, in some cases, to a "... retreat into the culture of origin ... or a retreat into ... religions from the home country." (Ibid.119). The rise of increased political action has emerged from post-modern 'motifs' alongside 'identity' such as difference, fragmentation, displacement, decentring and disenchantment. (Mercer 1990,49). Such trends lead to conflicts not only between but within groups, and within individuals. A contributing factor to such trends lies in the fact that:

> Identities are not neutral. Behind the quest for identity are different, and often conflicting values. By saying who we are, we are also striving to express what we are, what we believe and what we desire. The problem is that these beliefs, needs and desires are often patently in conflict, not only between communities but within individuals themselves.
>
> Weeks (1990,89)

An example used to explain the difficult dilemmas of diversity was in the conflict of absolutes rooted in the Rushdie affair between freedom of speech and the rights of sanctity in religious belief. This raised difficult questions of "...the freedom and constraint limits of pluralism in a complex society." (Ibid.93).

Globalization in one sense has opened up the world as networks of human interdependence spread around the globe. Simultaneously the human drive to construct meaningful, coherent identities has led to re-negotiation "... a dialogical space in which we can expect a good deal of disagreement, clashing of perspectives and conflict, not just working together and consensus." (Ibid, 102). 'In-group' 'out-group' conflicts heighten the sense of boundaries between and attempts to draw those boundaries:

"... culturally defined groups ... may even be strengthened by the competitive forces released by modernisation." (Yinger 1986,39).

One fact on which interactionist, process and identity theorists agree is that "Identity is never a static location, it contains traces of its past and what it is to become." (Rutherford 1990,24). Calhoun (1994) describes the process as a 'project' requiring a struggle for negotiation and renegotiation in networks of social relations in the pursuit of distinctiveness, difference from others and sameness with some. There are many similarities in this 'identity language' with that of Mennell and Elias. Hall (1990,222) also regards identity as a process that is dependent on different ways individuals and groups are positioned and position themselves in relation to the past and the present. He calls the African-Caribbean and Asian 'blacks' the "... diasporas of the West - the new post-colonial subjects." Hall suggests that culturally defined distinctiveness and identity necessarily live:

> ... with and through ... difference; by *hybridity*. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference.
>
> (Ibid. 235)

Such concepts might help to explain how the identities of the Muslim women in this research are positioned by their past and present situations,

in particular the apparent search, of some, to renew understanding of Islam and to find more significant meaning in their lives by embodying Islam more completely.

One final theory which has been deliberately rejected for this study is feminism. The perspective has been used by several other researchers of similar situations (Mirza 1995, Crozier and Menter 1993, Blair and Maylor 1993) but criticisms by some Muslim women of this 'Western framework' (Faruqi 1991,34) led to a search for an alternative perspective as the major defining theory for this study. Feminism recognises inequalities as a starting point and sets out to bring about change. Researchers seek to expose how power is used to shape, organise, manage and control the 'status quo' and how this maintains privilege for certain groups. The perspective involves challenge, action and political involvement. Feminists ask 'boat-rocking' questions which cause discomfort to those 'in power' which Coakley (1994,39) attributes as the cause of efforts to portray feminists as 'social demons' in the last decade.

Different feminist perspectives such as liberal, marxist, radical and socialist feminism (Scraton 1992), with their political, critical and praxis dimensions (Weiner 1994) make any simplistic description of the perspective impossible but:

> All feminist analysis begins from the premise that gender involves inequality and oppression, an understanding which provides the basis for political action and change.
>
> Scraton (1992,19)

Much early criticism directed at feminist theoretical perspectives focused on the continued marginalisation of 'race'. In 1984 Hook described feminists as primarily white, middle-class, tertiary-educated western women, making assumptions and generalizations which only privileged their own voices. (cited in Shepherd 1997,118).

> Before we can adequately build theory from a comprehensive womanist/feminist perspective, we must include the social realities of diverse ethnic females.
>
> (Smith 1992 cited Hall 1993,58)

More recent perspectives have involved merging and multipositioning following postmodern and poststructuralist influences. Hall (1993,63) acknowledged the sometimes unhelpful 'race for theory' amongst feminists. This has left feminism more fractured but has opened opportunities for 'reverse-discourses' to challenge meaning and power in new ways, for example by acknowledging the significance of subjectivities and voice. It would appear that Haw (1995b), in her post-structural feminist approach to an investigation of British Muslim girls in secondary schools, facilitated a more sensitive approach to the position of Muslim females. More recent efforts to link figurational or process theory and feminism ensure the constant possibility of new theoretical positions.

Mansfield (1997) describes a 'feminist figurational' perspective establishing a framework for her investigation into sport, gender and the body. Her framework was useful in pinpointing interconnectedness between many of Elias's concepts such as: cultural phenomena and gender relations, body and habitus which have implications in the present research as they did in her study into women's exercise. Mansfield's use of process theory in the study of women acknowledges the ability of that theory to explain changing gender relations. The use of the term feminist implies a political intention which was not a motive for the present research. In the absence of any similar previous empirical research, my preference was to focus on 'how things were' and 'how they had come to be'. Whilst gender could not be ignored, that was not the single structural feature of this work. The focus of this research was on the lived experiences of being Muslim, black, women in a predominantly secular, white society. The notion of differential power balances in figurational theory ensures that gender, race and religious relations can be addressed in the perspective chosen.

To summarize, the research falls within the interpretive paradigm. A process theory of identity will underpin the study but other perspectives will be used where appropriate to inform and extend that interpretation. This 'creative', multidimensional approach should enrich the potential insights that can be gained from the research. In relation to the vital link between theory and method the selected qualitative methods (to be discussed in the next chapter) offered the best available ways of searching for deeper understanding of the life experiences explored. Using process theory to underpin a four year period of systematic data collection by one researcher following a group of Muslim women through initital teacher training and their early teaching careers, offered a means of focusing on:

a) Changing influences of significant human beings in the life experiences recounted.
b) The effects of differential power balances within particular figurations which are never static for example, in College, on teaching practice, and in their first - post schools.
c) The embodiment of Islam and how this influenced social relations in the contexts studied.
d) Detailed probing of shifting 'identities' by analysing complexities of habitus, embodiment and identity as they affected experiences and perceptions over time.
e) Interpretation of experiences in relation to other historical and social processes, for example education, racism, and religious prejudice.
f) Both the intended and unintended outcomes of human interaction, the 'unplanned' and 'unforeseen' nature of the latter turning out to be highly pertinent to the direction of this project and the life-experiences of some respondents.

For these reasons, and the fact that the initial study was process theory orientated, and therefore perhaps the greatest theoretical strength of the researcher, (Benn 1994, 1996), it was deemed the most appropriate theory for this particular research. The key to the final decision to select

this perspective was the discovery of Elias's (1991), and Mennell's (1994) contributions on the process theory of identity. At that point it was decided that the theory could be a possible 'best-fit' perspective for assisting the understanding of respondents' life-experiences in this research.

CHAPTER 4

4.1 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The approach selected for this investigation into the experiences of a group of Muslim women during and post initial teacher training was interpretive, that is based on the belief that meanings and motives are made in social action and can only be understood by probing the perspectives of human beings involved in a direct and in-depth way. Qualitative method, enabling the gathering of personal accounts of experiences, was selected as the only appropriate possibility. Since the instrument of research was the researcher, the human element, the strength of the researcher / respondent relationship, was key to the survival of the project.

The anxieties related to the human element in this type of research, referred to in the introduction, are not uncommon. Tensions are created because power is necessarily devolved from researcher to researched in this type of work. Whilst the researcher chooses the project and requests the involvement of others, there are no 'automatic rights' to the 'knowledge' which is with the respondents. They have no obligation to participate, they control much of the interaction and make researchers privy to that which they choose to make known. The researcher surrenders a degree of control and accepts "... a subordinate, dependent status vis-à-vis those they have chosen to study" (Georges and Jones 1992, 334). An advantage of this type of research, with researcher as 'active subject', is that it avoids the dehumanization, exploitation accusations of some research (Mirza 1995,167).

The issue of being white, non-Muslim and a tutor at the College where the respondents started as students raises other interesting questions in relation to power differentials within researcher / researched relationships. There is no consensus in the literature on the effect of such power differentials on the research process but there are those who suggest that only like can really know like, for example Essed (1991), and those

who suggest that this is more problematic (Mirza 1995). Walkling and Brannigan (1987) propose that objectivity and depth of qualitative research can benefit from 'distance'.

There was no doubt, after the initial issues raised about physical education, that my sex was vital: to the process of negotiation, to the depth of dialogue and openness achieved with the Muslim women, and to the possibility of continuing the research. It would have been difficult for a male researcher to conduct one to one private interviews with Muslim women over a number of years because of Islamic requirements for sex segregation and modesty between men and women after puberty. On reflection my non-Muslim status was also important. In relation to understanding Islam and the differential effects of Islamic requirements on the lives of the respondents the research was a learning process for me. The experience would have been different if approached from an Islamic position. The respondents might have felt threatened for example in discussing aspects of tension. As researcher being able to be non-judgemental about different levels of religiosity influencing College-based interactions might have been more difficult from 'the inside'. Whilst it was useful to be 'inside' in terms of gender and 'outside' in terms of religion being 'outside' in terms of colour was probably more problematic. Understanding the experiences of British Asian, African-Caribbean and Asian-African women from my position would be difficult since I could only ever share that which they were prepared to share with me. Whilst I could learn from texts about 'race' its reality is based in experience. My interpretation of their experiences might be an inadequate version of their reality.

One danger of being 'outside' lies in interpretations which problematize or pathologise the perspective of the researched, for example reverting to stereotypical notions of Asian families, ignoring the wider social and economic factors that control their lives, and the strength of family support, can lead to wrong assumptions:

> The actual lived experience of the family has little resemblance to the stereotypical notions which structure professional values and perspectives.
>
> Brah (1992, 73)

But the experiences of an Asian woman researching the lives of Asian girls were not entirely unproblematic . For Mirza (1995) her Western style dress, short hair and make-up drew negative comments from the respondents. Thoughts of her gender and 'race' giving her a passport into the community proved much more difficult (Ibid.173). She reflected on disturbing aspects of her research process brought about by her identity. Sometimes she was seen as a threat to the Asian community, she found respondents defending or apologizing for particular behaviour. Mirza felt she was '... disrupting their understanding of what a South Asian (young) woman ought to be and the kind of work she should do' (Ibid.174). She found the respondents constructed her as 'other' :

> Being perceived of as 'other' by the wider society is something that I have come to accept; to be constructed as 'other' within what one assumes to be one's own culture / society is something else.
>
> (Ibid.175)

Mirza discussed the danger of the 'false-equality' trap suggesting that successful relationships in research were dependent on much more than shared gender and 'race'. She did not expand on this but reflections on the process of 'access' experienced in my own research might explain the path that led to researcher / respondent relationships that survived, in some cases, for four years, despite all the differences.

'Access' to a group of black Muslim women came about by a chain of circumstances which were unplanned and unforeseen. After the introduction of Islamic Studies within the B.Ed. degree at Greenacres College in 1991 life continued as before in terms of the culture of the

College's domestic and professional arrangements, for example accommodation, diet, subject specific courses, procedures for school-experience allocations. The 1991 / 2 academic intake had seven self-declared Muslim women, most on the Islamic Studies course, the 1992 / 3 intake had ten. It was December 1992 before any hint of discontent came to 'public' notice via complaints to senior management. More outspoken Muslim women had entered in the 1992 / 3 intake, an Islamic Society had started giving a forum for Muslims to share concerns, and the power of increasing numbers led to the voicing of ways in which the culture of the College did not enable the women to live their lives comfortably as Muslims. One of the problems was in the compulsory physical education course for intending primary teachers. Students asked staff to consider allowing the wearing of the hijab and sex-segregated sessions with same-sex staff. The physical education department, then based at a sister College 'Waterdown' met to discuss the issues.

Within the next six months 'Waterdown' and 'Greenacres' Colleges split in terms of academic association and the combined physical education department of six was split with the two women re-allocated to offices and responsibilities at 'Greenacres' (I became acting Head of this department in September 1993), and the four men at 'Waterdown', where all main course studies and staff had been centred since the early 1980's. Many challenges faced the department at Greenacres including re-building a main course profile for physical education, and in addressing the issues raised by the Muslim women. It was at that point I decided to undertake a research project which would increase my understanding of the interface between Islam and physical education. I asked the Muslim women to help in this project.

The students perceived this as positive, someone had taken a real interest in their situation and they were very keen to help. In addition the first female Islamic Studies lecturer had just been appointed. The women valued this move by the College. The member of staff supported the research and encouraged the students to participate. All seventeen women

responded positively to requests to come along to group or individual interviews at that stage. Seven Muslim women were in a physical education group participating in a College-based dance course that I intended to observe. They agreed for the research process to go ahead and to keep personal diaries of their experiences. Another four were embarking on final school-experience that term and agreed to keep diaries and have me as 'tutor with a research interest' looking-in. As an indication of the relationship that developed (and not arrogance) a note sent to me at the end of that school-experience, by the four Muslim women, is included (App.C)

I was aware of the potential problem of power differentials interfering with the research, particularly on school-experience (Sparkes and Mackay 1996). I realised that my position as tutor, and PE 'expert' might affect the students' ability to be entirely open and honest with me about experiences and reflections. By this stage a rapport had already begun and I found the more time I spent with particular students, in school or in interview situations, the stronger the rapport grew. It was interesting that in the summer of 1995 the five who volunteered to stay within the research for the first two years of their careers had all been students of mine on school-experience at sometime during their course, the four from the 'researched school-experience' and one from the year before. If the relationship had been negative or undermining they would not have volunteered.

So 'access' in a sense was given to me by the Muslim women in the first instance. Some were more willing than others to find time to contribute to the research but rapport grew with contact, most significantly through one to one interviews, and one to one time together on school-experience. Being female was essential and being non-Muslim helped because I was not a threat to them religiously. They knew who I was, where I was coming from and my intentions in the research. I was not making judgements on their behaviour in relation to Islam, I was interested in their reflections on how Islam affected their lives as students and teachers. There has been a mutual interest in the research. Sharing the early work that has resulted

from the research helped to sustain interest and respect between researcher and researched.

Some respondents have dropped out of the research for various reasons. For example, one student failed school-experience and transferred from B.Ed. to the Bachelor of Theology course. One had a serious back problem which prevented attendance at interviews. One volunteered for the teacher-based research then withdrew when she realized the demands on time for interviews and diary-keeping (App.D). Despite the use of pseudonyms the respondents could recognise themselves in the resultant work. One who stayed with me throughout the project shared the fact that some had had a giggle over 'Nadia' saying 'I'm Muslim ... but not as religious as them' (referring to the hijab women). She said '...they knew who it was and found it quite funny.' That probably explains why I never saw Nadia again! I was sorry to lose Zauda because she had instigated many changes at Greenacres and had so much to contribute. I tried persuasion, as did my Islamic Studies colleague but, having married just before graduating, and assuming family as well as professional responsibilities in teaching she withdrew at the end of her fourth year due to lack of time to meet the commitments (App.D).The situation was more unfortunate when, having started a full-time teaching post in September '96, Zauda had resigned by Christmas. Although she saw me on return visits to College and did discuss the possibility of an interview for my research she decided against it. She did say her resignation was related to issues of religious prejudice but she did not want to implicate the school. Nothing I could say would persuade her to tell me about her experience, she said she had told nobody but I did hear from another Muslim student, unrelated to this research, that teaching mixed-sex PE to top juniors was one problem Zauda had encountered in terms of conflicting with her Islamic beliefs. She did take up some supply teaching in the second and third terms of her first year of teaching and is currently expecting her first baby.

I was pleased to gain 'Zahra' in her third year. She had taken one year out of College to go back to Mozambique (where she had spent the

first nine years of her life) for a prospective marriage partner. When that failed to work out she persuaded her father to allow her to return to College, a process she described as a 'fight'. Consequently she had missed the start of the project. On her return to Greenacres she heard about the research from friends and volunteered to help for the rest of her time at College and after leaving.

In terms of 'researcher morale' the lowest period was July to December 1996 as the project entered the planned fourth and final year of data collection. The reason for this was that none of the five July '96 graduate volunteers ended up as 'Muslim women in the State education system' in September '96 because of other changes within their circumstances. Zahra had returned to Mozambique, disillusioned at her failure to secure a teaching job despite twelve applications to schools near her Leicester home. Promises to keep in touch never materialised. Twins had planned to stay in the City and take-up supply posts which would have enabled me to compare their experiences with those of Asma, who had been on supply since September 1995. Fareeda had signed on with a supply agency but Lina had actually accepted a full-time State school post, both in Birmingham. Unfortunately their mother's worsening illness led to last minute decisions to return home to Nottingham early in September 1996. Once at home Fareeda decided to drop out of the research and Lina, although willing, married early in 1997 and moved to London. The personal difficulties, distance and unpredictability of week to week events in her life meant we lost touch. That left Cath and Nazma. Cath's College experiences had led her to declare in July 1996 that she 'couldn't call herself Muslim any longer'. She did manage to secure a full-time State school post at the last minute. Nazma accepted a full-time post in a Muslim school in September 1996 for a variety of reasons.

The purpose of extending the research over four years had been to capture experiences in the first teaching year of the 1996 Muslim women graduates who had been in the research since 1994. Their early career experiences were to add depth to material collected from the 1995

teaching, the encouragement of my tutor, and the enthusiasm of Cath and Nawar to stay in the research that ensured the project continued with seven respondents in its final year.

The unpredictability of comings and goings did cause anxiety. - Throughout the process I was constantly aware of the respondents' rights to withdraw, the small number involved, the commitment I was asking, and the dependency of the project on the good-will of the respondents. The ongoing anxiety was strongest immediately before each interview, with the telephone call to fix the next time and place. It was always dispelled as soon as we made face-to-face contact. Confidence in the research was highest immediately after each interview where sometimes I experienced disbelief that they would share so much time and so many personal reflections. I felt very privileged and as the research progressed this feeling grew.

Methodological concern has shifted recently from process to product in interpretive, qualitative research. Questions raised relate to the 'textual' product, the problem of writing, of representing others, of creating particular views of reality (Evans 1992, Richardson 1990, Sparkes 1992, Sparkes 1995). Since the researcher's aim is the 'enlightenment' of research subjects, representation becomes an issue and to date has received little attention. (Evans 1992, 237). Since no research paradigm is neutral it follows that there is no such thing as a 'neutral report' (Sparkes 1992, 272). Increasing a self-conscious stance in this area might be painful but should strengthen critical reflection. (Atkinson 1990).

Writing has become problematized. The power of the researcher to exert 'monological authority', to represent or misrepresent, to make choices on inclusive and exclusive data, to theorize and frame the thoughts and expressions of others, has been questioned. Relevant to this research is the particular concern that has been expressed about the notion of 'giving voice' to oppressed groups such as women, blacks, disabled and children, because it raises issues of power and privilege and the potential for exploitation. (Sparkes 1995).

Strategies to avoid exploitation have been suggested such as multivocal or polyphonic texts in which researcher and participants are co-

it raises issues of power and privilege and the potential for exploitation. (Sparkes 1995).

Strategies to avoid exploitation have been suggested such as multivocal or polyphonic texts in which researcher and participants are co-authors, and the positioning of voices as central, meaningful and productive in texts. Criticisms of such recommendations address questions of clarity and credibility within polyphonic texts, and of sensitivity and balance in centralising voices. Others have warned against displacing responsibility for texts from researcher to researched. Richardson (1990) suggests researchers have to realise '... writing is an intentional behaviour, is a site of moral responsibility' and that:

> we can choose to write so that the voice of those we write about is respected, strong and true ... As qualitative researchers, we can more easily write as situated, positioned authors, giving up, if we chose, our *authority* over the people we study but not the responsibility of *authorship* over our texts.
>
> (cited in Sparkes 1995,167-168)

This is a useful stance since it recognises the interdependence, the mutual dependence and responsibility, of researcher and researched. On reflection, increased awareness of the sensitivities involved in writing such projects has been useful. Since starting in 1994 I have become increasingly conscious of the responsibility linked to the originality of this research since so little is written on British Muslim women. The differences between us will guarantee criticism from some and there have been times when I have doubted my ability to do justice to the experiences of these women because of my 'outsider' position. However, the project is based on genuine interest and a willingness to encounter and learn from the inevitable difficulties. An example of how a personal view of the world can encourage or discourage attempts to move forward with such research can be seen in the responses of two different Head teachers to my request in September 1995 to

continue the research with the Muslim women, as they started teaching in their schools. One sent a very encouraging and positive letter (App.E) another said to the Muslim woman concerned "Oh - here we go again - people getting PhD's on the backs of others". I do have a personal interest in pursuing the project but I know that the Muslim women also have personal interest in it, especially that which is made public, if it increases awareness of their experiences, positive and negative, in and post higher education.

Having outlined theoretical and methodological considerations which have underpinned the study the next section details the research method adopted over this longitudinal study.

4.2 RESEARCH METHOD

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In 1991 Greenacres College started an Islamic Studies variant within the main subject possibilities of the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree. The Religious and Theological Studies Department (RTS) embarked on this initiative for a number of reasons. Greenacres was part of a Federation of Colleges which included a postgraduate centre for the study of Islam. All theology courses reflect the liberal Christian free churches tradition of the Colleges within the context of a modern, secular, and multi-faith society. The premise of the course was that the British Muslim community would benefit from having appropriately qualified Muslim teachers and that the open religious ethos of Greenacres made this an ideal site for such a pioneering project. It was a pity that, due to unforeseen Teacher Training Agency directives, the four-year B.Ed. at Greenacres became a victim of reform, taking the last cohort in 1995.

The course was open to Muslim and non-Muslims, and of course some Muslim women did enrol on other courses. Students were enrolled on the same professional / vocational terms as all other students with the same expectations to meet all course requirements. A major objective of this course was to encourage more ethnic minority students into initial teacher training in response to Government demand (DES Circular 24/89) and the Equal Opportunities Commission Report on Initial Teacher Training (EOC 1989). This requested attention be given to cultural diversity, to ensuring there was no discrimination in selection procedures, and to recognising the shortage of teachers from ethnic minorities in British State schools. (Swann Report 1985).

As a result of this initiative Greenacres has received increased financial support, for example from Government funding sources and from the Muslim community, recognition from another religious community, as well as national and international recognition for piloting the first course of

its nature in Britain. The Muslim community has gained an attractive route into teaching, established within an accredited and empathetic institution, with an established and 'respected' understanding of Islam.

Since that start there have been a number of significant changes in the culture of the institution which were unplanned and unforeseen. Most difficulties for the Muslim students that existed within the established culture of Greenacres were addressed, at the students' request during the second and third years of the course. By this time a larger group of Muslim students had enrolled (there were only seven in 1991). A growing Islamic Society had been formed through which the students found a means of taking their views to senior management level. Subsequent changes included: the provision of single-sex accommodation where required, dietary requirements, a prayer room and honouring of Islamic festival days. In addition, in December 1992 the female Muslim students raised difficulties they had experienced within the PE at Greenacres such as: working in mixed-sex groups, having male tutors, being asked to participate in contact activities and in some cases being asked to remove the hijab for safety reasons. This research project started as a direct attempt to increase knowledge and understanding of the experiences of Muslim women at Greenacres when I became head of the PE department in 1993.

Despite the tutor / student relationship between researcher and researched, it was the strength of the relationships that led to the continuation of the project as a relatively long-term four year project. Interest in the experiences of these Muslim women moved outwards from PE to their experiences in College, in schools, as student-teachers and as newly qualified teachers. Their willingness to continue participating enabled the project to develop.

METHOD

The exploration of experiences of a group of Muslim women in initial teacher training and their early teaching careers was qualitative in nature and took place over four years from 1994 and 1997. In 1994 all self-declared Muslim women in the 1991(cohort A) and 1992 (cohort B) Bachelor of Education degree entrants at Greenacres College (seventeen in total, seven and ten respectively) participated in the initial case study research into College-based physical education. Twelve participated in the 'third year' research into course experiences and teaching-practice, and the end of 'fourth year' research interviews, and ten volunteered to stay with the project as they moved out into teaching. The five volunteers from the cohort which graduated in 1995 remained in the research for the first two years of their teaching careers. Due to circumstances already outlined only two from the cohort which graduated in 1996 were involved in the 'teaching career' research and, due to the overlapping nature of the cohorts, they were tracked for only one year. The dovetailing of data collection from the two cohorts over the four year research period is clarified in Fig. 1.

The original decision to work with two cohorts was brought about by circumstances. The small 1991 intake of Muslim women with the leading year of the Islamic Studies option within the primary B.Ed. was followed by a larger, more vociferous group in 1992. By December 1992 the Muslim women were sufficiently 'cohesive', with the support of an Islamic Society, to voice some discontent with College provision in relation to their needs as Muslim women. It was the women from these two 'leading' cohorts who began to raise issues with the College hierarchy. One facet of concern was physical education which all intending primary teachers compulsorily undertook. This led to my decision to examine the issues more closely through a research project (Benn,1994). Initially my intention was to focus the research singly on physical education but issues raised by the Muslim women broadened factors influencing their experiences at College. Such was the positive response of the Muslim women and their

openness in interview situations that the potential of a longitudinal study emerged. The relationship established with the women in those two cohorts, and the leading, 'pioneering' path they were treading for Muslim women at Greenacres, encouraged a continuation of the investigation into the experiences of these Muslim women as they moved through College and into teaching.

The data collection was carried out with a twelve month displacement due to the inclusion of two cohorts. The collation and presentation of data collected after the initial PE study (Benn, 1994) was developed by matching data collection in relation to key points in the four year period: i) end of third year which included final school-experience, ii) end of fourth year at transition point into teaching, iii) end of each teaching term in their early careers. Methods included interviews, diaries and observations. A questionnaire was used to gain a clearer picture of all respondents professional positions at the end of the research.

RESPONDENTS

All participants were volunteers. The majority of women were of Asian origin. With one exception they were born in Britain between 1961 and 1974. They were self-declared Muslims, identified through registration cards completed on entry to Greenacres College in 1991 or 1992. Once I had decided to take the investigation beyond the initial study into physical education I collected more details from the students who volunteered to sustain their involvement. Thirteen sets of information are recorded in App H, and include details on nationality, background education, main subject studies at College, family origin, parents occupation and siblings. Those wearing hijab are indicated in the table because this became a significant factor in the experiences of some Muslim women. The respondents who stayed in the research post graduation are also noted.

FIG 1 - PLAN OF FOUR-YEAR RESEARCH PROGRAMME

1993/4	
Cohort A	Cohort B
i)Group / individual interviews. (College-based PE)	Second year PE course observations / diaries / interviews. (PE & perceptions of College and teaching)
ii) Third year school-experience observations, diaries, interviews. (SE, perceptions of College and teaching)	
1994/5	
Cohort A	Cohort B
End of 4th year individual interviews. (Reflections on College and transition teaching)	Third year school experience observations, diaries, interviews to (Individual interviews- SE / PE, perceptions of College and teaching)
1995/6	
Cohort A	Cohort B
Individual interviews and diaries on first year of teaching. Interviews December, March, July.	End of 4th year individual interviews. (Reflections on College and transition to teaching)
1996/7	
Cohort A	Cohort B
Individual interviews and diaries on second year of teaching. Interviews December, March, July.	Individual interviews and diaries on first year of teaching. Interviews December, March, July.

ACCESS

The process of starting the initial research project was discussed in the last section. Students were willing to participate in the research because they had raised the issue of tensions for them as Muslim women and the PE courses at Greenacres. Continuation of the project stemmed from the genuine interest in the research by many of the Muslim women and an enthusiasm to continue sharing their experiences. As indicated the numbers did decline for a variety of reasons, which brought its own anxieties, but this was balanced by the positive responses of those remaining in the project.

When the students moved into schools as qualified teachers I wrote requesting the continued support of respondents outlining specific research requirements (App. F). I also wrote to Head teachers informing them of my research and my wish to continue as the student-teachers took up their first posts (App.E). No Head teachers objected, most sent verbal consent via the Muslim teacher concerned. Differences in responses were discussed in the last section.

CASE STUDY

The term 'case study' defines the project well. Researchers using this approach make no claims to be representative but to undertake detailed investigation into "...a single institution, community or social group, an individual person, a particular historical event, or a single social action." (Haralambos et al 1991,726). Becker described one aim of a case study as the attempt 'to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the group under study.' (cited ibid.). Whilst there are advantages and disadvantages to such an approach it is particularly appropriate for enabling one researcher to study a situation in-depth over a specified time-scale, and for opening the possibilities of creating hypotheses for further research rather than seeking solutions to pre-determined hypotheses. If case studies:

are carried out systematically and critically, if they are aimed at the improvement of education, if they are relatable, and if by publication of the findings they extend the boundaries of existing knowledge, then they are a valid form of educational research.

(Bassey 1981, cited Bell 1993,9)

The term case study has been described as " 'an umbrella term for a family of research methods having in common the decision to focus on inquiry around an instance' ... Though observation and interviews are most frequently used ... no method is excluded." (Adelman et al 1971 cited Bell 1993, 8). The case study is a tool of the qualitative researcher through which:

> The researcher attempts to capture data on the perceptions of local actors "from the inside," through a process of deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding ... and of suspending or "bracketing" preconceptions about the topics under discussion.
>
> (Miles and Huberman 1994,6)

The initial period of this case study involved investigation of a group of Muslim women within one institution. In analysing the data collected from observations, interviews and diaries gathered during this time it was possible to undertake a thematic approach. (Chapter 5). Once out in schools as members of the teaching profession experiences diversified as respondents 'lived-in' their unique situations, responding and interacting to their specific daily encounters. Consequently the 'early teaching careers' interview and diary data was analysed and presented as a series of individual case studies. (Chapter 6).

INTERVIEWS

Interviewing was the major means of data gathering and became increasingly significant as the student-teachers moved out into the teaching profession. Although it was not the only data source, as it had been for Essed (1991) and Mirza (1995), it did become the most important because it was the most 'consistent' form of data collection used over the four year period, and the data source which offered most insights into the perceptions of the Muslim women.

> According to interactionism, interviewees are viewed as experiencing subjects who actively construct their social worlds; the primary issue is to generate data which give an authentic insight into people's experiences ...
>
> (Silverman, 1993, 91)

Quality of data depends on relationship between interviewer and interviewee. 'Depth interviews' can lead to 'companion' relations (Ibid.95) in which respondents feel comfortable in talking about their situation, in having conversations about their experiences (Burgess 1980, Denzin 1970). Use of interviews is not unproblematic, for example the issue of data 'status'. Some qualitative researchers have treated respondents, accounts as 'scientific statements' as 'potentially true' (Burgess 1980, Denzin 1970), others as 'situated narratives' searching for events and interpersonal relations out of which accounts arise. (Gilbert and Mulkay 1983, Whyte 1980 cited in Silverman 1993, 108). Silverman acknowledged the importance of specific 'purpose' within each research project and the possibility of using both interpretations of data, or 'twin-tracking' as incorporated by Glassner and Loughlin (1987).

All interviews in this research lasted between one and two hours, with relaxed open and honest talk about the respondents' experiences. The relationship established in the interview situation was a facet of the initial

research project which encouraged the commitment of researcher and researched to a longitudinal study. After the first three group interviews in 1994 which helped with early interactions in the presence of 'friends' (Burgess, 1984,107), all other interviews were individual, carried out in privacy, in my office at College, their classrooms in school, or their homes. By the end of the four year project seventy interviews had been conducted, tape-recorded with prior consent, and transcribed:

> ... the use of recorded data is an essential corrective to the limitations of intuition and recollection. In enabling repeated and detailed examination of the events of interaction, the use of recordings extends the range and precision of the observations that can be made.
>
> (Heritage 1984,238)

The transcriptions were always completed in full because the nature of the research was open to allow for emerging issues. Undertaking the transcriptions personally was very time-consuming but did lead to a 'double familiarity' with the conversations, aiding the analysis.

Semi-structured interviews were used to standardise issues and frameworks but allow for flexibility in direction of conversations. Precise wording, or ordering of questions was not used in every interview but general ideas and directions were used. As the research progressed interviews became more 'personal' with issues raised in previous interviews being re-explored to pick up developments or changes in respondents' perceptions. Outlines of semi-structured interviews can be found in Appendix G.

OBSERVATIONS

Observation is a common method in qualitative research and has many forms. In the initial investigation into PE some course and school-

based observations were carried out. This was developed with further school-experience visits over the next year. My observations of College-based dance courses could be classified using Dane's third type of 'participant observer', that is 'participant as known researcher' (1990,159), details of this are in Benn (1994 & 1996). The school-based research involved my 'non-participant' observation of lessons taught by Muslim women who gave their consent. The danger of the power differentials and my 'PE expertise' as potentially threatening to non-specialist primary students / teachers was acknowledged and contributed to the decision not to observe the teaching of these respondents in their early teaching careers.

DIARIES

'Diaries can produce a wealth of interesting data' (Bell, 1993, 103) but have the disadvantage of being time-consuming and therefore at risk of pressurising respondents, being rushed or avoided. Diaries are a way of collecting data in qualitative research which are commonly used to supplement material gained from other perspectives. (Giddens 1989,682). They can be used with specific frameworks to collect a range of data, for example, behaviour data. They can also be adapted to be used in more open-ended ways, to collect different kinds of information, such as emotional responses (Bell Op.Cit.). I was more interested in the latter perspective and used diaries as a follow-up to interviews in the first instance so that the students would be familiar with my research interest and the focus on their Muslim identity. The purpose was to allow respondents to write accounts of 'aspects they considered important' (Burgess 1984,129). The diaries became more focused when students moved into teaching. A more precise account of specific research methods will be discussed chronologically, in section A during the initial teacher training period, and section B in the early teaching careers period.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The situation at the end of the four-year research period raised a particular question about the current professional position of the Muslim women who had been involved at the start of the project but had dropped out along the way. A postal questionnaire was considered the most viable means of collecting up-to-date and direct information. It consisted of 'fixed-choice' and open questions to offer factual information and more subjective perspectives on experiences and situations. (Haralambos and Holborn 1991). Whilst the main advantage was the practical ease of collecting data the main disadvantage was the distance between researcher and recipient, our history ensuring power differentials could inhibit Muslim women who had dropped out of the teaching profession from responding to a 'tutor' involved in their initial teacher training. There was a high risk of non-response from those targeted through the questionnaire who had decided against full-time teaching posts: "non-response is a problem because of the likelihood ... that people who do not return questionnaires differ from those who do!" (Kalton 1971 cited Bell, 1993,86). For this reason it was decided not to send a follow-up letter to non-respondents.

A) INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

INITIAL INTERVIEWS - 1994

Three group and seven individual interviews were carried out with seventeen Muslim women from the 1991 and 1992 cohorts. These were interviews focused on the women's perspectives of physical education, during their own education in British schools, at College and on teaching-practices. In addition, other issues were raised by the respondents which underpinned all future interviews and these included: reflections on intra and inter group relations, incidents of racism and religious prejudice, tensions between Islamic and College requirements, perceptions of changes

within themselves, the College environment, their views on teaching, and the effects of 'being Muslim' students in higher education on their friendships, families and lives.

YEAR 3 SCHOOL-EXPERIENCE

The twelve subjects in the school-experience research did not all participate in interviews, receive observation visits or complete diaries. Reasons were varied, for example Nawar had a difficult school-experience. Lessons were frequently altered at the last minute and planned visits had to be cancelled. Cath was keen to participate and wanted a planned visit but could not make the end of third year / SE 3 interview.
Appendix I illustrates the information on the participation pattern more clearly.

OBSERVATIONS / VISITS

The research undertaken for this project included the observation of ten Muslim women on final school-experience, including observation of the teaching of physical education and classroom-based conversations on respondents' perceptions of their progress. During the summer term of 1994 I requested, after negotiation with the students themselves, four Muslim women as my 'quota' of school-based students for their final school-experience. The students were aware of my special interest in their experiences in physical education and were happy to have me as their 'generalist tutor' understanding that I would visit a PE lesson once during the practice as well as the weekly classroom visits. In the summer of 1995 I was given a sabbatical term and negotiated the possibility of 'visiting' six Muslim women on their final school-experience. This meant gaining permission from the students themselves, from their tutors and the schools. I observed the PE lessons, shared time with them in their classrooms and

held conversations with each student lasting approximately an hour, as well as College-based follow-up interviews.

I did not want a tight framework for the research observations but wanted a "...kind of natural observation" (Walker 1985,139) which would allow reflection on emergent features. However, having observed students teaching since 1981 I would inevitably make judgements in relation to well-accepted notions of good practice, for example in PE aspects of organisation, management, relationships with pupils, appropriateness of content, quality of teaching and learning (BAALPE 1993, DES 1987, 1991a). Criteria were not exhaustive or used rigidly but used selectively in response to the uniqueness of each lesson situation.

The comfortable researcher / researched relationship, and the potential reciprocity of the situation, led to the agreement of the '1995' students to allow an extra 'observer' on their school-experience. The student-teachers wanted help, especially in their teaching of PE and were keen to seek my advice in return for allowing me to 'sit-in' on their lessons. In addition to the normal evaluation sheets completed to offer guidance to the student, I completed retrospective field notes which included any additional observations or comments from class teachers, heads or colleagues.

DIARIES

Solicited diaries were requested of the respondents observed on school-experience, four in 1994 and six in 1995. A precise structure was not given for the diaries, following the pattern of the diaries kept during the College-based dance course (Benn, 1994). Instead a verbal introduction was given asking respondents to record any experiences that were significant to them as Muslim student-teachers. I wanted the diaries to be accounts of aspects they considered important (Burgess 1984,129). Only five diaries were returned and none were very 'full'. In retrospect the lack of structure was probably unhelpful, although some in-depth reflections did

emerge on Islam and 'being Muslim'. The intensity of work already required of student-teachers on final school-experience was given as a major reason for non-completion of diaries.

POST YEAR 3 SCHOOL-EXPERIENCE INTERVIEWS '94 / '95

Eleven individual interviews were held in College after final school-experience, five volunteers from cohort A and six from cohort B. Questions were in two sections. One asked for reflections on school-experience. The other covered their third year at Greenacres College more generally, asking the respondents to recall positive and negative experiences, responses to the courses in physical education, and effects on other aspects of their lives, for example, friendships, family, faith, and views on the teaching profession.

END OF YEAR 4 - STUDENT / TEACHING TRANSITION INTERVIEWS '95 / '96

Twelve individual interviews were held at College after final examinations, six of the 1995 graduates and six of the 1996 graduates. The structure of this interview was again in two sections. One searched for positive and negative experiences in their fourth year at College, including any they would describe as prejudiced in any way. The other section probed more general reflections on their four year course in relation to being Muslim, personal development, effects on lives, perceptions of teaching, and physical education. I also wanted to gain insight into their aspirations, hopes and concerns of the imminent move into the teaching profession and any perceived significance of becoming Muslim teachers.

B) TEACHING '95 - '97

Once the subjects had entered schools as Newly Qualified Teachers, (NQT's) interviews and diaries were used as data sources. On this occasion more guidance for making entries in the diaries was recommended. (App.F) By the first researcher / researched meetings in December 1995 it was clear some respondents had managed more diary input than others but all were erratic. It was not due to a reluctance to fill them in but to the demands of the teaching profession on their time and energy. I decided not to add to their pressures but to 'back off', to be grateful for anything they could contribute via the diary and put the emphasis on the termly meetings to review progress. The request to complete diaries alongside giving interview time during the first year of teaching led to two respondents 'dropping out' at the end of fourth year stage These factors led to the increased significance of interviews in the research.

I decided not to undertake school-based observations once the students assumed their professional roles as teachers. This was because we had been through the tutor / student / observation experience, with the reciprocity that such a situation allowed via the process of negotiation. The newly qualified teachers now needed time and space to develop their professional skills and I was more interested in their perceptions of that development, as Muslim women, than in making judgements about observed teaching. I also realised by this stage that the incidents of racial and religious tension that had arisen with staff or pupils rarely happened in the presence of 'another person'. Therefore, in many ways my presence would interfere with the teachers in their 'natural setting'.

Individual times and places were arranged for end of term interviews with the volunteers who remained in the research post-graduation. Most interviews took place in the respondents' classrooms after school. Three invited me to their homes, and two chose College for their July interviews to enable them to finish the year in school and give

themselves more 'thinking time' before the interview. Asma, the respondent in supply teaching for the two years of research was interviewed in College and her home.

At this stage of the research, respondents had no difficulties developing the interview / conversation as they chose. End of term-one interviews revolved around recalling their initial experiences as teachers, the positives and the negatives, the influence of, and interaction with, people around them. The teachers were asked to reflect on 'being Muslim' and whether this had been of any particular significance to them in their early experiences of teaching. In every interview they were also asked about their experiences in teaching physical education.

End of spring-term interviews were structured to enable issues raised previously in December to be developed. These issues included teacher confidence, relationships, effects on personal lives, changing perceptions of teaching, and physical education. Through the July 'end of first year' interviews I sought to synthesise views that had emerged across interviews throughout the year and these included perceptions of themselves as teachers, their professional development, their Muslim identity, tensions and resolutions, and the effect on interaction with others, for example the wearing of the hijab. Development in the teaching of physical education was discussed, and changing perceptions of teaching as a career. By this stage personal 'accounts' could be re-read in previous transcripts before each interview and individual issues raised to check for clarity, continuity or change. The effects of teaching on their lives, and the changes in their perspectives over the year were reviewed, as were their views on the future and their aspirations 'five years on'.

Interviews conducted after each term in the second year of teaching developed on issues raised during the first year and became increasingly 'individualised'. The final July '97 interviews tried to synthesise particular experiences as a way of validating personal and general patterns that were emerging.

In addition to the interviews held with the Muslim women a two-hour interview was held, in July 1995, with the City Adviser for PE to discuss the history of tensions with Muslim children, parents and the provision of PE in local schools. This was undertaken to provide a context for the case studies on teaching PE in City schools. (All respondents are working in schools in the same City.)

QUESTIONNAIRE

By July 1997 it was evident from conversations with the respondents that many of the Muslim women who had been in the original group of volunteers at Greenacres in 1994 were no longer in full-time teaching. Vicarious accounts of experiences, motives and intentions of other Muslim women, in relation to teaching, were evident in the interview data collected. To increase the validity of such information a questionnaire was sent to the original seventeen participants in an attempt to ascertain their versions of choices and reasoning with regard to their teaching careers. (App.J)

TRIANGULATION, VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Methodological triangulation offered a means of increasing the validity of the project ensuring data could be cross-checked for corroboration or inconsistency using evidence from different sources (Burgess 1984, Dane, 1990, Hammersley and Atkinson 1983). However, as described above, data sources were not equally significant and changed over time leading to further questions involving weighting and validity. Such problems and complexities were recognised by Miles and Huberman (1994,266-267). Issues of validity in qualitative research are problematic, the social nature of knowledge leading Sparkes to conclude there can be "... no guarantee of validity" but it is a direction in which researchers strive (1992, 26). Respondent validation was used in this research to ensure

respondents checked interview transcripts as early as possible after each interview. No major contradictions emerged as a result of this practice but if they had more questions would have been raised about ways of resolving differences between researcher and researched.

The relevance of concepts such as reliability and validity, inherited from the positivist paradigm, are currently being questioned in relation to qualitative methodology "Seen in traditional terms, the reliability and validity of qualitatively derived findings can be seriously in doubt" (Miles and Huberman 1994,2). In this process of self-critique qualitative researchers are searching for more legitimate ways of safeguarding the credibility of research which exists within the interpretive paradigm and relates to the particular truths revealed via a qualitative approach. (Sparkes 1995).

Samples of interview transcripts, diaries, field-notes and questionnaires can be found in App. K, L,M and N respectively.

ANALYSIS

In the analysis of data within this research, interview, diary and field note texts were scanned for:

> ... any interesting patterns ... (searching for) whether anything stands out as surprising or puzzling; how the data relate to what one might have expected on the basis of common-sense knowledge, official accounts, or previous theory; and whether there are any apparent inconsistencies or contradictions among the groups or individuals, or between people's expressed beliefs or attitudes and what they do.
>
> Hammersley and Atkinson (1983,178)

Analysis involved recognising patterns or themes arising in the data, 'within' the data collected from one respondent, for example diary and interview

transcripts, and across respondents. These were categorized, for example in relation to 'significant others' in the analysis of school-experience data, and colour coded. This assisted sorting and sifting of material to identify similarities and differences in phrases, patterns, themes, sequences.

Recognition of emerging patterns influenced the direction of the research, for example facilitating the structuring of subsequent interviews. Ordering and re-ordering of data, re-visiting themes and tracing developments of respondents' experiences and perceptions resulted in "gradually elaborating a small set of generalizations that cover the consistencies discerned in the database" (Miles and Huberman 1994, 9). In analysing the College-based experiences of the Muslim women these themes or generalizations were illustrated with data examples from across respondents and data sources. (Chapter 5). When analysing and presenting the 'early teaching careers' data it was decided that an individual case study approach would offer the greatest justice to both the themes that permeated all experiences and those which made each Muslim teacher's situation unique.(Chapter 6). Theorizing the data analysis follows in chapter seven.

Finally the 'pervasive issues' of qualitative research:

> "labour-intensiveness (and extensiveness over months or years) of data collection, frequent data overload, the distinct possibility of researcher bias, the time demands of processing and coding data, the adequacy of sampling when only a few cases can be managed, the generalizability of findings, the credibility and quality of conclusions ... " (Ibid.2)

must be balanced with the strengths. Qualitative research enables insight and understanding of ordinary events in natural settings embedded in particular contexts. The sustained nature of such studies offer insight into processes rather than snapshot scenarios. Researchers deal directly with the researched and data can reveal a rich, complex, vivid sense of people's reality, a location of 'meanings' people place on their experiences

"perceptions, assumptions, prejudgements, presuppositions" (van Manen cited Ibid,10) and their social context. It is with this acknowledgement of the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research that the analysis of data collected in this study into the experiences of Muslim women in initial teacher training and their early teaching careers will be attempted.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 TEACHING PRACTICE AND FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES FOR THE MUSLIM WOMEN

This section analyses themes that emerged through interview, diary and observation data collected from twelve Muslim women during their final teaching practice in initial teacher training. The final practice occurred in the summer term of the third year of a four year B.Ed. course and built on first and second year school-experiences. Themes in this analysis constituted common experiences that were shared by 50% or more of the respondents across the school placements and are illustrated with particular examples. The intention of the research was to gain insight into those factors which contributed to positively or negatively defined experiences for the Muslim women on final teaching practice. It emerged that such experiences developed in relation to 'significant others' within the school-experience figuration, between the Muslim student-teacher and: the class teacher, colleagues, head teacher, tutor, children, parents and other students.

In relation to importance placed on the different data sources, the strongest emphasis was placed on the interviews. The reason for this was that only five diaries were returned, perhaps not surprising considering the amount of written work required on school experience. Field observations were recorded in a series of written comments on observations and conversations held in school after agreed visits to ten students. On reflection my presence in the school situation, as known College-based tutor, even with consent regarding the current investigation, inevitably had an effect on the students. In addition, any evidence of negative attitudes or behaviour towards the Muslim women, by head teachers, class teachers or children were unlikely to surface in my presence. Sifting through the data I

had no doubt that the strongest evidence of personal experiences was in the interviews, with some significant support material in diaries and field notes.

Eleven of the twelve Muslim women involved were Asian, the majority with family origins in Pakistan. Two student-teachers were African-Asians and one African-Caribbean. The latter student did not complete a final interview so the majority of this data comes from the eleven Asian student-teachers. As in all school-placements students had little choice over selected schools. Eight of the twelve were placed in inner city, predominantly Asian schools, two considered there was a 'multi-cultural balance' in their schools between Asian, White and African-Caribbean pupils, whilst two were placed in 'all-white' schools. Colleagues within all the schools were predominantly white. Across the twelve schools in the research there was one Asian, Muslim, female teacher, several Asian female classroom assistants and language support staff, and four African-Caribbean teachers.

Most significantly the data revealed that the type of interaction encountered by the student-teacher with certain people in the teaching - practice process was the most influential factor in their perceptions of positive or negative school-experience. The significance of the class teacher, head, colleagues, and children were mentioned by all respondents, supporting the work of Blair and Maylor (1993) and Siraj-Blatchford (1991). In relation to tutor, parents and other students within the school, data was more limited for obvious reasons. Four of the students had the researcher as tutor rather than visitor and were unlikely to make comments about their tutor in a one-to-one interview, five of the women were 'the only student' in their school, and some did not have much opportunity to interact with parents during their five-week teaching block. Students were differentially affected by the various encounters dependent on the 'perceived power' of the person(s), degree of involvement, and their level of self-confidence at the time of the interaction, as indicated by Sparkes and Mackay (1996).

CLASS TEACHER

The class teacher was the most influential person on school-experience and whether he or she perceived the presence of the student as a chore or a pleasure seemed to underpin positive or negative interaction from day one:

> She introduced herself 'I'm Mrs ------- I've got so much to do ... I've got this to do and that to do, I don't know how I'm going to get this done.' She made me feel on edge from the beginning.
>
> Nawar

> (Repeat practice after a failure) I had a wonderful teacher and she really calmed my fears and was very supportive.
>
> Zahra

> The insights, supports, encouragement and experience of the class teacher led to the survival of the student ... She showed genuine interest in the student and her success, and did not view this as some kind of extension of her own capability, as I've seen before.
>
> Field notes

Some students were aware that they had been allocated to specific classes to alleviate particular pressures. Zauda had been allocated to a class undergoing SATS testing, she asked to change. "I had to be assertive (at College) otherwise they don't change you." Nawar found out that she had been placed with her particular teacher because of that teacher's inability to cope:

> ... I later found out that I was there because she needed some sort of support.

The question of gender did arise, a 'low profile' area in previous research (Sikes 1993). Like 'race' imbalance, gender imbalance has been an area of 'silence' in much research on teaching practice (Menter 1989, Crozier and Menter 1993). The student who was allocated a male class teacher was apprehensive at first, preferring a female. On meeting him it was the positive nature of their encounter and time together that changed her mind.

> ... a lot has to do with the class teacher, who you are actually working with ... initially I felt ... this is going to sound a bit sexist ... I wished I'd had a woman - I would've preferred working with a woman ... but when I went in and met my class teacher he was really good, really understanding, really supportive and was into giving his advice on what would work with these children and what wouldn't ... I thought I shouldn't have had those preconceptions - he was great - didn't pressurise me too much ...
>
> Amira

Considering the issue of gender and class teacher, most respondents thought that teaching dance in front of a male class teacher could be problematic for them. The case never arose in the predominantly female environment of the primary school. They thought a male class teacher would prevent them joining in to demonstrate or work alongside the children in any way. They believed they could adapt their teaching style but would prefer a more involved approach.

Many respondents had met 'inquisitions' from female class teachers about Muslim women. They welcomed the opportunity to share something of Islam with others and to address stereotypes of Muslim women but some discussions seemed to verge on having to negotiate the right to 'be a Muslim woman'. All the time the students were aware of balancing the power of the class teacher to pass or fail them with their dignity, identity and self-assurance as Muslim women. For example in this early interaction

with her class teacher Zauda recalled a number of comments about particular views of Muslim women 'not going out of the house', 'having no rights.' "I can't see anything good in Islam - in the way people are treated." Zauda agreed with the teacher that Muslim women should not be in their houses all day and was then asked why, in that case, she wore the hijab, this was her response:

> I wasn't rude to her or anything and I said 'Well OK - for a start ... I do this for my religion and what I feel is right because ... what you are saying is wrong.' (Further discussion on Muslim countries / Islamic States) I think she was a bit surprised she said 'Oh well you've got to the end of teaching practice to convince me'. We never really talked about it again. I thought that might've been a problem but instead I think it really helped to break the ice and I think it really made our positions clear, and then I just got on with it.

Fareeda was in an all-white school and on reflection she thought the experience had been an outstanding success but she had a similar scene with her class teacher at the beginning of the practice. When discussing content of lessons she had asked if she could teach Islam in religious education, she was not prepared for the response:

> 'Are you going to indoctrinate the children?'
> and I thought 'indoctrinate the children? I'm a teacher for goodness sake ... I'm going to give them information ... I'm not going to tell them what to believe ...
> That's not what I *said* that's what I *thought*. I was really taken aback ... She had obviously judged me by the way I looked without giving me a chance to speak or anything - that was the most offensive thing that happened on school-experience.

The student-teacher's Islamic identity had become an element of disadvantage, adding the dimension of religious prejudice to experiences of racism shared by other black teachers. (Arora 1992, Ranger 1988). The follow-up to the above statement in the interview was also revealing:

> Interviewer - Did you say anything at the time?
>
> F - Far too early ... I would've got off on a really bad foot so I kept my mouth shut.

This offers an example of 'stasis' since conflict was avoided but not without some damage to positive feelings of self-worth in her identity. (Menter 1989).

Similarly, during one conversation Nawar shared the 'inquisition' she had had from her class teacher about why Muslim girls marry so young. The class teacher asked her how old she had been '... I was young - I told her the age I was when I got married. She said 'How can these people ... these Muslims get these girls married so young?' The class teacher was simultaneously admitting and denying that Nawar was a Muslim woman, asking personal questions then talking about 'these Muslims' as if she did not share that identity. Nawar was always careful and cautious outwardly in her responses, because she wanted to pass, but angry and confused inside. She even asked her tutor what happened if she failed '... because I (thought) I was going to fail in this school ... I didn't feel comfortable.'

Deciding areas of work often raised the issue of Islam. The students, six out of the ten studying Islam as their main subject within the religious education (RE) context of their course, were keen to experience teaching in this area. The response was usually uncertainty. The visibility of their Muslim identity, via dress and the wearing of the hijab seemed to instil the belief in others that they should not teach Islam. Nawar's class teacher said 'I don't think it's right for people to be teaching other people about their religion ... the children in this school are Sikh and we don't see the importance of Islam .. they would not like being taught about Islam.'

She replied

> 'It's not that I want to push Islam and I'm not pushing Islam on anyone ...' It was just the way they approached me (class teacher and RE co-ordinator together in response to her request to teach Islam). They made me think that I should never be teaching Islam.'

Negative attitudes towards Islam were attributed to the West's treatment of Islam:

> Islam is painted as militant and intolerant ... simplistic thinking where Islam is portrayed as backward and Muslims as fanatics, that regrettably characterises the West's image of Islam.
>
> Diary

Yet experiences were not always negative. In Nawar's second year school - 'all-white' - she was asked to teach the children something about Hajj. Lina was trusted to plan whatever she chose, then discuss the schemes with her teacher. These included some aspects of Islam, this was considered advantageous, not problematic, adding another form of positive outcome of difference to the positive experiences of black teachers' insider understanding of black pupils, identified by East et al. (1989).

Finally positive feedback from class teachers was important. The students were very self-critical and anxious to receive constructive criticism but they also recognised the effect of encouragement and positive reinforcement on their self-confidence. For example negative feedback ate away at any confidence Nawar had: '... there were no positive comments - look at my file - top of the lesson plans, the ones she did write on - OK maybe I'm not perfect (but) ... nothing positive?' Whilst positive reinforcement would be important to all student-teachers it was the number of negative incidents, interspersed with comments related to derogatory

images of Islam which began to raise questions of underlying attitude, intention and effect.

COLLEAGUES

Other teacher colleagues within the school were also significant in contributing towards the quality of the experience for the Muslim women. Where they were 'welcoming', outgoing and friendly, making positive efforts to include the student-teachers into the ethos of the school the respondents felt valued, a sense of belonging: 'You need that initial impression that you are welcome.' (Lina)

> The staff were ... aware of having students in .. they talked to you ... they know what its like to be a student on the final (practice) ... they were quite understanding and quite friendly. ... I got on better with the staff here (than previous schools) they were more welcoming
>
> Amira

> (A major difference between good and bad experiences)
> I think the major difference was that the staff had more team spirit - were far more comfortable, relaxed and accepting of students.
>
> Zahra

The notion of 'accepting' implying an acknowledgement of 'difference' was reinforced in the following diary statement:

> In order to be confident and enthusiastic as a teacher ...
> it helps if you feel you are 'accepted' and supported.

Comparing her unhappy final school-experience in a school with 80% Asian children and her former practice in an 'all-white' school Nawar

said: 'They (the staff) didn't make me feel a part of them - whereas the other school ... I felt so comfortable there...' This was attributed to feeling welcome and supported by everyone. When probing more deeply into why as an Asian she had felt more comfortable in an 'all-white' school Nawar suggested 'I think it's more to do with individual teachers and how they interact with you.' Where an open, welcoming ethos did not exist experiences could be very unhappy, with feelings of isolation, lack of acceptance and certainly lack of support vital to success.

> In my first school ... some teachers there ... didn't treat you very well ... not providing you with support, not talking to you.
>
> Hana

School 'policies' on students also contributed to feeling welcome or unwelcome in a school. In three of the schools students were 'not allowed' into the staffroom so did not have chance to mix with staff and feel any real sense of belonging. In the worst case they were not even allowed into resource store-rooms, they had to approach classroom assistants to get any resources: '... as student-teachers you are supposed to cater for them not them cater for you ...' (Zahra).

Sometimes the students saw certain other colleagues as 'on their side or against them'. Being the only Muslim, or ethnic minority teacher in a school could be particularly isolating if the student believed her identity as 'Muslim' was alienating. This parallels Tomlinson's (1983) findings of feelings of isolation and alienation in West Indian students at University. Fareeda, in a very happy all-white situation, had one teacher who was rude to her '... for reasons I didn't understand ... I wondered if it was because I looked very different as well, and my religion ... I don't know - you have to watch what you say.'

Nawar had a lonely struggle in a school where she felt unwanted, misunderstood and victimised. One teacher befriended her saying 'he couldn't survive one day with her class teacher' but incidents with other

staff undermined her self-esteem from the beginning including one with the secretary. She had told the Head that Nawar had been rude to her. When Nawar had asked for a prospectus, to gain some background information on the school, she was told they did not have one . She replied 'Oh I thought all schools had to have one now'. This incident came back to Nawar via the Deputy Head who came in to see her and said 'By the way you have to be careful how you speak to the staff around here' and via the tutor who had heard from the Head that she had been 'rude to the secretary.'

For Zahra having another Muslim teacher in the school to talk to helped. There was opportunity for closer understanding and shared interpretations of why that particular school experience was turning out to be so bad. (She was eventually withdrawn). All appreciated having other Asian adults at the school, usually classroom assistants, who they befriended, sharing experiences more openly than they felt able to do with other teachers. A good mix of Asian and white teachers made 'comfortable' environments for Asian students:

> ... I suppose there were more Asian teaching staff at this school than in my previous school ... I got on better with the staff here - they were more welcoming ... you could chat to them around the school ... You could laugh and joke with them ... over little things just broke the barrier down. (Between student and professional colleagues)
>
> ...
>
> Amira

In summary, relations between the Muslim women and other colleagues within the schools were significant in terms of their perceptions of 'inclusion' or 'exclusion' within the professional ethos of the schools. The nature of one-to-one interactions was more significant than the ethnicity or the sex of the colleague. Where positive, outgoing, friendly approaches were made by colleagues the Muslim women felt 'welcome' and 'accepted'.

Where ethnicity was shared by colleagues within the school more relaxed, collaborative relations were experienced. Being the only Muslim or Asian teacher in the school sometimes led to feelings of isolation, these were compounded when negative incidents accentuating the Muslim identity of the student-teacher occurred.

HEAD

The power invested in the Head teacher ensured his or her role was significant in the school-experiences of the Muslim women. The degree of involvement between Head and student determined the level of significance. Some schools delegated members of staff to assume 'responsibility for students', particularly where 'Link' tutors (mentors) were assuming greater control of supervision. In other schools, usually smaller, a closer relationship between Head and student existed. Positive experiences occurred where Head teachers were interested, forthcoming with praise, and in one case demonstrably sensitive to the needs of Muslim women. Fareeda, in an all-white school, was offered the facility of a room for prayer at lunch-time if required, and was the recipient of much praise and support from the Head throughout:

> I had an assistant ... she used to hear the Headmaster talking about me saying really good things about my standard of work, the way I was progressing, my attitude with the children and their attitude with me .. and how impressed he was ... and in my fifth week he actually offered me a job.

Her experience was so positive she left that school determined to teach '... I was not sure .... now I've decided that I love teaching and it's what I really want to do.'

Zahra attributed her failure on final school-experience (successfully repeated elsewhere) to her Head teacher. The school had 99% Asian

Muslim children, Islamic collective worship, with one other Muslim teacher. She had asked to be placed there, thinking it was the ideal final placement school for her. The Head succeeded in publicly humiliating her on the first day and she never recovered. 'I got it right from my first day'. 'It' came through comments such as 'We could do without one more student in this place we've got enough ...' and actions such as reducing her to tears, on her first morning immediately before her first lesson:

> ... she made me cry ... she bawled at me in front of ... the rest of the school were outside (the classroom in the hall) ... I heard that everyone else heard what she said ... I got the feeling she did it for everyone else to hear.

The inevitable result was a loss of confidence. Zahra found it very difficult to teach that first day and control of the children was never achieved. The confrontation by the Head contributed to that but was not the sole reason for her failure. The incident affected her whole demeanour in the school. She remembered being '... so conscious of being in the school itself and feeling so uncomfortable with the whole situation ... and I was so scared of meeting her in the corridor - it was so ironic. ... (having requested the school) I should've got over it but I didn't.' After a series of early intimidations the Head went in to watch Zahra teach and made it clear to the tutor that she did not want this student in her school. She was withdrawn and the Head announced her 'failure' and withdrawal in the staffroom. All previous school-experiences had been fine and the re-sit experience was very positive. The insensitivity of this Head, the power she chose to exert over this student, the compliance of the tutor, and the courage of the student to have another go, raise many questions. One undercurrent that she heard was that the Head had been forced by the Governors to appoint a second Muslim member of staff for the following September and had done so unwillingly. (This turned out to be Jamilah who suffered a similar fate in her NQT year).

Amira's Head did not have much contact with the students but was very aware of what was going on in her school. She invited me in for coffee on my visit and was genuinely interested in my research. This was a Church of England school with majority Asian, Muslim pupils. She told me she had rung the College when Amira arrived to check on where she stood 'on Health and Safety grounds' with wearing the hijab, including for physical education. There was a rule in the school that staff would always change for PE. College told her they foresaw no difficulties and that Muslim students were allowed to wear the hijab for PE if secured safely. There should be no problems changing for PE given adequate facilities. This incident supports Singh's (1988) concerns about lack of awareness concerning the needs of Asian teachers, for example in terms of dress. Satisfied on the 'official' line the Head expressed a concern that having a teacher in hijab might influence the children to want to wear it and they had a rule that children did not wear head covering in school. We discussed the reasons for Muslim women adopting hijab and I suggested she spoke to Amira about her concerns. She did speak to Amira but not until the end of the practice. She told her she had been concerned about the hijab for safety reasons and had rung up College. She mentioned it might be helpful for Heads if something 'official' was agreed, but said nothing about fearing the children might want to copy and wear them. Amira was angry that the Head had not spoken to her first. This was her second such experience:

> I remember on my second year TP ... the school rang up (College) they were worried about my scarf being a health and safety problem - it might get in the way. The College tutor didn't seem very understanding she just said make sure it's tied back ... really abruptly and that was it ... I remember thinking then - school rang up College - I wouldn't mind if they spoke to you - do you know what I mean?

At our interview after final school experience I told Amira about the Heads 'role model concerns' involving children emulating her with wearing headscarves:

A - Is that what she said to you?

Interviewer - Yes

A - ... I don't know why - they seem to feel threatened by it ... do you know what I mean?

Interviewer - Not safety but fear?

A - I was saying to the Head 'I know some people think this can get in your way (but) I know people who have their hair open (long hair flowing) and you can think yes there are so many ways you can have accidents.'

... it makes you wonder if a Head is thinking if (children) see a teacher wearing it they all suddenly come in wearing it !

This was perhaps the first time Amira had considered the possibility of Head teachers, powerful gate-keepers in terms of appointments and career progression, perceiving the hijab or dress of Muslim women as a possible barrier to 'fitting in' to the State system. This matches anxieties found elsewhere about the effects of difference on professional chances. (Blair and Maylor 1993).

In summary the schools in which students were most able to succeed were those which had a democratic style of management. In such situations Head teachers shared an open and flexible style, were in-touch with their staff and children, enabling and encouraging. Teachers were happy and relaxed in such an environment. Schools in which students were least likely to succeed were those which had a more autocratic style of management, closed and directed. In such situations Head teachers shared a rule-bound, tightly controlled, constraining style, and were more distant from their staff and children. Teachers were less-trusting, more guarded and anxious in such an environment. This supports much of the literature

on the role and leadership style of Heads. (Boyd 1984, Campbell 1985). It also supports recommendations for educational leaders to resist the pressures to become administrators divorced from the teaching / learning needs of the school. (Alexander et al 1992).When it came to face-to-face interaction racism and religious prejudice existed in both types of school. This plus the more obvious power differentials between student-teachers and class teachers, colleagues and Heads, meant the Asian Muslim women were particularly vulnerable to passive acceptance of prejudiced comments and behaviour.

TUTOR

The tutor was another powerful person in the school-experience process, as indicated in school-experience literature. (Dodds 1989, cited in Sparkes and Mackay 1996, Schempp and Graber1992). For the four students who formed part of the early 1993 research I was tutor / researcher at the same time. The other observations included the majority of students with other College-based tutors, and two with 'Link' tutors (a transition on the path to full school-based mentoring). As training becomes increasingly school-based, teacher-mentors will have a 'pivotal role to play in ensuring the future quality of initial teacher training'. (Mountford, 1993,29). Greenacres College was beginning the College - schools partnership process at the time of the research. On reflection the tutor / researcher role was advantageous in that it gave me a more complete picture of their teaching potential, an important factor in following up cases like Jamilah's once in the profession. But it was disadvantageous in terms of expecting students to comment, particularly with derogatory statements, about the role of the tutor in their school-experience. So data comparisons were more limited here.

The presence of a tutor always brought some anxiety which made me reflect on all of my observations. The students had known me as a member of the College staff, a tutor, before I started the research. Despite

the growing rapport in relationships with the Muslim women, my presence in the classroom would always have an effect. As Lina said:

> Any student would feel on edge - having a tutor sitting there ... makes you more alert and anxious - and I wasn't performing to the best of my ability ... even though I do feel comfortable with you ... it's just the idea ... I agreed to you coming in - but I said yes because I wanted to help you ... you did help me as well.

Such reservations did not stop the respondents sharing thoughts on 'other' tutors. Vicarious experience was shared by Salima:

> Some of the tutors bother us ... some of them are out of touch with primary - don't have anything to do with primary education ... obviously those who do curriculum area work with children will have, but others ... are just lecturers in their own main subject.

Fluctuations in numbers of visits also concerned students. Fareeda saw her College-based tutor twice in five weeks, as did Amira:

> My tutor came in the first week, then during my fourth week - with a big gap in the middle - fortunately I didn't have any problems but it's nice having someone coming in to check you are getting along well_I know my school wasn't too happy - my class teacher felt I could be getting more support from the College.

Lina, with a school-based 'link tutor' too busy to see her regularly preferred the distance. She made her own judgements about her progress, largely independently, and her confidence grew with that freedom. She recalled negative earlier experiences with 'tutors breathing down her neck', of 'pressure' and the indelible memory of the tutor who reduced her to tears: 'I sat there crying ... if people aren't going to be sensitive towards you then -

it's hard.' Being 'passed' on school-experience seemed to be the most important factor regardless of the pain in the process: 'I got through it - which I was really happy about.'

Zauda was the only student who raised the issue of being 'uncomfortable' with a male tutor on school-experience, and only in relation to dance teaching: "I asked my (male) tutor not to come in to my dance. When he came in on a Tuesday morning I swopped the lesson."

Nawar, who had a very difficult and unhappy practice, had a male tutor who she believed had been excellent:

> He was a very good tutor - I've got a feeling - the way I felt - that if I hadn't had a tutor like him I wouldn't have got through. I think I got through because he was basically just, he understood ... he picked things up - which was good.

Personally I think the case offers an example of 'teaching-practice stasis' identified by Menter (1989).

Nawar had been in a very difficult situation because a number of early incidents had led to the accumulation of very negative feelings towards the school, Head, teachers and others adults. The class teacher did not have time for her, the secretary had accused her of being rude, the co-ordinator for religious education was against her teaching Islam, the Head had been unpleasant about her request for a day-off at Eid stressing his and the staff's Christian roots. All of these incidents had been shared via the Head with the tutor. Nawar had asked for a change of school but the tutor talked her out of that. Whilst he shared the Head's conversations with Nawar he did not confront or challenge views expressed with anyone at the school. When he saw Nawar with her report after the end of the practice he actually said her class teacher was racist.

Interviewer - And how did he make that judgement?

N - He put it something like ... 'I can't actually ... because it would cause complications ... he wrote something in there that would suggest she was racist but he couldn't actually say that'.

Interviewer - Do you know if he confronted her when she made racist comments?

N - No - I don't think so.

Interviewer - Because it would cause 'complications'?

N - Yes

Interviewer - How do you feel - do you think she would've treated any student the same?

N - ... I've got a feeling it could've been because of who I am.

This incident can be analysed in two ways. By not challenging the racist or religious prejudice encountered the tutor enabled the student-teacher to gain a pass on a crucial part of the B.Ed. course. Alternatively, in-action could be viewed as compliance with racism and / or religious prejudice which disadvantages the rights of British Muslim women to 'be Muslim'. Such incidents will be discussed in chapter 7. The negative nature of the school-experience process could have long term effects on Nawar's perspectives of teaching in the State system:

> I've learnt that a lot of it (religious prejudice) is hidden - whereas I didn't know before. Before this practice I thought it was all a misunderstanding - people didn't understand (about being Muslim). What I've come to learn now - people do understand sometimes but there is prejudice as well - and there are ... hidden things about it ... some say 'We do a lot in our school to help Muslims ... whereas it's only ... show .... superficial'

. In summary, power differentials were most evident in tutor / student-teacher relations. This influenced the data available where the role

of researcher overlapped with role as tutor. The disadvantages experienced here were outweighed with the advantages of the positive confidences that were built during this time which enabled researcher / respondent relations to remain positive and fruitful for four years. Data did reveal student-teachers' anxieties about tutors, related to their 'credibility' in the classroom and their 'skills' in supporting or destroying students on teaching practice. The Muslim women in this research regarded a 'good tutor' as one who could enable them to gain a pass. For tutors of these student-teachers this sometimes involved compliance with an imperfect world of racism and religious prejudice. Incidents requiring challenge were 'overlooked' to avoid conflict which might have created greater disadvantage for the students. Whilst 'inaction' was recognised by the student-teachers they supported such action where it resulted in a 'pass' outcome.

CHILDREN

Relationships with pupils were a key factor in positive or negative school-experience reflections for the Muslim women. Feeling valued and respected were important facets of the best relationships, as they would be for all student-teachers but 'being accepted' again featured largely in the data:

> I felt valued ... they (pupils) listened to me and were able to accept me as well, and that gave me confidence ... I had a good practice because of my relationship with the children ... they were well-behaved - a really good class.
>
> Lina

Most respondents who wore hijab commented on the 'inquisitiveness' of the pupils about their dress, the non-Muslim Asians, African-Caribbeans and whites in their classes. They viewed this as a bonus, enabling them to send positive messages about Islam and being a Muslim.

The position of teacher enabled the children not only to 'see' them but to 'know them' and many felt this would be helpful in eradicating stereotypes of Muslim women:

> ... (There's) someone they could relate to ... someone they could see and know - that not all Muslim women sit at home .. you know ... the traditional stereotypes that they have. We can get up and do something - I think in this sense it was good.
>
> Amira

The majority of school-placements undertaken by these students had been in predominantly Asian schools, some in 'all-white' and some in more mixed multi-cultural situations. Their experiences and consequent choices for 'preferred schools' were not the same. Some had very positive experiences in 'all-white' schools and had a kind of missionary zeal about the role they could have in such a situation. Reflecting on taking a post in a school similar to the 'all-white' final practice situation Fareeda said:

> I'd love to ... the good thing was it was a very 'white' school - no black teachers at all - I was the only Muslim teacher there - I think it's nice for the children to have an input of ethnic minority teachers.

> ... (It's) actually having an impact and showing them that Muslims are not naive and backward as they are presented ... and giving them a correct understanding of what Islam really stands for because they've ... got a very biased opinion of Muslims ...from the media and they really need to have contact with Muslims to actually understand what it's all about.

Others including Rabiah, Zahra, Amira, Salima, Jamilah and Hana were comfortable in predominantly Asian schools where their bi-lingual skills,

and shared cultural backgrounds offered a special means of communication with some children:

> I think it was nice in one sense ... a lot of the children knew I was a Muslim ... I was wearing hijab ... and they thought 'She's here' - I suppose it was something positive for them ... it's not often that they see someone coming into teaching who they can relate to as well.
>
> Amira

All Asian respondents in predominantly Asian schools expressed concern at some point about 'being seen as teacher' or respected by the Asian children in particular because of their visible Asian Muslim identity. For Amira the problem was some of the Muslim Asian boys in her class who took advantage of their shared identity and 'tried it on' in terms of bad behaviour. This led to an interesting staff-room conversation between the student and two male colleagues. The class teacher said those boys were the same with supply teachers, anyone new but particularly women. He attributed this to perceived privileged treatment of boys in the family. Amira suggested her Asian identity exacerbated her particular situation:

> A ... I think it's more so because I am Asian as well - I'm not just one of them, they can relate to me - rather than me being just an English lady teaching them.
>
> Interviewer - Did you mean you could be doubly disadvantaged then?
>
> A - Yes ... being a woman and being one of them ... they try it on even more.

The male colleagues then reflected on the behaviour of the boys with the language support teachers (Asian women) and agreed with Amira. This led to a discussion on where this lack of respect is rooted and Amira was quick to point out that it was not in the teachings of Islam. She believed there was much in the teachings of Islam to guide young people's attitudes and actions towards others, in a genuinely humanitarian and respectful way. The problem was in the use of the Arabic language for much of the 'teaching' delivered at the Mosque. She suggested if the children were taught in a language they understood at the Mosques they might understand a bit more about the teachings of Islam, for example behaviour and respect.

For the majority of the Asian student-teachers the girls were much more demonstrative of their 'affiliation' with the teacher, leading to sharing of special confidences and comments, as found by East et al. (1989):

> It was always the Asian girls who were last out of the room at break and lunch-times and the ones asking to 'stay around Miss' offering to do jobs and tidy things in order to stay in with her. In the playground they would swarm around, fighting for a hand, or more importantly an ear to share snippets important to them, about home family and festivities, often in their shared language.
>
> Field notes

This 'affiliation' was not always helpful for the students in their role as teacher. Over-familiarity presented the risk of losing 'authority', or of not finding the respect that requires 'distance' in the teacher / pupil relationship. At least half of the Asian respondents had been called 'aunty' at some stage by Asian children in their schools. Zahra found the closeness of their identity to be a problem she did not anticipate: '... they seemed to see me as part of the family so they didn't seem to give me the same authority as a teacher.' This indicated a pre-determined notion of 'teacher' by the Asian children and the characteristics of a 'teacher'. (Wright 1992). It also suggested a mismatch in the perceptions of the children between the

'embodiment of status' afforded to teachers and to Asian women. (Featherstone 1983).Visual messages conveyed through dress and skin colour had a significant influence on these perceptions. When the 'aunty' issue was probed more deeply Nazma revealed how disturbed she was that it should be so 'odd' for these children (99% Asian Muslims in her school) 'to have someone of the same skin or the same faith background standing there teaching them'. She had three practices in predominantly Asian schools and the question had started to concern her deeply. She started discussing it with friends and found they had similar experiences:

> I know the children in inner City schools have a need for multi-racial multi-faith teachers in them ... it's like all the children come from the same community and the teachers drift in from a completely different area, don't live in the community, and live completely different life-styles to the children and so there is definitely a culture contrast thing, but its really weird that the children have soaked all this in so much that it is what they expect when they go to school, so when they see an Asian Muslim teacher they find that really odd.

Along with the majority of respondents Zahra had received regular comments such as 'Miss are you really a teacher?' or 'When is the teacher coming?' Again this raises the significance of children's perceived 'characteristics' of teachers and the 'embodiment of status'. Many student-teachers might receive such comments but these student-teachers attributed them to the same identity issue, of their 'rarity' almost making them an 'oddity' in the eyes of the children. The children's inquisitiveness mentioned earlier about hijab, dress and religion extended to origin, and associated cultural images in several cases. None as explicitly explained as Zahra's experiences:

I - Have you ever had other comments from children, other than the 'aunty' one which firmly places you within their community?

Zahra - The three schools I've been in all the Asian children have asked the same questions: The three questions they ask you when you go in - 'Miss are you Pakistani? ... 'Miss are you married?' ... 'Miss do you have children?'

(Her response was 'No, No, No'.)

> ...Maybe it's their conception of what an Asian woman is supposed to be or that's her role - her role is not to be here but to be at home, she's supposed to have a husband and kids ...

Zahra used the opportunity to explain the lived complexities of her multi-layered identity (Elias 1991, Mennell 1994). She explained that not all Asians or Muslims are from Pakistan, that she is from Mozambique, is not married, has no children and speaks Portugese as her first language. 'It's such a different concept for them because they've lived in such a closed community.' Zahra saw the need for more Muslim teachers which would demonstrate the 'normality' rather than the 'oddity' of achieving such status in the teaching profession.

A different kind of prejudice was experienced by the students in more mixed multi-cultural schools. In Asma's school, given a year six final term class with a predominance of African-Caribbean children, some Asian and white, the class teacher picked up racist comments directed towards the student after her first visit. She confronted this tackling whole class discussions on racism with the children and the comments were silenced. Asma did not recall any incidents directed towards her and was unaware of racial tensions within the class. As observer in the classroom I was aware of:

> ...intimidation, antagonism and general lack of co-operation amongst the children, with a group of physically large and loud African-Caribbean boys and girls constantly vying for control and

> status amongst their peers.... This atmosphere did nothing to help in the processes of teaching and learning a student-teacher was trying to facilitate....You wonder sometimes why students are allocated to such classes.
>
> (Field notes)

Zauda's experience of racism, or religious prejudice to be more precise since the incident related to her wearing of the hijab, was more direct:

> At the beginning I got called 'turban head' by one of my pupils - I did mention it to the class teacher but she didn't do anything about it ... I didn't emphasise it because it was the only white pupil (boy) in the class.

Rather than pursue support from elsewhere Zauda decided to deal with the situation herself and one exchange went like this:

> Boy - Turban head
>
> Z - Excuse me?
>
> Boy - Turban head
>
> Z - I'm sorry? (I didn't quite catch ...)
>
> Boy - Turban head
>
> Z - What did you say? (Voice getting louder)
>
> Boy - Oh ... sorry

Zauda found him difficult from that time but did not allow him to intimidate her and soon had him involved with work with the rest of the class. 'I felt quite successful ... he respected me - someone who thought like that about me instead of going further and further away from me actually became more in step.' When asked if this was because of the confrontation she replied it had been a positive point for her to know she could actually

manage such a situation and not lose face. The overlapping consciousness of 'race' and religion is indicated in her statement:

> ... as a Muslim ... I'm going to get a lot of that - maybe - in the future, from children ... they didn't really see me as a class teacher in the beginning. ... Sometimes they can be very negative towards you they just say 'Shut up Paki' - what can you do?

Despite this Zauda did not blame the children, she did not 'take it personally' believing such attitudes were instilled from adults, perhaps parents, who were to blame. She also told of a white student in the school who had a black parent arrive complaining of his racist attitude towards the son. She recognised 'It (racism) worked both ways'. She did not like being told to 'tread carefully' with particular children to avoid confrontation.

Nevertheless, Zauda regarded the practice as highly successful. Despite the early 'inquisition' from her class teacher about Muslim women and these comments from children at the start she felt she had established herself, broken down some barriers and come out of the experience positively. At another point in the interview which took place after the school-experience she declared she would like to teach in a challenging school like that 'I didn't feel any racism - or uncomfortable'. This student had experienced racism and religious prejudice but confronted, challenged and 'won' respect and recognition for everything she was - a highly competent teacher, Asian and Muslim. It is interesting then that she denied experiencing racism or religious prejudice, or did not recognise it, which is unlikely in view of the data, or had moved on in her relationships to the point where those experiences had become invisible.

In summary, relations between student-teachers and children were highly significant in the school-practice situation. Positive experiences involved feelings of being valued and respected as 'teachers'. The Muslim women welcomed opportunities to respond to pupils' questions about dress, religion or background. In predominantly Asian schools the

respondents enjoyed the opportunity to challenge traditional stereotypical views about Pakistani women. There were accounts of 'special affiliations' particularly with some Asian girls. The language and cultural affinity enabled confidences to be shared which would not have been possible with white teachers. There were some disturbing responses from Asian children unaccustomed to seeing Asian women as teachers. Pupils sometimes asked when the 'real teacher' was coming and used terms such as 'aunty' to address the student-teachers in their early days, indicating preconceived ideas of 'teachers' and 'Asian women'. Racism and religious prejudice from children was experienced by respondents, directed towards their colour or their dress. All coped in different ways. One student was 'protected' by the class teacher, remaining unaware of racial tensions, others used situations that arose to educate attitudes in a more open, less-stereotypical direction. Where confrontation occurred positive results were achieved with perseverance. Difficulties were experienced and overcome early in the process of building teacher / pupil relationships and were always attributed to influences beyond the child.

PARENTS

There was consensus that during a five week school-experience opportunities for building relationships with parents can be difficult. School procedures for dropping and collecting children also determine teacher / parent contact and relations. Students often described the power of a 'look'. Fareeda, in an all-white school, said:

> I remember whenever I used to send the kids home I would walk out with them ... I'd get a look -'What's she doing here' ... and I'd think ... well I'm a teacher here, so I never said anything.

Jamilah recalled a similar 'look' in her diary from a parent as she gave this mother's six year old daughter a hug on her last day:

The mother was just looking at me ... (she) said 'Come on!' and did not once look at me or smile. I got the feeling that she didn't approve of the fact that her daughter and I got on so well.... I believe it is much more to do with the clothes you are wearing than the colour of your skin. Maybe the correct term would be 'religious prejudice'.

Others felt the clothes and hijab were helpful for some Muslim Asian parents who felt they could identify with them straight away.

Most believed their bi-lingual skills were useful with the children but particularly with some Asian parents, making it easier for them to come into school to ask them questions or tell them about problems with particular children. Hana found her Punjabi very useful on second and third year school-experiences:

> ... reinforcing concepts and talking to parents - they loved it - being able to get over what they were trying to say - if there's a problem with a child - I was always called over to translate everything. ... I don't know whether I felt more valued because of it ... I just saw it as a bonus. I found - with my own class - the parents, especially the mothers, were more likely to come in and talk to you - I suppose in that sense - yes (did feel more valued).

(Hana speaks Punjabi at home, mostly to her mother who, unlike her father, does not speak English 'unless she has to...')

School-experience does not always offer opportunities for student-teachers to interact with parents but where that was possible for the students in this research the most positive aspect was in the use of their bi-lingual skills. Despite the undoubted contribution this made to home - school liaison the respondents often felt undervalued, with their skills unacknowledged, as found by Blair and Maylor (1993). In different school

situations, all-white and predominantly Asian, there were accounts of 'looks' speaking louder than words for hijab wearing students, in terms of incidents of parental hostility towards either their colour and / or their religion, supporting Bhaba's recognition of the power of the 'look'. (1994).

OTHER STUDENTS

In terms of 'other students' those in schools alongside peers on final practice were perhaps more disadvantaged than advantaged. It usually meant there were 'too many' for the staff-room, so they would be allocated their own room, often one of their own classrooms in which to gather, leading to 'in-group' 'out-group' student / teacher relations. Nawar's room was allocated for student use which meant her opportunities to work in the classroom at breaks and lunch-times were often hampered. 'I was always trying to put up displays and that'. There was no mention of support from having other students around during the school-based experience. Perhaps that is because of the other issue that did arise in the data - that of unhelpful comparisons between students.

Where students were placed alongside other students for the same practice comparisons were often made. Whether the student involved was regarded as 'superior or inferior' in terms of attitude, performance or contribution to the school, the comparisons were experienced as unhelpful and unfair. They were usually made by Heads '... well if she could do it why couldn't you ...' (Zahra), or class teachers 'What displays have you done? (other student's class teacher popping into Muslim student's room) - oh you've done a lot'. 'It was little things like that - I didn't think it was fair' (Amira). The Muslim students never felt able to speak-out against such comparisons at the time.

In summary, most information from students sharing the same school for final teaching practice was negative. Schools taking several students simultaneously often 'placed' them somewhere other than the staffroom for breaks and social time which was unhelpful in terms of

perceptions of 'belonging' to the school. The students also experienced, directly and indirectly, unhelpful comparisons of 'performance' which created new tensions for them and added to the anxieties of teaching practice.

SUMMARY

Empirically this research has highlighted that the Muslim students in this research were differentially affected by face-to-face interactions with particular categories of people: class teachers, Heads, tutors, colleagues, children, parents and other students. Many of the findings supported previous research into the experiences of black students (Blair and Maylor 1993, Siraj-Blatchford 1991), and of student-teachers on school-based practice (Menter 1989, Crozier and Menter 1993). Differentials were dependent on perceived power to control passing or failing the school-experience, the degree of involvement / contact with that person and their own level of self-confidence. Their situations were diverse, the most common being in predominantly Asian schools. Experiences varied depending on the situation but were unpredictable in terms of potential to be positive or negative placements for individual students. More influential than situation was the open, welcoming, inclusive ethos of the 'school', which is not a reified body but a group of interdependent human beings. Whilst the majority 'succeeded' in that they passed their final teaching practice, experiencing all of the problems student-teachers meet during this pressurised time, most also experienced some kind of racial tension or religious prejudice, whether they recognised it as such or not. Some did recognise the issue and the struggle they faced to eradicate negative images of Muslim women in British society:

> ... it needs to be acknowledged that bad attitudes and prejudice can affect a teacher's confidence and enthusiasm. However I feel it is

important to try to overcome this, to try to show them that you are not as 'bad' as they think you are.

Diary

Some, students like Nawar, were left emotionally scarred by experiences on school practice, with the effects of religious prejudice dominating her perceptions of teaching in the State system. Others, like Zauda, dealt with conflict more directly and confrontationally, finding positive outcomes, enabling her to focus more confidently on teaching. There was almost a feeling of expectation and therefore acceptance that they would confront stereotypical ideology of Muslim women, from children as well as adults. At the same time there was a determination to succeed:

I was going to get through no matter what ... imagine - you're doing a course with four children and you think I've had to give up so much and not spend the time I would've liked with them - so I'm going to get through this now I've started ...

Nawar

Zahra had had a big struggle with her father to allow her to come back to College after a year out, pursuing a possible marriage in Mozambique. When she was asked if she wanted to withdraw from the failing experience to try again somewhere else her reply was:

I said yes, I don't think I fought this hard to come back and not do teaching, and my past (teaching-practice) experiences have been wonderful.

There was also a determination to challenge perceptions, to maintain their dignity and identity as Muslim women and to become role models with very particular messages in the teaching profession.

It would give me great satisfaction to know that, as a result of my being there (in school), I had in some way helped to eradicate stereotypes and prejudices.

Diary

Whilst the student-teachers in this research shared common experiences with all students on school practice, and experiences of racism with all black students, they also suffered incidents of religious prejudice. For hijab-wearers, this obvious symbol of faith ensured the most direct comments about being Muslim. Sometimes these were favourable when individuals, children and adults, showed genuine interest in increasing their knowledge of Islam. More often, comments or actions were indicative of suspicion and disapproval of Islam and Islamic requirements based in ignorance which was not easy to dispel. Their relatively powerless position, and intention to be positive role-models of Muslim women, resulted in a preference to take the submissive way out. They rarely retaliated to negative or offensive comments but tried to remain positive. They worked at changing attitudes towards themselves and their Muslim identity by meeting professional expectations to the best of their ability within the school situation and by becoming involved in explanatory discussions when invited. Being accepted as a hard-working student-colleague was easier than being accepted as a Muslim woman, consequently, for some, their Muslim identity was rendered less visible in the school situation, for others such pressures led to deep-rooted, unresolvable conflicts.

In relation to Figueroa's (1993,93) five dimensions of racism / ethnicism it appears some students in this research have experienced all levels: the 'shared frame of reference', individual, interpersonal, institutional and structural racism / ethnicism. The terms 'racism' / 'ethnicism' and even 'religious prejudice', although equally appropriate seem similarly inadequate to describe the complexity of cross-structural experiences recounted by these Muslim black women.

5.2 CASE STUDY IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION, EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

This section builds on material researched for the initial investigation into the experiences of Muslim women on a primary initial teacher training course at Greenacres College (Benn 1994, 1996). In that study processes of change were investigated including changes within the institution and amongst the Muslim women as accommodation of Islamic and PE requirements were negotiated. Data collection continued, with two cohorts of Muslim women, for three years after the initial investigation. It was collected at key points in the four year B.Ed. course: in year two during and immediately after second year College-based PE courses (Ibid.), during and after year 3 school-experience, and post year four final examinations. Interviews were the main data source, along with student diaries of College-based and school-based PE experiences, and PE lesson observations during year three school-experience. In order to reflect processes of change that occurred this section will be structured chronologically to include: reflections on former PE experiences in British schools, College-based PE courses, school-experience and the teaching of PE, and end of year four reflections on teaching PE.

REFLECTIONS ON FORMER PE EXPERIENCES IN BRITISH SCHOOLS

All respondents had been educated in the British State system and recounted different memories of their own PE experiences at school. Some enjoyed the subject and recalled diverse and happy experiences. The majority of those recalling positive experiences were in single-sex secondary schools. Others recalled limited choices of activities, and negative experiences that often compromised Islamic requirements and preferred patterns of behaviour. The attitudes of teachers and those of their parents significantly influenced their experiences.

Difficulties arose, not in the activities themselves, but in the accompanying subject expectations, supporting the work of Carroll and Hollinshead (1993). Kit requirements, particularly the wearing of short skirts, were difficult for some of the Muslim women but not all:

> I was allowed to wear a track-suit under my games skirt. There was an understanding of my need to cover my legs.
>
> Leila

> ... we asked if we could wear track-suits because we had to walk past the boys, but we were told you couldn't. A large number of girls were Muslim but we were not allowed.
>
> Rabiah

Public changing, with comments such as '... we rushed to the toilets to change', and the ritual of showering that went with secondary PE, seemed to induce more distress than some of the kit regulations.

> ... with showers ... what I did in secondary school was actually miss PE because there was this shower business. ... I went to a number of schools but the problem was when I arrived at this one where everyone used to have to have a shower.
>
> Fareeda

Many coping strategies were devised, in the sense adopted by Brah and Minas (1985), with peer support to help individuals through their dilemma, which always included avoidance tactics such as: truancy indicated above, making excuses and forgetting kit. Vicarious incidents were related of parents colluding in this:

> .... they (Muslim girls) took a 'sicky' (sick note) whenever they had PE. Nadia

Swimming was the activity that caused the greatest distress in secondary PE experiences because of the public, often mixed-sex environment accompanied by the particular dress code of the activity. It was also the activity where parents had expressed most concern and had in some cases forbidden participation:

> My parents did not want me to do mixed swimming in secondary school, and were concerned when they knew I would be doing swimming at College.
>
> Salima

In relation to parental attitudes to PE most students had found parents supportive of PE in school, along with a general valuing of the education system, supporting De Knopp et al (1996). The majority understood the health aspects of the subject and encouraged participation in most activities.

> My parents thought, as it was part of the curriculum and it was good for health being physically active, they were supportive. It was OK in school but outside they thought ... you know ... let's keep it to that.
>
> Gazala

The significance of valuing PE for their children cannot be ignored because, as intimated above, such attitudes stand in stark contrast to parental support for out of school sporting activities for some Muslim girls. Sex-based differential treatment of Asian girls and boys in relation to such activities was also recognised in the findings of Carrington and Williams (1998). Some respondents had no desire to participate in sporting activities out of school, indicating different prioritising of cultural activities (Figueroa 1993, Williams 1989), but others recalled feelings of disadvantage as they

saw their brothers being encouraged to participate in sports during evenings and weekends.

> ... it's a bit different for my brothers. They can ... do everything (my parents) feel more comfortable with them going out ... they don't see it as a problem.
>
> Gazala

Whilst some saw this as a disadvantage they were loyal to their parents at all times suggesting such actions were made in their 'best interests'. There was evidence that attitudes were changing gradually with experiences for younger daughters being freer than for the eldest. Some also recognised the need to educate parents on the single-sex provision that was now available in some sporting activities which would enable them to participate without transgressing Islamic requirements:

> It's not a belief of Islam - (prohibiting women from sporting activity) ... it's just a tradition.
>
> Zauda

On reflection some respondents thought their enjoyment of PE at school was due to their 'ignorance' of Islamic requirements. Remembering their kit in particular they had some regret that they had been unaware of the Islamic dress code. As they were learning more about Islam on their Higher Education course, and in some cases becoming more religious, their perceptions of acceptable behaviour were changing:

> .... the more religious you are the more aware you are of these things. The more you study theology the more you become aware and because theology is our main subject it is on our minds all the time. Regarding what's right and what's wrong in Islam, it's a reminder all the time - we are not supposed to be doing this and this

> is what we are supposed to be doing, so you are more aware of these things.
>
> Fareeda

For many it was the opportunity to study Islam that had brought them into Greenacres. A small minority of Muslim women had not been fully aware of all the demands of a primary B.Ed. course and transferred to non QTS courses or out of the College completely because of the compulsory nature of subjects like PE and music:

> .... (friend) left because of the PE and music. Others have changed from B.Ed. to the Bachelor of Theology course for these reasons.
>
> Asma

In summary, respondents' experiences of PE as pupils themselves in British State schools had been mixed. Teachers varied in their attitude towards compromising on issues like kit, for example allowing Muslim pupils to wear track-suits or insisting on traditional games skirts for girls. Parents were usually supportive of PE because of its educational context but some were not supportive of girls' participation in out-of-school sport. This increases the significance of PE for Muslim girls as the only means through which some might learn about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Whilst swimming was the activity which caused the most concern at secondary level, any difficulties were not with the activities themselves but with the traditional PE expectations such as kit, public changing, showering and mixed-sex environments. Perceptions of personal experiences have been coloured with more recently acquired knowledge of Islamic requirements which sometimes introduced feelings of retrospective guilt.

COLLEGE-BASED PE COURSES

Details of the history and process of negotiated change that occurred at Greenacres College can be found in Benn (1994, 1996). In this section a summary of changes brought about in the College-based PE courses will be made. Between 1993 and 1994 the following changes had been accomplished: Muslim student options for single-sex groups, staffed by female tutors, visiting female class teachers accompanying children to College for team teaching, public acceptance of a more liberal dress code, specific changes for swimming, and more 'Islamically' conscious selection of material in dance courses. By the end of 1996 the gym had been made a more 'private' space for physical activity.

Tensions in the College-based PE courses for the Muslim women came to light when a group shared their concerns with the Head of Islamic Studies in 1992. Higher education PE gender issues had been highlighted in the research of Flintoff (1993) and female body consciousness in practical mixed-sex sessions was recognised as problematic for some women, for example perceived 'body scrutiny'. For the Muslim women in this research body consciousness in mixed-sex PE sessions was deeply rooted in the consciousness of religious transgression. Similarly other difficulties encountered in PE during initial teacher training courses had included occasional contact activities, male tutors and requests to remove the hijab in a 'public gymnasium' in mixed-sex company, all of which were transgressions of Islamic requirements (Sarwar 1994). These concerns were taken to Senior Management level and were directed to the male Head of PE in the then combined colleges of Waterdown and Greenacres. Due to further unrelated crises the only action taken immediately was to ensure future Muslim women entrants would be offered a single-sex group on entry to initial teacher training, with a female tutor for PE 'where possible'. Early in 1993 Waterdown and Greenacres colleges split and I was made Head of PE at Greenacres, where the Muslim women were based and the issues regarding meeting their religious requirements within the PE

programme became most pertinent. The initial study, to increase understanding of the issues involved, was undertaken in the latter half of the 1993 / 94 academic year.

The option of single-sex groups on entry to Greenacres helped some Muslim women. There was no consensus on the value of such a move at the time. Whilst some saw the offer as a positive move in support of the specific needs of some Muslim women, others did not see it as conducive to integration at the College. Those already on the course were also given the option and some moved to an all-female group. This caused some difficulties in terms of changing already established friendship groups. Some Muslim women chose to change groups saying the option came as a 'great relief'. Others chose to stay and 'put up with' the difficulties of mixed-sex PE because they enjoyed working with the people in their groups in all other curriculum area and education courses. In one group a 'new dilemma' was created when the only male member was asked to change to another group to enable his original group to become all-female. He complained to Senior Management that such a move was sexist but one voice against the growing strength of the Muslim lobby for a single-sex group was 'over-ruled'. It is recognised that Muslim men have similar requirements to Muslim women but the numbers of men, including Muslim men, in primary initial teacher training at Greenacres were too small to make an all-male group viable. The Muslim men never raised the issue of their requirements but it is perhaps an area for further research.

The dress code in PE at Greenacres for generalist primary PE students had never been rigid. The Department reinforced the fact that students needed to be comfortable and able to move. If 'baggy tee-shirts and trousers' helped the Muslim women to feel comfortable that was perfectly acceptable, and in fact was already a growing 'fashion' amongst the generalist students on their PE courses. The issue that needed clarifying was a consensus that the hijab was acceptable in PE sessions. There was growing understanding that those Muslim women who had adopted hijab needed to keep the head covering on in PE whilst the space remained public

(one wall of the gymnasium was a glass wall leading to a public passageway), whether the groups were single or mixed-sex. There were ways of securing the hijab which ensured they presented no 'safety risk' which had been the reasoning behind requests to remove them earlier.

The issue of all-female PE environments for the groups including Muslim women led to one unforeseen difficulty. This involved the sex of the accompanying class teacher with visiting classes of children. A problem had not been anticipated, and indeed went unacknowledged until revealed through a diary:

> ... we were just not expecting a male class teacher and hadn't dressed appropriately.

Once recognised within the Department it was easy to ask schools to send classes with female teachers when the all-female groups were timetabled.

Facilitating a female tutor at all times for the all-female group in a department of three staff was not entirely unproblematic. Even though the balance of PE staff at the newly established Greenacres PE department was 2:1 female to male there were some timetable difficulties in terms of facilitating the need for a female tutor to lead the all-female junior and infant groups. Due to staff strengths and specialist areas of input across the range of practical and theoretical areas that constituted the work of the PE department, the female staff ended up slightly more heavily timetabled than the male member. As head of department my interests were split between facilitating the needs of the Muslim women and showing equity to the staff members in terms of workload. To date the promise to staff Muslim groups with female staff, 'where possible' has only been problematic once, in 1997. On this occasion the students were asked if they minded having a male tutor for gymnastics. If this had been problematic a female tutor would have been provided and the workload imbalance accepted. The group in question agreed to having a male tutor (and a visit from a male Ofsted HMI) because the focus of the course was on teaching children 'brought in'

to College, rather than participating personally, as required in dance. However, the issue remains in the balance of the sex of appointed staff within the small department of three, and might be a consideration in the future of such provision or appointments.

The procedure for requesting permission from the Muslim women for the 'attendance' at a session by a male HMI during an Ofsted visit was explained to the visiting Inspector. He appreciated the situation and felt privileged to be invited to observe the session. In follow-up discussion the Muslim women told him how much they appreciated: "... just being asked instead of being told." The Inspector found such provision for Muslim women 'rare' in Initial Teacher Training and the example seen at Greenacres was regarded as 'good practice'.

Swimming, or rather the fear of anticipation of swimming courses, caused particular concern to the Muslim women. The students involved were the first third year students to undertake a compulsory swimming course. The reason for this was the pragmatic choice to use the on-site swimming pool at Greenacres for the mutual benefit of all trainee Key Stage One and Two primary teachers, in place of the outdoor education course, an activity recently relegated (Post-Dearing) to a Key Stage two only requirement. The concerns of the Muslim women related to dress, the public nature of the pool and the water-based requirements. Negotiations between students and staff led to agreements that the students could wear whatever clothing they required in the water with a reminder that the more they wore the harder free movement in the water would become. There was an assurance by the staff that a female lifeguard would be provided and no men would be allowed on the pool-side.

Some Muslim women made particularly good progress in personal water confidence during the course since opportunities to swim had been limited. Lina had not been swimming for fifteen years but soon found confidence and at the end of the course joined the all-female swimming session held once a week. The agreed liberal approach to dress did not hold

the answer for all Muslim women. Some used it to gain the confidence to move into the water but found excessive clothing cumbersome:

> I started with leggings, tee-shirt, sweat shirt etc. .... (laughs) but gradually I am wearing less and less ...
>
> Lina

Some found the wearing of extra clothing made them as conspicuous as the most revealing of swimming costumes, thereby counteracting the intention not to be the 'centre of attention'. Pre-course anxiety was obvious:

> Fareeda - I'll probably wear leggings and a long tee-shirt. You can imagine what that will look like to the outsiders. We would probably look really fundamentalist - especially in an all-female group - taking things to extreme - but it's still about personal modesty.
>
> Interviewer - You can wear whatever you want to wear.
>
> Fareeda - But it's also about how you project yourself to the rest of the group.
>
> Interviewer .... if you feel self-conscious about being differently dressed how can we overcome that?
>
> Fareeda - You can't really. It's a case of understanding. They have to understand the reason why we look the way we do ...

It was interesting to note her comment after the swimming course. Whilst there was still concern about the perceptions of 'others', pressures to conform to strict Islamic requirements were coming from 'inside' the Muslim group:

> ... (she) used to make me feel uncomfortable (in swimming) ... she used to say things like "you're a bit too revealing - cover yourself up" and things like that ... she used to wear the works.
>
> Fareeda

In terms of the public space in the pool, little could be done about the ceiling to floor window which fortunately led to gardens not public paths. The biggest problem came from a room above the pool where only a curtain prevented occupants 'viewing' activities in the pool:

> ... the only thing I can say is that when we were doing PE (swimming) there were a couple of times when men stopped to watch ... the curtains (above the pool into adjacent room) were open.
>
> Fareeda

Whilst steps could be taken to try to secure privacy this could never be entirely guaranteed or controlled from within the pool environment.

Once the first year group of Muslim women had been through the course, difficulties were minimalized. The students taking the swimming course the following year were less apprehensive and had a more positive experience:

> Swimming was great because we had an all-girls' group - which was sorted out last year ... if it hadn't been it would've been a problem this time. ... I could actually get in the water - with my swimming costume on - rather than just observe - that has been good.
>
> Zauda

> We have been so lucky ... the others (Muslim students in lower years) will never know will they?
>
> Nawar

Selection of content in dance is now undertaken more sensitively with avoidance of themes that might cause offence such as 'animals' or 'representations of gods'. With the College approach being creative, and cross-curricular, it is not difficult to find themes that remain neutral and uncontentious. This follows difficulties on the second year dance course experienced by some Muslim women in relation to a dance- drama about Chinese gods. (Benn 1994). With the inclusion of 'traditional dances of the British Isles' and dances from 'other times and places' the course incorporates examples from 'creative country dancing', Indian and African Caribbean folk styles, and a discussion on ways of interpreting the 'Post-Dearing' requirements. (DFE 1995b). It was made clear on a recent Ofsted inspection visit that traditional dances of the British Isles needed to be there in some shape or form to indicate 'adequate preparation to deliver the National Curriculum requirements'. Asian and African-Caribbean dance forms seem to be regarded as 'other', despite their evident life in the City and the regular use of black British dance artists in College and local schools.

The lack of consensus within Islam about the place of dance in education remains unhelpful for some Muslim students in initial teacher training, and in the teaching profession. (Parker-Jenkins 1995, Sarwar 1994,). Whilst many students in this research could not recall any dance experiences when at school themselves, many had their anxieties and pre-conceptions changed through the College-based course. Many thought dance was about 'pop music' and 'disco', erotic movement. Once they were encouraged to view the educational potential of dance experiences they became more convinced of its value in the PE curriculum. They could view dance as a means through which children could learn about movement itself, about how they could relate co-operatively with others, or express themselves, and how they could learn through the processes of making, performing and viewing dances. The use of starting points from across the curriculum, for example history and English, as well as the use of a variety

of possible accompaniments, for example poetry, action words, music, percussion, sound effects, and silence, further convinced the student-teachers of the potential of dance in education and of diverse ways in which they could teach the activity:

> ... before I thought 'well I don't know about this' - when I'd experienced it I thought 'Oh this is brilliant'. Out of all the PE courses I'd had since the first year the dance one I enjoyed most.
>
> Lina

> I would not hesitate in teaching dance as part of the PE curriculum (... I was a little uneasy before starting this particular course) ... My perceptions have been changed - in fact to a complete opposite - by my experiences.
>
> Diary

By the end of the short five session College-based courses attitudes towards dance in education were positive and the Muslim students appeared confident that they were not contravening Islamic requirements when involved with teaching the subject:

> ... it's provocative dance that is problematic. The dance we do in PE is not that sort of dance ... There will be people who object to dance ... they should understand about dance in education, they shouldn't complain.
>
> Zauda

Finally, with one wall of the gymnasium being floor to ceiling glass the question of achieving greater privacy was difficult to overcome. Fortunately, following a health and safety check the original glass was found to be deficient in relation to current standards required in sporting venues. After discussions with the maintenance department it was agreed,

and supported by Senior Management, to coat the inside of the glass with a film which allowed light in but meant people outside the glass could not see in. Although it does not feel very different because vision is still clear from the inside looking out, the gymnasium space is now much more private than before, and signs on the doors ask for 'All-female sessions to be respected'.

All of this has not happened without other tensions developing. Some white students objected to all-female groups being created, to finding themselves included or excluded in a group because of their sex with no prior discussion or choice. Group interaction between the Muslim and non-Muslim students was also strained on occasions, affecting the confidence of the respondents in PE which was already low in many cases:

> I sometimes get the impression that they seem to think us 'Asians' are good for nothing when it comes to games. That's the attitude I also experienced during secondary school.
>
> Diary

Whenever all-female clubs have been started there have been undercurrents suggesting things are 'not entirely fair', and requests to increase all-female pool time from one hour a week have been met with - 'Well there are others to accommodate'. Although the process of change continues, power struggles within the figuration of students, staff and interested parties at Greenacres College continue to constrain and enable progress. Recent moves to include provision for Muslim students as a major consideration in new lottery bid applications for improved Sports Centre facilities will be interesting to follow.

In summary, much has happened at Greenacres College, through a process of negotiation, to accommodate the requirements of the Muslim women without compromising the requirements of preparing primary teachers to teach PE. Muslim students have options to be placed in all-female groups, the guarantee of female tutors whenever possible, more sensitivity to Islamic requirements, most evident in swimming and dance,

improved privacy in the PE spaces and a more overt acknowledgement of the presence and needs of Muslim women for example in dress codes and interactions with visiting classes and teachers. This has done much to enable the Muslim women to feel more comfortable and less threatened in the PE situation, to have been more able to enjoy the College-based courses and consequently have become more positive in their attitudes towards teaching the subject. The greatest enthusiasm has been evident during and immediately after the courses through observations, interviews and diaries. Such changes have not occurred without new tensions being created with non-Muslim groups. As power differentials change and accommodation is made in the direction of the Muslim students there is some resentment from those most closely affected. Finally, it must be remembered that this section outlining changes in PE at Greenacres did not happen in isolation (Benn 1994, 1996). At the same time other policy changes were occurring such as the provision of more suitable dietary requirements, single-sex accommodation and the honouring of Muslim festival days such as Eid.

SCHOOL-EXPERIENCE AND THE TEACHING OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The diaries, interviews and PE lesson observation fieldnotes of Muslim women were collected for this section of the research. Only five diaries were returned, probably attributable to the intensive written demands of teaching practice, but seventeen were interviewed between 1994 and 1995 and eleven were observed in the teaching of PE. Since the majority of schools used were within the same City as the College, an interview was held with the PE Inspector to establish a sounder context for the interface of PE and the City's Muslim community. Issues arising in that interview helped to explain the diversity of experiences met by the student-teachers in this research, for example different policies on dress, variations in provision of single / mixed-sex swimming and difficulties with the

acceptance of dance. There was a history of tensions between PE requirements and the wishes of some Muslim parents to raise their children differently.

Context

The 'PE Inspector' had been in post in the City for over twenty years, mostly in an advisory subject related position. During that time he had been asked to help resolve 'PE issues' arising between schools and various Muslim communities in the City on many occasions. After several incidents relating to clashes of interests between physical educationalists and some Muslim groups:

> ... we started to look at a City policy ... what we've found is (it is better) for each school to have their own independent policy - advised by us. We no longer say 'In the City all Muslim children will do this and that ...'

The difficulty in establishing a City policy was the range of 'religiosity' found amongst different Muslim communities. Some were very strict and others 'much more liberal' therefore any policy statement would have been unsatisfactory somewhere.

> Hard and fast rules ... put you in the middle and people use it against you ... it can stir up things that don't need to be stirred up.

The differences between communities were usually attributed to the power and particular perspectives of the local Imam. Where difficulties arose they were often attributed to "... when a new Imam comes in, often not from British culture" and initiatives or negotiated activities were stopped or changed. The underlying motivation of the PE advisory team was to enable

all children to receive their entitlement to PE. The legal status of the National Curriculum has been used to support their case in recent years.

In relation to specific PE activities, swimming has led to difficult meetings between the City PE advisory team and the Muslim community. Some parents were against swimming, and suggested it '... went against the Qu'ran.' The PE team sought advise from the central Mosque and found that there was nothing to prohibit swimming in the Qu'ran. It was the mixed-sex situation, even at junior level, which had upset some parents. A number of primary schools in the City have negotiated single-sex swimming. The Baths Department try to ensure all female environments for the girls and understand the need for privacy in changing.

> ... we don't send a circular around saying you can have single-sex swimming - it's just that (some) schools allocate their time in single-sex sessions - we say it's up to you as a school.

Whilst swimming difficulties can be overcome to facilitate access for Muslim children, dance is a larger problem. "... we had an awful problem two years ago ... I think it comes from misunderstanding .. dance as an art form - they don't understand it." The Inspector thought dance was *the* perpetual problem between PE and Islam, supporting the dilemma already recognised (Sarwar 1994, Parker-Jenkins 1995, Hiskett 1989). The problems in dance were often related to the music used, types of leotards or costumes worn, and choice of movements:

> ... you could quite get the wrong impression of any dance display couldn't you?

Changing in classrooms has arisen as an issue in Muslim communities, for boys as well as girls, in City primary schools on several occasions. A number of strategies have been suggested, for example screening off part of the classroom. A good solution might be separate

changing rooms but that requires financing, and the question of supervision by one teacher in two spaces makes this problematic. With regard to actual kit: "We've accepted that, where required, boys and girls can wear track-suits and tee-shirts" but schools were encouraged to make their own decisions. The Inspector had recently been into schools seeing young girls wearing hijabs that were secured. He did not see them as presenting any particular dangers in the PE situation and therefore had no objections to primary or secondary girls wearing them. Evidence given by the Inspector on 'first choice' school ratings suggested that where uniform and strict PE kit existed in secondary schools, the school's popularity with parents soared. In schools that had more liberal regimes, popularity and 'standards' decline. There are different ways of interpreting that information, when challenged about the implications of non-liberal approaches in a pluralist society (Bullivant 1981, Troyna 1992) the response was:

> The trouble is we haven't got a pluralist culture within the schools have we, really? It's a National Curriculum ... I think most of the population would be much happier if everyone said 'We're British - we're Muslim at home but when we come out - we will come into the schools - we will do PE, this, that and the other, because that's what we've got in the National Curriculum.

which indicates the legitimization of the 'homogenizing effect' of educational experience within the National Curriculum recognized by Evans et al (1996).

Perhaps the most disturbing information gleaned on this interview was about 'unofficial exclusion' where parents, in strict Muslim areas, were keeping their children at home on PE days. He admitted "It would be difficult to prove" but one currently unresolved case involved an overt objection to a Muslim girl participating in PE. She was of secondary age and was dressed in full, long flowing clothes, with complete head and face covering and her parents did not want her to change for PE. She had sat

out of lessons for two terms, the local MP had been approached by the parents, the Head teacher was trying to work with the parents and the City Education Department to resolve the tension between the legal status of the National Curriculum and the parents' rights to determine their daughter's exclusion:

> ... the legal requirement of the National Curriculum - as far as I can work out - is above everything else ... If a child goes to school they have to do the National Curriculum - you cannot as a teacher or parent exclude any child - this is the whole part of equal opportunities - access for everyone to the curriculum - unless they've got a disapplication because they've got a statement...

Religion was not regarded as grounds for disapplication.

One of the major problems encountered by the Inspector in attempting to address the needs of the Muslim communities and to negotiate progress was "... working through an interpreter". There were tensions in meetings:

> ... I had the distinct feeling we were almost regarded as the Raj - (as if) we were coming in to *tell* them ... What I couldn't get across was that this was the right of their children - not something we were doing to them ... The view of the Asian parents we talked to was ... "You're imposing a Western view of something we don't see the point of ..." because '*We* didn't do it ' PE was superfluous'.

When we discussed the Muslim student-teachers coming through Greenacres, with their bi-lingual skills and their more positive attitudes towards PE the response was very positive:

> ... if you could get some of your Muslim women into (schools) ... with responsibility for PE ... that's the ultimate because that would break down all the barriers we have at the moment.

But later in the discussion, when the changing attitudes and influence of different Imams was suggested as a possible cause for some of the ups and downs experienced in negotiations between representatives for PE and the Muslim communities in the City the Inspector reflected:

> Given the status of PE - you're a Muslim woman and a postholder for PE - in a very fundamentalist area - what chance have you got of influencing anything?

suggesting Muslim women and PE shared marginalised positions within the Muslim communities in relation to his City-based experiences. In his experience Muslim mothers had been involved in school-based negotiations but in Education department / Muslim community negotiations male Immams and religious leaders did all the talking.

The interview offered a contextualisation for the school-based experiences the Muslim students were to experience as student-teachers and practising teachers in this City. Difficulties between PE and Islamic requirements had arisen at different times and places in the City, issues related to public changing, mixed-sex swimming, the nature of dance and kit requirements. Negotiations, usually involving an interpreter, had sometimes been difficult with few major changes emerging. The PE team found it better to negotiate concerns within individual schools than to prescribe City-wide policy because the level of religiosity, or cultural requirements, varied. The legal status of the National Curriculum, and the intention to enable all children to receive their legal entitlement in PE, became a powerful argument in the negotiation process.

MUSLIM WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF TEACHING PHYSICAL EDUCATION ON SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

This section records data related specifically to the teaching of physical education on teaching practice. Field-notes from the observation of eleven PE lessons taught by the Muslim women, diaries from five of those students, and interviews with seventeen between 1994 and 1996 were used to build a picture of their school-based initial training perceptions and experiences of this subject. Themes that emerged will be addressed in two sections. Firstly, there were experiences of PE on teaching practice in the primary school that could be regarded as 'general concerns', that is concerns that emerged which did not relate to the Muslim identity of these student-teachers but which could be shared with any primary student-trainee. These included: the practice of teaching PE, opportunities to gain experience, the role of the class teacher, and the status of the subject within the schools used. Secondly, there were 'Islamic concerns' or issues raised by the Muslim students that did relate specifically to their Muslim identity and anxieties that were anticipated or experienced during the teaching of PE on school experience. These included: privacy and PE spaces, the presence of adult males, the teaching of dance, and sensitivity to Muslim pupils.

General concerns

The observation of eleven lessons of PE taught by the Muslim students included two dance, one athletics, four games and four gymnastics. The quality of these lessons, as expected with any such profile, ranged from excellent to poor. Success of lessons was attributable to good planning, sound organisation and management and good teacher - pupil rapport. Poor lessons were attributable to discipline problems, lack of co-operation from pupils, sometimes created by inadequate planning for appropriate activities.

Some students regarded my presence as 'as support' since discussion after the lessons provided suggestions to help in their teaching of PE. Others were wary of a 'PE lecturer' focusing on Muslim women teaching PE and felt threatened by this:

> Any generalisations about Muslim teachers and PE teaching need to be cautiously made. People are individuals - some people are not so good / confident at teaching PE, others are. Personally I feel that I am able to teach PE just as well as any student whose main subject is not PE.
>
> Diary

> In some ways I feel that I am better at teaching PE than some others (regardless of whether they are Muslim or not). The reason for this being that I am enthusiastic, I join in with the children and demonstrate ... I want to discourage children from saying 'I can't' and I want them to have a go.
>
> Diary

One example of an excellent dance lesson, with a class of year-six mixed Asian, African-Caribbean and White pupils, involved the Muslim student in the teaching of Bhangra, a folk dance style from the Punjab. She was obviously comfortable with the style, enthusiastic in her participation / demonstration warm-up with the class, clear on progression throughout a well-paced lesson, positive and supportive in individual and whole-class feedback, and sensitive to the 'pupil-selected' groupings used for the final composition section. Continuity was evident and the student enjoyed the lesson as much as the pupils, many of these criteria matching those outlined in good practice documentation DES (1987, 1991a).

In contrast a poor lesson involved a student trying to teach volleyball to a year-six-leavers' class with a similar racial mix. Racial tensions within the class had already been identified and the class-teacher

had helped by directly addressing the issues that were emerging with the pupils. However, PE offered an opportunity for inter-group rivalry and this became the dominant intention in the games lesson observed as described in fieldnotes:

> In the end the children largely 'ignored' the student-teacher, not in a pointed way but they were so engrossed in each other and the plays for power that were going on between them, that their focus on work and teacher interaction was minimal... I would not have enjoyed teaching this class because the children were much more interested in taunting each other ... than doing any work and in the end you stop looking for the problem in the work provided...
> I sometimes wonder why we put students in such difficult positions.

Dominance in the pupils' own variation of the game of volleyball became a means of exerting superiority over others. This affected the groupings they 'were prepared' to work in, their biased application of any rules, and their cruel response to skill success or breakdown which led to sides winning or losing points. Any notion of fair-play was missing and the worst scenario of a competitive games-ethic was present. The student survived the lesson by trying individual and small-group appeals, maintaining a semblance of control and retaining her personal composure quite professionally. Such 'coping strategies' are examples of ways in which teachers often survive the experience rather than use preferred ways of teaching. (Evans and Davies 1986).

Interviews offered valuable information on progress in school-based opportunities to practise teaching PE. When questioned at the end of their second year some students had taught no PE at all during first and second year school-experiences. Reasons were diverse such as buses used for transport to local fields breaking down, the hall being used for other activities during PE time, rain spoiling outdoor lessons, and teachers being

unwilling to 'relinquish' PE lessons. During her first two years on the B.Ed. course Gazala:

> ... didn't get to teach any (PE) and I really regret it. I did observe it ... like an eagle ... and I picked up many points. I thought I could teach it. The hall time was a problem ... there was no time for me to take over ... I'd prepared everything (then) PE time was changed for other activities ... I didn't get chance to do it.

Similarly Amira had managed no PE lessons in her first two years and only three half hour athletics lessons on final school experience. Even when lessons did occur students found thirty minute slots difficult to manage and the loss of 'ten minutes here and there', for dinners or assembly, frustrating. All such factors contributed to the message to student-teachers that PE had a very low status in the eyes of the staff and management of their primary schools.

By the end of the third year no student had experienced teaching all the activity areas within the PE National Curriculum. The majority had opportunities in two areas by this stage, although not always with continuity: "... I've taught gymnastics, one lesson of games - I wouldn't be very confident, dance - I've never done." The somewhat haphazard nature of primary PE was reflected in the accounts of last minute requests to change activities from those planned. Class teachers would ask for a change of activity on the day of the lesson, for example if the weather was nice and they thought the children should go outside, or if the hall was required for something else. The students coped with this by falling back on lessons they had observed or experienced themselves in the past since there was no time for re-planning. Nawar was teaching a scheme on gymnastics: - "... one day she (class teacher) said she wanted me to do games outside... so I went out with this support teacher ... probably because the weather was good." Nawar had been told to change lesson activity that morning and had no

time to re-plan so she taught "off the top of her head " copying a lesson she had observed elsewhere on school-experience.

Recollections on the level of support from class teachers in the subject of PE were mixed but often uncomplimentary. "... the teacher wasn't very confident with gymnastics - she said she was learning along with me..." Despite legal requirements for a qualified teacher to be present during PE lessons taught by student-teachers, this often did not happen. Fareeda had the children on her own for gymnastics including apparatus work:

> Yes - I had them on my own ... and she (class teacher) said 'do you mind?' or whatever and 'she had a lot to do' ... so I said 'well I don't mind' ... but she knew the rules, she said 'well if you need anything I'll be up here...'

Similarly, Lina had a 'busy' class teacher and a school-based 'Link tutor' who had just been made Acting Head in a school crisis, so she received little support for any of her teaching, including PE.

Class teachers as role models in the teaching of PE also came under criticism from the students, particularly in relation to dress. Whilst Amira was in a school where the PE policy stipulated that all staff were to change for PE, policy was less-clear in other schools. Student-teachers followed whatever standards were set by the class-teacher. Sometimes these were set by example:

> In the third year TP (school) teachers didn't change so I didn't but in the second year I did - for every lesson.
>
> Zahra

> Zauda - I never changed in rounders because I never moved around much in PE. It wasn't really me teaching it - we team-taught (with class teacher).

Interviewer - Did she change for PE?

Zauda - No, not shoes either.

and sometimes they were set by 'request':

... my class teacher used to put pumps on ... I asked her one day if I could just put my pumps on ... I was short of time ... she said no - she'd rather I changed ... She never used to change herself so there were double standards there ... I was expected to change - she never used to change.

Lina

Those students who did change for PE kept their headscarves on if they were hijab-wearers. This presented no problems for the children since, as primary class teachers working with the children in all subjects, the pupils were already used to the hijab. Three of these students had head teachers who were concerned about the safety of wearing these in PE but instead of raising the issue with the students all three contacted College to find out if this was 'allowed'.

In addition to the problems of finding time and support to teach PE on school-experience a number of the students commented on the poor facilities and equipment, particularly in comparison with College-based resources. "... in school you have such limited equipment and you ask yourself 'how can I use this?' It's difficult to adjust your lesson." (Asma). Some schools took children off-site for games on buses, often to the local park or playing fields, as well as for swimming. Being dependent on buses brought its own problems with late arrivals or cancellations. Other classes had to walk quite a distance to swim or play games so when it was raining "... they just cancelled the sessions." (Amira).

Many of the above factors contributed to messages about the low status of PE in the schools used. Lessons were changed or cancelled for various reasons, continuity of teaching experience in the subject was rarely

possible, facilities and equipment were often poor, class teachers sometimes found 'other things to do' during PE time therefore offering no support in terms of professional development or legally. No students spoke of enthusiasm or guidance in PE from their schools. The students did not set their own standards on dress but followed examples set, in each situation. They were 'victims' of cancelled buses, alternative plans for the school hall, ad hoc 'changes of mind' about activity focus, and bad weather which all contributed towards very little opportunity to develop skills or confidence in the teaching of PE. Despite all of these factors the students did teach PE before the end of their third year practice, and some produced excellent lessons. There was a willingness to 'have a go', to seek advice, and to learn through their mistakes.

The implications of the poor support for student-trainee teachers in school-based PE experiences raises questions about sharing any optimism with regard to improving either equality of opportunity or quality in PE without improved professional and economic support. (Evans et al 1996). It also raises questions about Government pressure to move towards stronger partnerships with schools in the process of training and mentoring (Laws 1996). Partnership comes with responsibility. The uninspiring school PE contexts met by these students, and the lack of concern about what or how they were teaching in some of those schools, raises grave concerns in relation to any potential improvement in the teaching of PE in primary schools.

Islamic concerns

In the early 1994 interviews the Muslim students raised several concerns they had, as Muslim women, about the teaching of PE. Some concerns were in anticipation of what might occur and others were as a result of experiences encountered. In later interviews after final teaching practice these concerns were followed-up to trace changing perceptions through further practice.

Although differentially affected, in the College-based courses the issue of privacy arose for women wishing to move in a sporting environment. This had led to the provision of all-female groups and later to making the actual spaces used more private. When asked about working in primary schools, and the public nature of the primary hall or outdoor spaces the responses were mixed. Without such experiences many thought it could be a problem, especially if the head (usually male) or male teachers walked through. This did not turn out to be a major problem for anyone. Several found themselves in all-female environments in which they felt very comfortable. For Leila who was observed teaching PE during the last lesson of the day in the hall which filled with male and female parents collecting their children:

> I was seen as a ... professional teacher ... I didn't think they were watching me...I was teaching PE it is part of the National Curriculum ... It was very open ... I wished I could be shut off just to hear the children and get control - it's quite difficult ... the parents and children were used to it ... the parents were there to pick up their children.

The issue of male adults encroaching on their 'movement' space was more problematic for some Muslim women. Many thought that having a male class teacher might be difficult. Two asked school-experience organisers for placements with female class teachers. Amira was allocated a male teacher and recollected:

> ... when I found out I had a male teacher I felt ... I wished I'd had a woman ... but when we actually met, my class teacher was really good, really understanding, really supportive ... I wouldn't feel comfortable dancing in front of a male teacher there ... I would've probably asked for a female teacher to come in and observe me ... (but never taught dance therefore there was no problem).

The tension was between the students' wish to join in with dance movements, in the warm-ups and perhaps helping with demonstrations, and the Islamic requirement to remain modest in their behaviour in front of adult males. The potential to 'sexualise' dance movements seems to remain at the root of the problem. The students found a solution to the difficulty by changing teaching methods if and when an adult male was present. This was regarded as easier in gymnastics and games, choosing children to demonstrate, and teaching in a much more static way, but it was not their preferred method:

> I'd adapt in the sense that I wouldn't be doing the physical work or whatever .... I'd prefer to get involved ... I think it's important.
>
> Lina

> I would've been more restricted with what I was doing ... I'd have restricted myself a little more due to a male adult being there ... since there wasn't, I was free to do what I wanted .... it would've restricted me definitely"
>
> Fareeda

The degree to which this affected individuals depended on their religiosity. For Zauda the presence of her male tutor for a dance lesson was unthinkable: "I asked him not to come in for dance. When he came in on a Tuesday morning - I swopped the lesson. He was aware of that ..."

Despite apparent difficulties with the anticipation or experience of male adults in a dance lesson many students recalled enjoyable dance lessons, supported by excellent lessons observed. The difficulties experienced, for some, with theme selection on the College course did not occur on school-experience where students chose their own focus. The expressive aspect of dance also did not seem to cause a problem with one student selecting 'Moods' as a theme, requiring much from the children in

relation to expressive movement. For two students there were moments of uncertainty in their interviews where they reflected on the messages they were sending about dance and Islam through teaching the subject. Both shifted in the degree of their conviction that the subject was viable Islamically and both became concerned about the possibility of sending confusing messages to Muslim children in particular.

Swimming was an activity many students observed on school-experience. Unless asked directly to participate in the teaching they were content to sit and watch. Salima was asked to teach a group at the pool and there was no 'all-female' environment provided. As teacher on the pool-side the issue was not that of dress but she still felt conspicuous and disliked the attention of adult males in the first instance:

> ...I have noticed that there are not many Asian staff on the swimming-pool site. There are a few men - no women - and I have felt them staring at me - especially in the first session. This is probably because they have not seen an Asian woman teaching swimming - or such a tall one!

Once familiar with the situation these feelings disappeared and by the end of the practice it was the teaching of swimming she had enjoyed most because of the progress evident from the pupils.

The Muslim students' understanding of the needs of Muslim children in their schools was either highly valued, ignored or resented. Some were encouraged to share their knowledge with the rest of the staff. Jamilah instigated a highly successful inset session on Islam to help the rest of the staff with their understanding of the Muslim children. Others met incidents related to school kit requirements and changing arrangements that did not meet Islamic requirements. Students' sympathised with Muslim children denied the option to wear track suits. Gazala was unhappy when a Muslim child was forced to do PE in pants and vest when he was clearly upset by this. "I should've raised the issue ... but I didn't have the confidence". The

students' bi-lingual skills were often useful in sorting out PE 'reticence' on a one-to-one basis with children, often attributable to simple things such as changing or kit problems. Sometimes these efforts were unwelcome or undervalued by colleagues because they challenged established practice: "Well they can't wear track-suits because they are unsafe on the apparatus". Some students became angry at the impasse they met over concessions on kit in some primary schools:

> (Teachers) lead you to believe this is the law and part of the National Curriculum - what children have to wear ... if it's (just) school policy we might be able to ask for changes.
>
> Nawar

The Muslim students also empathised with older pupils forced to change in the classroom: '" it's very daunting...in most Muslim families changing is a very private thing." (Zahra). "I know what they feel like" (Zauda). Some allowed older junior children to change in the school toilets. Despite the consensus that these Islamic requirements were not essential until puberty many students were concerned about the evidence of early puberty they were seeing in the primary schools, and about understanding parents' and children's freedom to behave Islamically in preparation
for later requirements:

> All parents want to bring up their children in a way that will help the child to be a member of the community - to 'fit in'. Here I am speaking more culturally than religiously. It would seem strange to bring a child up in a way that bears no resemblance to what you want that child to be when he grows up.
>
> Jamilah

The respondents were differentially affected by their experiences of PE on teaching-practice. This was dependent on their individual

perspectives of Islamic requirements in relation to perceived or actual experiences. Anticipated concerns about the public nature of primary PE spaces did not become a major issue in practice. The predominantly female primary-school environments were helpful for the Muslim women. The presence of adult males was a concern for many students, as class teachers or Tutors, especially in the observation of any dance lessons, but all managed to avoid this and some were able to enjoy teaching dance lessons on TP. These student-teachers were able to empathise with the needs of Muslim children in PE. This empathy was used positively in some school contexts, but resented in others as established rules were challenged. As researcher, and head of the College PE department I acknowledge some personal disappointment that the Muslim women's enthusiasm for PE shared in the College environment was less strong after final school-based experiences. Perceptions of the subjects' status within the schools were quickly assimilated and the students preferred to follow examples set by practising teachers than to be pro-active and assertive in aspects such as: changing for PE, requesting more opportunities, or challenging last minute requests to change activities from planned lessons.

PERCEPTIONS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AT THE END OF A FOUR YEAR B.ED. COURSE

Interviews were held with eleven Muslim women after final examinations at the end of their four year initial teacher training B.Ed. degree course. All had successfully passed their degrees and were in the process of deciding their future directions. Interviews covered many aspects, one of which was the women's perceptions of PE as they moved from student-teacher to qualified primary teacher status.

As indicated at the end of third year final teaching-practice the students had experienced limited opportunities to work across the different activity areas required in the National Curriculum. Experiences in some

cases amounted to as little as three half-hour athletics lessons. PE was not the only subject neglected in this way, several commented on having no experience of teaching music. When reflecting on this at the end of year four some suggested College should have done more to ensure wider opportunities:

> I think that's one thing the College should make you do - have a go at everything on school experience. I know it's not always possible.
>
> Asma

Hana (Asian, Muslim, non-hijab-wearer, with English as her main subject) was the only student who had never experienced problems in PE at school, College or on school-experience, and consequently she was really looking forward to starting teaching, including PE. All the others recalled difficulties at some point and were more cautious at this stage of transition. They all recognised the requirement to teach PE and all were willing to do so, however, many lacked confidence but remained positive about the prospect. Concerns were related to safety and assuming responsibility 'on their own'. For Salima her lack of confidence related to teaching as a whole:

> Can I be honest? ... No I'm not ready for teaching - I don't feel confident at all - I feel a bit anxious, nervous - for a full year I don't think I could cope with that - a whole year of teaching instead of a block (practice) with all those responsibilities.

With regard to the teaching of PE most recognised personal areas of weakness and were prepared to 'learn through experience' or 'do more reading' to help themselves. Use of large apparatus was Salima's concern, swimming and dance for others. Evidence of lack of confidence in the teaching of primary PE is not new. (Evans 1988).

Attitudes towards PE had become more positive as a result of the College-based courses:

> Having the PE courses here has boosted my confidence - yes I can do it. They have broadened my knowledge of PE - that PE is for everyone and not just for the few who can make contact with the tennis ball or whatever - I didn't enjoy it at school - I tried to get out of it as much as possible - I was stuck in goal in hockey most of the time .... forced to stand in goal ... that's all I did...
>
> Asma

Unfortunately the structure of the course and the spread of short five-week blocks of PE across four years starting with games in year one, led to fading memories by the end of year four:

> Jamilah - I've taught ball throwing and catching - is that gym?
>
> Interviewer - ... no that's 'games'
>
> Jamilah - I associate games with rounders out in the park ...
>
> (giggles)
>
> Interviewer - Your year-one games course was a long time ago...

One of the major problems was the fact that the fourth year was largely academically orientated with little school contact. Students had been in their main subject groups working towards final degree examinations. This compartmentalising of the B.Ed. degree into meeting both vocational and academic requirements resulted in this unhelpful break in continuity in terms of the student-teachers' professional development.

There were other effects of this return to main subject studies, particularly for those with Islamic Studies as their main course. They were increasing their 'consciousness' of Islam and the requirements of the religion which was changing their perceptions of their role as Muslim teachers in the State system. Whilst none used PE as an example, three used music.

Aspects of music, dance and art share similar unclarified positions within Islam in relation to their value in Islamic culture. The new level of uncertainty amongst the students was one reason why a number of the 1996 cohort were thinking about moving into supply teaching rather than full-time posts:

> Interviewer - The difficulties you mentioned about music etc. and Islam - there is no consensus on them Islamically is there?
>
> Fareeda - No - I did teach all those areas on third year school experience but I was not as aware of it then. If I have to teach them on supply - I'm going to have to do it ... I know I've got to compromise ...

All remained positive about the importance of PE. In fact some had a clear aim to improve opportunities in PE for Muslim children, for example by encouraging single-sex swimming. If there were doubts about teaching dance they never mentioned them in our interviews. Thoughts on the need for single-sex PE activities, changing spaces and swimming were much stronger by the end of the fourth year:

> I can honestly say it's only come to a head in the fourth year - in my second year it would have been more acceptable but now - I see it from a different point of view - especially if it's year five and six children - they should be separate.
>
> Fareeda

Whilst such concessions were discussed for Muslim children there was clearly a growing discomfort with the whole idea of maturing youngsters changing in mixed-sex company in the classroom. For the Muslim women working in infant schools this was not an issue but for many contemplating junior teaching it was a growing concern.

The quest for single-sex education for Muslim pupils goes far beyond PE. A revelation about parental 'exclusion' of children in the City supported suggestions made by the PE Inspector, and surrounded the issue of mixed or separate education for Muslim pupils:

> One girl was not allowed to go to school because the single-sex school became a mixed school. Therefore she wasn't able to continue with her education. Another girl - she finished at twelve. They (parents) tend to get away with it. There's a way out - nobody knows they are at home.
>
> Nawar

One 'way out' is to say the girl is going for a holiday, for example to Pakistan, then she just never returns to school. When asked how widespread this practice was no clear answer could be given except that 'it happens'. Nawar was not supportive of this practice. She was aware that it was the struggle for places in single-sex schools and the problems for establishing Muslim schools that sometimes led to such drastic action. Whilst PE might not be the cause for such action it is the most visible subject which can transgress Islamic requirements. This might account for the tensions in negotiations experienced by the PE Inspector.

The end of the fourth year revealed changes in levels of confidence with PE and fresh doubts, for some, about their desire to move into the State education system as Muslim women. Both factors were related to the structure of the B.Ed. course, and the nature of the fourth year. This year distanced students from professional school-based experience and, in some cases, from mixing with other students across the College outside of their main courses. For some on the Islamic Studies course this strengthened religious conviction but posed tensions between their desire to live their lives as good Muslims and to deliver the National Curriculum in the state education system. Whilst PE was not mentioned as a contentious issue in itself, it is the subject in which Islamic requirements to cover the body and

for 'body privacy' can be most easily transgressed or accommodated. The need for such considerations at the upper end of the primary system concerned the Muslim women most. The accommodation of separate-sex education at any level is full of contention, at primary level the debate has hardly begun.

Empirically this section has tracked changing perceptions of PE amongst a small group of Muslim women through a teacher training four-year B.Ed. course. A historical context of tensions between some Muslim communities in city schools and the PE Advisory team was established. Findings from interview, diary and fieldnotes data revealed that levels of confidence shifted throughout the course. The Muslim women had come into College with diverse experiences of PE in the State system. Some recalled tensions related to Islamic and PE requirements about dress and mixed-sex activities, others were 'unaware' of Islamic requirements whilst they were pupils in school and had enjoyed participating, perceiving no tensions. Initial College-based courses in PE showed lack of awareness of Islamic requirements and caused discomfort to many Muslim women. Once issues were addressed the courses did much to improve confidence and enjoyment in PE. Enthusiasm for the subject was at its highest during and immediately after the courses. School-based experiences did little to retain or develop confidence or skills in teaching PE. There was evidence of insensitivity to the Islamic requirements, of these Muslim student-teachers and of Muslim pupils within their schools. The low status of the subject was quickly assimilated by the students. Their perceptions of the importance of PE were lowered, not in relation to the significance of the subject in the lives of pupils but in the lives of primary teachers and expectations of them as future teachers of PE. By the end of the fourth year personal doubts about confidence, safety and responsibility in PE had grown. There were anxieties but still a desire to include PE as a valuable part of the curriculum. Some students were increasing their religious conviction, and their Islamic Studies fourth-year-course was influencing this shift. For those women concerns about the State education system, for example the teaching of

particular subjects such as music, and mixed-sex education of maturing youngsters, most evident in upper primary PE, were becoming key issues of concern and were affecting their decisions to move into full-time teaching posts.

5.3 IDENTITY AND CHANGE IN INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

- The original study examined changes specifically related to the physical education courses at Greenacres College of higher education. (Benn 1994). In the process of that investigation the complexity of other influential factors in the lives of the Muslim women emerged, largely through the interview data. These influenced the perceptions of the Muslim women on their course, relations with peers, staff, and family, their religiosity, and their ambitions as teachers. Interviews at the end of 1995 and 1996 pursued these themes as the cohorts reached the end of their third and fourth years at Greenacres. The follow-up 'end of third year' interviews supported much of the 1994 data indicating similar, but improved experiences for the 1992 entrants as changes became more established. The end of fourth year data, in contrast to this, indicated some major changes in the perceptions of the Muslim women. The themes of: change and accommodation; identity; family; religiosity; and teaching will be used as a framework for this section.

1994

INITIAL EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM WOMEN AT GREENACRES COLLEGE

Data from the first year of research, 1994, indicated that change and accommodation was being negotiated between staff controlling courses, organisation and management at Greenacres College and the Muslim women.(Benn 1994, 1996). For the first cohort, the 1991 entrants, early conflicting experiences between Islamic and Greenacres culture were just accepted: "Because we were such a minority we didn't make a stand - just went along with it." (Zahra). Eventually change was instigated by the Muslim women 'en bloc' via the Head of Islamic Studies after 'suffering in silence' over a number of concerns that then became public issues. The

reason for the tensions was the lack of sensitivity to Islamic requirements at Greenacres despite well-intentioned College-policy to open the doors to increasing numbers of Muslim students with the introduction of Islamic Studies as a main course subject within the primary B.Ed. The original research tracked changes in the physical education course and requirements brought about by negotiation between staff and students. These included giving choices to Muslim women over entering all-female groups at the start of their course, ensuring female staff taught the all-female groups for the subject, encouraging flexible but safe dress codes, recognising suitable themes and approaches for dance sessions, improving the 'privacy' of the sports spaces, for example with notices on the doors and special provision for life-guarding and pool management during all-female sessions. As a result of these changes the Muslim women were appreciative of efforts made in their direction and were more positive in their attitudes towards PE.

Alongside changes and accommodation in PE the Muslim women were gaining institutional concessions elsewhere at Greenacres. A single-sex hostel was re-established following requests from Muslim parents and students. Dietary requirements were met and eventually a prayer room was established. None of these changes came without creating tensions elsewhere, for example with non-Muslim students:

> ... there was uproar when we asked for a prayer room. Now this course has been going for three years and it took us two years to get a prayer room. In our eyes this is ridiculous because to us a prayer room is an essential item. We need somewhere to pray... obviously some students think this is preferential treatment ...
>
> Fareeda

It was not until 1996 that some non-Muslim women told me in informal conversation how upset they had been to find themselves in an all-female group in 1994, made to accommodate the Muslim women's needs, with no

discussion: "... it just happened." Consultation with one group, and well-intentioned changes, had unanticipated repercussions within other sections of the student body.

Responses to the change in policy which gave Muslim women the option to be in all-female groups at Greenacres were mixed in the first instance. Some regarded this "as a *relief* because now they could do PE with no problems" (Nawar). Others found it more difficult because they had enjoyed the friendships that were established in previous groups. Some changed groups reluctantly knowing it was the right decision Islamically, others chose to stay in their mixed groups because they were less affected by the presence of males and had found ways of coping with this to their own satisfaction. Many Muslim women students shared concerns about the effects of segregation, although the balance of Muslim / non-Muslim women in the all-female group was never dominated by the former. They were concerned about relations because Muslim / non-Muslim group-mixing had already proved difficult: "... there are those who are not willing to relate to us at all... I do feel that non -Muslims think that we are intellectually inferior and we are not." (Fareeda). The complexity of the situation of wanting to be with other Muslim students and wanting to mix more openly with non-Muslim students was recognised:

> For us, we were all put in one group which was good in a way because we could support each other when ostracised by other students but in another way it probably looks as though we are such a large group that others cannot infiltrate.
>
> Zauda

For those Muslim students entering in later years, experiences were easier. The allocation of groups 'on entry' meant friendship groups could be established from the beginning of the course rather than changed mid-way.

In terms of identity there were ways in which the Muslim women wanted to be 'the same' as all other students training to teach in the State

education system yet ways in which they recognised, and needed acknowledgement of their difference.(Nielson 1986, Mennell 1994). The first cohort of Muslim women recognised the original nature of their course and saw themselves as setting an example: "... we are the first and people are watching, (for example) there is much French interest in our course." (Leila). This resulted in some in-group pressures to conform:

> ... some of the Muslim students say 'We are not going to teach PE' and I say 'What is this - it is your responsibility, it is part of the National Curriculum, you have to teach it.
>
> (Ibid.)

Some Muslim women clearly struggled with personal dilemmas as they tried to conform to a system which required them to transgress their Islamic identity. First experiences of PE at College had been difficult for some Muslim students in mixed-sex groups, with male tutors, contact activities, and requests to remove the hijab, explaining strong anti-PE feelings amongst some Muslim students.

The hijab wearing students were the most 'visibly Muslim' and experienced the dichotomy of improving group relations within the Muslim community by demonstrating commitment to 'living Islam', but distancing of relations from non-Muslim groups by creating what was sometimes called a barrier. The hijab, and adoption of Islamic dress by some Muslim students simultaneously accentuated both in and out-group identities. (Yinger 1986). Adoption of the hijab was described by the respondents as bringing a sense of personal fulfilment and empowerment to the individual. When explaining the sense of power that covering the body can bring, as well as a sign of commitment to faith, Jamilah described it as a way of personally controlling who looks and what they can see:

> So what I imagine Islam to be is ... trying to produce a society that does not focus on the appearance as much ... trying to put

> (Westernised views on female attractiveness and women's sexuality) into its proper place (between husband and wife).

In this case embodiment of culture (Shilling 1993) brought empowerment of self. Adoption of the dress offered a positive inward and outward sign of being a Muslim woman in a predominantly secular society. A 'double-disadvantage' of religion and race for the hijab-wearers, and an example of the 'filo-pastry of identity' (Mennell 1994), is acknowledged in Nadia's following comments:

> ... other students think hijab girls are strict ... extremists ... they're not - they are just normal ... I (a non-hijab wearer) am just Asian to them, not a Muslim. Even though they might be a bit rude towards me they are not as rude as they are to the hijab girls, because they'd know I'd answer them back and the hijab girls would be more respectful and dignified.

The hijab also brought intra-group antagonisms with Muslim women who had adopted a 'modernist' approach rejecting some perceived pressures to adopt hijab. For those Muslim students covering or not covering the head was not an accurate indicator of level of commitment to Islam: "You live to the law of the land. In a Muslim country you would dress in a certain way and might change this in other countries." (Leila). Such intra as well as inter-group conflicts are not uncommon in times of change. (Weeks 1990).

Concerns about others' stereotypical views of Muslim women and the effect of these on relationships were common, as were concerns about the effects of biased media reporting on the activities of Muslim groups. The students shared concern that such views coloured others' perceptions of them, and the difficulties of Muslim / non-Muslim mixing in College-group sessions exacerbated these fears: "People have preconceptions of what Muslims are like, and they are completely false ... media ... about terrorists and fundamentalists ... they don't give you a chance to explain

what real Islam is about" (Fareeda). Antagonism underpinned some students' perceptions of both Westernisation and of Westerners' views of Islam. There was growing sensitivity to myths and distortions between what might be described as established and outsider groups. (Elias and Scotson 1994). These terms are not meant in any derogatory sense but are used to relate to a theory which has been useful in the study of differentially related groups, more recently referred to as dominant and marginalised groups. (Dunning in press).

Westernisation, in particular moving away from Islam, was something the students' parents had feared. The reality was that most were moving in a more Islamic direction, matching a phenomenon identified in the early 1990's by Madood (1992) and Ghuman (1991). But other tensions were being created in some families as students started to realise their upbringings had not been in-line with 'real Islam' but more in-line with what they described as 'Pakistani culture'. In some cases the women studying at Greenacres were becoming 'more religious' than the rest of their family and this was creating tensions. Patterns of generational change and conflict within migration groups were identified by Elias (1991). Tensions were emerging not from the threat of integrating Westernised values but from the adoption of more Islamic values. Some parents were 'shocked' when daughters chose to wear the hijab, to refuse to wear brightly coloured clothes for weddings or adopt a 'straighter and narrower' path in terms of praying and other Islamic requirements. Whilst parents were pleased the women were not becoming 'more Westernised' they did not all approve of the changes either, thinking some were 'unnecessary', and in some cases a 'challenge to their authority'. Where families were 'changing', criticisms from within the extended family and local community were evident, particularly about the actions and behaviours of females: "(My parents) have had criticisms from family saying 'Your daughters are wild, they don't cover their heads' and our parents say '... we are still Muslim'. (Nadia). Recognition in 'real Islam' of issues such as equal opportunities for men and women, the rights of women for education, the responsibility within Islam

to question and seek understanding and not 'just to follow blindly', were significant in changing the Muslim students at Greenacres. In relation to bringing up her own children in the future Amira suggested:

> I will give them reasons for 'why' and encourage questions. I will bring them up in Islam. It would be different (to her own upbringing) ... giving girls as much freedom as boys, within the boundaries of Islam of course ... they will not have the same restrictions as I had. I am not blaming my parents, maybe they did not know any better, they were doing what they thought was best.

Religiosity, or the degree to which an individual would judge themselves to be a religious person, was changing for the Muslim women at Greenacres College, in a more Islamic direction. This was attributable to three main factors: an increasing community of Muslims, an increased profile for Islam within the College, and, for some, the opportunity to study Islam as a main subject. For those women studying other main subjects the community aspect was the most significant:

> I have gained a lot from being here because there are other Muslim girls here and they want to strengthen their faith, they are in the same boat as you, you feel you can talk about your experiences and problems.
>
> Amira

With the increasing accommodation of Islamic requirements, the establishment of spaces such as their prayer room, an Islamic Society, and a larger Islamic Studies staff including female staff, the culture of Islam was becoming much more firmly established at Greenacres. This enabled Muslim students to feel more comfortable, that is, more able to live their lives as Muslims. For those studying Islam as a main subject they were

enjoying the opportunity to examine 'real Islam' and reflect on the implications for them as practising Muslims:

> When I started I didn't know much - only bits. But because of main subject Islam you learn about it all the time. I started improving myself and I adopted the hijab.
>
> Lina

This brought changes in their perceptions of personal attitudes and actions, both retrospectively and currently.

The Muslim women had positive views about teaching. Their school-based experiences had been varied and whilst some saw their potential within multi-cultural state-school environments others had ambitions to work in all-white schools. In both situations the students regarded themselves as future role-models to encourage more positive attitudes towards Muslims. They hoped to challenge pre-conceived stereotypes of Muslim women and bring an understanding of real-Islam into schools. Some, particularly non-hijab wearers, regarded their black identity to be more, or equally, as important as their Muslim identity, bringing much needed ethnic minority teachers into the classroom. Those wishing to work in multi-cultural environments had experienced greater harmony in those contexts, through a deeper sharing of habitus. (Elias 1991, Dunning in press). They were hoping to bring their cultural insight, embodied identity, and bi-lingual skills to the benefit of parents and children.

1995

EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM WOMEN AT THE END OF YEAR 3 AT GREENACRES COLLEGE.

When the second cohort of respondents reached the end of their third year in 1995 they shared many experiences which continued to reinforce the themes already noted. Case examples from interview data will

be used to illustrate this continuing development. Students in this cohort had been instrumental in establishing the Islamic society and in taking grievances to the senior management team about the need for improved sensitivity to Islamic requirements at Greenacres. The power of the collective voice to sway power balances in figurations is recognised by Elias (1991). Some regarded changes as 'rights' and others as 'lucky' but all recognised that changes had made their lives more comfortable by allowing them to be practising Muslims.

An example of further change at Greenacres to accommodate the sensitivities of the Muslim women during this year involved the removal of certain Art work from public corridors. For some Muslim women the exhibition of drawings and paintings of the naked human body, for example from life-drawing classes, was offensive. The point was raised by the Muslim women with the Head of the Art department. Since that time such work has been displayed in less public spaces, most frequented by Art students, and other work has been displayed in the more public corridors:

> ... (The head of Art) was very good - I respect him as well - the conversation just cropped up - he's been very understanding towards peoples' values and beliefs - he's been very good about it ...
>
> Lina

One Muslim student had changed from the Islam course to Art and had been allowed to pursue an alternative course during the life-drawing module. In explaining the offensive nature of the display of the human body it was the perceived Westernised exploitation of women's bodies that was the issue, exacerbated through the media: "... even with a bar of soap (advert) the sex aspect has to come out.... As women we want to preserve our dignity, our honour and respect ... modesty is a very essential characteristic in Islam - not just for women - for men as well." Modesty is their way of honouring and valuing the human body, keeping it private,

respected and unexploited. This offers another example of polarisation of views between established and outsider groups.(Elias and Scotson 1994).

During 1995 attempts were made to gain more public acknowledgement of Muslim festivals at Greenacres, with varying success. Zauda had an experience which she found very unsympathetic. She had an opportunity to take part in Hajj, a pilgrimage to Mecca which should be undertaken once during the life of every Muslim. Women have to be accompanied by male adults and her father had offered to take her during this year. The offer came at a difficult personal time for Zauda with problems related to school-experience, her faith and illness. When the response to her request for time-off College was not supported by the Head of Islamic studies or the senior management team, she became very distressed. The College authorities thought it was detrimental to her studies and progress on the course, she thought she should be allowed to go because it was her religious duty to undertake this pilgrimage. This was the first request of its kind at Greenacres. Zauda's response to the refusal was to visit her Doctor. She was given three weeks off College with a covering 'sick-note' which referred to emotional problems.

> I gave my Dr's note in and went to Hajj ... when I came back the Dr signed me back on for College early but the authorities .. were questioning my 'emotional stability' for teaching - made me see the College Dr ... she was fine ... in the end the Principal called me in ... it's on my record but no disciplinary action would be taken ... I was very upset at the way I was treated.

This offers an interesting example of constraining and enabling influences within a figuration as power-balances between students, their families, medical practitioners and College managers shift and interests are pursued within the figuration via one axis of tension or another. (Elias 1994).

Other problems occurred for this group of students when the final External Examination of school-experience fell on the Festival of Id-Al-Fitr

(Eid) and some Muslim students wanted the day off to celebrate the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting, with their families. This was not agreed resulting in some unpleasant exchanges between students, tutors and schools. Shortly after this it became policy that such Festivals would be honoured in the future. Longer periods of time off, for attendance at Hajj, were not considered viable in relation to successful completion of the course. For Zauda this was unsatisfactory: "It was suggested that I could meet this (Islamic) obligation at any time in my life - but we have to take it when the opportunity occurs."

During 1995 the hijab, as a positive symbol of Muslim identity, was again mentioned, for example related to school-based incidents. This was a positive phenomenon for Amira, signifying the importance of in-group affinity to her:

> ... it does help ... when you go in they will ... identify you as Muslim rather than just thinking she's an Asian and not knowing - (Muslim children and parents) being able to identify *with* you ... because I wear hijab ... I think it's nicer if people can do this.

For Lina, the significance of in-group affinity was more important than distancing with other groups, but there were internal conflicts for her as being Muslim was becoming an increasingly prominent layer of her identity (Elias 1991). She remembered changes in the way people interacted with her when she had adopted hijab three years before:

> Lina - (Non-Muslims) were more able to accept me when I didn't wear it - whereas when I do wear it - people look at me differently ... even within College - people are more restricted towards me - I can remember how people treated me before ... I feel more respected wearing it ... (Now) I have to make that effort ... more of an effort - in order to fit in ... you have to do that anyway but I feel it's added pressure for me to go and mix with people more ...

Interviewer - So in some ways it's a barrier to building relationships - and yet at the same time in other circles you gain greater respect because you wear it?

Lina - Yes - on a personal level I'm happier - wearing it because it's given me .. more confidence - it's my identity as well - I am a Muslim - this is my identity.

Fareeda was unhappy about those people who 'see and pass judgements' on others who appear to be different. Following a school-based experience this year she recalled one teacher who had been particularly rude to her when they first met: "I wondered if it was because I looked very different ... and my religion ... I don't know - you have to watch what you say ..." The alienating and allying symbolism of embodied culture (Shilling 1993) become increasingly significant in the modern world where lives are dominated by visual symbols.

Difficulties in mixing with non-Muslim peers at Greenacres was a continuing source of concern to the Muslim women. Zahra, coming from a mixed community in Mozambique found this strange and tried to be pro-active in bringing about change:

> ... every week I'd sit on a different table to see what the reaction would be - to see if I could form relationships at all (with non-Muslims)- it was a no-go area really....In the end the girls (Muslims) said 'forget it' - there's no point - you've got to do some work ... you might as well stick with people that you know are going to accept you and get on with it...

Some Muslim / non-Muslim friendships were struck and much was gained through these friendships, but they were not common, and did not survive the test of time. Zahra recollected spending her first year as the only

Muslim woman in a College hall of residence. "(Other residents) were very reluctant to get to know me but in the end, because we lived on the same corridor, we made a nice group." Having taken a year out to return to Mozambique Zahra noticed many changes when she returned to Greenacres. One personal change which she had to make was to move out of hall into a Muslim house. Reflecting at the end of her third year at Greenacres she felt she had 'compromised herself' in joining friends in the bar when she was in the first year. She now regretted that because it was against Islam to go into places selling alcohol. This contributed to her decision to move into the Muslim house:

> ...I'd had enough - all the English girls I'd lived with decided to move in together - then I thought - do I want to go along with this or don't I? ... It's OK when you live on campus because you don't have problems with food or alcohol - you have your own room and that's it ... when you share a house obviously you have considerations of food, men coming into the house and - you know - boyfriends and that ... that's when I made the active decision. I was Vice-President of the Islamic Society and started to get to know more Muslim girls - that's when my Islam started to grow.

Increasing religiosity and preferences for 'in-group' choices in friendships and lifestyle opportunities were linked. Zahra decided to move in with her Muslim female friends as a more 'beneficial' and 'hassle-free' personal solution. Recalling her friendship with the 'English' girls she regarded them as very respectful. They had always asked her if it was 'OK' for her to come out with them but eventually she felt she was 'hindering' them and at the same time she did not want to be seen as someone reluctant to socialise. She wanted to 'belong' but also wanted to 'be different'. This supports findings by Blair and Maylor (1993) where preferred differences in social life and communal living led to difficulties for some black students.

Family influences were not as significant in the 1995 data, probably because lives were more settled with three years of a four year course completed. Reflecting Blair and Maylor's findings (Ibid.) students were differentially affected by patriarchal control. One incident mentioned did illustrate the extreme influence of such power on the life of Zahra. She had experienced great difficulty in persuading her father to allow her to return to College after a year out in Mozambique. The year out had occurred as a result of something that had happened to her sister whilst at University. Zahra's sister had been the 'first' Gujurati daughter, in her local community, to be sent away from the family home to live and study at University. Other Gujurati women from that community had been to University before but they had lived at home and studied locally. Whilst living away at University her sister had married a Yugoslavian Muslim against her father's wishes. The family 'lost face' in the eyes of the local community and 'suffered' as a consequence. Anxious that the same should not happen to Zahra her father sent her back to Mozambique for a year, to consider an arranged marriage. She had to take a year out of her course. The possible marriage was unacceptable to her so she returned to England after the year and fought hard to be allowed back to Greenacres:

> I didn't even know if I was coming back ... my dad was still saying 'no, no, no' right until the end ... (the family) were very apprehensive about me coming back.

She did return and moved into the 'Muslim house'. It meant aspects were difficult with new groups and course changes but "I had fought so hard to get back that I wasn't going to give up".

Many of the respondents were continuing to experience an increase in their faith at Greenacres. Evidence from the 1995 interviews supported findings on 'religiosity' from the '94 data. This unexpected benefit of life at College was highly valued by the Muslims: "... learning about my faith has made me think ... especially as a woman ... it is important to value certain

concepts and go by certain guidelines..." (Lina). The effects were to bind the Muslim students more closely together but also to further distance them from non-Muslim or 'Westernised' influences. There was a growing satisfaction amongst the respondents about the Greenacres environment and the groups within which they had established good working, and safe socialising, relationships:

> Interviewer - You don't do Islamic Studies but seem to spend a lot of time talking with Muslim friends?
> Amira - Yes - we talk about things we relate to - whatever is happening - don't always sit there having a specific discussion about religion - but something that might pop up generally or interest somebody.

Attitudes towards teaching were most positive at the end of year three because of the successes in passing final school-experience. Ambitions for most of the Muslim women were strong: "I love teaching", "I can't wait to have a class all of my own", "Now I know teaching is for me". Amira had been slightly deterred by the work-load and the prospect of facing that in the long-term: "I thought - did I really want it?". Nawar left with a real feeling of alienation matching some of the experiences found by Siraz-Blatchford (1991):

> After this last practice what I feel inside is that - I might not be able to teach in a State school because they wouldn't accept me - that's how I really feel - they wouldn't accept me - in the sense that they didn't like what I had to offer ... refusing me Eid and so on ... I'd have great difficulties in a State school.

The majority were most enthusiastic about the prospect of teaching and becoming positive role models in the system after their final teaching practice. (Siraj-Blatchford 1991, Tomlinson 1983). There was consensus

about the necessity for Muslim teachers in all types of schools within the State system, for the benefit of everyone but particularly for increased understanding of Muslim children and parents:

> ... there's a need for Muslim teachers in Muslim schools but I think there is a greater need for Muslim teachers in State schools because the majority of children are there.
>
> Zahra

1996

EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM WOMEN AT THE END OF THEIR 4TH YEAR AT GREENACRES COLLEGE.

Data from the interviews at the transition point between end of fourth year and entering the teaching profession showed some contrasts with that collected over the previous two years in the areas of: change and accommodation, identity, religiosity, family and teaching. Change and accommodation were seen as positive but for some accommodation started to mean compromise on Islamic requirements, and new questions were arising about the implications of this for them. Questions about their identity, increasing recognition, for some, of their distancing from other groups through experiences of racism and religious prejudice at Greenacres, led to some lack of confidence with the system. Feelings about compromise were linked to increasing religiosity and consciousness of Islam. For the first time in their course this consciousness raised some doubts, for a small number of the most religious students, about their potential to become teachers in the State education system. Families were supportive and proud of the students' success. Most (six) had remained at home throughout the course and no attempt was made to move away from home through job applications. Two had their own homes. The three who had lived away from home in the 'Muslim house' whilst at College, faced

pressures to go home as their course came to a close. These aspects will be illustrated from the end of year four interview data.

When asked to reflect on the process of change and accommodation experienced over the previous four years at Greenacres the consensus was that 'things had improved' for the Muslim students. They were differentially affected by aspects such as mixed-sex groups, dependent on their religiosity. For Hana, who did not wear hijab, there was no problem at any point in her course. She stayed in a mixed-sex group commenting that : "... it posed no problem for me - I suppose it depends on the individual - how far or how strict they feel they need to be within the religion." But for others change had been vital to their ability to feel comfortable at Greenacres, that is, free from guilt concerning any transgression of Islamic requirements and free to live their lives as practising Muslims.

The changes had brought tensions with other students and whilst 'within group' friendships and community / Islamic ethos developed, the Muslim women remained aware of 'between group' tensions with some non-Muslims at the College. Although 'within-group' relations strengthened there were minor intra-group differences, mostly attributable to differences in degree of commitment towards Islam. Mercer (1990) and Weeks (1990) discuss such tensions within as well as between groups in the process of disenchantment and conflict that accompanies change. For Cath, the only African-Caribbean Muslim, intra-group problems were significantly attributed to race. Although she acknowledged that Islam is a world religion in which all people are equal, the reality of her experiences, and the tensions between herself and some of the Asian Muslims, did not reflect that philosophy:

> I think it's that *we* (non-Asian Muslims) were not born into the Islamic faith - it's like - 'You can't tell me anything about *my* religion - although the religion doesn't belong to anyone ... they prefer to *tell* you rather than look at something together.

This implies the possibility of inseparable intermeshing of religion and identity in the lives of those who inherit Islam and go on to further embrace the faith. Cath experienced a sense of double isolation. Not only had she experienced difficulties of isolation whilst studying Islam and searching for personal guidance within the religion, but she also experienced difficulties as an African-Caribbean student at Greenacres. The numbers of Asian students outnumbered other black students. Although the Islamic society was thriving, Cath had attended that and 'felt unwelcome'. The support group for Black students (African-Caribbean) had existed for only a brief time during her four years at Greenacres and finished when the only African-Caribbean female member of staff, who organised it, left.

> Interviewer - So, in a sense have you felt doubly isolated here - both as a Black woman and as a Muslim?
> Cath - Yes, and my feelings are - (from) where I am now ... I wouldn't say I was Muslim.

Although Cath had found some Asian Muslims kind, caring and reflective of the Islam she was seeking, the hypocritical attitude of others, accompanied with tensions perceived as racial, had led her to reject 'being Muslim' although there was much about Islam that she still admired. Her feelings of alienation matched those found by Tomlinson (1983) in the first study of African-Caribbean women in University but were exacerbated by alienation from many followers of the faith she was studying.

The Muslim women in this research recognised their 'difference' in religion and colour from others at Greenacres and, for some, the pursuit of that difference was highly significant to them. Those who had adopted hijab had made a clear statement, about their Muslim identity. Whilst the original motive was as a symbol of commitment to themselves of the Islamic direction in which they were moving, they became increasingly aware of the inevitable 'visibility' and consequences of the symbolic significance of wearing the hijab. Complexity of their identity made interpretation of

negative experiences difficult, again indicating Mennell's 'filo-pastry of identity' concept (1994) and the problems of understanding in the process of interaction:

> ... they might be reacting to you, but because *who* you are is mixed up so much with your religion, your race and your gender... what are they reacting to? You don't know - you can't really say - if you try to pinpoint it ... you might be wrong.
>
> Jamilah

Students related incidents of religious prejudice that they recalled from their College experiences. Incidents in religious education professional pedagogy courses were particularly vivid and were recounted separately by several students. They involved the attitude and behaviour of peer student-teachers in religious education sessions on Islam and Hinduism. The Muslim students thought that their fellow students were 'disgraceful' as they laughed at the lecturer's accent in the Islam session and talked over his presentation. In a session on Hinduism, religious artefacts brought unnecessarily rude comments from fellow students. Not only were the Muslim students disappointed with this behaviour from trainee professional teachers but they were also disappointed in the 'lack of challenge' by the lecturers. These experiences served to distance the students in the research from the non-Muslim students in College, few felt able to challenge such behaviour themselves: "...we just 'go in - go out' that's our motto - we are here to do a degree - keep our heads down." (Salima). Such experiences are not new (Siraj-Blatchford 1991).When asked about changes with the increasing numbers of ethnic minority students Salima said: "The numbers of Asians and Blacks have increased but not integration ... " When asked if she felt 'in-group' choices were made on both sides she agreed.

For Jamilah the Greenacres course had strengthened her Islamically and the fourth year had given her time to reflect a great deal on the implications of being Muslim in Britain. As she reached the point of

finishing her course she was realising increasing compromise on her part on how she would prefer to live:

> ...there have been compromises but then ... I expect them. We are living in a context which is not a Muslim context - so ... I wonder to what extent it is feasible to make too much fuss about it .... When you've got two things which are opposite it's going to be very difficult to get them to mix - and ... in some situations I do think Islam and Western values do conflict.

Jamilah was struggling consciously with nexus of two elements of her perceived identity: her identity as a Muslim, and her new identity as teacher. One major dilemma for her was that she saw nowhere else that would enable her to live a better Islamic life, explaining that she knew of no 'proper' Islamic country, without "oppressive regimes, army control and dictatorship". If she wanted to move to improve her situation Islamically, there was nowhere to go. When asked about Pakistan she suggested that many there were not practising Muslims:

> There are people who say they are Muslim but do not whole-heartedly believe in Islam ... just because they are born into a Muslim family ... you don't have to wear a headscarf to be a Muslim ... it's the beliefs ... there are people who just take the Muslim label because they think it is more convenient.

When she had been to a village in Pakistan she was disappointed to find only a handful of people who could be regarded as 'practising Muslims'. The search for a 'home' in which she could feel more comfortable seemed impossible. She was sharing a real feeling of displacement (Mercer 1990). She did not, any longer, regard her own upbringing as Islamic:

> Interviewer - Would your family regard themselves as practising Muslims?

Jamilah - Yes ... everyone who claims to be Muslim would regard themselves as Muslim ...

Interviewer - You suggested you didn't think you'd been brought up in a practising Muslim household?

Jamilah - I don't

Interviewer - Do they?

Jamilah - Of course they do ...

Interviewer - Would you tell them?

Jamilah - Yes, we do - but they don't like it...

The fourth year had been an 'academic' year in which students reverted to main subject courses. For those who studied Islam this was an opportunity to strengthen knowledge and understanding, and, where desired, faith, in Islam. The process of becoming 'more Islamic' was not simply attributable to the Islamic Studies course. Zahra analysed four factors which contributed to this shift: "It's not just the course itself - but living with other students and other aspects like the Islamic society, the whole aspect of living away from home, time to find yourself." By the end of the fourth year a minority of the Muslim women had begun to recognise their 'raised consciousness of Islam' causing new dilemmas with regard to teaching in the State education system. One anxiety was the possible criticism that could come from Muslim parents and children because of their obvious identity and 'in-group' expectations:

Zahra - ... parents will be thinking - 'What is she teaching them, is she doing it Islamically?' I know other Muslim teachers who come back and say 'Some parents say this and that...' You tend to get picked on more - because you are a Muslim ... if you do something out of turn it reflects badly on you ... I don't know how it's going to work out.

> Interviewer - So is there conflict within you - pleasing the Muslim community of the school ... demonstrating Islamic values and meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum?
>
> Zahra - Exactly - I don't know what to make of it at the moment.

Further discussion led to more specific anxieties for Zahra, for example teaching PE in mixed-sex environments, dance and music. She was very keen to portray 'a good Islamic image to the Muslim children' and at this point doubts about the Islamic acceptance of such subjects re-emerged. On her teaching practices she regarded herself as 'lucky' to have been in majority female situations but changing religious consciousness was increasing awareness of possible conflicts which she had not fully resolved for herself:

> It didn't really cross my mind ... Also - at that time I was not so Islamically dressed - now I'm more cautious about that. I think it's going to be difficult.

Earlier positive comments about PE, dance and Islam, in the 1994 and 1995 data, were also countered in other interviews which reflected this new cautiousness at this transition point in their lives. For Fareeda the possible upper primary mixed-sex PE was again potentially problematic: "The PE isn't the problem - it's the situation". In addition music and the Eurocentric nature of the history curriculum were also considered problematic. After further discussion she spoke about the religious progress that had changed her perceptions of teaching:

> I certainly wasn't aware before, when I first came on the course - but now I know more about my religion - about what we should and shouldn't do - it does make you think about whether the State school can really accommodate Muslim teachers and children. It's

> an area we (Muslims) have to look at because - I personally think that they can't.

The statement indicates growing prominence of her Muslim layer of identity (Elias 1991) and growing uncertainty about the possible mismatch between being Muslim and a teacher in the secular State education system. The use of the term *'they can't'* indicates a strong sense of 'us and them', of the 'other' and the State system being the same.

This statement came one year after Fareeda had enthused about the teaching profession and looking forward to joining. She recalled those memories at the end of her fourth year but experiences within the intervening year had altered her perspective and personal priorities and at this point she was unsure about a future career in teaching:

> I really enjoyed teaching - the best thing I had ever faced - but in teaching you can't apply yourself totally in a State school - being a practising Muslim - because you will face certain problems such as - you can't really teach music for Islamic reasons ... and art as well... I've heard two sides to the argument but I'm not too sure ...

Fareeda had other interests in her life, particularly design, and at this point her priorities were firstly her religion and a desire to continue learning and growing Islamically, secondly her designing and thirdly her career in teaching. She had recently joined an Islamic study group which had encouraged her to go on growing in this direction. Consequently Fareeda was choosing a supply teaching route rather than a full-time post in order to 'further test' teaching and her ability to combine religion and State requirements in that role, and to leave space in her life for other things, to "keep her options open".

Compromise was the key to coping with dilemmas between being Muslim and teacher in the State system for Jamilah:

> ... fair enough I'm going to work in the State system and if I compromise I want to make sure I know it's a compromise. I'm not just going to justify it by saying Islam doesn't say this anyway ... to try to change Islam ....

Similarly, when asked after a long discussion on dilemmas of teaching and whether in teaching within the State system you adopt something of the State Lina replied: "Yes, but you can adapt".

Students facing such dilemmas were in the minority but other factors also influenced perceptions at this stage of the course. Most expressed some lack of confidence or uncertainty which had not been an issue twelve months earlier. Another source of unsettled feelings was the profile of the teaching profession, the de-moralised state of the teachers, and the amount of interference and change influencing education:

> The way the education field is going - puts you off ... the way teachers are valued in this country - I think they are so under-rated here ... the way the Government is treating teachers, I think it's terrible .... the way things are going I don't see a future in it.
>
> Lina

The expectations in terms of workload, class sizes, commitment and other demands were also deterrents for some. This 'professional awareness' had grown gradually over the four year course: "Once you are in Greenacres you understand increasingly what it is all about." In relation to finding a full-time teaching post Lina was "... not fussed - with the way things are going". The majority of students were lacking in self-confidence but looking forward to joining the profession. Doubts were related to their own competence to cope with 'a whole year' and the responsibility that went with the role of 'teacher'. They were 'nervous' about meeting the expectations of the schools. In relation to PE there were some anxieties about safety, responsibility and 'apparatus' in PE but these were off-set by

enthusiasm to 'have a go'. The most common phrases used in relation to willing but anxious reflections on teaching were 'being accepted' and 'fitting in', indicating perceptions of themselves as 'different' from teachers in the system. Jamilah went one stage further, acknowledging that all newly qualified teachers would share many of their anxieties but that she faced more difficulties:

> Jamilah - ...slight concerns anyone would have about fitting in with the staff - how they're going to react to you. I wouldn't call them fears, concerns maybe ... I'm thinking that as a Muslim, Asian woman I need to prove myself more.
> Interviewer: Do you think that?
> Jamilah - To a certain extent I feel I've got to prove myself more than if I wasn't a Muslim Asian.

Black students' / teachers' feelings of being undervalued were also found in the research of Blair and Maylor (1993), Singh (1988) and Siraj-Blatchford (1991).

So the Muslim women's perceptions of teaching at the transition point between training and joining the profession were mixed. Whilst the enthusiasm that had emerged through positive experiences in their third year teaching practices had faded, the reality of joining the teaching profession brought mixed feelings. Some were still enthusiastic about a career in teaching but anxious about being able to cope with the demands. Others were not sure whether they still wanted to join the profession because at this point they saw a potential clash of identities between being good Muslims and being class teachers in the State education system. Their priority was their religion so doubts about their futures as teachers were raised. Increased awareness of problems within the profession had also raised doubts about long-term commitment.

Anxieties about joining the teaching profession were exacerbated for those respondents who were failing to secure permanent posts at this

stage of their course. Three students had posts in final school-experience schools which allayed anxieties and gave some security to an otherwise unknown situation. As non-Muslim peers were being offered posts the Muslim students were looking for reasons to explain their 'apparent failure'. Many were concerned that their 'Islamic Studies' main course militated against them when head teachers were looking through applications. Rabiah had failed to get a post and time was running out. She telephoned two local education authorities and asked to have her main subject title changed to 'Religious Education': "...within seven days this school turned up - it might have been coincidence but it might have been that 'Islamic Studies' put them off a bit." Following a 'media-panic' about collective Islamic workshop within a City primary school Cath was also concerned about the effect this would have on head teachers' perceptions of employing Muslim teachers:

> I was thinking - 'Oh my goodness - Muslim students applying for jobs at this stage - they are not going to want us ... the application forms had already gone out - you'd already said your main subject was Islam and it was difficult to know what the attitudes of people interviewing you would be...

Muslim dress and attitudes of interviewers, particularly heads, were also concerns raised for the first time at this stage in their course. There were fears that, for hijab-wearers, being so visibly Muslim might be a reason for not allocating them posts, adding a religious dimension to the racial fears of being hampered in their professional development experienced by the black students in the research of Blair and Maylor (1993). A number of the respondents recalled school-experience head teachers who had telephoned College for 'health and safety' clearance on the wearing of the hijab so they thought their dress might be problematic to future employers. Hana did not wear hijab but had reflected on the difficulties her friends could encounter: "I've always thought about going for interviews and ... how other people are going to react towards (Muslim

dress) ... if that's how you are going to dress you can't go for interview without wearing hijab ..." Lina suggested many saw the hijab and immediately labelled them as fundamentalists. Recalling an experience on interview she revealed that she did: –

> ... feel odd to be honest - I was dressed like this - the only Muslim woman - and I felt they were looking at me and wondering what I was doing there. They think you don't have a brain behind the scarf - going to get married and have lots of ... children and be a good housewife - those are the stereotypes people have.

Zahra applied for twelve teaching posts. Where she did get an interview she was the only Muslim and did feel 'uncomfortable' wondering if her Muslim identity had any influence on decisions that were being made about her future.

In addition to Islamic Studies and the visibility of being Muslim another reason suggested for difficulties in finding jobs was their 'race'. It was also suggested that the 'white students' got the first jobs:

> ...what I've come across ... and others who have gone for interviews ... is that the first choice will go to white teachers ... People are saying 'Don't worry - you'll get a job - there's a lot of demand for bilingual teachers and they want more Muslim teachers or Asian teachers. Where are they? (The jobs).
>
> Asma

Rabiah suggested that further research should be done on the perceptions of head teachers "... to see how they feel about taking on Muslim teachers - especially from the Islam course... there's no point in introducing an Islamic option if people aren't getting a job at the end." She suggested responses would be different if she (a Muslim) was to undertake the research rather

than a non-Muslim. The sensitivity of the subject leads me to suggest any response would be difficult to elicit regardless of the researcher.

Despite changing commitments towards the teaching profession and concerns about 'not being able' to enter the teaching profession all respondents retained their belief in the need for Muslim teachers in the State education system, and of their potential to be positive role models:

> I hope to be a positive role model for Muslim children and also a positive contact for non-Muslim children, maybe teachers and parents - to ... dispel some of the stereotypes and prejudices, and just like any other teacher (my ambition is) - to be a competent and enthusiastic teacher.
>
> Jamilah

The influence of family was more pertinent at this 'end of year four' stage of the course than it had been the previous year. As Blair and Maylor had found (1993) students were differentially affected by cultural factors such as the degree of patriarchal control. Such issues became clearer at this stage of the research than at any other time. For Fareeda, Zahra and Lina, the three students who had moved away from home and lived in the 'Muslim house' for most of their time at College, their families wanted them to return home. Zahra had 'proved to her father that nothing had happened' (following the problems with her sister explained above). She had remained a 'good Muslim', and her brothers encouraged her to return home to work to help the family. The status of her father and family in the local community would rise with her being a qualified teacher. She only applied for jobs within travelling distance of her parents' home. Unfortunately she was unsuccessful in finding a job and, despite goods intentions to stay in the research, I have not heard from Zahra since she returned to join family members in Mozambique in autumn 1996.

Fareeda and Lina were twins and both wanted to stay in the City after their course. They were trying to persuade their parents to allow them

to do this. They both had diverse interests and had decided to go in for some supply teaching instead of full-time teaching for reasons explained previously. In September 1996 Lina was invited to take a full-time post in the City and accepted but a week later, due to their mother's illness, both women returned home and Lina withdrew from the post the day before term started. Fareeda decided to pull right out of the research after she returned home that summer despite earlier enthusiasm to stay with the research for the next year. No reasons for 'withdrawing' were ever given. Lina wanted to stay in-touch with the research but this proved impossible. She married early in 1997 and moved to London. She was then fully committed to travelling between her home, her mother's home, and trying to fit in some supply teaching.

Nawar was the only married respondent, with four children. Her husband had not been very enthusiastic about her embarking on a four year course and now she thought he would prefer her not to move into the teaching profession:

> Nawar - ... he used to say I don't like women working - he told other people who have told me - I don't want my wife working and things like that.
> Interviewer - He never said that directly to you?
> Nawar - No - never to me - he knew what sort of person I was ... before we married ... I could never be that sort of person...

Nawar did want to teach but was aware how much her family had been 'sacrificed' for her studies over the last four years and she wanted some time to spend with them. Despite that, Nawar was talking about perhaps moving onto a Masters degree and definitely teaching at some stage: " ... I feel deep down inside - all this I've learnt - I've got to give it to somebody else. I might have a struggle with my husband in the future but I have to do it." She had left applications for full-time State school posts very late because she was apprehensive and undecided about her own commitment to a full-

time post at that time, thinking part-time or supply teaching might be the answer:

> I think to be a teacher ... to be a *good* teacher you need to be there 100% committed - put everything into it, and I think to be a teacher in a school I'd have to be that sort of person, unless I was doing part-time or supply.

Despite reservations in September 1996 Nawar took a full-time year-one class in a Muslim school, teaching the National Curriculum. This was as a result of a chance last minute advertisement that went up in the corridor at Greenacres, it was not a planned move. Nevertheless, Nawar had been into a Muslim school environment for her final dissertation and had reflected positively on the environment in her end of fourth year interview:

> I think I would be happier in that environment in respect that I wouldn't have to go and hide (getting) a wash at lunch-times - explaining to everyone what I'm doing and why I'm doing it. The children will know - when it's prayer time I can just go into the corner and pray. I won't have to fight. In the State system I've got to do all the explaining. Why am I doing this, why am I doing that - if I want to wear my scarf - in the Muslim school they will accept me - they'll see the positive - whereas in the State school they might say 'Why do you have to wear your scarf?' or they'll look at you and then you'll feel 'Oh I'm wrongly dressed ....' In that respect I would feel more comfortable in a Muslim school...

This experience, coupled with her negative State school traumas on school-experience, led her to accept the post. Moving into a Muslim school also made the transition to working easier for her husband to accept. It was a bonus for her daughter in terms of travel because she was already a pupil in

the secondary section of this school. Despite anxieties about her husband's views Nawar always ended up pursuing her preferred avenues: going to College, entering full-time teaching, considering a Masters degree and moving back into the State system to teach.

For the other respondents who had lived at home throughout the course the transition into jobs meant no upheaval within the family. For Asma, who wanted full-time work but was unfortunate enough not to find a post, her family was able and willing to support her. There was no pressure to find a job but plenty of support when she did. For Salima the pressure came in another form, that of an arranged marriage. Her experience was not shared by any other respondents within this study, Lina found her own husband and married within eight months of leaving College. Jamilah, divorced, also found her own husband and intended to marry in the summer of 1997, two years after leaving College. Whilst Salima did want to be married and to have children, she was unhappy about the process.

Salima - ... it's going to be an arranged marriage

Interviewer - Do you know who he is?

Salima - I know who he is but we're not allowed to talk.

Interviewer - How do you feel about having a marriage arranged for you?

Salima - Awful - I wanted to go out and choose for myself - but that's something they'd (parents) never let us do - and he has to be the right kind of person - right background, right culture, thank God he wasn't family because they were considering family and I said 'No I'm not going to have that' ...

Interviewer - Isn't that illegal in the British system?

Salima - It is ... and I think it's disgusting ... it happened with my sister, my brother and my older sister. My younger sister was married to my uncle's son – her's lasted for six months before she came back home. My older brother was married to my aunty's

> daughter (cousin). I think it's totally wrong ... they're more like brothers ... we have too much blood in common.

One problem Salima recalled with intra-family marriages was the large family rift that occurred when the marriage was unsuccessful. Following further discussion on consanguineous marriages and their implications Salima reported that her father dismissed the medical difficulties of such marriages as the "White person's myth". Islamically Muslims can marry second or third generation 'within family member'. They just do not declare the relationship if they marry in a British Registry Office. Salima had been offered a choice of two men, one within and one out of family. She and her sister agreed to marry two brothers. Whilst no date had been set the whole experience and implications for her future were at the forefront of her thinking at this transition point between College and the teaching profession. Whilst she had little choice about who she married she did have the choice as to whether she continued or left work on marriage.

SUMMARY

In this section empirical evidence, gathered across three years from two cohorts of Muslim women on a higher education course, has revealed increasingly complex shifts in the inter-connectedness of the themes of: change and accommodation, identity, religiosity, teaching and family. The themes emerged out of the first interviews conducted for this research and were followed up with interviews at the end of each of the following two years. Initial shifts were in the direction of positive change in terms of accommodation of Islamic requirements at Greenacres, moving in a 'more Islamic' direction, professional development in terms of success in passing school-based experiences, and enthusiasm for joining the teaching profession as Muslim teachers. Alongside these experiences were encounters with racial and religious prejudice, tensions between Muslim and non-Muslim student groups, clashes at institutional level in College and

schools, and growing awareness of tensions within their families attributed to growing awareness of 'real Islam' and home influences referred to as 'culture'. The 'visibility' of the hijab-wearing Muslims created stronger 'in-group' bonds but raised concerns about interactions with 'outsiders' based on personal, vicarious, mediated and cognitive experiences at College, in schools and on interviews for teaching posts (Essed 1991). The research interviews at the end of the fourth and final study year, as students were about to embark in the teaching profession, were the least positive. Some doubts and lack of confidence were revealed as the students were to leave Greenacres and move on in their lives. For some, continued pursuit of Islam and strengthening of their faith had led to the recognition of compromise. Concerns about being able to practise Islam and teach within the State education system were raised. Other uncertainties were related to the morale of the profession, the demands of full-time teaching, and balancing personal plans with those of other members within their families. These uncertainties meant that some were late in applying for posts and unsure of their futures. This led to fears of rejection when difficulties in securing posts was experienced. These difficulties were attributed to their main subject choice of 'Islamic Studies', their Muslim identity, and their 'race'. The summer period at the end of their final year in higher education proved to be the most difficult for many women in this research because of the uncertainties in their lives. For some the most significant contribution Greenacres had offered was the chance to increase their knowledge, understanding and faith in Islam, for others ambitions decided four years previously materialised as they found teaching posts, albeit with reservations and concerns. Some failed to find jobs, which led to frustration and a search for reasons, whilst others prioritised family bonds.

The unforeseen, unpredictable divergence of lives at this stage led to the decision to complete the 'early teaching careers' research with any of the 'end of fourth year' students who would participate. This resulted in five from the 1995 graduates who were traced through the next two years of their lives, and two from the 1996 graduates who supported the research to

its conclusion in the summer of 1997. The decline in numbers and the diversity of situations and experiences resulted in the 'case study' approach adopted to collate the early teaching experiences of these women in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This section contains case studies of the early teaching careers of the seven women prepared and able to stay in this research, as they moved from being students in College to NQT's (newly Qualified Teachers) in schools. Details of the seven individuals can be found in Fig. 2 and of their school contexts in Fig. 3. The first four case studies follow Jamilah, Rabiah, Salima and Hana, from graduation in July 1995, through two years in full-time primary teaching posts. The main data source was interviews conducted at the end of each term and diaries which became less significant as teachers found the demands of the job all-consuming. The professional / personal circumstances of the remaining three case study teachers were unplanned and unforeseen, but remained equally valuable in terms of insights offered into the life experiences of these women as they entered their teaching careers. Asma also graduated in 1995 but failed to secure a full-time teaching post for the first two years of her career. This research followed her through temporary supply and language support posts, tracking her efforts and responses in the pursuit of a full-time position. Nawar failed to gain a State school full-time post so decided, after graduation in July 1996, to accept a position in the infant department of a Muslim school. This research tracks her experiences through the first year in this position. Finally, Cath also graduated in July 1996. She was the only African-Caribbean heritage student - teacher in the project. At the end of her B.Ed, in which she had specialized in Islamic Studies, she declared herself to be non-Muslim. She secured a full-time teaching post and this research tracked her first year experiences.

Common elements permeate the case studies, since they were raised by the students at the beginning of the research and stayed in the interview structures throughout the project:

i) those people who were most influential in their professional development;

ii) perceptions of developing professional skills;

iii) experiences in the teaching of physical education;

iv) the effects of their black / Muslim identity on teaching and vice versa;

v) the effects of teaching on their lives and

vi) changing personal and professional ambitions.

FIG. 2..

Pseudonym	Date of Birth and Marital status	Nationality (Self description)	Background Education	B.Ed. Main Subject	Family Origin / Arrival in Britain / Religion	Father's Occupation ---------- Mother's Occupation	Siblings	Hijab	Continuation to Teaching Research
Jamilah	06.04.69 Divorced	Pakistani / British	Britain	Islamic Studies	Pakistan 1960's Muslim	Factory worker Housewife	B B G B B	Yes	Yes
Hana	09.06.72 Single	British	Britain	English	Pakistan 1960's Muslim	Bus driver Housewife	B B G B G B	No	Yes
Rabiah	05.07.73 Single/Mar. August '97	British	Britain	Islamic Studies	Pakistan 1960's Muslim	Factory foreman Housewife	B G B G	Yes	Yes
Asma	20.07.69 Single	British	Britain	Islamic Studies	Pakistan 1960's Muslim	Quantity surveyor Housewife	B B G B	Yes	Yes (Supply)
Nawar	14.11.61 Married (4 children)	British	Britain	Islamic Studies	M - English F - Pakistan 1959 Muslim	Own Family Business	G G G	Yes	Yes (Muslim school)
Cath	05.05.65 Single (1 child)	African Caribbean / British	Britain	Islamic Studies	Jamaica 1960's	Mother - assembler	G G B G B B	No	Yes
Salima	05.09.71 Single/Mar August 1997	British	Britain	English	Pakistan 1960's Muslim	Shop owner Housewife	G B G G B B	Adopted Easter 1995	Yes

FIG. 3.

				School Situation	Analysis
Teacher	Community Served	Type/ Number of Pupils in School	Class, Ethnic / Religious Breakdown	% Asian/Muslim Pupils	% Asian/Muslim Staff
Jamila (Year 1 school)	Majority Asian Muslim	Infant / Junior 750 pupils	Year 1- 32 pupils 100% Asian Muslims	98% Asian 98% Muslim	98% White/ 2 Asian Muslims (Asian Assistants + Language Support)
Jamila (Year 2 school)	Majority Asian Muslim	Infant / Junior 360 pupils	Reception - 30 pupils 99% Asian Muslim	98% Asian 98% Muslim	98% White Only Asian Muslim Teacher. 2 Asian Teachers (Asian Assistants + Language Support)
Rabiah	Predominantly Asian Muslim but very socially deprived area.	Infant / Junior 320 pupils	Combined Year 1 & 2 21 pupils. 65% Asian Muslims 35% White/ Black/ Mixed Race.	60% Asian Muslim. 40% White,Black,Mixed Christian, Sikh, Hindu	98% White Only Asian Muslim Teacher. Asian Head Teacher in year 2. (Asian Assistants + Language Support)
Salima	Majority Asian Muslim	Infant / Junior 406 pupils	Year 4 - 30 pupils 90% Asian Muslims	80% Asian Muslims 20% White,Black,Mixed	98% White Only Asian Muslim Teacher. 1 Asian Teacher (Asian Assistants + Language Support)

FIG 3. (continued.)

				School Situation	Analysis
Teacher	Community Served	Type/ Number of Pupils in School	Class, Ethnic / Religious Breakdown	% Asian/ Muslim Pupils	% Asian/Muslim Staff
Hana	Majority Asian Muslim	Infant - 270 pupils	Year 1 - 30 pupils 100% Asian Muslims	98% Asian Muslim	98% White Only Asian Muslim Teacher. 1 Asian Teacher (Asian Assistants + Language Support)
Nawar	Muslim	Infant to "A" level 450 pupils	Combined Years 1 & 2 19 pupils	100% Muslim Mixed origins. - Middle-East, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Turkey, Converts	100% Muslim
Cath	Mixed Black / White / Asian.	Infant / Junior 300 pupils	Year 6 - 19 pupils	45% Asian (20% Muslims) 45% Black 10% White	50% White 30% Black 20% Asian Predominantly Christian

6.2 CASE STUDY - JAMILAH

CONTEXT

Jamilah had been attracted to Greenacres because of the Islamic Studies main course. By the end of the four year B.Ed. she was keen to teach. Her first post lasted a year and she moved to a different post for her second year. Both schools were populated with 98% Asian Muslim children and predominantly white staff. Where other Asians were employed this was usually as classroom assistants or in language support positions. There was one other Asian Muslim female teacher in her first school, and there were other Asian teachers in her second school. As a Punjabi and Urdu speaker Jamilah could communicate in mother-tongue with many children and parents in both schools, and in the same dialect as a large number. At the end of her two years she resigned from full-time teaching for a number of reasons including the growing consciousness of the mismatch between her 'Muslim identity' and her State system 'teacher identity'.

PROCESS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Jamilah had not been in a predominantly Asian, Muslim school before her first post so she was surprised at her first reaction. They were in assembly and she considered it 'odd' to see a hall full of Asian children surrounded by a staff of predominantly white teachers. Another incident near the start also concerned her involving the only white child in her class being withdrawn by her parents, with no explanation. It crossed Jamilah's mind that the parents might have been able to "put up with a large majority of Muslims in the school" but perhaps having a Muslim teacher was "going a bit too far." Coming to terms with this new environment, and highly conscious of her affinity with the majority, she embarked on her year with high aspirations about being a good teacher and a much needed positive

role model for the children. With a class of thirty three (all Muslim) children the task was not going to be easy. By the end of the year she had been coerced into leaving by a series of circumstances which could be described as rooted in racism and religious prejudice from non-Muslim adults influential in her professional development, particularly the head teacher.

On the day of her interview for the job the head teacher was reminiscing about her many years at the school. She had moved to the school when it provided for an all-white community and "...now I feel I am teaching in a Pakistani village." Jamilah did think it strange that she would make such a comment to her but other events had warned her that things would not be easy. This was the school in which Zahra, her friend at Greenacres, had been reduced to tears in public by the same head on teaching practice, failed and removed from the school. It also became clear that it was the Governors of the school who wanted Jamilah appointed because she was an Asian, and Muslim. Although the head was against it, the decision to appoint her was made.

Jamilah's first head was distant and autocratic. The 'headteacher incident' really upset her. One day the head had spent a short time in her classroom and fixed a meeting at which she proceeded with a string of accusations about issues such as: not following the timetable and inadequate use of display boards. Her manner was very abrupt allowing no opportunity for Jamilah to reply. It was not the accusations as much as the manner in which the 'dressing down' took place that angered Jamilah. She thought it unjust and tried to ring the union for advice on further action. Within two weeks the head had gone in to observe a lesson, put an arm around Jamilah and said that she was "great." Nevertheless she was told she would have her temporary contract extended by six months at the end of the year rather than move straight to a permanent one, as a kind of extended probation.

Jamilah had a mentor who she saw once a week but the advice she received was contradictory to that of the adviser who came in to 'check NQTs'. One seemed to be asking for a less formal approach in the

classroom and the other for a more formal approach. Jamilah was confused and unable to find a way to please everybody so she asked for a joint meeting for further answers to her 'extended NQT year' and the contradictions she was receiving. It just happened that the meeting took place on a night when I was at the school and I was allowed to stay in on the meeting. That night I wrote:

> Jamilah is a deep and intelligent person who is desperate to do the right thing for herself and the children in this school. She had a shock when 'told off' so severely by the head and since then has been seeking to 'toe the party line' in terms of requirements within this school. How could she ...ensure she 'fitted in'? It was a frank and open meeting but she wanted a list of competencies not yet achieved so she had something concrete to work on and when they could not give her one she felt her extended NQT year was unjustified.
>
> Field diary

There were a number of other incidents involving victimisation of Jamilah by other staff, for example one teacher who burst into the staffroom publicly proclaiming: "Jamilah is finished!" (as an NQT in this school) after her 'dressing down', in a supposedly private meeting with the head. The caretaker even 'played tricks' on her not being helpful with keys and other minor but pointed incidents. One evening when I was in the classroom her Muslim teacher friend came in and during the process of conversation told me there was a 'hidden agenda' at the school and that Jamilah had been given a hard time. In her own diary Jamilah wrote:

> I don't really feel valued, I sometimes feel as if I am in an 'out to get you' environment. I believe that if an NQT who has done well in the College years does not do well in the first year of teaching - then that says something about the type of support given by the school ...

NQT's who are given the right kind of support and guidance ... in a healthy relaxed atmosphere can develop to reach their full potential as teachers. NQT's who are in schools that are not as supportive and where the atmosphere is very negative have a real uphill struggle to keep their enthusiasm alive.

Jamilah did develop a stronger relationship with her mentor once she decided to stop trying to please everybody and use her own 'professional judgements' to decide how to organise and teach her sessions. Nevertheless the unhelpful relations with powerful people in the school led her to apply to go back onto the Birmingham pool for the following September to try to move schools. She was not dissuaded from this decision by the words of the adviser in the three-way meeting already mentioned. During that discussion the adviser gave Jamilah two options, she could stay where she was and keep "working positively", or she could move to another school but with "1100 applicants to Birmingham pool, 600 interviews and only 350 employed" the message was clear. Her decision to re-apply was supported by the head who commented when asked for a reference "Oh it's not like we're going to sling you out or anything, the worst that could happen would be that you would be put on an (extended) temporary contract." Jamilah's advice to other NQT's thinking of applying to that school: "If they were Asian and Muslim - don't, unless the head changes." (She has since retired.)

Relations with parents and children in her first school were excellent. Many of the parents she dealt with had no English and appreciated her language skills. The children valued their teacher for many reasons including the familiar dress and shared religion. Cards and letters received, and shared for this research, on her departure at the end of the year (see samples App. O) provided evidence of this rapport, along with such comments as:

You've been a great credit to this school - a favourite with the children and the parents and it's going to be such a loss when you go.

Parent

We'll get the head to change her mind - we'll have placards outside the school gates ...

Parent

The continued support of her group of Muslim friends from Greenacres, the telephone network and termly meetings, were a great help throughout this two year period. Relations with colleagues in her first school were not strong. She admitted that she tended to stay in her classroom rather than socialise in the staffroom, trying to meet the demands of teaching. Jamilah did have a strong relationship with the other Muslim teacher and they spent quite a lot of time together. She began to feel guilty about this because it might have been misconstrued as not wanting to mix with non-Muslims. She recognised that their friendship would have been more 'visible' than others amongst the staff because of their obvious difference in dress and hijab, but Jamilah believed:

> when you meet someone of the same background and experiences you seem to get on because you haven't got all that explaining to do ... people shouldn't feel threatened by that ... we just have a common interest.

But Jamilah's negative experiences, particularly with the hierarchy, were not compensated by the relationship with the parents, children and her close friend. She decided to leave the school since:

> ... (I) had no option really because I have a head who doesn't like me basically, or wants to exert her power. I can't forget or forgive

> what she has done and to go on living in that situation ... it was the best decision (to leave) ... I'm glad I got the opportunity to move away. For me to stay there would just have been uncomfortable.

Once she had secured another post for the following September the hierarchy 'lay-off' pressurising her, the mentor suggesting Jamilah went to see her if there were any problems. She never received any final NQT report, written or verbal, on her progress. On the final day, to Jamilah's relief, the deputy head gave her a gift and speech which would have been perceived as hypocritical coming from the head. There was a cursory good-bye from the head and no response to a gift left for the mentor, compared with a flood of letters, gifts and cards from parents and children. In her new school no mention was ever made of the extended temporary contract business, related to her unsatisfactory completion of her NQT period, and she never saw the adviser again. By the end of her first term in the new school she was finding teaching "quite enjoyable", liked the head who was "much more down to earth and involved", and recognised a more relaxed attitude, but there were also 'more realistic' personal expectations of teaching in the State system.

Jamilah made a concerted effort to spend more time in the staffroom and experienced positive 'superficial relationships' with her colleagues. Reflecting on her social relations she came up with an explanation which appears to epitomize Elias's 'social habitus' (1991). Jamilah was explaining why some friendships are inevitably stronger than others, at one point using the analogy 'birds of a feather' then going on to use the term 'connect' to describe a good friendship:

> ... making connections with people in terms of feeling comfortable, feeling relaxed with them, feeling able to be yourself with them... how can anyone know who you are if you don't share (experiences) - it has to be mutual, obviously - mutual sharing and mutual understanding.

She went further to describe different levels of connecting depending on how much was shared:

> I think you can definitely connect at a deeper level with people who share the same concepts as you and have the same understanding .... and similar life-experiences.

We then discussed the progressively deeper 'connectedness' that might be shared between a Christian and a Muslim, an Asian and an Asian Muslim, an Asian Muslim and an Asian Muslim.

> If you are talking about where people are happiest obviously it would be with like-minded people who they could relate to easily.

In some ways this helped to explain why Jamilah thought ethnic minority teachers, especially practising Muslims, would find more difficulties in the State system where there are so few of them:

> ...one of the issues ... is the kind of support networks that are available; especially in terms of friendships and social relations. If we are saying that friendships are linked to similarity then it seems that 'ethnic minority' teachers, especially those who firmly practise a faith, are going to find it very difficult to find colleagues who are similar to them. Firstly, because there aren't that many ethnic minority teachers around and secondly, out of the ones that are around, there may only be a few that are practising.
>
> Diary

In her new school rapport with children and parents was again excellent. Her multi-lingual skills, including Punjabi and Urdu, were of particular benefit with many of her reception children who could explain

themselves in mother-tongue whilst sometimes struggling to do so in English. She had a completely different insight into their level of knowledge, skills and understanding to a teacher unable to listen or respond in the children's mother tongue. The new team-teaching situation was a good experience, sharing planning, teaching and evaluating with another newly appointed young teacher in the reception department. At Christmas her colleague was moved to a year one class and a senior teacher, on the management team, became Jamilah's partner. Whilst she appreciated the knowledge, support and leadership shown by her new colleague the relationship inevitably became hierarchical leaving Jamilah feeling controlled and constrained. Suggestions she made were rarely adopted and in the end she thought "what's the point?" As the year progressed it was suggested by the head that she re-applied to the pool because the financial position of the school was unclear and they might not be able to extend her one-year contract. Jamilah was successful in her re-application to the pool but wrote withdrawing when she decided to move out of full-time teaching. The school never suggested that she stayed but by July had appointed three new members of staff for the following September. Jamilah finished the two years feeling unwelcome, undervalued and unfulfilled in the State system.

A major problem in terms of professional development throughout the two years was Jamilah's uncertainty about expectations. Issues would occur which could have been dealt with if fewer assumptions and clearer guidelines were available for new staff in both schools. Familiarity with the nuances of every primary school takes time to assimilate and mistakes could have been avoided with more help. One example was a mention, in her otherwise excellent second year reference, that her classroom assistants needed more specific guidance. Handling other adults, especially when they told Jamilah they were used to working on their own initiative, can be difficult for experienced teachers, clearer directives to both new teachers and assistants would have been helpful. Her perception of her status as a powerless NQT ensured that she did not feel very confident in directing the work of adults who had "been in the job at this school for many years."

Positive aspects of professional development gained over the two years revolved around planning, teaching, assessing, reporting, organising, managing, and gaining competence with all the responsibilities of a primary teacher. Once through the stage of trying to please others, during her first year of teaching, Jamilah became more confident with her own decision-making and approaches. Moving from one school to another was valuable professionally since it gave her the opportunity to experience different systems. She valued the more delineated systems, and the team planning, in the second school, over the 'trust your professional judgement' and independent planning of her first school. She did feel resentful of the poor communication surrounding more negative perceptions of her performance, for example the mentor, adviser contradictions in her first post, and the realisation, on reading her reference that there was a minor problem in her second school. A direct, open approach would have enabled her to improve on her weaknesses but also would have prevented some of the suspicions that are fostered by such poor communication. In the end she decided that everyone's perception of teaching is determined by their own preferences for particular approaches and methods: "... when other people judge your competence it depends on what viewpoint they are using."

Breadth of curriculum caused no major problems but as Jamilah's' consciousness of Islam and the interface of her Muslim identity and her State system teacher identity increased she became increasingly aware of compromising her Islamic preferences in order to teach in the State system. Working with very young children presented fewer difficulties than working with older children but she was aware of her role model influence. "Previously I used to pay lip service to the idea of being a role model for Muslim children. It is only now that I have been in school that I fully realise how important this is." (Diary). Jamilah was concerned about presenting the wrong view of Islam, for example in teaching music. "If you are teaching an area of the curriculum you are not happy with, you are providing a role model for the children which might be confusing." She was still undecided on the music situation, Islamically, as she had been at the

end of her fourth year, but she suggested that if she did not have to teach the subject the dilemma would not exist. The demands of the breadth of the curriculum led Jamilah to suggest the possibility of some specialist teachers working in primary schools. Whilst she was confident in her ability to be a subject specialist in religious education she thought this was very much a marginalised subject in the primary school. In areas like music she believed that a specialist teacher would be able to offer the children much more than her in their primary years. In relation to PE Jamilah was happy to teach the subject but on one occasion reflected on whether a specialist "would be able to teach it better."

Jamilah enjoyed teaching her two lessons a week of physical education, covering a balanced programme of games, dance and gymnastics in both schools. In her experience PE was at an advantage to other subjects like RE because the timetabled hall meant most teachers usually took their specific slots for PE lessons. When starting gymnastics and apparatus work with her reception class she asked if she could have a classroom assistant in the lesson. Allocation of assistants in the reception unit, as most 'reception' decisions, had become the prerogative of her team partner, a member of the senior management team. The sixty reception children were divided into two groups, Jamilah was to take thirty children for gymnastics whilst the other teacher had both available classroom assistants for classroom based activities so they could be divided into three groups of ten.

> I feel confident with PE but with apparatus and everything, a classroom assistant would have been helpful. There were two occasions when I suggested maybe it would be better to have an assistant in PE but it was brushed aside - and I'm not sure it's worth bringing up again. So it will just have to be a case of ensuring my discipline is 100% in PE.

This indicates the lower status awarded by the senior teacher to the needs of children in PE, the safety aspect was obvious but ignored. Adding to the

evidence of the lower status of this subject in the perceptions of primary teachers, when asked what the ethos of PE was like in her schools Jamilah answered: "Sometimes lessons were cancelled - for other activities in the hall. There wasn't much talk about PE in the staff-room or around - as there was of other subjects."

PE facilities and equipment were regarded as good in both schools. The independent planning in her first school left Jamilah thinking she needed more guidance and liaison with other teachers, on PE (and other subjects) to build confidence with content knowledge. She was not encouraged, in the differentially related 'team-teaching' situation of her second post, to offer ideas, quickly developing a loss of self-confidence as suggestions were ignored or not valued. She was confident with teaching PE, especially apparatus work The only other PE incident Jamilah mentioned was experienced in both schools where the year one, and reception children, respectively, refused to join hands for circle dances between girls and boys. Whilst she insisted that they did join hands because of their young age, she was conscious that their gender identity was more significant to them as Muslims than it would be to parallel aged non-Muslims. These children at four and five years of age had already assimilated cultural / religious values and expectations.

Changing into track-suit and tee-shirt for teaching PE would have been a problem for Jamilah, not at Greenacres, but in the Asian Muslim school situation. The reason for this was the 'expectations' the community would have of her as a Muslim teacher. She changed her shoes, as most teachers in the situation did: "Being in an Asian Muslim school with parents in and out all day, I wouldn't feel comfortable wearing track-suit and tee-shirt." Asked if people walking through her lessons created problems she answered: "No, not really, that is why I could demonstrate ... and most of the staff, as in the majority of primary schools (particularly infant departments), are women."

In her final interview Jamilah discussed the possibility of doing some supply teaching after leaving her full-time post. She considered trying some

key stage two situations, starting with year three and moving gradually upwards. The reason for this was the rapport she had developed with older children when they started coming into her classroom to help her with organisation and preparation of materials. She enjoyed the level of conversation and interaction and thought she might enjoy teaching that age group. When asked if teaching PE at key stage two would create any problems for her she thought it might: "... would I have to do PE on supply?" It was not a problem related to Islam but to the level of subject knowledge required and, more importantly, the issue of control and behaviour with an unknown class: "Sometimes on supply you aren't sure how they'd behave in PE", reflecting concerns for safety.

By the end of the two year period Jamilah had learnt a great deal about teaching but decided in the last six months that she wanted to leave to make space for other things in her life. She considered the possibility of supply because a complete break seemed such a radical step, but was not certain of this option. She also considered going into a Muslim school since she believed this was where she might feel "most comfortable". She gave five reasons for this: fewer children, more Muslim colleagues, fewer compromises, being able to pray properly, and finally "I would be comfortable with my Muslim identity and not feel that it is something that I need to try and 'hide' as much as possible." (Diary). But in the immediate future she wanted to "... move away from being told how to work and what to do."

A number of experiences and changes had led to this decision. A contributing factor had been the growing consciousness of ways in which her role as teacher led her to compromise her preferred actions and behaviour as a Muslim. At the same time striving to be a better Muslim necessarily involved striving to be a better teacher and she was setting herself impossibly high aspirations which she was not meeting. These included trying not to shout at the children, since Islamically this was not good, and trying to ensure she stayed positive with each individual throughout the day. She was increasingly aware of her role model

influence, about the power she embodied, particularly in the Asian, Muslim schools she had experienced, and she was struggling to find answers to questions about the messages a good Muslim teacher should be communicating to the children:

> I think being a Muslim has probably raised dilemmas and questions which I probably wouldn't have asked - but I think analysing your own behaviour and the responses of children is a good thing - thinking about your responsibility, thinking about how you become a better teacher, because it makes you more aware of your responsibility.

Whilst she thought such self-reflection and analysis of practice was a positive quality in a teacher she was also recognising the degree of 'slippage' that was occurring as she compromised and accommodated teaching in the State system. She was not prepared to keep 'moving in that direction' since her sense of self as Muslim was more important to her.

In two predominantly Asian Muslim school contexts Jamilah embodied an excellent resource as a qualified teacher, a scholar of Islam, a positive role-model of a successful Muslim woman for the local community, with multi-lingual skills and cultural insight into the habitus of the children and their families that constituted the schools. In the two years of her employment in those situations she was never asked about her Asian, Muslim identity, to contribute to any in-set related to Islam, RE or cultural insight into local community needs and requirements. On leaving Greenacres she aspired to making improvements in society by educating about Islam from within the State education system. Those skills were never required. The only 'embodied' skills that were appreciated were her multi-lingual skills but she believed these were more highly valued by the parents and children than the gatekeepers of professional development:

Jamilah - I just think if I was head teacher of a school that was mainly Muslim I'd want to know about this religion and (the children's) background, and I'd want my staff to know that they could have a better understanding.

Interviewer - Do you mean the lack of interest and the missed opportunity of having a Muslim teacher in such a school?

Jamilah - Yes

She never underestimated the value she brought to the children:

> (they) gain such a lot just by knowing that someone from their own cultural background is in such a position (as teacher) - that alone speaks volumes to them, you don't even have to open your mouth - but if you do ... and speak the same dialect as them .... you can see it on their faces...

But she did recognise a serious lack of understanding about Islam and Muslims amongst her colleagues:

> I am often surprised at the lack of knowledge that teachers have about Islam and Muslims. One of the teachers was surprised to learn that Muslims believe in Jesus as a prophet. I definitely believe that there should be some kind of in-depth training to make teachers more aware and to challenge stereotypes that they may have. It is a shame that Muslim staff are not used to help. I would be quite willing to talk to staff about Islam if given the opportunity. However, I felt these people weren't interested and I don't feel the skills and knowledge that I brought in .... were appreciated.
>
> Diary

Not only did Jamilah feel undervalued by white senior staff and colleagues as an Asian, Muslim teacher, with many untapped skills, but she

actually moved to a position of 'subverting' her Islamic identity in her second school situation in an attempt to improve relations with the other staff. In her first school she recognised that speaking out about issues of Islam and being Muslim was often met with resentment, even in staffroom conversation when a topical Islamic event was being discussed. Rather than welcoming discussion and shared understanding, she found such conversations often led to resentment and tensions. Negative attitudes towards Islam were so deeply rooted that any attempts to reason, as a Muslim teacher amongst a dominant non-Muslim staff, proved impossible. To avoid any possibility of repetition she rendered - as 'invisible' as possible - her Muslim identity in the second school, by deliberately staying silent in any conversations related to religion or Islam. "I am not overtly Muslim in school. I am because of the headscarf, but verbally I'm not overtly a Muslim." In a sense this was a new kind of 'stasis' where confrontation was avoided resulting in no challenge and no change to the status quo. (Menter 1989). "Sometimes it's safer not to talk about things." "...for future harmony I thought ... it's best not to talk about anything related to Islam, since it may just result in friction." (Diary). Jamilah agreed that whilst adopting this approach had enabled her to 'fit in' more readily it had also compromised her Muslim identity.

Similarly, Jamilah considered any future 'high profile' involvement in RE, her greatest curriculum strength, as potentially problematic because it would draw attention to her Muslim identity. The feared unspoken question appeared to be: 'Could such a visibly committed Muslim be capable of co-ordinating a balanced RE programme?' Such a question would never be asked, overtly or covertly, of a committed Christian teacher, responsible for the same professional objectivity when teaching a multi-faith RE syllabus.

Religion was the most important aspect of Jamilah's life and in the State education system any sense of religion was marginalised. She aspired to be a better Muslim and a better teacher but the mismatch of Islamic and Westernised values, epitomised by a religious or secular reality-base, made

this increasingly difficult for Jamilah. She regarded no education as 'neutral', even a secular system was making a 'value stand':

> ... there isn't any sitting on the fence ... regardless of what you do with a child ... it can be interpreted as brainwashing or giving them information or trying to get them to lead a certain kind of life ... There is no neutral ground ...

For Jamilah the value-stance of the State system was weakening Islam for British Muslims. With the exception of her time at Greenacres, her experiences within the system, as a pupil and teacher, and as a member of the Asian Muslim community, indicated a weakening of faith through that system. She recognised that as mothers, with weakened faith, raised the next generation of Muslim children with minimum Islam in their homes, the faith dissipated through generational change. (Elias 1991). She recognised that being a practising Muslim in this society was difficult and that pressures to become more Westernised were very strong:

> I do feel that Asian teachers in State schools who are more Westernised would probably feel more comfortable in the situation but to me that is negative for the girls because I feel they need more practising Muslim role models because that's what is important to me. (The wearing of the hijab was the obvious example of such a symbol.)

Jamilah wanted to be proactive, to do something positive with her knowledge and skills, particularly for Muslim girls, in British society. Within the State education system, where most Muslims are educated, there was no opportunity for her to offer this. Even thoughts of starting a voluntary lunch-time Islamic club within her largely Muslim schools would be, she feared, misconstrued by other staff as 'fundamentalist':

> Once you are in a situation you realise the structures that are already set up, the limits you work within, and therefore you lower your expectations ...

So after two years in the system she decided to give herself space to pursue her Islamic interests and "develop myself as a teacher my own way" hoping to use her knowledge and skills in a voluntary capacity for the benefit of Muslims who wanted to know more about their faith. "I am not bothered about the pay - it's the dilemmas." In the State system she had recognised a gradual slippage into acceptance of behaviours she preferred not to adopt. She was not prepared to move any further in that direction.

Jamilah's Muslim identity was increasingly the most prominent layer of her habitus. (Elias 1991). From the start of her post in full-time teaching she made time at weekends and in the holidays to pursue her Islamic interests. She went to Arabic classes to improve her ability to read the Qu'ran for herself and she went to Islamic classes and conferences. She could never share this interest in the staffroom:

> I don't really talk freely about what interests me... I would be hesitant to mention that I would be going on an Islamic conference - I just feel it may make people stereotype me as a fundamentalist (whatever they think that to be).

Her ideal vision was to use her knowledge and teaching skills for the benefit of society. In particular she wanted to teach Muslim girls, who shared her values, and wanted to learn more about Islam, about the liberating nature of Islam. On the issue of the oppression of women in some Islamic states Jamilah reflected on how Islam was wrongly used sometimes where other motives such as greed, power and control were concerned: "Women need to find out what Islam does say ... (any kind of) coercion is unislamic." She suggested problems of oppression occurred in all communities and were not necessarily restricted to women: "An Asian

community does not consist of oppressed Asian women, there are some oppressed Asian women and some oppressed Asian men." (giggles).

Jamilah thought the education of Muslim girls might be more liberating in Muslim schools than in the State system because "they'd be more confident in themselves and happy with who they are." In the State system "there is a big issue of their self-esteem ... the dominant culture is there in terms of staff and teaching - in terms of everything that might erode their culture, so how can you expect them to succeed if they start from a position of having no self-esteem." To some extent this personal opinion supported the findings of Haw (1995).

Aspirations to make a difference within the State education system had not disappeared altogether. Jamilah considered many ways of being more proactive with her new found freedom from full-time teaching. One idea was to offer schools visits or packages to discuss issues related to Islam or improving cross-cultural/community understanding. Her intention was to improve society through sharing understanding of Islam both within the Muslim community and the dominant non-Muslim society. Her own experiences had continually indicated lack of knowledge and sensitivity to the behaviour and requirements of Muslims, for example in the ritual of shaking hands between men and women which was not a 'big issue' through 'Western eyes' but was for them as Muslim women. She wanted to make a difference by sharing understanding of difference so that increased awareness would make their lives more comfortable.

Throughout the two year period of the teacher based research Jamilah's family had been supportive. Following her early problems with the 'headmistress incident' her father told her to leave, she did not have to work. But her brothers said "Welcome to the real world" indicating incidents of racism and power plays were normal in their lives. As a divorced Muslim woman Jamilah always wanted her own children and she hoped to marry again in the near future. Since her parents had had "their chance at finding her a husband" and it had not worked out, she wanted to be in charge of the selection of her second husband. She found him, with

her brother's help, through her Islamic Studies classes. They plan to marry in the autumn of 1997. Her mother and father were not entirely happy about the match. Jamilah had been very sensitive in her selection to find somebody with the same dialect and Pakistani origin as her family. She was sure once her parents met her fiancé's family they would get on well which was important to her:

> ... there's a bit of the unknown as well, but nothing I can't cope with. I don't think there will be any tensions I can't deal with - even if there are - you just make the best of the situation you are in.

Her decision to give up full-time teaching would have been made whether she was marrying or not. In relation to life-changes brought about by marriage, she would move into her husband's house but the decision to work or not was hers, he just told her that she did not have to work.

For Jamilah the process of professional development that she experienced in two years of full-time State school teaching was constraining. She found little outlet for the utlization, acceptance or valuing of her Asian, Muslim identity with the professional gatekeepers, but much via her interactions with pupils and parents. Despite being part of the majority population in both school situations, power differentials meant the significance of her interactions with the white, non-Muslim, minority were most influential in shaping her dissatisfaction with State school teaching. In many ways her Muslim identity was forced to become increasingly 'invisible' in order to facilitate 'fitting-in' with her white, non-Muslim management and colleagues. Her main subject studies in RE and Islam were ignored and eventually she felt that any contribution in those areas, despite being part of the National Curriculum, might be misconstrued and therefore best 'silenced'. Finally, realization of the level of accommodation, and her preference to lead a more Islamic life in which her religion could be an overt and valued part of her identity, led her to resign from full-time

teaching in the State system after two years. Her anxieties were reflected in the following diary statement:

> I wonder to what extent a teacher is free to be the kind of teacher he or she wants to be since there are a number of constraints ... a teacher has to work within the framework of: the National Curriculum, school policies, established practice.... (and the preferences of others) heads, mentors and advisers.

6.3 CASE STUDY - RABIAH

CONTEXT

This research followed Rabiah through her first two teaching years with relatively small numbers of mixed year one and two children in her class each year. The school was in an area of extreme social deprivation. At College Rabiah had looked forward to going into a school with social difficulties, in order to make a positive change in the lives of the children. She also hoped to be a positive role model as a professional Asian Muslim woman. Her situation had all the potential to enable her to realise these aspirations. However, she always felt as if she had been pressured into the job as offers for first posts were being made to peers and time appeared to be running out when this school was offered. After two years, despite achieving much, being RE co-ordinator and embarking on a part-time related Masters degree, she was disillusioned about teaching. Rabiah was 'worn-down' by the work-load, despondent about finding any way to make positive change in such a difficult situation, 'lonely' in a school in which she was the only Asian, Muslim teacher, and consequently uncertain about any long-term plans in the teaching profession. The opportunity to move to another school after this two year period kept her from serious consideration of a career change at this point.

PROCESS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Not having the advantage of prior knowledge through former teaching practice or research project attachment, Rabiah had to learn the systems of the school and build all the relationships from day one. The 'geography' of the school, with her 'hut' being away from the main building in the playground area for the two years, did not help her to become 'established' in the early days. The most difficult part of her early experience was the 'independent' system of planning which left her

struggling with masses of weekly preparation, across all curriculum subjects. She felt this was a waste of time and of the specialist subject expertise within the school. The lack of collaboration which resulted, inevitably, led to some difficulties with building relationships in the school. There was a noticeable change in relations with staff when, with the arrival of a new head, the system of planning changed in her second year to a more collaborative, specialist led, approach enabling her to contribute ideas on her specialism of RE and to assume the benefit of other areas of expertise for planning in subjects such as PE.

Rabiah's first weeks in teaching were very stressful. "At College you felt confident in terms of teaching, when you come out - it's such a daunting experience - and I had to plan by myself and I thought ... am I covering what I should be - are they progressing?" She wanted to leave within the first fortnight. The workload ensured she had no spare time in the evenings or at weekends and her anxiety to do well actually made her ill. She lost weight and showed signs of stress which concerned her family as they tried to give her all the support they could from within the home. "I have spent the whole of my half term holiday planning and I'm fed-up." (Diary). It was the response of the children's parents which helped her through this difficult first stage: "... the only thing that kept me going was that I was seeing Asian parents ... to see their (positive) response to me as a teacher here and the way they would come up and talk to me, that really gave me a boost, and that is something that contributed - really helped me - to adjust to this school." As time and familiarity moved on Rabiah realised most parents were not interested in their children's education at the school and she became very disillusioned when only six parents from a year group of eighty-eight children turned up to meet the teachers on parents' evening.

From the beginning Rabiah really enjoyed her pupils. Although there was a cross year-group system of organisation which meant wide-spread needs for differentiation. As she became a more established figure within the school she did notice a growing affinity between some of the Asian Muslim girls and herself, they would come from other classes into her

classroom at lunch-times, help her with jobs and talk to her. She also noticed a respect from older Asian boys, opening doors for her, calling her 'sister' which she regarded as a mark of respect, sharing conversation in their own language, and encouraging better behaviour from other children because of her presence. There was an inquisitiveness from some children of all ethnicities about her dress and hijab but she regarded their questions as a positive way of spreading understanding, believing they would leave school with a better attitudes towards Muslims and Islam because she had been there and answered their questions as openly as possible.

There were tensions with her mentor because Rabiah was torn between taking advice from two members of staff who were 'fighting for the role'. Apparently one had wanted the position and it had been given to the other so she found herself in an 'inbetween' position, and her anxiety not to offend either colleague became stressful. Her appointed mentor made one visit to a lesson during her first year. Rabiah did have 'time-out' as an NQT to visit other classrooms, and the opportunity to meet her mentor and other colleagues whenever she needed, but she did not feel well supported in her NQT year. The isolation of her planning position was particularly distressing since it was so time-consuming and offered no reassurance that she was 'on the right lines'.

Lack of confidence permeated her research interviews in the first year of teaching, resulting from lack of feedback from others. "I just wish they'd tell me how I was doing." By the end of her second term the head had told her she was "...doing fine" and her mentor had confirmed she was "...getting along fine". "What's fine?" she replied. The head had written a reference for her re-application to the pool since nothing was definite about the permanent contract. Her reference was 'very good'. So she felt more reassured but the insecurity did not fade completely:

> My mentor should take a greater interest in what I do with my children and give me advice on how to improve things or discuss

things with me ... she has so much to do. (Other posts of responsibility.)

The head assured her that the contract insecurity over the continuation of her contract after the first year was related to school finance problems not to her teaching. She was proactive in not allowing Rabiah to be called for other jobs from the pool before she knew of her own school's position at the end of May. She genuinely appeared to want Rabiah to stay. Rabiah saw this as supportive from one perspective but also as constraining from another, since she would have liked the opportunity to move to another school for her second year. It was in her spring term that Rabiah made her first whole-school contribution with an excellent assembly on Eid that she had volunteered to take. She did receive positive feedback from many colleagues as a result of this and reflected: "perhaps it proved to them that maybe I am a capable teacher."

By the start of her second year Rabiah had secured a permanent contract after writing, complaining to the Governors of the school, when the head offered her another temporary one. She had been offered the position of RE co-ordinator, and 'in charge of assemblies', with no financial incentive, she had enrolled for a part-time Masters degree in education at the local University, her year two pupils had achieved unexpectedly high National test (SATS) results, and she felt decidedly undervalued and unappreciated:

Interviewer - I think your year sounds like a success story ...
achieved without much help ...

Rabiah - Yes - I wish more people would see that. No-one has said anything about an end of NQT year report - I don't even know if I've passed yet ... I am assuming...

One aspect of the school that disturbed Rabiah throughout the two years was the lack of positive role models of committed teachers on the

staff. When she started Rabiah would arrive at school by 7.00am and leave at 6.00pm, this changed to arriving at 8.00 and leaving at 5.30 but she soon realised most other teachers were arriving at 8.30 and leaving by 4.15, even 3.30 on Fridays, and she began to be resentful about this. Gradually she assimilated the routine of other teachers, preferring to take work home with her rather than stay late since she felt vulnerable on her own in the school, especially in the dark evenings of winter: "... it's to do with the atmosphere in this place ... people don't seem to be committed ... it rubs off on you eventually...it's rubbed off on me, I'm gone by 4.15."

In terms of perceived status Rabiah felt very much "the lowest of the low as an NQT" in her first year. In staff meetings and interactions she felt powerless to make comments that would be valued or that would make changes because she had received negative responses to her early attempts: "we've tried that one..." Her high expectations of making changes through teaching were quickly dashed:

> At College we would say - we'll go into schools and make changes - (now) I feel- what changes can you make? We are the lowest of the low - really - as NQT's. How important are our views?

She was pleased to have responsibility for assemblies and RE in her second year and spent four weeks of her summer holiday re-planning the modules and policy for her colleagues. Her efforts were appreciated but Rabiah recognised differential 'take-up' in the early months as colleagues prioritised core subjects and tackled foundation subjects if and when time and external pressures such as external national testing allowed.

For Rabiah, also, language and maths were priorities with her young class. When discussing other curriculum areas she said she had taught about six lessons of music in her first year: "Nobody picks up on it and nobody cares." Following this up at the end of her second year the situation was similar. Probing why music was so marginalised she said it was the discipline problems, management of instruments and groups of children that

was particularly problematic. "I do more music than I did last year ... you have to chase the co-ordinator for what you have to do ... you plan but then you never do it.... if it's there on the planning no questions are asked. Discipline in PE, which can be more demanding than music in terms of organisation, was always "excellent, because the children enjoyed it so much and they had agreed some clear ground rules for the lessons in the first term."

PE was a regular subject on Rabia's timetable. Throughout most of the two years she had two lessons a week but in the summer terms "...got away with one lesson sometimes" because of the pressure of National testing and the need for extra time on basic language and number skills. In the beginning she was unconfident about games and asked another teacher to go in with her for the first lesson. "What she did I probably would've done myself but seeing her do a lesson was really helpful." Gymnastics had a high profile throughout the two year period of the research. Rabiah was happy to allow the children on the apparatus. Usually she prepared the apparatus at break or lunch-time with colleagues who would also be using it in the next session, and "the juniors put it away". When asked if the apparatus was planned around any principles underpinning the lesson she replied "No ... other teachers don't seem concerned", but Rabiah "always tried to ensure the children had a go at the basic activities of rolling, jumping and so on in every lesson." She did a warm-up activity and moved them straight onto apparatus in most lessons, recognising that she "ought to" do some floor skill progression work. Sometimes she set tasks but often she allowed the children to 'play', to explore the apparatus and enjoy the session, 'letting off steam' from their intensive classroom based work. The children really enjoyed the subject "... if we don't go around all the apparatus they sulk".

> ...because our standards are so low - I have been focusing so much on basic number and writing and language work ... PE lessons are a

way of getting out of the classroom and doing something different - something fun...

Dance also featured regularly but Rabiah lacked confidence with content knowledge in this activity area: "Even if I felt comfortable I wouldn't feel like a good dance teacher." She sometimes used the radio programme but the school did not really approve of this initially. Rabiah thought the pre-planning done in the programmes would help her so when the school originally asked her to produce her own schemes she was:

> ... concerned about what I was going to teach ... I don't want to plan my own scheme. I want to follow the radio programmes because I feel they are beneficial. Sometimes I hate the school.
>
> (Diary)

The problem in the first year was the independent planning in all PE activities and other subject areas. The change of planning system in the second year helped, with the 'specialist' curriculum co-ordinator overseeing the basic plans which would then be developed by individual teachers. Rabiah started talking about her dance lessons with a more informed discourse for example saying that they had been focusing on actions, or shape or changes of "what do you call it - dynamics - that's it." But when she revisited the "same ideas under a different name" the following term she began to struggle with variety in progression and development again, as she did in games:

> We were asked to do dribbling and bouncing skills...I feel I've done it - and reinforced it again - and used a range of apparatus, and reinforced it again - I suppose I would appreciate some ideas there ... it seems a bit constraining, it doesn't seem much (to cover) does it?

Rabiah realised in the teaching of games, as she did in dance and gymnastics that she had insufficient subject knowledge for development of lessons to ensure progression over half-term blocks of work. Management of lessons and confidence with organisation of pupils, space and equipment, was good: "It doesn't bother me any more - I think it's quite safe - the children are sensible." The improved PE policy introduced by the new PE co-ordinator helped, and her curriculum resource books from College-based courses were useful. However, she was surviving PE rather than feeling a real contributor to developing the skills of the children, and Rabiah recognised the need for greater structure. When asked if, having recognised the problems, she would prioritise the subject for in-service input, she replied negatively. PE was not a priority subject for her since it was not perceived as a priority in the school.

> PE is not a priority ... art and craft is not a priority, technology isn't - we do everything but priority is maths and English.

The core areas were her priority with the young pupils and if she had the option she would go on an RE in-service course. Despite this being her College main course she felt she would benefit, as a future curriculum co-ordinator from an early in-service RE course. In fact such an opportunity was denied to Rabiah, when in her first year she asked to go on a twenty day in-service course for curriculum co-ordinators in RE. She felt resentful that she had no input into that decision which was made by her head and mentor.

In terms of kit for PE the children were allowed to wear tracksuit, or shorts and tee-shirts but "... the parents ... don't send kit in so the children do it in vest and pants. I think they should send kit in but the parents don't back me up - they are so laid back here." Rabiah just changed her pumps but did not consider it worth changing clothing since she taught from standing positions and walking around the hall, she chose not to get

physically involved in the lessons. This way there was never any problem for Rabiah if people walked through the public primary hall.

At the end of the spring term of her first year Rabiah "loved teaching" and was coming to terms with the reality of her situation, which meant being more realistic with expectations. One year later she "felt part of the school for the first time" because she began to feel a contributor to decision-making, but she was also considering a change at this early point in her career. There were many reasons for this but the most significant factor was the persistent indiscipline in the school as a whole and from one particular child in her class.

The difficult child, of mixed black / white parentage, caused Rabiah much distress in her second year of teaching. He had been put in her class because "...none of the other teachers wanted him". He dominated her attention, disrupted and affected her other pupils and helped to diminish Rabiah's confidence throughout the year. One of the causes of his disruptive behaviour was his racist thinking which was, in Rabiah's interpretation, instigated and encouraged by his mother. Comments of 'Paki' directed at Rabiah and other children were regular and the child's mother and step-father were perceived as 'intimidating' by Rabiah when they came to collect him, or to ask about his work or behaviour. Mother complained to the head about the poor work the child was producing, Rabiah was keeping the head informed of the child's racist comments and disruptive behaviour in the classroom, which she catalogued. The child was seen by the psychologist and diagnosed as needing further attention and possible statementing but nothing was done to help Rabiah with this difficulty throughout her second year. The new head was Asian and Rabiah thought that he did not want to 'be seen to side with her' in triangular meetings between white mother, Asian teacher and Asian head. In all other respects the new head had brought enthusiasm, he had recognised the demoralised state of his staff and the difficulties of their situation and had started to lift that morale by becoming involved in trying to get to know his staff in his first term.

By the end of her second year of teaching Rabiah had achieved much but felt undervalued, let down by lack of appropriate support systems to offer help when required, overworked and underappreciated. She also thought that some teachers underestimated what Asian children could achieve:

> Something that really annoys me is continuously hearing the remark that we have such low standards in this school because of these ESL (English as a second language) children. It turns my stomach inside out. I want to say what is failing them is our low expectations and poor teaching ...
>
> Diary

Rabiah's National test results had been good at the end of her first year but a colleague had accused her of 'cheating' by offering a pupil bi-lingual support, which they were allowed, when in fact she had not offered it to this particular child because she did not need it. Rabiah attributed the reason for the accusation to jealousy as the class had produced 'better than expected results' which built resentment from colleagues who appeared to regard teaching as a 'competition'.

There were positive moments. Rabiah recalled a gradual break-through with a white family. The young girl in her class would not speak to her at the start of her year:

> I think she felt a bit reluctant, hesitant ... the first parents evening father came and stood, didn't sit down to talk to me - now (mother and father) come and smile and talk quite closely - it's there now - nothing comes easily - I've had to work at it.

Rabiah believed there were ways in which she had to work harder, as an Asian Muslim teacher than most. Having signed on for a Masters degree

and put in extra work as curriculum co-ordinator for RE so early in her career she sometimes wondered:

> Rabiah - ... why should I be doing so much extra to get the same chances as other people?
>
> Interviewer - Is that how you see it?
>
> Rabiah - Yes
>
> Interviewer - Because you are an Asian Muslim woman?
>
> Rabiah - Yes - it's let me down before - look at everything I did on final school experience not to be offered a job.

She had hoped for a full-time position in that school because two teachers were going and she had worked really hard to impress the school during her attachment. Rabiah did not choose the school she finished up teaching in for her first two years and that feeling of being pressured into the situation never faded.

It is impossible to attribute single causes to life-changing events but for all of the teachers in this research their 'difference' to the majority of teachers in the State education system was never far from their consciousness during our discussions. Rabiah recognised the identity she embodied and the positive effects that had on some of the children who shared her identity in the school: "... they can see I'm Muslim". When asked if there were other 'differences' between Muslim and non-Muslim teachers she said "...perhaps that is all there is." She recognised that whilst she embodied being Muslim, that identity was no part of the overt teaching influence she could use in her role as teacher within the State education system:

> .... the messages I am giving are that you can achieve status, make something of yourself - but in terms of teaching ... I'm not converting children into Islam - that's not my role - but there are things we bring ...

As a practising Muslim she did find teaching had an influence on her faith. In her first year of teaching she did not find time to pursue her religious studies. She did pray in her classroom at lunch-times. She tried to keep this hidden from colleagues but not from the children:

> I'd appreciate private washing facilities. I try to keep it secret and do my ablutions in the washbasins in the staff toilet. If anyone comes in I stop and continue when they go out. Some classrooms have their own sinks but mine doesn't. I don't mind praying in the classroom but obviously I would prefer privacy.

There came a time when she stopped lunch-time prayers because she felt the facilities were dirty and not conducive to the importance of the ritual. Later, in her second year, she made a positive effort to read and develop her knowledge of Islam again. She resumed prayers in school but never felt able to ask for better facilities. When compared with the concessions that happened at Greenacres, once the students had asked for concessions, she acknowledged that change had occurred because "... of the number of Muslims at Greenacres - here I am one voice." Speaking out in the school situation would have meant being labelled as 'trouble-maker' which she felt had already happened when she had mentioned small issues that could be addressed easily with some knowledge of Islamic requirements, like words of songs popular at Christmas, or food offered on social occasions.

Being lonely as a Muslim teacher in the State system was sometimes a problem for Rabiah. She continually fended off staffroom comments about Islam and Muslim women. She increasingly appreciated the special environment she had enjoyed at Greenacres and she missed the company of her Muslim friends on a day to day basis:

> ... if you wanted to share something or bring something up there was always somebody there but in schools you are alone - in society you are also alone ... you don't have the support, you don't feel

> comfortable raising things - they are more likely to fall flat because you have nobody backing you up.

The telephone network of support between the Muslim friends was still strong but it could not fulfil the role of companionship that was missing in school where Rabiah sometimes felt isolated amongst predominantly white, non-Muslim staff. When an equal opportunities post arose in her first year she really wanted to have a go for it but did not. She felt it might 'be expected' and that if she was successful other staff would resent her gaining the post, attributing it to the fact that she was the only Asian, Muslim teacher in the school.

The significance of difference recognised by Rabiah related to Elias's 'social habitus' concept (1991). Where individuals shared common experiences, values, life-styles and belief systems the interaction bond would be strongest:

> ... you feel stronger with other people with similar beliefs and goals. In this school it is difficult to talk (amongst colleagues) about your religion - I could in ----- (her final TP school) because the interest was there and people wanted to find out. At this school nobody asks me any questions and there is a negative view of religion (based on others' experiences as children).

It was not just the issue of understanding values and belief systems, Rabiah also mentioned the question of preferred tastes and how hers differed from others in the staffroom, making close relationships more difficult (Bourdieu 1984). She described the barriers of staffroom interaction in the following way:

> It's not a major problem but I think you would relate more to somebody who comes from a similar background as you, has similar beliefs, ideas and experiences. ...

What do they talk about in the staffroom? It's all to do with 'personal beauty'- travel, hairstyles, clothes ... those are things I don't relate to because my upbringing has been so different.
What really gets to me at the moment is holidays - we've got to go on holiday ... it's all to prove that you've travelled, are maybe rich, with a good lifestyle. ...
Another thing they talk about is TV - but what they watch and what I watch are completely different - they talk about pop stars and actors - I don't know any of them ... that's the talk of the staffroom.

For Rabiah, these were some aspects of Western values that were opposed to Islamic values. Some of Elias and Scotson's established-outsider theory (1994) is helpful in interpreting the selection and polarisation of these values, further explained by Rabiah as follows:

> Westernised *habits* would be a more appropriate term ... the social life, the drinking, the smoking, the partying ... the relationships, thinking of yourself - independence and being self-centred - compared with the community you would always think about if you followed Islam .... Islamic values means being accountable to God for what you do - doing what Islam requires ... in-line with God's requirements.

There were times when Rabiah thought that 'work-life' required her to live in two cultures. Despite going through British primary, secondary and College education, the Asian Muslim culture of home and the Westernised, secular culture of school: "Work-life is so different - to school or College. All through school you have friends that you can relate to, you know, but it's different at work...we 'get on' work-wise but not personally." Rabiah reflected on times when she had been sure of 'proper relationships' with white friends but attributed those to having the time and space to

develop closeness of friendships. Teaching did not offer her either. She was experiencing feelings of distance and alienation.

Even research for her Masters degree assignments was not helping her to move psychologically in a positive direction. Her recent survey was on attitudes of teachers towards Christian-based collective worship. Questionnaire responses showed that a number of teachers within her own school, which had at least 80% non-Christian pupils, thought their assemblies should be predominantly Christian "...because we have a Christian country and therefore all children should be involved in Christian worship." She was angry that teachers with views like that, were treated differently by the media from Muslims with a more logical viewpoint. A recent furore was caused when a section of the City's Muslim population, which spoke in favour of Islamic collective worship in schools with predominantly Muslim children, received negative media coverage:

> ... (the Christian) views are not flashed all over the newspaper - they are not treated, like the Muslims, as if they are all fundamentalists.

For Rabiah work was not the most important aspect of her life. Her faith and family were more important and had been a great support throughout her life, especially her early teaching career. With their help she was hoping to be married in the near future but the legal battle to enable her fiancé to come to Britain from Pakistan had taken three years. She felt somewhat humiliated to be forced to continually appear in court to convince the 'authorities' that theirs was to be a genuine marriage and not a 'marriage of convenience'. Her father and other family members also had to appear. Her father had bought them a house and an alternative large family house so they had somewhere to live when married, and she could support her future husband financially. Rabiah was to marry a distant cousin whom she had met and liked in Pakistan three years ago. Her fiancé was finally allowed into Britain in the summer of 1997. I considered it a great privilege to be invited to the wedding on August 23rd.

Thoughts of a career change were seriously considered in the latter half of Rabiah's second year of teaching. Securing a post in a new, and preferred, school was vital to staying in teaching for a third year. Rabiah was delighted to secure a post, with responsibility for 'equal opportunities' and 'adults within the school', at a school nearer to her community for her third year in the teaching profession. It was in a much stronger Asian Muslim area, and she was convinced the discipline problems would not be as great as in the school she was leaving. She attributed this to the fact that Asian families stayed together 'maybe for the wrong reasons' but giving the children firmer family roots and greater guidelines and parameters for their behaviour. Rabiah was suggesting her own identity was better reflected in the school she was moving to: "... it'll be good to be accepted for what you are right from the outset - without having to prove yourself - not having to 'play these games' to build relationships." Feelings of being 'fake' in her former workplace ensured she aspired to a more comfortable environment in her new school, where 'being herself' meant not having to subvert her Muslim identity in the same way:

> ... the more practising you become the harder it is because your purpose is different to others - to live our lives Islamically.

Rabiah had become suspicious of motives from non-Muslim individuals who had done her unintentional harm through their actions within her teaching experiences. Asked if teaching had become harder for her over the two years because she was a practising Muslim she acknowledged that she had found it increasingly hard to be open with colleagues, to say what she really wanted to say. Where views differed she had adopted a 'silent' attitude because she did not want to risk confrontation and further alienation. This appears to be a kind of stasis (Menter 1989) adopted as a damage limitation exercise on relations

between a Muslim teacher and non-Muslim staff. Rabiah knew this would not occur between Muslim and Muslim because of their mutual understanding. They would be able to be more comfortable about being open with each other without risk of offending. There was a personal cost to this non-confrontational approach, to Rabiah's self-esteem, and identity. When asked if such conflict and compromise of Muslim identity had affected any of her friends in the teaching profession she reported that Zauda had left full-time teaching because she was compromising her beliefs so she moved to supply, the difference being:

> You probably don't have to do half the things that you'd be doing as a full-time teacher ... you can go in and do your own thing - choose what you do ... There again ... if we do leave because we are compromising our beliefs what are we going to do - just leave Muslim children in the (State) schools with no Muslim teachers?

Rabiah had considered the teaching context of a Muslim school and in her second year of teaching she had been a 'mentor friend' for Nawar who had taken a post in a Muslim school with a similar aged class as Rabiah. There was much that she admired about Nawar's position:

> It's so different for her - it's a private school - she enjoys it more - you've got the support of the parents ... parents are eager to find out ... you don't have all the problems we have in the State school. You have Islamic teaching so you can teach morals ... So I have been thinking about it recently - also with all the behavioural problems we have to put up with - you are not respected are you?

But in a later interview she recognised the huge pay differentials and the other resourcing difficulties of the Muslim school and was not entirely convinced that it was the direction for her to take. The aspects of: respect;

freedom from the stress of continual struggles for discipline; and for open acceptance of her Muslim identity; did appeal.

Rabiah's early teaching career brought much success. She achieved good results from the children and was respected for the work she did in the area of Religious Education once she had been made subject co-ordinator. She had taken on a part-time related Masters degree at the end of her first year and had continued to enjoy the support of her family through this intensive two-year period of her life. Throughout that time she was never really happy in the school and believed it's 'bad reputation' in the City would prevent her from gaining a post in any other school. Experiences had resulted in detrimental physical and psychological effects. She was disappointed in the lack of enthusiasm and commitment from colleagues and the uninterested attitude of pupils' parents. Rabiah was frustrated by the lack of real influence she could have on the school but was aware that she had made small changes and experienced some success. Aspirations and expectations had to be re-thought and there was recognition that she was not entirely comfortable as a Muslim teacher in the dominant Westernised ethos of the staffroom. Towards the end of her second year of teaching she was considering an alternative career but having the opportunity to move to a different school offered fresh hope of finding a more rewarding situation:

> I don't know about teaching - the behaviour and the amount of work has got me down here, but that might be different in my new school.

It would not be marriage or family that took Rabiah out of the profession but the negative experiences of her early career.

6.4 CASE STUDY - SALIMA

CONTEXT

Salima was one of the self-declared Muslim women who had studied English as her main subject at Greenacres but entered in 1991 with the first cohort of Islamic Studies students. Friendships and interest in Islam developed over her four year B.Ed. course and her involvement and support for this research project, enabled me to track the first two years of her teaching career. She was fortunate to secure her first job in her final teaching-practice school.

Pupils at the school were predominantly Asian, Muslim, largely of Pakistan and Bangladesh origin. Salima was the only Asian Muslim teacher on the staff although there were Asian classroom assistants. Her first two years were with year-four classes, twenty-nine pupils in her first year and thirty-two in the second. The school was open-plan with two parallel year group classes working collaboratively in terms of planning, and some teaching experiences. In her first year she had a more experienced male teacher as her team partner and in her second year she had team seniority as she supported an Asian NQT woman through her first year of teaching.

Throughout the two-year period of this early teaching career period Salima had a love / hate relationship with the profession. Her greatest 'love' was in the teaching of the children, her biggest 'hate' was with the written administration required. Preparations for Ofsted featured large in her attention from the first interview in December 1995 to the last, just after the 'happening' in July 1997. Whilst the Ofsted process definitely helped in her professional development it also contributed towards serious doubts about her desire to stay in the profession. On completion of this research Salima was about to be married in August 1997, and to embark on her third year of teaching at the same school.

Salima would never admit to being committed to teaching but actions speak louder than words. Deciphering the evidence of her professional competence, confidence and job satisfaction was a challenge. The evidence revealed through her classroom was countered by a screen of self-effacing comments and a particularly dry sense of humour that permeated our research interviews. From her time at College Salima had not been entirely convinced that teaching was the right career for her. She had considered moving straight into a Masters degree and 'having a family' was high on her agenda. Confidence to undertake a full-time post was particularly low in her final fourth year interview and permeated her first year of teaching. Fortunately she had secured a post in the only TP school in which she had ever felt comfortable, and a mentor who had become a highly respected colleague and friend during that TP period. In many ways she knew she could be happy in that school situation but she was anxious that she would 'let everybody down' and not 'live up to' the high expectations others had of her in the school. Her identity as the only Asian, Muslim teacher contributed to her anxiety about expectations. At the end of her first term her lack of confidence, and concern with the unspoken expectations of others, came through in this comment:

> I think I've let the head down, I think she thought - we are going to hire an Asian teacher - I don't know what she expected - I do the signs (writing in different languages) what else does she want. Does she want me to look Asian in the dress sense, or to do a lot more bi-lingual stuff? I think I've let her down in that sense.

But confidence gradually developed in a well-directed school with an ethos of high expectations and clear structures and procedures for achieving them.

Professional development of all aspects of teaching and learning was high on the head teacher's agenda and systems were in place to ensure constant improvement of planning, teaching, assessment, recording and reporting, display work, subject leadership and all aspects of school life. These included peer and senior management observation and feedback sessions, team meetings, clarity of expectations, targets, self-assessment and in-set support provision. Such demands were met in an ethos of positive good-will, mutual support and a sense of value for all individuals in the school. The head told staff directly that her 'neck was on the block' in terms of the reputation of the school and that she wanted the best environment for staff, pupils and the local community. Joining such an aspiring ethos made Salima think she might 'not be up to expectations' but the systems and procedures, though demanding, did ensure support in her early career as she gradually gained confidence and a genuine sense of being valued within the school.

The head teacher had high expectations of her staff and was prepared to become closely involved in supporting and helping wherever possible. She regularly visited classes, gave honest appraisals, saw staff for one-to-one chats, and gained copies of 'best schemes' and ideas for resources from other heads in 'her network'. Before Ofsted the head was in school, with some colleagues on Saturdays, ensuring final documentation and required evidence was in place. The head teacher knew everything that was happening in the school, had clear and high expectations, was prepared to 'check things out' for herself, and to contribute through making critically constructive comments or contributions. She was positive and encouraging with Salima to such an extent that Salima felt she did not deserve the praise, that she was, in a sense, a 'fraud' since she knew how to 'put on a performance' when someone came in to a lesson but was aware that she did not always teach to that standard. Salima had an excellent sense of humour and on one occasion suggested she needed to move rooms because she had 'worn the teacher's chair out!'. She often raised the issue of not always 'performing' at her best, of times when she was in a sense treading water or

sitting 'back-stage' (Goffman 1971) in order to recuperate herself after particularly stressful times. She was very self-critical of herself and thought it was wrong or unusual to sometimes 'take a back seat' and just let the pupils 'get on with it'. On annual review with Salima at the end of her first year of teaching, the head had offered her a point of responsibility for technology because she was so pleased with her teaching and contribution to the school. Salima turned it down since she did not feel ready for such responsibility, and technology was not a subject in which she felt secure. It was at this point that Salima giggled as she said "I don't see the head as the enemy any more."

Salima's mentor was the deputy head, maths co-ordinator and had been a very supportive class teacher on her final school experience. They had a close relationship and Salima felt she could 'share anything with her'. Lesson observation was built into the school system but there was not much specific time for mentor / NQT observation. Salima and her mentor chatted over lunch-times and breaks, before or after school, whenever they needed to and she always received positive and supportive advice and comments. On reflection Salima realised that in this rushed and unscheduled way of having haphazard mentor / NQT meetings she had missed out on real 'quality time' which would have been invaluable with such an experienced teacher. The mentor's positive interaction with Salima did not convince her of her capability because she was unable to 'see herself as teacher' for most of her first year. Whilst Salima did have 'time-out' of her classroom as an NQT for planning or observation, she felt there were so many things assumed of her: "It's all the extras - register, duties, rotas - I just needed someone to tell me ... this is what you do."

Colleagues within the school were mostly happy in the environment. The constant demands and monitoring of progress brought particular pressures for those who were finding it difficult to 'stay afloat'. This caused some resentment when 'word got around' that some of the new, younger members of staff were doing particularly well. Salima's 'team teaching colleague' was the senior member of their partnership but his personal

feedback was not as positive as Salima's. Their close relationship as colleagues meant they shared many conversations about the positive and negative experiences they were having throughout the year but when differences in their 'capabilities' became evident he became resentful:

> He called me a 'creep', the 'apple of the head's eye', 'star' - sometimes it bugs me and sometimes I just ignore him. He's not been doing too well and that's his own fault.

A negative competitive element had emerged which weakened their professional relationship.

The children really enjoyed having Salima as their teacher. At the beginning of her first year many wanted to know if she was Pakistani, and / or Muslim (she did not wear hijab at that stage). They were finding out about the degree of their affinity or 'shared habitus' and sometimes used it to proclaim association: "Oh she's one of us" or "She's not one of you - she's not Bengali." Some children did not see her as a teacher in the first instance.

> I realised as soon as I went to the class that the children would have certain stereotypes of what a teacher is and what a teacher isn't .... one boy just kept saying 'When's the real teacher coming?'. One day I had to cover another class and they'd say 'Is that the real teacher?'.

Once she was approached in the corridor by a year-five boy who said 'Miss are you a real teacher?' by which time Salima exhaustedly replied: 'No - I'm plastic actually!' Most other Asian adults in the school stayed in the infant department and she was the only Asian teacher 'moving around' the junior department . Consequently she attributed these comments to a 'novelty factor' since they stopped after the first few weeks. She had similar experiences with some parents:

I found out from one of the Asian parent workers .... before I came the parents were worried about me being the children's teacher. I don't know if it was because I am Asian, because of the way I looked, or because I didn't seem too approachable. Now they are positive ... it's alright. Parents evening was fine.

There was one incident with an Asian classroom assistant that really concerned Salima in her first teaching term. She was told by the assistant that the impression she gave was of being very 'coconutish', white on the inside and more Westernised than Asian. The assistant :

> ... thought we wouldn't get on ... she said 'it's probably the way you dress and talk and look'. I thought 'If she thinks that, do the children think that as well?' ...I just hope I don't come across like that ... I did find it offensive ... I don't think I'm Westernised at all - just because of the way I dress.

Reflecting on this in her diary Salima indicated that "...dressing in so-called white clothes", more Westernised than Asian dress, might have contributed to this impression and she was particularly concerned that she was not influencing the children "to become more Westernised." Regardless of the personal concern the assistant's comments caused, as Asians their relationship was 'more open' than some "... she wouldn't say some of the things she says to me to other teachers, because we are from the same culture", an example of Elias's 'shared social habitus' concept (1991). They developed a good friendship. By the end of the first term Salima was established in the school and relationships with children, parents and colleagues continued to develop in a positive direction. Nevertheless this incident affected Salima deeply and may have contributed to her decision to adopt the hijab at the start of the summer term that year.

Adopting the hijab was a big decision for Salima. Her faith had grown at Greenacres and her Muslim friends were still very important to

her. Although teaching did not leave much time to pursue her faith she decided the time was right and returned to school wearing the hijab after her second term of teaching. The staff said it looked really glamorous which was not the intention. The children had most questions wanting to know why, and why now? "That first day I was more nervous of the children's reaction than that of the staff." They all said it "looked nice" and that "some of their relatives wore it." Since then it "...has become part of me .... I would feel uncomfortable without it ..." Some parents assumed she had done Hajj. Many parents spoke positively of the move to adopt the hijab. Some of the girls started wearing their own headscarves into school. "Adopting hijab was important for the children." The move was a statement about her identity as a Muslim and in many ways she was happier about the influence she was having, and meeting her perceptions of expectations within the community of the school, after that move. It was both a private and public statement and Salima was aware of both perspectives.

Responses to her wearing of the hijab, from within her community, were positive. At first Salima was aware of extra attention which she did not like but she quickly realised it was 'positive and respectful attention'. She noticed responses of Asian men were particularly respectful: "I don't get rude comments when I'm walking down the road. It's nice like that." The younger girls in the community did not know how to respond. "They expect me to have changed overnight - it's not like that - I've made a statement about my faith." Salima separated the adoption of the hijab, a symbol of her Muslim identity, from wearing the shalwar kameez, a symbol of Pakistani identity. "I do wear shalwar kameez sometimes although I don't like wearing it. I don't associate myself with Pakistan at all. It is the country where my parents were born and my relatives are but I wouldn't want to live there..."

Responses to adopting the hijab from within her own family were mixed. Her father said nothing, her mother was against it because it was "not a Pakistani thing" and symbolised a more radical fundamentalist shift the 'older community' was fearing in its youngsters. Her younger sister

thought she would follow in a few years time and her brothers saw it as a positive move, trusting her more by not asking where she was going every time she went out of the house. Whilst she thought her parents should be more positive about such a move in the direction of the faith by one of their children, she did understand their position. It made her more tolerant of a home situation which was not easy for Salima during the two years of the research. At times she had felt cut off from the family, not speaking much, and not being allowed to go out freely without questioning and approval:

> I think my faith building up has made me see them in a more understanding light. I didn't understand where they were coming from - now I do sort of accept - it was the way they were brought up - the way they are...

Friendships at school had sometimes offered more in terms of support during Salima's early teaching career than relations within the home.

Early in her first year of teaching Salima did not feel capable of making much in the way of a contribution to staff meetings on policy or practice. She felt her status as an NQT was low and that she had much to learn from more experienced staff around her. Although she turned down a post of curriculum co-ordinator for her second year of teaching, she did accept responsibility for library, for supporting an NQT through her first teaching year, not as mentor but as year-group-colleague, and she accepted a student on teaching practice from a local College. Whilst she did not enjoy additional responsibility, she coped well.

The most interesting experience in terms of changing her perceptions of herself was in having a student. For the first time she recognised how far she had progressed professionally since she had been at the school herself as a student. She could now "see herself as teacher", realised that she was confident in the classroom, and gaining valuable knowledge, skills and competence, with all the other requirements of the role of teacher, that now 'distanced her' from the position of student.

Nevertheless, Salima asked not to have a student again because the experience did not match that which she had expected:

> I don't know why but I expected him to come in, do wonderful lessons ... and I could just have all this time for everything else and it's not turned out like that.

She ended up helping him in the classroom, dealing with situations of bullying that had arisen when the student took over the class and generally doing more work and picking up more problems than if she had kept the class herself. Nevertheless the experience was valuable in terms of the positive change it brought to her self-perception.

For Salima the stresses of the job came with the administrative workload. In her first year this consisted of long days in school, evenings of more work and some time planning on Sundays. By the end of her first term she proclaimed "...the only thing I look forward to is the weekends and they go really quickly!" By the end of the spring term she recognised her discipline was much better and her attitude more relaxed but she still could not keep up with the paper-work. "There are NQT's here who stay until 7.00pm and I'm not prepared to do that." Paper-work included short, medium and long-term planning, subject planning, forecasting, differentiation, marking and assessment requirements. This did not improve but, in fact, became more intensive in the second year with the prospect of Ofsted but even when that was over "there were the same expectations."

Reflecting on College Salima recalled a sense of 'freedom' about those days and nothing but 'responsibilities' since joining the profession. By the spring term of her second year she had asked her parents if she could leave teaching because she just could not cope with all the work. They would not let her give up her job. At the end of her second year she reflected:

The negative part (of teaching) is the time - it takes lots of time outside of school hours - time out of the rest of your life ... hopefully next year (her third) will be better but I don't know. I enjoy the children - that's the best bit ... and this school...I know, if I want to go further in my career, I can't stay here but I don't want to start up again ... as a staff we do get on ... everybody says that when they come into this school.

On this last visit of mine the head brought a Governor around to Salima's classroom to show her the displays and work of the children, and to proclaim her praises of Salima's work to the Governor, (and myself). Salima was embarrassed and said the head was always doing that, but it offered an example of the positive ethos in the school, the style of leadership and the sense of being valued that resulted.

In terms of the curriculum the core areas had most attention but all subject areas were addressed in the first eighteen months of Salima's post, with in-service courses for everything, including PE. This was attributed to the build up for Ofsted but the quality of support documentation and subject confidence improved through this detailed attention. Music was the subject that was 'overlooked'. Salima admitted that in her first year she ran out of time so it 'got overlooked'. In her second year they had a music specialist in for a short time so she had not taught the subject. When asked if there was any problem Islamically for her with teaching music she replied: "It's never come to the crunch where I've had to teach it so I've never had to face that Islamically..." There were no difficulties Islamically for Salima with the teaching of PE, her experiences equated with those of many NQT's.

Physical education had a regular, twice weekly slot on the timetable. Salima taught swimming, gymnastics, dance, athletics and games in her first two years. Whilst she enjoyed swimming she found progress frustrating with the lowest ability group having only one short lesson a week. She did admit that it was the 'afternoon off' that also appealed to her about

swimming, travelling on the coach, changing, teaching and bussing back, taking a 'whole afternoon' out of the week. By her second year the City's policy on teachers accompanying children to the pool changed and she could no longer go with the children because she did not have the newly required life-saving qualification. In relation to 'being Muslim' Salima did meet an incident whereby the parents of a Muslim child did not want their daughter to take part in mixed-sex swimming, writing letters to ask for her exclusion from the activity. Salima felt sorry for the child, who had to sit on the side of the pool when she really wanted to join the other children. Despite being Muslim and understanding the issues Salima did not feel able to address the issue with the parents. The child was not in her class and the particular parents involved were difficult. "I wouldn't want to push it with her parents - with some I could."

The school was well-equipped for games and gymnastics. The advantage in PE was that all the children 'loved it' so they were always on their best behaviour. If they were naughty they were temporarily excluded from participating which they disliked intensely. Games lessons were a favourite. Salima enjoyed teaching the lessons and continued to set a positive example by changing for PE. Once she was persuaded to take a drama lesson for her colleague and let him take her games session but she preferred the PE. The support documentation in the school was excellent with clear ideas on lesson content and development, but if she did want some help she felt unable to approach the curriculum co-ordinator who: "was older ... white-haired!" She had found the school PE in-set useful since she had an opportunity to observe someone else teaching a lesson, but the intensity of multi-subject in-set courses reduced the impact and left Salima 'exhausted'.

All PE activities were structured in half-term blocks. This was a disadvantage in gymnastics in particular because as soon as Salima's confidence with floorwork and small apparatus, benches and mats, was developing it was time to change activities. She did some good work on floor sequencing and linking of skills, as was acknowledged by the PE co-

ordinator one day after she had been in the hall tidying the cupboard during Salima's lesson. Unfortunately Salima's fear of managing the children on large apparatus meant her pupils did not use it until eighteen months into her teaching career:

> I just wasn't too sure - I didn't know how to set it up ... and whether I could trust the children ... and what to do with them when they were on it .... I can do it next year! It wouldn't bother me now.

On reflection her advice to other NQT's was to use the apparatus as early as possible. Salima's lack of confidence did not stop her enjoyment of teaching this subject: "PE is the best lesson it is so disciplined and organised." She recognised the power of PE to induce the best behaviour in children, rooted in the enjoyment most children find in the subject. She also recognised ways to use that power. She had already 'bribed' her next class with 'extra PE' if they worked hard all year and produced good National test results. She was looking forward to having the year-six class for her third year of teaching, since she had the same children as a fourth-year class and really liked them. However, she was anxious about National tests since the current year six children had already surpassed the school's millennium target. She thought she might 'let them (the school) down', but she knew PE was a lever she could use to persuade the children to produce better work in other subjects.

Ofsted had featured highly in the degree of panic and concern about workload in every interview conducted during her first two years of teaching. The event happened in the summer term of 1997 and turned out to be very successful. There were difficulties regarding the teaching of one or two staff, but the long process of building for the 'event' had been planned to ensure all was ready well in advance of the team's arrival.

> ... it's true what they say - the build up is worse than the actual event ... lots of praise ... most lessons were good ... my year group

> came out particularly well. When they left they gave us a photo-frame and said we could use it to frame the final report ... because it will be good ... in the draft ... it was all good.

The aftermath was 'an anti-climax' and Salima talked of the euphoria only lasting about five minutes. The head saw staff individually to give them feedback. Salima's technology lesson had been the best in the school. She seemed surprised that the school "expectations stayed the same" after Ofsted but staff were very tired and found it difficult to maintain their levels of enthusiasm until the end of term.

Whilst many of Salima's experiences would be similar to most other teachers in their early careers, being Muslim was important to her in that particular Asian / Muslim school situation. There were incidents in her first year that concerned her, for example her perceptions of the Christmas celebrations and Christmas carols. Muslim children were required to sing songs with words which belonged to another faith. She did not feel able to challenge the system at that point:

> I wouldn't feel comfortable to say - I'd just be targeted. I just want to be comfortable - it's not worth speaking out ... you just wonder how much parents know about (what goes on in school) some come in a lot - others don't come in at all.

There were not many incidents that Salima perceived as creating tensions for Muslim children within the school. She never challenged, and in fact deliberately stayed out of, staffroom debates where her 'difference' might have set her apart from her colleagues, an example of 'stasis' (Menter 1989). But she did support these children and positive images of Islam, for example through legitimate avenues such as RE projects on Islam. There were other times, for example during Ramadan, when she prayed at lunch-times and several girls from the school chose to join her in that practice.

By the end of two years she had become valued by children and staff alike as a person first, but also as the 'expert' for any questions they had on Islam or being Muslim. She recognised that the children responded differently to her visible Muslim identity. Other staff had commented on how proud she must be of the children's knowledge of Islam which formed part of their RE project that year. Salima was convinced it was not *what* she had taught them but *how*, things she did and said every day. Adopting the hijab was a significant part of the process. The children recognised her religious identity and appreciated her openness with their questions and desire to learn more about Islam. Her Asian identity was also significant, her bi-lingual skills enabling her to share more with the many children who spoke her dialect. There was the formal side of using those skills, for example in the demonstration bi-lingual lesson Salima was asked to do for visitors from abroad. But the greatest rewards in this area were in the closer relations the language skills enabled her to develop with the junior children on an informal basis. Despite recognition of these additional skills Salima brought to the school, she did not feel 'used' in any way. She was constantly directed towards developing her professional skills. Her English main subject interest was recognised as a strength in her teaching and she was encouraged, at the end of her second year, to think about future posts as co-ordinator in that subject.

In final reflections on how teaching had changed her, Salima thought it had made her anti-social. She was aware that she went home from work and shut herself in her room to work. Relations with her parents were not always easy, as they exercised a large amount of control over her life, for example, she had to make up 'excuses' to travel to London to see a Muslim friend from College because such a visit would not be allowed. As previously mentioned, becoming more religious made her more tolerant and understanding of their behaviour. The issue that dominated the family discussion parts of our interviews was marriage. She had "... put it off for six years" rejecting the men her parents suggested as suitable partners.

Although she did not want to be married she did want a family and gradually accepted the situation:

> ... my family have said I couldn't marry out of the immediate culture - it had to be somebody inside - so I had to accept eventually. My friends say 'How do you feel?' I don't feel anything ...

Her parents' criteria had been that the man had to be of Pakistani origin, Muslim and related to the family, not closely, but part of the family. When asked about the positives of being married Salima replied "I can escape from home - I want to move out - it's time - I'm stressed out at home. I'll be in control of my own life in that I don't have to answer to anybody." There was no other way she could leave the family home and retain good relations, which were important to her. She did not want to hurt her parents, or risk being permanently cut-off from them, by going against their wishes. When she eventually met her future husband she "felt nothing" but was not unhappy with her good-looking fiancé. She and her sister were to marry two brothers who had a business and house in Pakistan. Since arriving in England for the wedding her fiancé had found a job.

The wedding was supposed to take place in the summer of 1996 but was postponed, without telling Salima, because there was too much to organise in too short a time. Her parents wanted to go ahead for Easter 1997 but, with Ofsted in May, Salima said she could not cope with both. After she had made herself ill, not eating and losing two stones in weight within one month, the wedding took place in August 1997. Salima had grown much more accepting of the arrangement. She wanted to go ahead, she liked what she knew of her fiancé and was prepared to try to make the marriage a success. She often joked when asked if she had met him or if they knew much about each other, saying "He might run away" and "We've got enough time to get to know each other after the wedding!" Whilst coping with the excitement and anxieties of such a venture and the

challenges of an early teaching career, Salima has done well to find so much success in school.

I appreciated her sense of humour, the range of her school and home experiences she was prepared to share with me over the four years of the research, and the invitation to the wedding offered in our final interview. It became increasingly clear that Salima was fortunate to be in her particular school. It offered the right environment for professional development as a primary teacher to be nurtured and valued. The strong headship and stability of staff, culture of the school, and shared affinity with children and parents, all helped to give her an excellent start, culminating in a highly successful Ofsted inspection. Whilst she still does not want to think long-term in relation to a career in teaching, Salima is positive about her forthcoming third year and the possibility of assuming greater responsibilities in English at another school one day. However, as she embarks on married life her priorities change. Her desire to build a home and family of her own far exceeds any desire to build a career.

6.5 CASE STUDY - HANA

CONTEXT

Hana was Asian, regarded herself as Muslim, did not wear the hijab but sometimes wore shalwar kameez into school. She stayed in this teacher-based section of the research for two years, offering interviews at the end of each term and diary contributions when possible. She was successful in securing a job in her final teaching practice school. Hana had a class of thirty year-one infants and had the same year-group the following September. 98% of the children in her school were Asian, predominantly Muslim with family origins in the Punjab. Her class was 100% Asian. Knowing the school before starting the post was a great asset. From the beginning she was happy in the role of teacher, comfortable in the school situation, and able to focus on developing professional competence through the experiences gained in her early teaching career.

PROCESS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The first day of her career as a teacher was exciting, full of anxiety and something of a blank in terms of remembering what she actually did with those thirty, bright-eyed five-year-olds, between 9.00am and 3.30pm. After that, things quickly settled into a routine and Hana learnt of all the 'extras' College can never prepare teachers for, like registration, collecting money, finding time to chat with parents dropping off and collecting their children, preparation of children and classroom for so many activities and responding to the diverse daily demands of young pupils. Systems were familiar to her since, not only had she completed final teaching practice there, but also her final year research dissertation. Nevertheless there was much for her to learn and much to establish, not least in 'being accepted' as teacher.

Whilst staff had no difficulties with welcoming Hana into the school in her new role as teacher, some of the parents, children and other ancillary staff, did have difficulties. At first Hana thought it might have been because of her previous work at the school as a student, but eventually she came to the conclusion that it was because they did not see many Asian women teachers. The rarity of the phenomenon offered Hana a more viable explanation. For some parents it took until the first parents evening in the spring term of her first year for them to accept her as 'teacher'. Early in the year one parent asked Hana if she was the class teacher. After an affirmative reply the parent responded with: "Have you done a course or something?"

> When I explained it to her she said it was very good - I presume she meant having an Asian teacher in school.
>
> Diary

Other parents were "funny with me at the start - just looking at me - not talking to me", even the dinner ladies asked: "Where is their teacher?" and she replied "It's me!". Being able to converse in Punjabi helped to develop more positive relations with some of the mothers who did not speak English. By the time the February parents evening arrived she had the best attendance of the night, certainly in terms of percentage of mothers who came along. She spent a productive evening conversing happily in both Punjabi and English as required.

The children were interested to discover Hana was a 'proper teacher' in the school. When responding to a junior girl asking about her position in the school the child responded "Oh I thought you were just a worker" because the school had taken many Asian pupils on a recent work experience exercise from the local secondary school. When the children discovered she was a teacher some wanted to know more about her, for example if she was Muslim and where her family were from originally. Hana thought this might have been a way of seeing how much they had in

common with the new teacher. There was one other Asian teacher in the school, much older than Hana, who had been there for a long time. Other Asian adults were classroom assistants.

Reflecting on the significance of her identity within the school, at first Hana believed that her Asian identity was more important to her young children: "... it's just being an Asian face" but later in her first year the shared cultural experiences, through being Muslim, were also helpful. At the end of Ramadan the children were talking excitedly about the Eid party:

> ... it was just normal for them and they asked what I'd wear ... we had an Eid party - I read in Arabic - the kids went 'Ah' - the head translated the Arabic into English.

She thought sharing their cultural and some religious experiences was important for the children and the parents "knowing that we can do something a bit different."

Throughout the two years of the research Hana attributed the enjoyment of teaching in the school to the positive, open, friendly relationships between the staff. This aspect of working in the school improved with every interview. Changes occurred in a positive direction very early on as she commented on how she could "just be herself" with them instead of trying to "make an impression like you do on teaching practice." She knew social relations in her school were unusual:

> ... it definitely makes a difference how you feel about getting up and going to work every day... on my first teaching practice the staff were off with me - didn't talk to me ... I didn't want to go in in the mornings - I couldn't work in a place like that...

There were twenty staff in the infant department, all women, and Hana was aware that this might have made a difference to how comfortable she, and others felt in the situation:

> I know when we have joint buffets and things with the junior staff the women here hate mixing with the men. They say we are looked down on because we are infant teachers and because we are women.

Nevertheless, she was grateful for the ethos the positive relations brought to the work-place. By the second year she was joining in social events with the staff outside of school:

> ...it makes such a difference having so many nice people to work with ... everybody knows everybody, we go in the staffroom breaks and lunch-times, everyone mixes, we have events after school and weekends for staff, someone says 'Oh I'm having this at my house come along' and we all go, it's very friendly and sociable ... we meet each other out of work, it's great.

One aspect of her younger life might have influenced the ease with which Hana fitted in with the predominantly white staff at the school. When Hana was eight she moved with her parents from a predominantly Asian to a white area of the City, living in that area until she went to College at eighteen. Reflecting on this experience she suggested:

> ...having started off in a mainly Asian area, then moving out - you adopt new values I suppose - I was only eight and you just adapt. When you are young you want to fit in don't you - when you go to a new area you meet new friends I think that probably changed me .... I just get on with everybody ... that is probably a difference for me (to other Asian Muslim women in the research) ... living in different communities.

The friendly ethos of the school improved even further when the head retired and the former deputy was made acting head in the second year of the research. The first head had been more distant and Hana had been 'a bit wary' whenever she went to see her. A different style of management and approach by the acting head was welcomed:

> She's just more interested in what we're doing ... more willing to interact and come into the classrooms to see what you are doing and to join in with what the staff are doing. We never used to see the old head much.

As the process of becoming increasingly involved with the school developed, Hana realised it would be hard to leave. For the moment she is happy to stay for perhaps five or six years but part of her also thinks she ought to move to gain experience in a different type of school. She had heard some terrible stories of schools that "look alright on the outside" but in which "nobody talks to you - that's what puts me off moving..."

The school was not set up with particularly good support systems for NQT's. Hana did have a mentor but staffing levels were such that no teacher had any 'out-of-class' time to support colleagues, either as mentors or curriculum co-ordinators. This meant that Hana was seen once teaching, by her mentor, in her first term. There was support in the form of meetings which became fewer as the first year progressed. The open relationships between staff meant she always felt able to approach her mentor, or any curriculum co-ordinator, but it had to happen in break times or after school. Hana did find the weekly team planning sessions with other infant staff useful. The head of her year group was also the curriculum co-ordinator for PE, music and art. At the meetings she used to offer thematic ideas but then individual staff would develop ideas, within those guidelines, for their individual classes.

In relation to other NQT support, Hana had one visit from an adviser in her first year but no end of year appraisal or report to indicate all

was progressing as required. The lack of feedback about her professional development caused Hana the greatest anxiety throughout the first year. She was constantly unsure if what she was doing was appropriate, paralleling other year one classes, or gaining satisfactory results. Sometimes staff shared children's work in the weekly planning meeting, in maths, language and science, but this was not a great help to Hana. She believed she would have benefited from more experienced staff coming in to see what was going on in her classroom. The head promised to visit a lesson but never managed to do that. This was Hana's comment at the end of her first year:

> I was worried that I wasn't getting any feedback. I wanted people to come in and watch me just to say 'yes - you are on the right lines' but everybody took it for granted that I was doing the right thing.

At this point Hana even asked the teacher who was going to 'inherit' her class if she would give her some feedback on the children's level of attainment because she wanted to know if they were 'average' for a year two class in this school. The teacher had been in the school for thirteen years and knew the children and their capabilities well.

One of the events that did make a difference to Hana's confidence at the end of her first year was an Ofsted inspection in the June of that year. She had somebody from the inspection team of six in her classroom for 80% of their three days in the school, which she found intensive. Again receiving no direct feedback was unhelpful but: "...after going through Ofsted and still being here, I think, well I couldn't have been that bad or they would've said something." In some ways that inspection did boost her confidence and it certainly helped the pulling together of school policy documentation and team support amongst the staff.

In many ways the start of her second year of teaching in the same school was much easier:

... being more aware of what you should be doing - having the first year to discover really what you ought to be doing ... knowing what the 'average' child should be doing, and preparing - knowing what to do, variety of activities.

... It's been easier because you feel more at ease - you know what you are doing, the daily routines ... I'm still running around like a headless chicken - it's a lot of hard work.

Although never resentful of the amount of her life that teaching consumed she was aware that nothing could prepare you for the perpetual workload. She recognised that it would be difficult for anyone not involved in the process itself to understand what it meant to be a teacher. It was in her mind all the time, thinking about an event that happened or planning for tomorrow. Evenings always involved some continuation of work. Intentions to keep Saturdays free rarely materialised and Sundays always involved planning for the following week. A new system of planning introduced in her second year helped to alleviate some of the pressures. The system was considered 'a great relief' by the teachers, as an efficient and adequate way of achieving the same ends as the former, labour intensive, system. Whilst the second year of teaching was easier in some respects the increased awareness of the whole process made some aspects harder. For example the better Hana became at teaching, at recognising individual needs, and the demands of differentiation, the harder she had to work at planning, method and assessment processes. As a conscientious teacher the challenge was continual: "I don't know if it's going to get any easier but it's not moving in that direction yet."

Preparation for lessons still takes up a large percentage of my time both in school and at home and I'm still trying to figure out how other teachers manage it!

Diary

In terms of breadth of curriculum the major focus in terms of preparation, teaching and assessment for Hana was in the core subjects but particularly English and maths. In her first year she did not understand the full value of her bi-lingualism. She had used it to make break-throughs with non-English speaking parents. She also used it, where necessary, with the young children to help them out when they 'were stuck'. Hana's perception of the value of mother-tongue teaching increased significantly in her second year. She was sent on an in-service course on the topic and this inspired her to want to do something more positive in this direction within the school. By the spring term of her second year she felt able, for the first time, to assume greater responsibilities and agreed to help the English co-ordinator by taking the 'speaking and listening' aspects of the subject and focusing, initially on promoting more use of bi-lingualism throughout the school. She really enjoyed this challenge and it lifted her self-confidence as she felt able to contribute more to weekly staff meetings and to facilitating new opportunities for the children. These were to start with bi-lingual approaches in the infants then permeate upwards through the school. There were no financial incentives with the responsibility but Hana was not concerned about this, only the opportunity for the experience she would gain.

Physical education was an enjoyable subject for Hana. In her first year the children had one long session a week and activities changed on a two-weekly cycle. She did not question this organisation and became fully involved in the games, gymnastics and dance aspects as directed within her team. In retrospect she did find the one-hour time slots too long for her and the young children! Hana's only concern in her first gymnastics lessons was how the three special needs children in her class would cope. She did not know their capabilities and specific needs in PE. Without an assistant for PE she was concerned about safety for the first lesson. She asked the deputy head to come into the lesson to help, which happened and helped. The following lesson Hana coped on her own, albeit with some anxiety and

close observation of the special needs children. Once she found that they, and she, could manage the gymnastics lesson well, her anxiety faded.

Closely kept diary entries for PE games and gymnastics lessons in Hana's early teaching experiences revealed concern for lesson format, with details of warm-up, development and cool-down tasks. Lessons contained variety of activities and use of equipment, concern for safety, links with other curriculum areas, and development of many skills such as listening, observation and social skills, alongside physical skills. Knowing the children well brought the advantage of being able to record detailed progress of the specific needs of individuals through her developing observation skills. Soon her attention was able to pick up the needs of other children and to relax more as the children responded positively to the clear ground-rules and procedures they had adopted. She was not afraid to experiment with new strategies, for example different groupings, serving new purposes, or to pass responsibility to young children for moving apparatus and equipment. As she became aware of increases in pupils' confidence in PE so she reflected on her own progress:

> I am able to see a developing confidence in some children who seemed rather unconfident at the beginning of the year. I am also more confident in my own approach to PE.
>
> Diary

Experience, continuity and reflection were helping Hana with her teaching of this subject.

Dance was perhaps the most problematic activity area for Hana, not in terms of management or organisation but in terms of ideas. The school used the radio programmes sometimes but Hana wanted to try different ways of working. The PE co-ordinator offered theme related ideas but not specific lesson content ideas. Hana did buy extra resources for herself in this area but always thought she needed more subject knowledge to help with developing work. Finding sufficient variations in use of the gymnastics

apparatus was also a concern and rooted in the same problem of subject knowledge. Equipment and apparatus provision within the school was good, but there were problems noted in the Ofsted report which improved PE for Hana's second year.

One aspect which improved as a result of Ofsted was the requirement to improve children's variety of PE experiences. Instead of one long PE session a week they moved to two lessons and alternated gymnastics one week, games and dance the next. Although Hana did not recognise the difference this would make at the time of the Ofsted criticism, suggesting the PE inspector had not understood their system, the PE lessons after the change were more satisfactory. The other major change was in improving the school's PE policy. Although Hana always changed for PE there was no policy on kit for the children. In the summer term as Hana prepared them in basic athletic activities for moving outside to do PE, some children were at risk, particularly girls in sandals, since there was no requirement for them to have pumps. The majority of PE lessons took place indoors since this inner City school had only a small hard courtyard area outside. The one day they had walked to the park for PE activities it had taken them twenty minutes! As a result of Ofsted, from the following September all children were to have tee-shirts, shorts and pumps for the basic PE kit.

Clearly the 'ethos of PE' was developing in this school. Hana had set her own standards and seemed to be progressing well with this aspect of the curriculum within the constraints of the situation. Only one lesson was cancelled in her first year, for workmen, and one lesson changed from gymnastics to games because the Christmas decorations would have been ruined by bringing the apparatus out! In relation to being a largely Muslim school, the young age of the children, and the 'not very strict' Muslim community the school served, meant no Islamic / PE conflicts had arisen.

In terms of her own faith Hana had finished her fourth year at Greenacres hoping to move in a more Islamic direction. Having changed areas from an Asian to a white area of the City at an early age, she

recognised that her parents had tried to maintain their cultural and religious practices but that, gradually, these had slipped. Being at Greenacres, making more friendships within the Muslim community there, led Hana to consider becoming more practising. Once out in the teaching profession this aspiration did not materialise within the final two years of this research. Time for any life outside of teaching was difficult but she did recognise that "if she really, really wanted it she would have found time." Her religious aspirations had "gone backwards." When asked if she would consider herself a practising Muslim she asked what I meant by that term. I asked what the term meant to her: "Praying five times a day and I don't do that but I still see myself as a Muslim." When asked about the needs of Muslim teachers in schools the issue of lunch-time ablutions and prayer space had not arisen for her: "I've never thought about it because I've never had to confront it."

The wearing of the hijab was a practice Hana reflected upon deeply. Many of her friends did wear the hijab. She knew of some hijab-wearers who wore it "just for show" and whose "morals were not Islamic at all".

> I think if I were to adopt hijab I'd have to be sure it was the right thing for me - it depends how comfortable you feel, it's a personal thing. I'd do it if I was confident about why, and it was to do with my religion.

She was aware that the hijab-wearing Muslim teachers might have a harder time "because people have a picture - think 'Islamic fundamentalist' or whatever - a lot of people think like that." When asked if that awareness would ever stop her adopting hijab she replied: "No - if religiously it was right for me I would adopt it."

Throughout her life at College and in teaching Hana had lived at home. She felt completely supported by her family who understood the demands of teaching. She valued having no responsibilities at home, "having her tea ready" and small things that made her life as a teacher

easier. There were no constraints on her activities at home and she enjoyed many friendships within and beyond the Asian Muslim community. She was in no rush to have a mortgage or other family commitments but was just beginning to think that way at the end of two years in the profession. When asked what she had learnt in her first two years of teaching she replied: "That this is what I want to do..."

Hana had devoted herself completely to the teaching profession in the first two years of her career. Most days went from 8.00am - 5.30pm in the school situation. Once established and accepted as 'teacher', maximising her efforts in teaching brought feelings of satisfaction and achievement. Hana recognised progress in the work of the children and wider contributions that she was able to make to the school. She felt valued and 'at home', relations with colleagues, parents and staff being comfortable, based on openness and mutual respect. As an Asian Muslim, though not a strict Muslim, who had lived in both Asian and white communities, the school reflected much of her diverse 'social habitus' (Elias 1991). The predominantly Asian, Muslim (but not strict Muslim) children and parents, and white staff offered an environment which matched experiences encountered throughout her life. The only experiences of racism she had ever encountered were occasional shouts of 'Paki' as she walked down the street to her secondary school. She had ignored them and thought that they had not affected her in any way. Inside her schools, and with neighbours in both the Asian and all-white communities in which she had lived, relations were good. College and teaching experiences had been positive. She had never directly experienced religious prejudice, or any sense of compromise, in the State education system. Whilst she was aware of both racism and religious prejudice directed towards Asian Muslims in British society, they had not been part of her personal experience.

6.6 CASE STUDY - ASMA

CONTEXT

Asma was in this research for the four year period including the first two years of her post-College teaching experience. During that time she tried to secure a full-time primary post but was continually unsuccessful. For her first year and the final term of her second year she worked as a supply teacher, and in-between as a temporary language support teacher. Initially Asma signed on with one supply teaching agency working two days a week but eventually was signed on with four agencies and worked up to five days a week. The longest time she spent in any one school during the supply period was three days. The language support post offered more stability, working across two schools. She went into a range of school-types, including all-white, balanced multi-cultural, and schools with 99% Asian Muslim children, and worked with classes across key stages one and two.

Impressions that supply teaching offers individuals freedom to choose which schools, days and classes they work in, on and with, were quickly dashed for Asma. She was a serious 'intending teacher' and wanted more stability, commitment and responsibility than was available in the work that she was given. Supply teaching brought Asma some positive experiences, such as opportunities to work across key stages one and two, but also many negative feelings of discontent, disillusionment and insecurity. Being forced to settle for supply teaching, and to watch her friends develop all kinds of professional knowledge, understanding and skills denied to her, was demoralizing. She was a newly qualified, committed young teacher, ready and willing, but unable, to devote herself to a full-time post. Whilst many of her experiences might be similar to those of any newly qualified teacher in the same position, her increasing insecurity and loss of professional confidence was accompanied by increasing consciousness of, and sensitivity to, the effects that her identity,

as Asian and a hijab-wearing Muslim, appeared to be having on her experiences.

PROCESS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Reflections on the many different school situations attended offered much insight into types of schools and attitudes of people within those schools. It was not the ethnic make-up of the school which determined any sense of feeling comfortable as an Asian, Muslim teacher, within that school. Rather it was the incorporating or excluding attitudes and behaviour of other adults that determined Asma's perceptions of a situation. In some schools there were welcoming, supportive, valuing comments and gestures: "... the staff were really nice - helpful - gave me resources and so on... At another 'Asian school' the staff said we could do with you (being Asian) here permanently." But in the majority of schools the opposite was found:

> You go into the staffroom and they ignore you and I'm sitting there thinking ... what do I do? You are a visitor.
>
> The staff sit in a huddle - they don't invite you to join in or come over or anything.

There were other instances of feeling 'outside', isolated and undermined, for instance when her efforts to discipline pupils were 'taken over' by well-meaning 'established' teachers. Occasionally experiences were clearly attributed to thoughts that her colour and her dress made her a target for prejudice:

> ... there was a white teacher - throwing her power around - who totally ignored me - I thought 'Why is she ignoring me?' When she did look at me .... I don't know ... was it hatred or disgust - it was

> just the look in her eyes. I couldn't understand - was it because of my hijab or what?

Asma found the silence she met, the looks but not the questions, disturbing because she did not know if the problem in communication was attributable to lack of understanding or fear of offending her ethnicity:

> They (people within the school) tend to see the scarf first and then me. It's not so much what they say or do - it's just a feeling within myself that they treat me differently because of my scarf. Perhaps it's something they don't fully understand.

This is an example of Essed's (1991) 'cognitive experience' where one's perception of reality is influenced by the knowledge of racism / ethnicism.

Busy primary teachers rarely had time to help or direct a supply teacher: "... go and find somebody else - go to the secretary." The secretary was 'the most important person in her life' for Asma. She would be told to report to the secretary's office, the longest introduction was five minutes and usually consisted of directions to the classroom. Rarely was any work for the day given, never was she introduced to a class as their teacher for the day. "I just got on with it." Whilst head teachers did not often spend time with Asma, one did in order to warn her that the school was on the fringe of a National Front area and if she experienced any comments of racism she was to report them to him. She deduced he had approached her: "... one because I'm Asian and two because I'm wearing hijab." He told her if she was there long-term it might have become an issue with the parents. From that comment Asma deduced that the school would probably not employ a black teacher. Asma was shocked by the blunt approach which ruined the rest of the day for her: "I was getting on with the children before the head came in ... afterwards I was looking around me... it spoilt it for me." Asma felt intimidated by the knowledge he had shared and on leaving at the end of the day she asked the head if there were other areas of the

City with similar problems. She ended up with a list of places 'to cut off' her possible supply teaching areas, further weakening her chances for professional opportunity. When asked if she would challenge such a situation she felt unable to do that, feeling somewhat isolated in the teaching profession, and confronted with such deep-rooted racism, she preferred to avoid confrontation, an example of 'identity stasis', borrowing the term from Menter (1989).

One other incident involving a head teacher was interesting because it was in the school in which Zahra had been 'failed' on her school-experience, and Jamilah had been 'forced out of' at the end of her first year of teaching. All three women were hijab-wearing Muslims. In relation to the 98% Asian, Muslim children within the school:

> Asma - She (head) does not value the children's religion, home-life or anything - she says 'tell the girls not to wear scarves' and so on ...
> Interviewer - Was that a way of telling you not to wear yours?
> Asma - It might have been but it didn't stop me ...

Despite the more usual lack of contact with head teachers, Asma always made sure that they knew who she was, and that she had been into the school. She always left her curriculum vitae in case any full-time posts became available. This constant seeking of a permanent post ensured continual self-inflicted pressure. Asma was aware that she needed to make 'an impression' and that she could not afford to make a mistake if she was to have any chance of a full-time post or even further work within the supply agency: "It's like double the pressure of teaching practice - you're on guard all the time - daren't set a foot wrong."

It was not only head teachers who were 'gate-keepers' to professional opportunities. Managers of supply teacher agencies also have power to enable or constrain opportunities. Asma recalled spending one interview being asked by the interviewer why she wore the hijab and shalwar kameez, if she had worn that dress into school, and if so what kind

of responses she received? Always polite, and wanting to be signed on by the agency, Asma eventually said "... excuse me is this anything to do with me joining your agency" and he replied that it was not but she had sounded 'so different' (English) over the telephone that he was just curious. He just did not expect her to "look the way she looked". She correctly deduced that he had no other 'similar' teachers on his books.

Once inside her classroom some children would 'try it on' for a while but she did enjoy the interaction with the pupils most days, particularly: "... where the children were happy with the work and me ..." The lack of other Asian, hijab-wearing Muslim teachers in schools led to many questions from inquisitive pupils about her identity. Where she did share a classroom with an hijab-wearing assistant the children thought they were sisters, or related. Children would ask her if she was a Muslim and about herself. Those who shared her ethnicity and religion sometimes outwardly displayed their pleasure at her presence:

> Oh Miss you're a Muslim teacher - great - and we've never had an Asian teacher - we can talk to you (Asma speaks Punjabi, Mirpuri, Urdu and Hindi.)

Asma distinguished being Muslim and being Asian on occasions. When asked about whether she felt a positive role model for the children she replied:

> Yes - sometimes because of the hijab - the girls wearing scarves and so on ... but sometimes because I'm Asian - I see them sit up straight - they don't get this (an Asian teacher) very often.

The issue of dress and offering a Westernised or Asian appearance was important for Asma. At one point she was talking about wearing the hijab but deliberately adopting a more Westernised dress form rather than traditional shalwar kameez.

> When I wear the Western outfit I get treated like a supply teacher but when I wear the Asian clothes I get treated like a classroom assistant, or worse, like a parent who has no knowledge or very little knowledge of education and schools.
>
> Diary

She regarded the head scarf, which she always wore, as indicative of her Muslim identity and her shalwar kameez as indicative of her Pakistani family origin. Whilst this was her preferred dress at home she did not feel comfortable enough to wear shalwar kameez in the school situation. Reflecting on this she recognised that she was sending a particular message to Asian children, that you can "...adjust your life... you don't have to be just one thing." In further discussions about different responses to her combination of dress she perceived a definite split: "... people respond to that - some positively - like the children and some negatively - like the staff."

In her first year Asma was very aware of her status in the eyes of pupils and parents. Early problems with discipline and indifferent treatment from parents was attributed to the rarity of Muslim teachers:

> The children did not see me as a teacher they saw me as a classroom assistant. When I do see hijabs, they're on classroom assistants, dinner ladies and so on - not on teachers .... it takes time to establish yourself as teacher ... It was hard to take at first ... I found that insulting from the children and the parents ... they totally ignored me at first - they'd say 'Where's the teacher?' and I said 'I'm the teacher' - and they'd go off and see the secretary - they'd rather see the secretary than me ... I am the teacher, I am qualified.

Building relationships with parents was difficult on supply because Asma moved between so many schools. Where return visits were possible

children and parents became much more accepting of her and they became "more understanding towards me." Asma also became more understanding towards them, recognizing, after spending more time on supply in different schools, that she actually could not help parents much with their queries, because she did not know enough about specific school situations, or the progress of particular pupils.

Positive professional development came from looking inside other people's classrooms. Asma learnt a great deal about different systems of aspects such as classroom organisation, display presentation methods and management of pupils' work. She began to discriminate and become more critical of these aspects and make plans about how she would organise her own classroom. Discipline and general class control strategies also improved "... because they had to..." and with that came increased confidence to walk into different schools, staffrooms and classrooms. Whilst Asma believed her confidence and communication skills had improved by the end of her first year, she decided her actual teaching had not progressed.

Limited range of curriculum experiences, anxieties about making correct assessments of pupils' levels and targeting work appropriately, the lack of mentor support, the expectation that she was competent to deal with anything, all resulted in negative perceptions of her professional competence. Similarly, the lack of opportunity to develop continuity of planning, assessment, record-keeping, to have access to in-set courses and support for other professional skills that her peers were developing, resulted in Asma deciding that she did not want to do supply in her second year. Students from the second cohort started telephoning Asma for advice on supply teaching at this time because that was going to be their choice on leaving College. She became the Muslim students' 'expert adviser on supply teaching'. She told them:

> They (colleagues in school) expect more of me (as a supply teacher) ... you are not experienced and they expect experience. You just go in there and do it - you don't get any help.

Since 90% of the time Asma would be left to her own devices on a supply day, with work rarely set, she prepared a box of materials. This consisted of progressive activities in language and maths. She could 'dip into' the box once a quick assessment of the children's capabilities had been gleaned from "... a look through their books before they come in." With no set timetable, and no-one questioning what she did on each day, Asma's routine usually consisted of maths and language in the morning and something more practical in the afternoon. There were large gaps in her experience:

> Science, for instance, I don't know what resources a school has - no-one has time to show me what is available ...or something like history - unless someone gives me a topic I don't know what to do.

At the end of two years temporary work she had never taught a music lesson and was very unconfident about the prospect.

In terms of PE Asma sometimes took lessons. She did try to give the children a lesson if she was told it was on their timetable but schools never insisted on this:

> Well - when I go in - they say 'This is your hall time you can do PE or not - please yourself'. This could indicate they don't give it a high priority or that they don't have time for me as a cover teacher.

The impression of a laisez-faire attitude towards PE was exacerbated by never receiving any guidelines on what to do in PE lessons. No evidence of a PE policy, guidelines on kit or procedures was ever offered. She had to

rely on the children's version of what they did in PE. This was sometimes unhelpful as interpretations were swayed towards what they would prefer to be doing. The safety aspect of working with unfamiliar equipment, and always 'new' teacher / pupil relationships, did concern Asma. Once she did have notice of a school visit, one day ahead, that would involve accompanying a class to the swimming pool. She asked if she would be teaching a group in order that she could prepare a lesson. She was told 'No' only to arrive at the pool and be told that she was teaching a group:

> I just did my best - from what I could remember from the College course. They could've told me the day before, or in the morning so I could've prepared it more thoroughly.

Sometimes issues such as communal changing rooms at the pool, and older junior children changing together in classrooms, embarrassed Asma as a Muslim woman, more than it did the pupils. "... They just got on with it" but she "...felt shocked, embarrassed and angry that they should have to put up with this." (Diary). Incidents where Asian boys and girls would not mix in infant schools did concern her since separation of the sexes was not a religious requirement at such a young age. In terms of other PE issues encountered whilst on supply, the lack of information given before going into school meant Asma never changed if she did do PE "... and usually the other teachers don't change. I don't even know what kit is acceptable for the children." Equipment was often disappointing, not matching resources used during College training. This did not help when she was struggling for content and organisation skills in her PE lessons.

The majority of lessons taken were games, consequently Asma became more confident with this activity area. She did find PE more difficult than classroom based work: "...discipline and organisation, with them all running around in a large space ... but I will persist." Dance she avoided, not because of any Islamic difficulties with the subject but because of personal lack of confidence. Subject knowledge was her greatest

problem in PE. Having taught no dance by the end of her second year in the profession, the space of four years had elapsed since her five-week College-based course and any further experience of the activity area.

Experiences in gymnastics on supply consisted of 'getting the apparatus out'. It appeared the children had played 'pirates', a game of chase around the apparatus which used to be popular when Asma was at school herself. It is now considered dangerous and unsafe practice. Probing more deeply, it seemed Asma picked the idea up from a first year PE student that she was supervising on teaching practice, and she went along with it:

> Interviewer - If she was a first year student she had not done much gymnastics at College - you know more than her.
> Asma - I didn't know it was a problem ... we used to do it at secondary school - every week - it's fun - the kids enjoy it. It's keeping the kids 'on side'.
> Interviewer - Do you mean on your side?
> Asma - Yes ... the only times I've done it were when the student was in...
> Interviewer - If you have a student - you, as teacher, are responsible for safety.
> Asma - I've learnt a lot today!

The honesty of the exchange and the vulnerability of Asma as she tried to 'do PE' whilst on supply was evident in this exchange. Lack of confidence meant she was prepared to consider a first year PE student as 'more competent' to make decisions than herself. As a supply teacher she was supervising students without any guidance on what legal and other responsibilities this entailed. She was still at the stage of keeping the children happy and not 'making waves' on supply days. She was at risk herself and totally unaware of the potential danger of such a situation. The College-based professional gymnastics course had not superseded the influence of the years of her own experiences in PE as a pupil.

Whilst she enjoyed building classroom resources to make her supply days productive and enjoyable for the children, by the end of the year she found the experience repetitious, unstimulating, unproductive, and unrewarding. Instead of increasing her knowledge, skills and understanding of teaching she was becoming de-skilled in the role of supply teacher and recognition of this fact grew gradually over the year.

Having such a different first year teaching experience to her friends, Asma found their termly 'social get togethers' increasingly difficult. Initially they would talk about their problems and challenges like assessment, testing and team planning. She felt 'isolated' because she was not involved in the same processes.

> Well they don't understand, my problems are so different to theirs... they've got things to talk about - profiles, end of term reports - I haven't - I don't know what they look like. I would've preferred a full-time job and I feel disadvantaged now, but I never had the chance.

Eventually friends would try not to mention teaching because they knew how much she wanted a full-time job. It was through these meetings that Asma realised how little she was gaining professionally from supply teaching. She recognised that she was "missing out". Not only was she not gaining the skills that come with responsibility and commitment to a class but she was getting no support in the teaching situation, from mentors, talk with colleagues, College tutors, or in-service training:

> I would've liked a mentor or somebody to come into my classroom to perhaps suggest a few things. I feel cut-off - one minute I'm at College - with a tutor looking over my shoulder - suggesting ... this or that .... then I'm thrown in at the deep end - you do it by yourself.

College had become a relatively secure environment for trainee Muslim teachers. There were a number of overlapping issues experienced by Asma, with other Muslim teachers, once out of that environment. These included incidents of racism and religious prejudice, feelings of isolation, frustration and a sense of loss within friendship circles. For Asma there was little chance of building new and meaningful relationships in schools to support her professionally, or socially, whilst on supply: "I feel so out of it - not talking to teachers all the time ... On supply you do your job and go home."

The start of her second year was a traumatic time for Asma because she remained convinced that she could not continue as a supply teacher. Having "...cried on the shoulder" of somebody with responsibility for employing temporary language support teachers, she was allocated to one school for three days a week. The benefits were: the welcoming community spirit of the school; and a Head who valued her, her multi-lingual skills and who had time to talk to Asma about her professional position. He was instrumental in finding her two days a week in another school doing similar work. By the spring term of her second year she was in the most stable situation she had experienced, albeit five days split between two schools. She was beginning to enjoy some of the benefits of becoming more involved with teachers and children.

Although the social ambience of the schools was good, the job was far from easy because Asma had no training as a language support teacher. She only found resentment if she asked other teachers for guidance. Asma was desperate to find an alternative to supply, she had multi-lingual skills and had to learn to meet the expectations of the specific post, once again, through trial and error. Nevertheless she persevered, really enjoyed the schools and grew into the job. Promises of even greater stability in the near future were offered but disaster struck again when funding for language support teachers was cut. On the day Asma came to College for her 'end of spring term research interview' she had been told that she could no longer work at her favourite school after Easter. She was to leave the following

week, after two terms of relative stability. She knew the second school did not need her after Easter so now she had nothing: "I lose out everywhere - I've got nothing."

Asma was at her lowest ebb, in terms of morale, during that interview. She was desperate for a full-time job, or at least some semblance of continuity, which would give value to her sense of self-worth and to the four years of training she had undertaken in order to become a teacher. At that point she was seriously considering the options of either being forced back into supply teaching for the summer term, or of leaving the profession and re-training for another career. "... I want to leave. I'm fed up now, I've had enough ... because I thought I was going somewhere ... but I'm not." She returned to supply for one more term.

By the end of the final summer term of this research project Asma had secured a full-time teaching post to begin the following September. Having survived the final supply term the July research interview was the most positive of Asma's teaching career to date. After two years of trying, the process of securing a post happened through 'talking in corridors', sharing some of her frustrations with colleagues in social conversation, which was overheard by senior management. She was offered a full-time post, then the following week she was offered another one and also started to receive offers from the pool for the first time. She did not understand this sudden change in luck and could only suggest that her language support work had helped. For the first time she felt recognised and valued for the multi-lingual skills she could bring to the classroom. Both schools in which she was offered posts in the same week needed those skills. She starts as an NQT in September with no recognition of the struggles she has experienced in the teaching profession over the last two years.

Through all of this time Asma had lived with her family. Their support, and the comforts and stability of living at home, helped her though these difficult first two years. A perceived advantage in her early days on supply was the freedom to say 'no' to work on some days. Asma took an extended holiday in Pakistan during the Christmas of her first year and took

the month of Ramadan off. A negative aspect of such freedom is that she was only paid on the days she worked, had no holiday or other rights, and no day could be predicted. Financial insecurity was not a problem because of her family support, but her unpredictable life-style she did find problematic, waiting for the early morning call, not knowing if, where or what would be required of her each day: "Somedays I work, others I don't, I don't know whether or what to plan." Throughout the two years there was never pressure to work from her parents. "There is that Asian cultural aspect - my parents will always look after me...They don't really want me to go away from home just for the sake of a job, being a girl. That suits me because I like living at home, the home comforts." But not having a full-time position placed her in an 'inbetween' position at home where her brothers and sister-in-law all have professional jobs. "They (parents) ask me to do more..."

The question of marriage had arisen. Asma would like to be married one day and her parents were looking for a suitable partner for her. When asked about Western views of arranged marriages Asma suggested there was "...a lot of ignorance"

> I've told my parents to get on with it ... They've tried but it's not been right ... My job in the future depends on who I marry - I think I'll keep working - but I want a job first. Whoever I marry has to accept that I am a graduate - qualified, and might like to work - or choose not to - that would be my choice. I have a lot of say in it. It's easier for the family to find my partner - I don't want the hassle-he has to be acceptable to the family as well.

Whilst Asma recognised that forced marriages did happen, she was critical of these and was quick to point out that such practice was 'unislamic'.

In terms of her faith, which had grown during her years at Greenacres, Asma felt she had 'stood still' during her first year of teaching and she tried to 'make more effort' in her second. The busy schedule and

her 'visitor' status meant lunch-time prayers were not possible. Space for prayer was never offered and, in fact, refused for a male Muslim student she met in a predominantly Muslim school. The year six children had also asked for a prayer-space, via their pupil / staff council, but no concessions were offered at that point.

Asma's visible Muslim identity had led to difficulties in staffrooms. Discussions about the possibility of Islamic collective worship, raised by some parents, had induced fears amongst the staff, and staffroom talk, which rendered Asma 'invisible'. Instead of recognising someone who might have a valuable point of view, she found herself excluded from conversations. Asma attributed this to what Essed (1991) described as 'mediated experiences', racism communicated through the mass media:

> (It is) fear of Islam - if people would try to understand it - to read and talk about it - they would understand us. We are not all fundamentalists - all out to bomb people. There are a minority in every religion - we get bad press.

Asma believed such perceptions coloured views of non-Muslims towards Muslim schools and created much of the anxieties expressed through the media about State funded Muslim schools. In relation to teaching in a Muslim school, Asma's concern was that prejudice would prevent her from getting back into the State system. She recounted vicarious experiences to support her viewpoint: "I know teachers ... who have gone into Muslim schools and now can't get back into the State system." Fear of such prejudice also led Asma to keep silent about Islamic Studies being her main subject at College. When asked she always said Religious and Theological Studies but never went into details of her specialism.

In terms of overall professional development, the first two years of teaching were not positive in terms of developing professional or personal confidence for Asma. She lacked opportunities for skilling herself with the experiences offered to peers in full-time posts, and in fact, she recognised

elements of de-skilling, as initial teacher training courses were distanced, and continuing professional development opportunities denied. Constant rejections within the system affected her self-esteem. There were times when she attributed such rejection to lack of recognition of her special contribution as a Muslim Asian multi-lingual teacher but she never lost conviction in what she believed she had to offer through that identity. Such self-perceptions were recognised by pupils and eventually, through perseverance and a willingness to learn through doing, by colleagues within the profession. Experiences of PE were raised consistently in interviews and presented particular difficulties in terms of opportunity, continuity and confidence for Asma as a supply teacher. Throughout this time her faith, and family were a constant support, but differences between her supply experiences and her friends' full-time teaching experiences meant that she began to feel on the outside of that group, as well as an 'outsider' within staffroom contexts. Once she had gained a full-time post, at the end of her second year, she was looking forward to 'celebrating' with her friends and re-gaining a more equal status, in her own eyes, within this key circle.

6.7 CASE STUDY - NAWAR

CONTEXT

This research followed Nawar through her first year of teaching which was with an infant class in a Muslim school. Nawar graduated in 1996 and took part in interviews at the end of the three school terms. Her experiences are interesting because little is known, yet much is assumed, about what happens in Muslim schools. Her experiences during teaching practices had left her concerned about 'fitting in' to the State system as a Muslim (see chapter 5.1). That was not the reason for her move into the Muslim school. Her application to the City's pool for teachers had been rejected. With her four children, husband and family well-established in Birmingham she did not want to travel further afield for work. By September 1996 she had no post and was in a dilemma about her immediate future. The vacancy at the Muslim school was posted on the board at Greenacres College, for a National Curriculum key stage one teacher. Despite training for the key stage two phase, Nawar tried for the job and was successful. This case study tracks her perceptions of professional development, advantages and disadvantages of teaching in the Muslim school, and life-changes, as she progressed through the year.

PROCESS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Muslim school had a primary and secondary section. Nawar shared lower primary responsibilities with another teacher. She had personal responsibility for 19 children from reception to year two, with the other teacher having the year 3 / 4 class. Children were taught in mixed-sex groups during those stages except in PE, and Art (for organisational convenience). When all the girls from reception to year 4 worked in PE, the boys did art, and vice versa. On joining the school Nawar was required to sign a contract through which she agreed aspects such as salary

arrangements, a minimum forty hour week, dress code and behaviour code. She had to wear the hijab at all times and in a certain way, and she had to act as a positive role model, Islamically, for the pupils at all times.

- There was a male head from Pakistan and a female deputy head who appeared to be the strictest Muslim. All male and female staff at this school had to be Muslim and agree to the contract. Another non-hijab wearing Muslim student from the same year as Nawar refused to go there when she found out she would have to wear the hijab because she would regard herself as a 'hypocrite'. There were separate staffrooms for male and female teachers and when they joined together for staff meetings they sat at different ends of the same room. They were not allowed to ask personal questions of each other without invitation. All teachers were graduates but some had QTS qualifications and some did not. Nawar and the other lower primary teacher did have QTS. Nawar had little interaction with the rest of the staff and, in terms of support, only the other primary teacher offered her any help by checking planning and giving advice sometimes.

At the beginning of the year Nawar found the job very stressful. She had not been trained for key stage one and she had no resources in the classroom she had been allocated. Her greatest mentor for the year became Rabiah, who had left Greenacres the year before and who was entering her second year as an infant teacher, with a similar spread of ages in a City State school. Not only did Nawar establish close telephone links with Rabiah but they met regularly, and ended up planning together and sharing results of children's work, tests, and assessments. Nawar attributed her success in this year to the help she received from Rabiah. Resources she found by chance in a 'car boot sale' where many language and mathematical learning materials were being sold-off. She snapped them up, pestered her head throughout the year and succeeded in establishing a stimulating and productive learning environment. The head started to send all visitors to the school to her classroom. The older children would wander in at break-times to tell her that it was the best classroom in the school. By the end of the

year Nawar felt established, more able to manage the work, and satisfied with the evidence of progress achieved by her pupils.

The best part of the job for Nawar were the children. She quickly developed an excellent rapport and genuinely delighted in her infant class. There were no discipline problems. The children appreciated any resources they did have, including the provision of paper and pencils. The older children respected Nawar and often went in to her classroom to help with preparation of materials and to talk. An example of Nawar's concern for her young children came early in the year when she found that they were not eating their lunch. This was because they were rushing to meet the lunch-time ablutions and prayer requirements. She asked if the children could finish the morning session ten minutes earlier, which they did, and she stayed with them to ensure that they had time to both eat and pray.

The strict regime of the school was more apparent in Nawar's early days with minor incidents which suggested some inappropriate attitudes and behaviour towards the children, for example stopping badly behaved (secondary aged) children from having lunch. When invited to lead an in-service training day on motivation, she used this as an opportunity to discuss positive reinforcement and rewards. This was well-accepted "...especially by the male teachers" and Nawar became aware of some changes in a more positive direction. Her QTS status also meant that some teachers without the benefit of such training started to ask her questions about their work. Through a subtle, non-confrontational approach, she became a moderating influence on the school. One example followed a morning assembly in which the children had been told naughty boys and girls would go to hell. Her very young children were frightened and on returning to the classroom she reassured them that in Islam no children go to hell. Another time girls became very worried when they saw some hair showing from under her hijab since there were strict rules in the school about this. She 'played it down', telling them that she had harmed nobody except herself, and quickly moved onto the next subject.

Nawar understood the deputy head to be the strictest Muslim because of the way she interacted with children and other staff. No strong rapport was established between them, but the power differential also meant that Nawar felt unable to challenge some of the ideas that she felt were being wrongly imposed as 'Islamic'. As a result she found her own ways to do this, usually in the privacy of her own classroom. The head was in many ways distant from issues of the classroom, evident in his lack of interest in the SATS testing Nawar instigated with her children in the summer term. However, Nawar was not afraid to approach him and became known for her 'persistence' over a number of issues, such as her starting salary and constant need for additional resources in her classroom. Interaction with other staff was minimal, partly because it was built into the contract that personal questions should not be asked unless invited, but mainly because she was so busy with her pupils and classroom that there was no time to mix with colleagues. The only space Nawar had away from the pupils was when she conducted her own lunch-time prayers, after she had seen to the children's needs first.

In terms of the curriculum Nawar had a set timetable which was tailored around Muslim needs, such as prayer times, and time on Islamic Studies every day. Nevertheless she tried to fit in everything she would do in the State system because throughout the year she was aware that she wanted to return to the State system in the near future and she wanted to stay 'in-touch'. Although told she did not have to do history because the Muslim school view was that National Curriculum requirements were 'biased', she insisted, on the grounds that the children were dealing with concepts useful in any historical study such as time-line. Any work on other religions was done with respect and by giving positive value to other celebrations such as Christmas. Areas like music and art she did because she believed that they were educationally essential but she worked within parameters of 'acceptability' for example her class had performed Islamic songs for their parents at an open day in the summer term. In some ways

Nawar believed that she was 'redressing the balance' in the school because some aspects were, in her opinion, 'too strict'.

Most of her time, as is common in infant classes, was devoted to basic language and maths skills. Nawar was delighted with the progress of her pupils between the start and end of the year. Parents were also supportive and appreciative. Sixteen of the nineteen parents turned up to the final parents evening, all others sending genuine apologies, and all were pleased with the evidence of progress in their children's books and within the classroom. Every pupil in Nawar's class was staying on at the school for the following year whereas, in other classes, there was a large turnover at this point.

The children did have PE experiences, Nawar took the girls in her first term, mixed-aged five to nine years. In this term Nawar did dance, which she called movement education, and gymnastics. The former activity involved children making songs and movement sequences to rhymes which they really enjoyed:

> ... the Islamic school is so formal ... they don't have as many games and things like that - they loved this - each week we had a theme like circus, toys, machines - every week there was something different - they enjoyed it so much.

The children also enjoyed gymnastics but had limited apparatus, only mats. Nevertheless, they did some basic skill activities and really appreciated the opportunity. Nawar also enjoyed the rapport she found with the children in PE. She wanted to continue in the spring term but it was her turn to take the boys for art so she would return to PE in the summer term. The other primary teacher asked her what she had been doing with the girls in their PE lessons. This was then varied in the spring term with basic games skills experiences. The parents had made many bean bags and the school enjoyed much better equipment for this activity area. In the summer Nawar focused on rounders-type activities and really enjoyed watching their progress over

the weeks. She was not phased by the wide age-range, she used the older children to help the younger ones. She found organisation in the art sessions, with twenty six boys in a very small space, much more difficult.

Swimming was an interesting case since the boys had been to the pool at the start of the year but the girls' opportunity never materialised. The reason given for this was that additional money for 'optional activities' had run out and swimming was an 'optional activity'. Nawar suggested that swimming should be there for all the boys and girls and should be included in the basic fees rather than offered as an optional extra. She will not know until September if any changes in the current system are to be made.

Apart from lack of gymnastic apparatus, the aspect that concerned Nawar most about PE was the kit requirement. The girls all had to wear leggings and a PE skirt and a headscarf, from reception age upwards. She felt this was too much since Islam required such modesty at puberty not at the age of five. "Personally I think this school is a bit extreme - that's why I moved my daughter away." (Her daughter had spent two terms in a year seven class at the school but by the summer term had returned to the first year of her local secondary school to join the State school friends she had been with at primary school.) Nawar recognised that other Muslim schools were not as strict, allowing girls to remove the hijab in PE, but the mixed-sex nature of her school led to stricter rules on the conduct of the sexes.

Despite some reservations about the degree of strictness within the school Nawar was more comfortable, as a Muslim in this context, than she had been in the State education system:

> I can pray without having to justify myself ... you don't have to justify who you are. I can go and pray without thinking who is watching ... the facilities are there for you to do those things. The fasting is coming up and we can talk about what we are going to do. In those respects I am comfortable.

She recognised the difference, in relation to experiences of her friends teaching in the State system, that being in a Muslim school meant to her faith. Whereas following Islam was part of her daily experience, her friends "... found no time to develop their faith." Nawar also described the religious reality-base which was required to underpin everything she taught. As a Muslim she found this a positive experience: "... for instance when doing science you can bring in the perspective of Allah as creator." She could switch modes of operation, teaching from a secular base, as required in the State system, or from a religious base as required in the Muslim school, but she was most comfortable with the religious perspective. Nawar perceived the greatest problem, with spending a long period in a Muslim school, to be in 'adjusting' to the State system again.

There were disadvantages in the Muslim school which led Nawar to think she would try to move into the State system. Initially there were difficulties over her salary. They offered her much less than she would be offered in the State system. She negotiated a slightly better verbal agreement but when the 'code of practice' arrived it indicated that she would only receive the additional money in retrospect, if she stayed on for a second year. No wage payment would be made over the summer holidays for staff not returning in September. Unhappy with this, Nawar refused to sign her contract, but when they witheld her September salary because of her refusal, she signed.

The biggest disappointment of this first year at the Muslim school was in the problem created by her request to have seven days off to finish her once in a lifetime pilgrimage to Hajj over the Easter period of 1997. The opportunity had arisen for Nawar, her husband and two of their children, to attend Hajj this year. As a Muslim, this was a key step in the development of her faith. She believed the school would be supportive and found it hard to come to terms with their initial refusal. The head was in Pakistan when the deputy first informed Nawar that she could not attend Hajj because of her responsibilities towards her pupils. On his return Nawar saw the head for an explanation and was told that the senior management

were not against her going but there were difficulties covering her class. She could go if she found a qualified Muslim teacher to replace her for the seven days and she would have to give her salary to this teacher for that period. Since she knew a number of Muslim friends on supply Nawar did not think this would be a problem but it was, because friends were either busy, or did not want the work, or the level of pay. Eventually a friend, she had trained with at Greenacres, came up from London to cover her class and Nawar went to Hajj with her family. Despite having some smoke-damage to the lungs from her proximity to the fires that swept some camps at Hajj that year, killing large numbers of people, Nawar went back to work immediately on her return to the UK. The experience had been life-enhancing and completely unforgettable in terms of a humbling and unifying sense of oneness with Muslims from all over the world.

A major concern that permeated her thinking from before and during the post, was the status of working in a Muslim school. In some ways she did not think it was regarded as a 'proper' job in a 'proper' school, despite knowing that she was working as hard as her friends in the State schools. She told me of a friend who had been in Muslim schools for six years because she could not get back into the State system. Even if she did return to the State system she would enter on a basic NQT salary scale with no recognition of her years of teaching in the Muslim school. This was inequitable from Nawar's perspective and was indicative of negative views about Muslim schools in the dominant culture. For this reason when Nawar later met colleagues from State schools, that she had met whilst training at Greenacres, she would say "I'm in an Independent school, looking to get back into the State system", rather than use the term 'Muslim school'.

Nawar attributed perceptions of non-Muslims about Muslims and Muslim schools to media damage: "People look at you differently because of media treatment..." She also thought that this was the cause of the direct racist / religious prejudice experienced by the secondary girls from her school during their annual trip to a country park. Nawar thought a hundred girls, arriving in uniform and white hijabs, would have been particularly

conspicuous, but that did not excuse the upset caused as some girls were spat on and called 'Paki'. The staff with them ignored these events. The girls went back to school and told Nawar how upset they had been. When she took her younger children on their outing, not in uniform, she did not meet those experiences. She was going to suggest that it might be helpful if the older girls went on their school trip out of uniform next year. She acknowledged the particularly deep offence felt, by some of the girls from her school, as a result of such incidents: "(Muslim) girls in State schools would perhaps laugh, or joke it off, or answer back, but not these girls."

The strongest driving force towards the State system was Nawar's need to prove to herself that she was capable of doing a good job in the State system. She had little self-confidence despite the fact that she had managed at least the equivalent amount of success, with the added responsibility of establishing all the resources in her room. Nawar was very uncertain, that she was 'doing the right thing' with her children. She initiated and conducted National testing (SATS) at the end of the year for her seven-year-olds. The head and other primary teacher took no interest in the enterprise. Rabiah, one year ahead of Nawar at Greenacres and with a parallel class in the State system, helped her through the process and both were very pleased with the results. No-one else, including parents, showed any interest in these but for Nawar it was an indication that she was doing a comparable job. It was a means of 'external' judgement, positive reinforcement, a welcome 'public bench-mark'. All other judgements about: levels of attainment, professional development, expectation and success, had been 'private and personal' and therefore somewhat unconfident, throughout the year.

The Muslim friends' network was her strongest support, and the relationship with Rabiah in particular. From those interactions she knew she was missing out on advice from mentors, advisers, and in-service training. She also knew that the rhetoric of support for NQT's was not always a reality. As the friends shared experiences between State and Muslim systems they became increasingly aware that there were advantages and

disadvantages in both. Although the head, parents and children demonstrably valued Nawar and her contribution to the Muslim school, she wanted the salary commensurate with a position in the State system, the confidence of knowing that she could 'do the job' in a State school, the 'status' that goes with a 'proper job', and less of a struggle for resources than she had experienced in setting up her infant classroom.

Not being satisfied with her current position, but remembering her dilemmas as a Muslim in the State system during teaching practice, Nawar started to question her 'in-between' position. In her current position she was comfortable as a Muslim but dissatisfied as a teacher, in the State system she thought she could be satisfied as a teacher but uncomfortable as a Muslim:

> I don't feel comfortable with myself somehow - I am thinking I'm not comfortable in this school and I'm Muslim so I should be happy ... and I don't think I'm going to be happy in a State school - then I think I have to go into a State school and find out ...
>
> Many of us (Muslim women) seem to have difficulties out there.

When probed more deeply the issue of dress and 'others' perceptions of Islam came to the fore. Evidence suggests islamophobia is working against Muslim student-teachers and teachers. A common experience amongst respondents was the fact that in the process of their training, or work in the State education system, others look, see, or hear 'Muslim' and make negative judgements about motives and intentions. (Runnymede Trust 1997). This was not just paranoia but supported by sufficient experiences to offer a meaningful explanation to the women. Although they never used the term 'islamophobia' it sums up many of the subtle and unspoken experiences they catalogued. Thinking back to the experiences she had had over adoption of the hijab, Nawar remembered people within the Muslim community seeing it as a sign of respect for Islam, whilst non-Muslims saw it as a sign of becoming "one of them", fundamentalist.

In another example Nawar was having trouble getting into the pool for teachers in Birmingham. She had been rejected in her final College year and again on her application near the end of her first year of teaching in the Muslim school. Not content with a second rejection, she rang up for an explanation to be told that she had not written enough on her form about 'equal opportunities' or about 'her philosophy of teaching'. Her head assured her he had given a good reference and he wished her well in her application saying that she had done a good job at the Muslim school. She was left to make assumptions about motivations behind actions that were constraining her professional development. She thought the pool authorities probably did not like the part on her form where she admitted she was currently teaching in a Muslim school "because I told them everything. She had been proactive in trying for a State school primary post by visiting the predominantly Asian, Muslim school when she discovered a primary teacher would be required from September. On the day of her visit the job went to a teacher from the pool, an Asian Hindu, and Nawar was left thinking "perhaps they didn't want me because of the way I looked."

Other differences between Muslims and non-Muslims were also discussed when Nawar was trying to answer her own question about why 'they' (Muslim women) were having problems 'out there' (in the State system). Difficulties were not simply attributable to living in an islamophobic society but were to do with deep-rooted differences which worked in dichotomous ways. Firstly, differences worked to maintain and give value to group distinctiveness, secondly, to inhibit inter group relations in the struggle for a more harmonious and equal plural society. An example was explained in terms of the shared difficulties Muslim teachers experienced in social interaction with non-Muslims in State school because of the dominant cultural discourse. Aspects such as: plans to go to the pub, talk about fashion, boyfriends, and particular pastimes that dominated 'social chat' were not part of their social habitus. (Bourdieu 1984, Elias 1991):

> It's the values ... it makes staffroom conversation difficult ... my friends have said things like - we're not always accepted - people judge us as fundamentalists if we wear hijab ... It is very important for us to be dressed modestly ... but I do find what I wear affects relationships with people.

An example of one happy compromise was shared by Nawar. A friend was doing well in the State system but wanted to improve social relations between herself and other staff. She suggested that the Friday staff gathering could be moved from the pub to Macdonalds to enable her to join, in an alcohol-free environment. This worked very well.

Difference affects relationships in both positive and negative ways, the problem is in the interpretation of the messages being sent and received between Muslim and non-Muslim, which are often based on insufficient knowledge. As a minority group, some Muslim women feel pressured in a dominant cultural institution like the State education system. The dilemma is between their right to be practising Muslims *and* accepted as practising teachers. Whilst dress is one contributory factor to the dilemma:

> ... I don't think we'll ever feel comfortable out there because it's to do with the way people look at us.
> ...I think if you are willing to show that you are very Westernised then they will accept you. Once you start letting them know your religion means something to you - then they are not happy about it.

The problem goes much deeper than that, into preferred ways of living and behaving. The State education system imbues Westernised values, for some Muslim women the personal cost of perpetuating this is too high, as in the case of Jamilah.

The current feeling, amongst some Muslim teachers, of alienation in the State system and their search for acceptance of difference in life-style and vocational demands, was also suggested for the large number of

Nawar's Muslim friends who have moved into supply rather than full-time teaching posts. Whilst supply was successful in terms of freeing time and responsibilities for the heavy extended family commitments in the lives of some of her friends, Nawar did not think it would work for her. The reason given was the realisation that relationships with children were the most important aspect of teaching for her. Nawar realised that strong teacher/pupil relationships would be impossible to develop in a supply position.

Nawar was finding full-time work very hard with four children and an extended family in which there were constant demands to attend weddings and funerals and to stay involved with the life of the community. Nevertheless, Nawar's mother was her source of inspiration. She was English and had worked from the age of fifteen to build a grocer's business which has thrived. She had only recently rented the business out to have more free time. Nawar's mother wanted her to enjoy the benefits of working within the State system and encouraged her to move in that direction. However, Nawar felt that her mother did not always understood her need to meet both her Muslim and her teacher identity. Nawar was also concerned about her husband and children's views. She was anxious at the start of the year about balancing the needs of the family and the job but she succeeded. Although starting in a Muslim school helped her husband to come to terms with a 'working wife', once he saw the difficulties he did not mind her efforts to move into the State system. Nawar's determination and powers of persuasion had enabled her to realise all of her ambitions to date, despite reservations about her husband's views of her starting a four-year degree course and entering a full-time profession.

Nawar survived a challenging first year in a Muslim school. She started from nothing in terms of resources for this age group and built a successful, highly valued teaching / learning environment, offering a broad and balanced curriculum. Despite her strong Muslim identity she saw herself as a moderating influence within the school which had appeared unnecessarily strict over certain issues. She was able to bring about some

changes and was not afraid to be persistent, with the head, over her own and her pupils' needs. In terms of professional and personal support in this first year, she found it within her Muslim group of friends from Greenacres, and through Rabiah in particular, who was prepared to help, share, guide, encourage and reassure. Balancing the needs of family and work were difficult but not impossible and were 'easier' by the end of the year. Attempts to gain a job within the State system were not successful and Nawar was afraid of 'being stuck in the Muslim school system' because of prejudice against Muslims and Muslim schools in Britain. She remains determined and persistent about moving out of the Muslim school as quickly as possible. Probing more deeply, there were tensions for Nawar between satisfying her Muslim identity, most comfortable in the Muslim school system, and satisfying her teacher identity which she believed could be better realised in the State system. She also recognised deep-rooted differences between Islamic and Western habitus and the need to respect these differences whilst accepting that Muslim teachers had something to offer in the State system. This will only be achieved if islamophobic attitudes in the dominant culture, including the dominant culture within schools, can be changed. In relation to Muslim women teachers in the State education system, such changes would mean less frequent treatment as objects of suspicion, less alienation, and more acceptance of their desire to live their lives with their chosen Islamic identity alongside their professional teacher identity.

6.8 CASE STUDY - CATH

CONTEXT

Cath was the only African-Caribbean heritage student / teacher in the research. Whilst she was a self-declared Muslim when she entered Greenacres College with the 1992 Islamic Studies cohort, by the time she graduated, in July 1996, she had decided that she could not call herself Muslim any longer. Through her first year of teaching she continued to reflect on her personal struggle with her love of Islam and the reality of the Islam she had experienced. She was fortunate to find her job in a Birmingham school because she had not been accepted onto the pool. She had completed her final teaching practice at the school, heard that there was a post, visited the school to see the Head, who remembered her, and was given the vacancy. The school was in the area in which she had grown up and now lived with her thirteen year old son. Returning to Greenacres as a mature student Cath had aspirations to work positively for the adults and children in her community. The opportunity offered through the post at this school enabled her to realise that ambition early on in her career. This research tracked her though the first teaching year.

The school was a multi-cultural school in a more balanced way than the other schools in the research. The balance of African-Caribbean, Asian and White children and staff was more equal and a Black male head teacher had been in post for a number of years. Cultural diversity was valued with different events brought into the school throughout the year to emphasise this, such as a Black artist in Cath's first summer term. Cath was allocated a year six class of nineteen children. There were two white children with a balanced split between Asian and African-Caribbean heritage children amongst the rest. Only two children in her class were Muslim, the rest being a mixture of Seik, Hindus, Christians or unknown.

PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Cath worked in a very positive environment. She was comfortable in the friendly open ethos of the school, with relationships made easier by the fact that she had been at the school as a student eighteen months earlier. The strength of support she had around her was a major factor in her positive perceptions of this NQT year. Perhaps the most influential relationship was with her mentor. As deputy head for the school he did not have a class of his own so timetabled himself to be with Cath once a week. They discussed planning and feedback from sessions. She used him to team-teach when he was in her classroom, and Cath enjoyed genuinely open, consistent, positive and constructive guidance throughout her first year. There was never a problem she could not share with her mentor, she "spoke to him everyday" and "always agreed with his comments." Cath also felt able to send disruptive children to the head on the rare occasions when she needed extra support. Colleagues were helpful with curriculum advice and support resources. She was sent on an NQT, and a maths in-service, course and was given time to observe other teachers at work whilst the head covered her class. Cath felt very much on the inside of the school and accepted as equal in an environment of Black, Asian and White staff and children.

Positive relationships with children and parents had to be earned. Cath believed that many black students wanted to be positive role models but that success depended on the individual. Whilst there were discipline problems with a small number of children throughout the first two terms, the way in which Cath tackled the difficulties, with a one-to-one caring, persistent approach, ensured she had earned respect from pupils and their parents by the summer term. An illness in that term took Cath out of school for a while. One parent told of how her son had 'kept on' about the fact she was away because he was afraid she was not going to come back. Other parents, seriously concerned about the behaviour of their Muslim daughter, who caused Cath many problems in her first two terms, were delighted when she settled down completely by the summer. If she had not been

given much time and many chances by Cath to help her through her difficulties, she would have been sent back to Syria by her parents as a 'disruptive child' to live with other members of her family.

Not only was Cath supported strongly within the school as the only NQT to start that year but she also received two visits from the local Adviser and reports from this person, her head and mentor at the end of the year. These reports were positive. They helped her to identify strengths, weaknesses and targets to continue to work towards. She was encouraged to be self-critical and constructive in terms of her professional development.

PE was not a priority in her first year of teaching as Cath came to terms with planning, assessment, recording, and coping with the extra administration of National testing and final primary school reports for her year-six class. Although three lessons of PE a week were timetabled "swimming never happened" so in the autumn and spring terms only two lessons a week took place. With National testing in the summer term, further time was taken away from PE but 'made up' with a games tournament as a reward for their 100% attendance and effort during the testing. Early explorations of dance left Cath unconfident about ideas and development of work. Despite good resource support from the co-ordinator she was not happy with this activity area. Games had a higher priority and greater confidence but Cath was always looking to improve her skills of organisation and content provision: "I'd like ... more time to get into this ... it's just been a case of get in and do this term" (first term). She was not 'on top' of the annual programme for PE but lived from half-term to half-term, coping with a mass of information on all curriculum subjects and other administrative responsibilities.

The Muslim girl gave Cath problems in PE because she would not participate. She said it was because of her religion but her father said this was not a problem. Cath knew the root of the difficulty was in her somewhat obese size and stage of maturity. She 'sat out' during the autumn term and 'disrupted from the side-lines' in the spring term. In the summer term, as the deeper conflict of her possible return to Syria was resolved, her

behaviour improved generally and she started to participate in PE. Once she realised her size was not a problem for others in the class, she started to enjoy herself in PE.

At the end of the spring term Cath admitted to having some serious discipline problems which she was finding her way through. She had decided to take away 'privileges' and one of these was PE for a fortnight. Asked why she had used PE Cath replied "... that was the favourite subject of the children and they would not enjoy it being taken away." There were aspects of the discipline problem, and the safety requirements for PE, that made this a viable option when considering sanctions which might improve behaviour. Whilst the children were "time-wasting, unco-operative, arguing, fussing, fighting ... not working together well" she did not trust them in the PE situation. Through making a stand she indicated that she "was not going to turn a blind eye". Cath was looking for a more collaborative PE approach rather than a competitive games approach but she was not confident with dance, and did not trust the children in terms of safety on apparatus for gymnastics, so she was left with games. "There were dangers - they were not very careful, they don't consider other people, they are very physical". Playing devil's advocate I asked Cath how she would respond to someone who said PE was an entitlement not a privilege and she replied: "PE is an entitlement by law but I feel they have to be safe in that environment - to move on in that subject".

By the end of the summer term there had been radical change. The behaviour of the children was more co-operative and positive once they realised that this was their last term in a primary school and they were about to separate and move into secondary education. One day a child spoke out about his fears of leaving this school and there followed an 'opening of hearts' about the security of the present and the insecurity of the future. Cath just "...stood back in amazement and let them get on with it". From that moment on she did not have any discipline problems. The children settled down and worked positively towards their National testing. She had much help and support from the other year six teacher that term,

who helped her through the preparation and administration of the tests. They continued to work together, wanting to reward the children with more 'fun activities' once the intensity of testing was finished. One method of 'reward' was a fun games tournament in PE. The children responded well and enjoyed the event.

A reflection on the year of PE was that "we haven't covered some activities ... we've had to be very flexible." The flexibility that was required meant that PE was missed, changed or re-scheduled in order to make space for other events such as National testing, preparation for the annual leavers assembly, a visiting Black artist, sportsday and so on. Such lack of continuity would rarely be found in other 'more academic' subjects. The fun and privilege perspectives of PE suggest a different status was attributed to this subject. Whilst Cath did not experience the teaching of swimming, gymnastics or outdoor and adventurous activities in her first year, she was sure that the children had met these elsewhere in their key stage two programme. She realised, with the overwhelming demands of primary teaching, that she could not tackle everything, at the level she preferred, in her first year and therefore she prioritised areas for particular focus as they arose, PE had not been one of these.

There was no doubt that Cath had enjoyed all the experiences of her first year of teaching. Reflecting on Greenacres College, for Cath as a mature student, it had been a means to an end, a 'stepping stone' towards achieving her ambition to be a teacher. Taking Islamic Studies was important 'personally' since she wanted to learn more about the faith, but professionally she gained knowledge of how to apply "those qualities (everyone) brings into teaching ... (ways of) bringing those skills to the situation and how to use them. I've learnt a lot but still have much to learn." She did not underestimate the challenges of the future but she was appreciative of the year she had experienced. The workload was "unbelievable" and permeated all aspects of her life "...even when I'm in my bed I'm thinking I can be doing this or that" but the load was one she had been warned about and was prepared to undertake:

> It's been a year of learning about the children...working with them in order to achieve what I wanted from them - we had our ups and downs...

The leavers' assembly served as an ideal culmination to her year. It had moved her emotionally as she recognised, for a moment in time, the encapsulation of her ideal multicultural society living in harmony:

> I'll tell you how beautiful it was ... we had children, parents and teachers crying... it was so beautiful. The choir actually sang the song 'reach out and touch' - there were parents and teachers holding hands - it was so warm. The children have that with them as they move on - they will remember it for a long time ... it was a good experience - we don't often see that level of interaction between children, parents and teachers - it was just so positive to see that - with everyone - Asian, Black and White. It was so moving.

At that moment teaching was everything Cath "hoped it could be." She has met next year's year-five class three times and is looking forward to "another good experience." She hopes to be awarded a permanent contract after the two years of her initial contract expires.

When asked why she found it so easy to work in that school Cath's answer indicated a sense of shared 'social habitus', (Elias 1991), familiar, ingrained experiences which constitute her make-up:

> I have many friends who are White, others Asian and others Black. It's about people ... my best friend is White - we have a brilliant friendship - she is White and I am Black ... I work in that kind of environment and I've always lived in that kind of environment long before I went to College.

In such a school situation, where the head, a number of other teachers and many children shared her black identity, it was the valuing of individual difference that underpinned the success for her, not her black or former Muslim identity.

The attraction of Islam never left Cath. It was the perceived barrier to the acceptance of Black Muslims by the "dominant Asian Muslims" that created problems. "I was not always welcomed with open arms." Islam is prophessed to be a universal religion but Cath's experiences suggested that some Asian Muslims regarded it as "their religion" since they were born Muslim and she could never share that experience. Her questioning, which is encouraged in Islam, was sometimes resented in reality. Some Asian Muslims at Greenacres did "genuinely accept" her but many did not. She concluded that the theory of Islam, which she found totally inspiring, was not matched by the practice. "Not just at Greenacres but in the community as well." Cath has friends in the Black Muslim community and has been to meetings of groups such as the Nation of Islam but she has not yet found a satisfactory outlet for her religious inclination. She saw only antagonisms between Asian, Black and White Muslims whilst the discourse was one of a universal Islam. In the triad of Muslims she had experienced, she believed the Black Muslims were 'outsiders' as the dominant Asian Muslims in Britain, and Europe, invited White Muslims more readily 'into the fold' because of their dominant influence within British and European societies. Her prognosis of the situation was that separatist versions of Islam, along racial lines, is regrettable but inevitable. Despite this, even in our final meeting she was still hopeful that she would have time in her life again to study Islam and to reassess her personal direction in relation to religion.

With her insight into Islam and her experiences as a non-hijab wearing Muslim, Cath did have views about perceptions of Islam in Britain. "I know some Muslim women who have deliberately not worn hijab because of the assumptions attached", suggesting stigmatization makes it difficult to display a Muslim identity in a dominant non-Muslim society. In

relation to the oppression of Muslim women in other parts of the world, and the influence of that knowledge on British Muslims, Cath suggests:

> It's the way it's portrayed - the oppression of women - that's not how it is in Islam - they are not following the book - they have other motives. There are conflicts within Islam ... (oppression of women) is an experience that's there in all cultures. I think it is to do with change ... more Muslim women are standing up and having a voice and speaking out against oppression - but there are others who don't, or who don't like that. It's not part of Islam, it's part of culture that has wormed its way into perceptions of Islam.

She attributed many problems for Muslims in Britain to lack of knowledge and the perpetuation and assimilation of media instigated negative views of Islam: "The positives of Islam don't seem to get through to wider society." Although British Muslim women are freer than their counterparts in Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and the Gulf States, they can still only enjoy relative freedom, constrained, not by Islam, but by perceptions of Islam in the dominant society.

Cath was fortunate to gain her first post, not least because it was in an ideal area for her, close to her home and where she grew up. She maximised the situation to develop her professional skills, using her own life-experiences in the community, and the excellent support that was available within the school. She felt completely 'at home' in the school and coped with the difficulties of discipline, adjusting to the flexible demands of the schools and the challenges of a year six class, to her own satisfaction and that of her mentor, head and adviser. Whilst she declared herself a non-Muslim in this year, Islam continued to be important in reflections on her own past, present and future experiences. She did not see being a black teacher as significant in a situation where it was 'normal' (including a black head). The relatively balanced mix of cultures within the school was significant. Cath's eclectic view of society, religion and Islam meant that she

was continually trying to make sense of the world around her, to question different treatment of racial groups within Islam and the oppression of women within some 'Islamic societies'. For Cath there was a mismatch between the rhetoric and reality of Islam and the struggle was in making sense of her experiences in relation to this. She had found her first year of teaching exhausting but 'all she had hoped it would be.' Despite the 'ups and downs' she reflected positively on her experiences and looked forward to many years in the profession, hopefully in the same school where she had felt so fulfilled:

> I suppose in most schools there are not many black teachers but we have a few, black head teacher, and Asian teachers - a lovely mix ... it's very comfortable and open which is why I like it. I am most definitely happy where I am ... no plans to move...

6.9 SUMMARY

It was important to analyse the early teaching careers data as single case studies for two reasons, firstly to do justice to the time and effort given to the research project by each teacher, secondly, because as these teachers went their separate ways from Greenacres into different school situations, their experiences developed in very diverse ways. For example, the supply teaching experiences of Asma, and the Muslim school experiences of Nawar, offered valuable insights into the reality of their unique situations. Whilst the same frameworks were used in interviews, individual threads were picked-up for each respondent as their teaching careers developed. The intention was to enable the women to develop the conversations in line with their particular situations and perceptions.

The majority of case study teachers were in schools with predominantly Asian, Muslim pupils (Fig.3). Any assumptions that an Asian, Muslim teacher might be most comfortable in terms of identity,

ethnicity and a sense of personal value in such a situation, have been dispelled. The contexts of the schools were not always indicative of the teacher's ability to succeed. For example, Jamilah was in two different schools in her first two years of teaching, both with 98% Asian Muslim children. She experienced a tension-riddled, sometimes miserable first year, created largely by the head teacher and some colleagues. Her second year only improved because she avoided conversations related to Islam or her Muslim identity. On leaving both schools, strength of acknowledgement and reinforcement of her success in teaching came from the children and parents, not from her colleagues or senior management.

Of the seven teachers in the 'early teaching careers' section of the research Jamilah, Rabiah and Asma (all hijab-wearing Muslims) thought there was insufficient recognition of their bi-lingual skills, not amongst children and parents but amongst the school hierarchy. They felt unappreciated and undervalued, believing that their potential as Asian, Muslim women teachers had not been fully tapped throughout the first two years of their careers. This supports findings by Ranger (1988) and Singh (1988) which suggested that ethnic minority teachers were: sometimes marginalised, under closer scrutiny than their white colleagues, experienced discrimination and tensions about 'fitting-in', and met difficulties related to religious requirements such as prayers and dress. Singh (Ibid.) also reported feelings of isolation amongst Asian teachers in all-white schools. The evidence here was that some teachers experienced feelings of loneliness or isolation within 98% Asian Muslim schools. Shared identities were a bonus with the pupils and parents but relations with predominantly white, and sometimes resentful colleagues, were the source of tension.

Many positive experiences were shared, of special relationships with children and parents, insights gained through multi-lingual skills, indicative of shared religious and cultural habitus (Bourdieu 1984, East et al, 1989, Elias 1991). These were overshadowed for some by the difficulties the women experienced finding a 'sense of self' (Nias 1989) and acceptance as black, Muslim women. The disproportionate number of

ethnic minority staff employed in support roles in the schools matched the evidence of Khan-Cheema but this exacerbated early struggles for the teachers in the current research to be accepted as professionals with 'normal teacher status' (Singh 1988) or in their words as 'real teachers'.

Cath, Hana and Salima felt valued in their school situations (none of these were hijab-wearing Muslims when they started their posts, Salima did adopt the hijab in the Easter of her first year). Their school environments were supportive, characterised by feelings of being respected and valued for who they were, and with head teachers who offered quality leadership supporting a 'climate of professional growth.' (Boyd 1984, Campbell 1985). Whitaker 1983).

Nawar felt valued as a Muslim teacher, but undervalued as a State qualified teacher, within her Muslim school. As a student-teacher she had experienced very negative views towards her overt and deeply significant Muslim identity but she found herself being a moderating influence for the young children in her Muslim school. Opportunities to bring a consciousness of teacher and pupils' Muslim identity to the teaching situation was not the same for her friends in the State system.

The more religious the teachers were the more consciousness there was of emerging tensions between the predominantly secular State education system, underpinned with 'traditional western values' (Bullivant 1981), and Islamic requirements. The privileging of Christianity (Sahgal and Yuval-Davis 1992) in the RE syllabuses, school ethos and the minds of colleagues, and the deeply rooted negative views of Islam (Runnymede Trust 1997) militated against the teachers finding a sense of value in being Muslim teachers. This was more problematic for some than others. Evidence ranged from Hana, who regarded herself as Muslim but did not participate in all requirements and did not wear the hijab, to Jamilah who made every effort to continue improving herself Islamically, with weekend lessons in Islamic Studies and Arabic, despite the pressures of teaching. For the most devout Muslims, Islam guided all aspects of their behaviour and interaction with others. That aspect of their identity could not be dropped

at the school gates each morning but was necessarily embodied in their practice as they struggled to be good Muslims and good teachers.

The day-to-day demands of the primary classroom were enormous. Experimenting with classroom organisation, different ways of planning and assessing, coping with first parents' evenings, building positive relationships with colleagues and coping with daily pupil problems, ensured surviving the job was the main priority of all the teachers in their first year of teaching. (Evans and Davies 1986). This did not improve much in the second year, although greater stability in the use of methods for planning, teaching and assessing, and rationalisation of 'job and life', helped.

Professional confidence in teaching, for all respondents, stemmed from interactions and interdependencies with others: head, mentor, colleagues, parents and pupils. All missed the security of College and the group of friends they had acquired. They formed telephone networks of support amongst each other. Moving from an environment where they had established strong bonds with fellow Muslims, into environments where they were often on their own as Asian Muslim teachers on the staff, proved very difficult for some. Rabiah, for example, perceived herself as on the 'outside' of the culture of the staffroom in terms of conversation topics, preferences, pastimes, interests and values. Lack of confidence continued, for many, into the second year because very little feedback on their progress was offered. Where the mentor system had time and space to develop, with Cath, it was highly successful, but for other NQT's the experience was haphazard and unhelpful as mentors coped with overload of responsibilities. (Laws 1996). For most, professional confidence was gained through trial and error, through continual self-evaluation. This was an unsettling part of their early teaching experiences.

It was interesting to pursue the teachers' anticipated fears and concerns, raised in their final College year, as they were actually experienced in the State system. The ethos of emphasis on core subjects, particularly maths and English, took much of their attention. Subjects like music, PE and art had a low profile in terms of documentation, time

allocation, and perceived importance, therefore creating less difficulty than some had anticipated. Where Ofsted was looming, or experienced, the pressures were greatest but brought other rewards of positive reinforcement, a sense of value, of 'doing the right thing', and clear school organisation and direction. Positive personal reinforcement was also experienced as a result of managing external National testing.

In relation to PE, all full-time teachers had taught the subject regularly. The key stage one teachers covered the core activity areas of gymnastics, dance and games but there were gaps in some of the six activities required at key stage two. Concerns about the teaching of PE, expressed in College at the end of their course, were pursued in research interviews. All had turned out to be less problematic than anticipated, largely as a result of the relatively low status of the subject in the reality of life in the primary school. The difficulties they did experience in terms of subject status, facilities, time and lack of content knowledge, would have been similar to those of any primary, non-specialist teacher. Much of the evidence supported that of previous research in primary PE. (Evans 1988, Evans et al 1996, Williams 1989). There was no evidence of new initiatives regarding sport in schools or extra resources, coaching support or in-service opportunities for any of these teachers, suggesting a gap between National initiatives and the PE reality inside some primary schools. (Campbell 1996, Clay 1996).

Dance did not present problems Islamically but did in terms of ideas for developing pupils' work. Gymnastics happened, in that the children were given experiences on apparatus but the purpose and quality of those experiences varied. Where colleagues helped to 'put out' apparatus the NQT's felt 'relieved', for instance Rabiah did not question the lack of rationale she saw in the structure. Only Salima waited until the summer term of her second year to find the confidence to get the large apparatus out with her pupils. Games presented few problems except in the area of development of lesson content and pupil progress again. Facilities and equipment for PE did not match those used in College. All teachers found

that the children's enjoyment of the subject was a strong lever for reinforcing good behaviour and self-discipline, not only in the PE lessons but also in classroom work. There were examples of PE being 'used' as punishment and reward to elicit better standards of behaviour and work elsewhere. Ethos surrounding issues such as dress for staff and pupils in PE were established within the school and the majority of respondents quickly assumed the standards and expectations set within each school.

The experiences of the women in teaching PE were not affected by being Muslim but by being generalist primary teachers in overloaded situations. Working in infant and / or all-female school situations lessened any anxieties about clashes of Islamic and PE expectations. (Sarwar 1994). For Asma, in her supply experiences with older children, concerns about pupils' changing arrangements did arise, as they did in vicarious accounts of the experiences of other Muslim teachers, but the embarrassment of the teacher seemed to outweigh the embarrassment of the pupils who just 'got on with it'. Nevertheless, the issue of early maturation and separation of the sexes in upper primary situations remained a concern.

Respondents became conscious of other aspects of school life that seemed inappropriate in largely Asian, Muslim situations, such as the tradition of the extensive Christmas celebrations, and some themes selected for assemblies. They rarely felt able to express their concerns with colleagues, being in a minority position amongst the staff, as an NQT and in terms of ethnicity. They did not want to create tension, conflict or confrontation. Being 'accepted' by colleagues was important to these teachers in their early careers.

For those who were most visibly Muslim in terms of dress, recognition of their lived difference within a predominantly white, non-Muslim, Westernised staffroom culture, did create tensions that they sought to minimise in order to survive. Whilst they would not compromise on dress they increasingly avoided conversations related to Islam or their religious interests. Early conversations, in which the Muslim teachers did respond to queries or staffroom conversation on Muslims, or events

associated with Islam, indicated islamophobic attitudes which were exacerbated by their attempts to explain events from an Islamic perspective. Avoidance tactics, what might be described as a form of 'identity stasis', (adapted from Menter 1989) made them more accepted amongst teacher colleagues. For some, such as Jamilah, this direction of her identity was unacceptable and contributed to her leaving full-time teaching.

Perceptions of teaching as a career changed over the research period. By the first Christmas most respondents were exhausted with disturbing accounts of work-load, lives devoted to school, negative effects on home life and personal suffering. A different perspective emerged by the end of the first year with school in a more manageable perspective. Long-term vision of a future in teaching was rare, only Hana and Cath were convinced that it was the right direction for their lives. None of the women had been prepared for the effects of teaching on their lives. Family support varied but for most this was the aspect of their lives that had helped them most through the stresses of their early teaching careers. Parents did not always find it easy to understand the amount of dedication required by the job. Within the Asian families, with the exception of Salima, the teachers had the option of working or not, which did not change as two entered married life. For most women the issue of marriage was significant, as Evetts (1990) had found in her research on women in teaching, with responsibilities in the home affecting early teaching careers for some. Nawar was the only respondent married throughout the research, with four children, and although concerned about 'coping', their ages and growing independence enabled her to manage work and home well. The majority of the women in this research were taking positive steps towards finding marriage partners, or their parents were taking action on their behalf, with their support. Although for some their religious development was creating other tensions within their families, home still offered the women the support and opportunity to be 'just me' that some could not 'be' at school, in some ways indicative of Goffman's front stage / back stage presentation of self. (1971).

For some of the respondents the effect of teaching on their religious development was disappointing. Time to develop their faith was no longer available and there were common references to 'standing still' or 'moving backwards' in terms of their religiosity. For those with the strongest faith, time was found to pursue group meetings, Arabic and Islamic Studies classes and conferences. Where this was most rigorously pursued, by Jamilah, the recognition of the effects of working in a predominantly secular State education system created most tensions. Within the system she could not be herself or share the Islamic values which guided her life in other contexts. There was conflict between her teacher and Muslim identities. Jamilah left teaching wanting to pursue a more Islamic lifestyle, and hoping to use the many skills acquired in teaching to help Muslim children outside of the State education system. Being 'on the inside' had not enabled her to do this. Difficulties also occurred for Nawar in the Muslim school where she was able to 'be Muslim' but felt unsatisfied and undervalued as a teacher. She wanted to try teaching in the State system again, although there seemed to be barriers to this. Mennell's theory of multiple layers of identity (1994), and Elias's theory of one layer being more prominent than others (1991), help to explain the shifting nature of the 'process of identity' pursued for each case study in the current research.

For the Asian respondents the significance of being Asian and Muslim teachers was differentially experienced. Those without the hijab, for example Hana, and Salima before adoption of the hijab, regarded their Asian identity to be more significant than their Muslim identity because of the immediate visual and cultural affinity with the large number of Asian children in their schools. They all had particular views on the hijab, as a visual symbol of commitment to Islam, and its effect on interactions with others. Whilst making a positive statement for them and some who shared their ethnicity, it also created barriers to other relationships within and beyond their immediate community. Stereotypical assumptions and textually generated notions of fundamentalist Islam were attributed as guiding pre-judgements about them. Within their own communities tensions

between Islamic traditionalists, modernists and revivalists led to differences of opinion, and confusions between Pakistani or Bangladeshi culture and 'real Islam'.

Vicarious accounts of the 'teaching careers' of fellow Muslim women were offered by remaining respondents in final interviews. It appeared that the majority of the seventeen who were involved in the early stages were no longer in full-time teaching, most opting for supply teaching. In order to gain a more accurate picture and explanation of their current professional circumstances, a questionnaire was sent to the women. Responses are collated in the final 'results' section.

6.10 QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Eleven out of seventeen questionnaires were returned (65%), seven from the respondents who were still in the research and four additional ones, two from full-time Muslim teachers and two from supply teachers.(See samples App.N). Those women who were participating in regular interviews did not write much on their forms since we had discussed all of the issues regularly. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gain perspectives of the Muslim women outside of the mainstream research by the end of the project in 1997 and responses here were disappointing.

Whilst the full-time teacher position was clear, and the drop-out position, the precise commitment to supply teaching from the rest, and the reasoning behind this, were not clarified. Only one returned form from a supply teacher offered comments on the detailed questions. The only other 'supply form' returned indicated undertaking supply teaching by choice without any further comment. At risk of some inaccuracy then, information available from the forms returned and vicarious experiences recounted by remaining respondents, has been combined for a final picture in Fig.4.

FIG.4

FINAL PROFESSIONAL POSITION OF WOMEN INVOLVED IN THIS RESEARCH

MUSLIM TEACHERS IN FULL-TIME STATE SCHOOL POSTS	REPORTED MUSLIM WOMEN DOING SOME SUPPLY TEACHING
6 (35%) (Including Asma just starting Sept. '97)	7 (41%) (2 started in State system full-time posts and moved out due to some dissatisfactions with State system)
OTHER FULL-TIME TEACHERS	DROPPED OUT
2 (12%) (Cath - Now non-Muslim Nawar - Private Muslim school)	2 (12%) (1 - left the course 1 - left the country)

Those teachers in full-time posts who did respond were very positive about their experiences which matched those from respondents within the mainstream research. The first example indicates the importance of shared ethnicity to having a sense of value and being valued in the school:

> I have found my ethnicity an advantage because the children are of the same ethnicity, thus I am able to relate to their cultural and social needs. I am also aware of the children's religious affiliations.

Another teacher commented on how important her school situation was to her professional development, supporting interview responses indicative of positive experiences in schools with a 'climate of positive professional growth':

> I am aware that some Muslim teachers I know have had some negative experiences. I do believe any experience is largely due to luck, fate. I was lucky to be placed in a school which really values the contribution made by me as a Muslim female teacher ... opportunities given to me have been genuine and not just 'token gestures'. I feel quite positive about my future professional development as a teacher.

Supply responses were lacking and vicarious reports uncertain in terms of how much teaching was actually undertaken and why. Jamilah has been placed in this column but she was not entirely sure if she would undertake supply in September 1997, having withdrawn from full-time teaching after two years. During her final interview she suggested she may have said that because it seemed a strange decision to move right out of the system from full-time teaching to nothing.

Reasons for so many Muslim women choosing supply teaching are unclear but some suggestions have been offered. Nawar suggested Asian family commitments are numerous because of the extended family they are obliged to support, for example in events such as weddings and funerals. Such commitment, she suggests, makes full-time employment difficult to sustain. Rabiah suggested that supply teaching enabled individuals to choose what they taught, and how, without the same responsibilities as a full-time teacher. Knowing that Zauda and Jamilah chose to leave full-time teaching in part because of difficulties experienced as Muslim women in the State education system, the 'freedom' of 'visitor status' might have been an

attraction, along with salary, in considering staying in the system. The detailed returned form subject suggested:

> I feel I need to expand my teaching experience via supply teaching which gives me an insight into educational establishments of various kinds. Thus I do not need to commit myself to a school that I might feel hinders my teaching skills.

She spoke of the importance of going to schools in which the children share her ethnicity, in which she can be a positive and understanding role model.

Negative talk and outlook were perceived by this teacher as ways of putting-off young teachers and she had experienced both positive and negative situations. Her view that "Being a Muslim will hinder your development if you make it an issue" fails to recognise the very real racial and religious prejudice experienced by some of her College peers, especially those who have decided to be more 'visibly Muslim'. She did think that a supportive family life was crucial to the success of Asian females in education and professional jobs. This was certainly the case with the respondents in this study.

Whatever the reasons, the low number of Muslim women who remained in full-time posts in the State education system in the current research gives cause for concern. Since figures based on ethnicity of teachers are not collected, it is only possible to make comparisons with statistical evidence that is available, differentiated by age and sex. (DFEE 1996). Since the ages of the Muslim women on completion of this research ranged from twenty-four to thirty-six the average age, 26.5 years, was used to gain a comparative figure from the Government statistics tables. The full-time teacher "Wastage by graduate status and age" table was used and the figure for trained graduate women between the ages of 25 - 29 years. (Ibid, 21). In 1994, the latest available figure, the percentage was 9.4%. The highest figure for this age group was 15.8% is 1980 but there has been a steady drop since 1991 when the second highest figure of 13.6% was

reached. Whilst precise figures for primary schools are not differentiated it does offer a significant difference to the 51% 'wastage' indicated in Fig. 4. Definition of 'wastage' as 'transfers to other maintained, assisted or grant-aided sectors of education plus other leavers from this sector' suggest transfers to temporary supply work would be included in this figure.

One problem that exacerbates concern about the figures found in this research relates to the length of time served by teachers before leaving the profession, not indicated in the DFEE 1996 report. Recognising that the average age of the group of Muslim women in this research was higher than the majority of women entering initial teacher training and the teaching profession, it might be assumed that 26.5 is 'older' than most teachers with a maximum of two years in the profession. With the majority of entrants to teaching being 22 years, it might be more appropriate to consider the report's statistics for teacher wastage under 25 years, indicating very early career wastage. This percentage is the lowest of all age groups, being 4.4% in 1994, making the current findings even more alarming.

The lack of satisfactory primary data, from those Muslim women who trained at Greenacres but are no longer in full-time teaching, leaves many questions unanswered. The data that has been collected indicates a much higher drop-out rate of Muslim women from full-time teaching in the State system than statistics reveal for women graduates generally. Data collected over the last four years from a group of Muslim women has offered many insights into College and teaching experiences. A theoretical discussion in the next chapter will offer some explanations which might enlighten the figures produced in this section.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

Data analysed in chapters five and six, on the experiences of a group of Muslim women, will be discussed theoretically using perspectives outlined in chapter three. A process theory of identity will be used to underpin theoretical interpretation. Other theories will also be used, such as theories of embodiment, where their use can help to increase understanding. The discussion will be holistic in order to maximise the processual nature of the research project. Encompassing evidence from data collected both during training at Greenacres College and in 'early teaching careers', offers an opportunity to incorporate the relatively long-term patterns of development revealed through the four year research period.

Generational and historical influences must be the starting point for applying process theory to data analysis (Mennell 1992). The majority of women in this study were British born, second generation Asian Muslims whose parents are of Pakistani origin. Their parents had arrived in England in the early 1960's and the majority still lived in strong Asian, Muslim communities in the City. 'We-images' in relation to their communities were strong but these became more complex as the women experienced life at College and in the teaching profession. The women had been educated in English primary and secondary schools. Whilst some respondents recognised unease with certain aspects of their education, including PE, in their experiences during those years, consciousness of Islamic influences on their lives as pupils in the State education system was slight. It was the process of higher education and of being teachers that raised, for many, a higher consciousness of Islam and greater awareness of ways in which the system interfaced with their Muslim identity.

In 1991 Greenacres College offered a new and exciting opportunity for these Muslim women in the shape of an Islamic Studies option in a four year B.Ed. degree course. Most were attracted by the opportunity to study

Islam. Hana and Salima entered in the same year to take English as a main subject, Amira with the second Islamic Studies cohort in 1992 to study biology, but all were caught-up by the developing Muslim influence in the College during the process of their course. For some who chose Islamic Studies as a main subject, the teacher education part of the course was secondary to their desire to study Islam. As they progressed through the course and undertook school-experiences, teaching featured more prominently as a potential career. The most positive feelings towards the profession were expressed at the end of their third year, after finding success in passing the final teaching practice. The most negative feelings emerged one year later at the transition point between College and teaching. At this point the conducive nature of life at Greenacres, for the women as Muslims, was most appreciated. They had struggled to gain provision of religious requirements and by the end of the fourth year were very comfortable in the environment. They were enjoying the strong friendships and religious growth that resulted from this greater stability and were anxious about pending change.

It was in the second year of the course that problems between the institutional culture of Greenacres and the Muslim women's preference to live their lives more Islamically became public. They were raised by the Muslim students via their newly formed Islamic society, and through Islamic Studies staff to senior management. This is an example of Elias's (1991) notion of collective power being more able to influence figurations. As a result of the group approach to senior management a process of negotiation, accommodation and change took place. Unintentional institutional racism existed at Greenacres in the early years of offering targeted higher education opportunities to the Muslim community because facilities for meeting their cultural and religious requirements were not taken into consideration. The process of change resulted in a growing consciousness of Islam, not only for the Muslim women but for everyone who worked and studied at Greenacres. Dietary requirements were met, separate living accommodation and a prayer room were provided, single-

sex PE groups and changes within that subject were made, and Islamic festivals were honoured. The women's identity as Muslims was becoming increasingly visible as it affected others in the Greenacre's community.

There were many outcomes from this process of change. Firstly, there was a growing bond between the Muslims at Greenacres as they studied, lived, ate and prayed together. They found like-minded others and shared an inquisitiveness about Islam which led them to a deeper, and in some cases new, understanding of their religion and the requirements of being a Muslim. Secondly, some resentment and tension occurred with non-Muslim peers at College as the power balance shifted in the direction of the Muslim students. Thirdly, some experienced new tensions within their families and communities as their understanding of 'real Islam' raised questions about previously taken-for-granted 'Pakistani cultural practices' pursued in the name of Islam.

Tensions outside of the group increased bonding within the group for many but some in-group differences also occurred. For example Cath was finding acceptance as a Black Muslim difficult in an Asian dominated Muslim group, and differences between hijab and non-hijab wearers sometimes arose. Nevertheless, with the elapse of two years after graduation, reflections on experiences at Greenacres included much appreciation of the changes that had enabled them to 'be Muslim'. 'We-image' friendships had been formed amongst Muslim students which had continued in the form of a telephone support network in their early teaching years. For many the opportunity to study Islam was a highly valued life-enhancing opportunity.

From the evidence of College-based data collection (chapter 5) it is clear that course organisation: for example timing of PE inputs, school experiences and the main subject emphasis in terms of lecture content and student groupings in the fourth year, were crucial to the Muslim women's self-perceptions at the transition point between graduating and teaching. The nature of the fourth year distanced the women from their school-experiences and earlier professional training courses. Whilst this

undermined their confidence in terms of teaching, their consciousness of Islam had increased. In terms of religious development this was perceived as positive. For some it raised questions about their ability to be both a Muslim and a teacher. (Fareeda, Zahra). At that point Jamilah was aware of having to compromise some of her beliefs and practices as a Muslim in order to teach in the State system. This vision of incompatability is indicative of conflicts of conscience and loyalty between the women's 'Muslim' and 'teacher' identities. Issues such as the teaching of music and dance, on which there is no consensus in the literature, once again raised uncertainties for some Muslim women. Doubts reappeared despite apparent earlier 'resolution' of difficulties. The doubts were not about their ability to teach dance and music but about whether, as Muslims, they should. Such changes in self-perception indicate a constant state of flux as the women's multi-layered identities were differentially influenced, over time.

Despite the favourable memories of their time at Greenacres two years after departing, many respondents had experienced racial and religious prejudice within the College and within their school-based experiences whilst training. It would be difficult to be precise about the motivation of incidents but the number related by hijab-wearing Muslims (an overt symbol of Muslim identity), and comments from non-hijab wearing Muslims that wearers did receive more abuse than themselves, indicated that religious prejudice against Muslims was more fervent than racial prejudice. Whilst numbers of ethnic minority children have been growing for many years in the City schools, increasing numbers of visibly Muslim women in initial teacher training was a new phenomenon.

Personal, vicarious, mediated and cognitive experiences of 'ethnicism' were related in this research (adapted from Essed's (1991) experiences of racism). The term ethnicism is used in Figueroa's (1993) sense of 'ethnic' to define a group linked by particular features which influences the process of interaction and interrelation. For many Muslim women the hijab is a feature symbolic of group affiliation, Muslims share

other largely cultural features "real or supposed and often distorted" (Ibid.92). The focus on religious practices makes ethnicism a more appropriate term than racism in this context, although clear boundaries for understanding the experiences of these black Muslim women would be impossible. Since being Muslim is the pre-eminent focus in this research, and the hijab is essentially a religious symbol, negative and detrimental experiences encountered may also be interpreted as religious prejudice and discrimination.

As students in College some of the Muslim women had been surprised at the comments and behaviour of some peers who were going to be teachers in a multicultural society, at group exclusion, and incidents unchallenged in lectures. The non-hijab wearers told of the deeper levels of exclusion and negative comments experienced by some hijab wearers, but the number and level of incidents were higher in school teaching practice situations than they were at Greenacres. In schools the most visibly Muslim women were sometimes placed in the position of defending their right to be Muslim by the nature of questions about media driven versions of Islam. The majority of these came from staff most influential in their success or failure on the practice, their class teachers, so responses were moderate and concealed the offence they felt, an example of teaching-practice stasis. (Menter 1989). Their relative powerless status as student-teachers was greater than their perceived powerlessness as NQT's later in the research which perhaps helps to explain why teaching-practice experiences were so vivid and so overtly anti-Islam. The Muslim women's perceptions of dominant negative views of Islam influencing interactions were used to interpret comments, questions, behaviours and attitudes experienced in their situation, later to be supported with the evidence of islamophobia in Britain (Runnymede Trust 1997a & b). Some also experienced ethnicism from the pupils. The women persevered through these difficulties, believing such negative attitudes were not deeply rooted in the children but instilled by parents and others, and were therefore capable of change.

Visibility of Muslim identity for those women who had adopted hijab created change in interaction with others. Cultural capital inside the Muslim community was enhanced by the wearing of hijab (Bourdieu 1984). Respect from Muslim peers at Greenacres, Muslim pupils and parents in schools and from some who were not threatened by the gesture within the community, was evident in many experiences shared during this research. The embodiment of being Muslim had positive power in these contexts but negative power in others. (Dunning in press). Early tensions, created by the process of change in favour of the Muslim students at Greenacres, brought comments and incidents of deliberate exclusion in group activities and isolation from other students. The hijab-wearing Muslims were most directly affected.

On school-placements hijab-wearing Muslim women became increasingly aware of their embodied difference. As they moved into situations as 'the only Muslim teacher' they encountered such experiences as accusations of 'indoctrination' when offering to teach Islam within the RE lessons, and many instances of the 'power of discriminating looks'. (Bhabha 1994). For Nawar there were times when her embodied identity was invisible as her class teacher asked her 'how Muslim families could marry their daughters off at such a young age?' Their status as qualified teachers led to less direct confrontations from colleagues in their early teaching careers but the evidence suggests that hijab-wearing Muslims continued to experience some colleagues' fears of, and lack of knowledge about, Islam.

At the end of the fourth year at Greenacres, largely spent in main subject groups with minimal cross-group interaction, memories of difficulties experienced as Muslims in earlier years of their courses had faded. The most significant development at that stage was the bonding within the Muslim group which had led to important personal religious growth and friendships. For many respondents their 'Muslim identity' was more prominent in their consciousness than it had ever been, and more prominent than their 'teacher identity' at this point of change in their lives. There were anxieties about their embodied identity as hijab-wearing Muslim

women and the effects that would have on their professional chances. For example Nawar, Asma, Zahra and Rabiah expressed concern about their apparent inability to find a job. Many had thought about the possible effects of their dress, particularly head covering, on employment prospects, for example Amira, after two of her head teachers had raised the issue with College staff on school-experiences. Others recalled consciousness of their 'difference' at interviews and uncertainty about the effect. Elias's (1991) point about the particular significance of the head and face in human interaction is relevant in such questioning. Whilst interviewers might not remember what kind of shoes interviewees wore, they would remember talking to someone wearing the hijab. Rabiah suggested some research on head teachers' attitudes towards employing Muslim women might be helpful.

Arriving at true motivations behind the actions of professional gate-keepers in relation to visibly Muslim women would be difficult but there is some evidence in this research to suggest that there might be a problem. Of the seven teachers who stayed in this research for the 'early teaching careers' section the three non-hijab wearers at the time, Cath, Salima and Hana were all offered jobs in their final teaching practice schools. Jamilah was accepted onto the LEA pool and was successful in gaining a post in a predominantly Asian, Muslim school through Governor pressure, against the wishes of the head who then proceeded to make her first year very difficult. Rabiah was offered a post late in comparison with her white, non-Muslim peers in a 'socially deprived' school 'which no-one else wanted'. Nawar and Asma had been rejected at LEA pool interviews, so Nawar accepted a post in a Muslim school and failed again with the LEA pool the following year as she attempted to move into the State system. The reason given after the second rejection was that her application form did not include enough about equal opportunities! Asma went on supply, unsuccessfully pursuing a full-time position for the first two years of her career.

Embodiment of Muslim identity entailed more than the wearing of the hijab, it meant following Islamic guidelines by constantly striving to live their lives in terms of beliefs, attitudes, behaviour and interaction, as good Muslims. As they moved in a more religious direction, particularly during their time at Greenacres, they expected more of themselves in terms of living Islamically, and they became more aware of the expectations other Muslims would have of them. This meant increased consciousness of behaviour and its implications in relation to religious guidelines, differing parameters of being enabled or constrained in their lives by the new freedom and discipline they were experiencing in 'real Islam'. For some, this meant resolving dilemmas such as how to meet diverging goals of their 'Muslim' and 'teacher' identities, and for the strongest Muslims of how to be good 'Muslim teachers'. For Jamilah the personal struggle of resolving how she could be a *good Muslim teacher*, exactly what that would entail, and how she could achieve her aspirations on a daily basis, finally contributed to her decision to leave full-time teaching after two years.

The process of religious development raised such concerns as the possibility of misrepresenting Islam, of 'sending the wrong messages' to Muslim children and parents. An example was in the playing of certain instruments or singing in music for Fareeda and Zahra, or for Jamilah, being seen by Asian parents in a track-suit for PE. But concerns went deeper than issues of image projection and interpretation. Being free to be Muslim in the State education system became an issue where religiosity was strongest. Not being free to 'be Muslim' as a teacher in the State system was a concern shared by most hijab-wearing Muslims in this study. Such concerns led, in part, to decisions by students such as Fareeda to enter supply teaching by choice rather than full-time teaching, to gain status and some financial remuneration without total commitment to the State system. The reality of the teaching situation was differentially experienced, for example, with Rabiah finding the balancing of both identities much less problematic than anticipated, whilst for Jamilah the dilemma contributed to her resignation.

To hijack a term, some Muslim women adopted 'identity stasis' to cope with subtle pressures on their 'Muslim identity' as teachers in the State education system. (Menter 1989). There were many examples of experiences, on teaching practice and in their early teaching careers, when deliberate decisions not to voice opinions or enter conversations related to Islam, were taken. There was increasing pressure to 'keep quiet' in full-time teaching posts because of the long-term nature of their working-relations. Such pressures followed negative, fixed, stereotypical attitudes about Islam, from colleagues, mainly related to media portrayal of fundamentalist Islamic actions. In terms of social relations in the staffroom it became easier to 'stay silent' than to contribute and risk confrontation. They would have welcomed reasoned, open-minded debate but that was rare.

Another form of 'identity stasis', related to being 'specialist RE' teachers, also presented dilemmas for some, for example Fareeda, Nawar and Jamilah. On teaching practice, or in first posts, they were enthusiastic about offering more specific contributions in their main subject, and in particular about sharing their insights into Islam where appropriate, as a legitimate part of the National Curriculum. Responses were off-putting, including words like 'indoctrination' and obvious suspicions about their capability to be objective whilst so visibly embodying Islam. The outcome was a 'retreat' of the Muslim women to avoid confrontation. Fareeda and Nawar only had to survive their teaching practice situations for a short-time but for Jamilah, in full-time teaching, her approach to her new second year school involved 'main subject silence', preferring the anonymity of not contributing, to the possibility of confrontation and suspicion about her intentions when offering to help with the development of RE. The exception to this was Rabiah, who was given responsibility for RE in her second year of teaching, with very positive responses for the amount of work she had put into documentation to support colleagues.

'Main subject stasis' was another phenomenon that emerged in the research evidence. The women who had studied Islam within a religious and theological context, as a main subject within their B.Ed. course, had

concerns about the possible stigmatization and effect such a choice would have on career prospects. Fears again related to their perceptions of the tacit views of Islam held by others' within the dominant society. Initial concerns arose when job applications to the LEA pool were rejected or were longer in processing than those of peers who had different main subjects. The women started changing their forms to state 'Religious Education' and stopped being entirely open about their course on initial meetings with colleagues. This was a way of coping with early experiences of negative, questioning responses to revelations of an Islamic Studies main subject. Asma, in her two years of supply teaching, soon learnt 'not to mention' Islamic Studies as her main course since colleagues had responded negatively in the early days. She did not have time in her transient position to establish relations sufficiently to challenge such responses. All of these issues were making social relations with colleagues in schools difficult, with the Muslim women retreating from interactions in order to leave their 'Muslim identity' intact.

Social relations were more difficult for the Muslim women in the school situation than the relatively secure environment that had developed at Greenacres. The concept of habitus is helpful for analysing this phenomenon. Particular difficulties were found, for some, in staffroom situations. Elias (1991) referred to social habitus as 'self-image and social make-up ... that grows out of the social script.' This encompasses Bourdieu's (1984) version of habitus involving lifestyle preferences, for example 'tastes'. Likewise, Mellor and Shilling's (1997,20) definition includes 'embodied dispositions which promote particular forms of human orientation to the world ... (predisposing) people towards specific ways of knowing and acting'. Mennell (1994) linked habitus and identity, habitus being at a more sub-conscious level and constituting more inclusive layers of identity. Whilst skin colour offers superficial and genetically endowed difference, habitus refers to the internalization of preferred ways of being, that are shared, at different levels of consciousness, with certain others, through processes such as interaction, imitation and adaptation.

Differences in social habitus were identified by the teachers in the early careers section of this research where in-depth personal reflection on relationships with others in their figurations were explored. Some had experienced difficulties with developing positive social relations in the staffroom. In their own words there were ways in which their life experiences were completely different from those of their white non-Muslim colleagues. Conversations about lifestyle choices, food, holidays, entertainment and relationships, were antithetical to their preferred lifestyle choices. Where they were the only Asian, Muslim teacher in the school this could contribute to feelings of isolation and exclusion in the schools. Whilst Asian women were disproportionately represented in positions of classroom assistants and language support workers in their schools, and friendships sometimes flourished here, some Muslim teachers felt this further diminished their hard-earned 'teacher status' in the eyes of colleagues, pupils and parents.

Expressions like 'connecting', used by Jamilah, were particularly useful in describing how relationships were easier between people who shared more in their lives, past and present. She went on to describe different levels of 'connectedness' explaining how, in her experience, a white Christian and Asian Muslim could share the experience of being 'outsiders' in a predominantly secular society and therefore 'get along' on one level, how an Asian and an Asian Muslim would share lifestyle similarities and connect at a deeper level, but how an Asian Muslim woman would connect at the deepest level with another Asian Muslim woman, because they shared most about each other's lives, they had most in-common.

Nawar expressed the same beliefs through different examples. The greatest 'relief' she experienced in her teaching was when she moved into the Muslim school and no longer had to justify herself, or to respond to questions about being Muslim, her colleagues and children in the Muslim school 'just knew'. Experiences in State schools during teaching practices had been difficult for Nawar because of her Muslim identity.(Chapter 6).

Rabiah described similar experiences where the degree of 'life-sharing' determined levels of understanding that were possible between two people. A common background offered security in interaction, a 'sense of knowing', a framework on which interpretations of words and actions could be made without risk of being misconstrued. We discussed our relationship since, following such a premise, understanding of a white, non-Muslim researcher investigating the experiences of black Muslim women, would be limited. She explained that her involvement in the research was a means of trying to help me to understand what life is like for them, of trying to share understanding, she saw that we had those goals in common which helped.

The theory of shared habitus defining group boundaries and levels of social interaction was supported by those respondents who found school situations most comfortable and social relations with colleagues positive. Hana had been raised in an Asian community until the age of eight years and then in an all-white area until she entered College. Her friendships and life experiences had accommodated that change as the family lost some of their Asian, Muslim cultural and religious practices over the years in the White community. Hana had long-established friendships in the White and Asian communities. The habitus that grew out of her social script was different from that of Jamilah, Rabiah, Zahra and others who had remained in Asian communities. Cath, the only African-Caribbean teacher in the research, taught in a school within the mixed-race community in which she lived and had been raised. She knew many of the parents and children and related well to the mixed-race staff, headed by a Black headmaster, in her school. She shared many layers of habitus with the community in her school situation and, consequently, enjoyed a more consciously 'accepted' identity in that context.

Mennell (1994) described shifting multi-layers of habitus, and more consciously, identity, in the process of development. As these women moved through training and early career stages of their lives, changing balances between these layers were occurring, affected by circumstances of time and place: Mennell's 'filo pastry of identity'. Whilst it is recognised that

complexity of situation, in particular for these black, British, Muslim women, means multiplicity of identities and habitus, much of this research focused on changing balances in their perceptions of personal 'teacher' and 'Muslim' identities. Elias's (1991,183) notion of differentially prominent layers of habitus the most prominent of which 'is the layer characteristic of membership of a particular survival group' is also useful, offering a three-dimensional understanding of habitus and identity in a constant state of flux.

During their early teaching careers, the evidence suggests that there were minimum tensions in the State school situation where respondents experienced a stronger 'teacher identity' and, consequently a Muslim identity which created no conflicts of conscience, (Hana, Cath). Where evidence suggests respondents appeared to be able to 'switch into teacher mode' through busy school-based days, and enjoy greater consciousness of their Muslim identity in other contexts, a more equally balanced prominence of Muslim and teacher identities is suggested, (Salima, Rabiah, Asma). For those whose strongest consciousness appeared to be of their Muslim identity, separating their 'Muslim-self' from their 'teacher-self' was more difficult leading to deeper conflicts of conscience and loyalty in the State system, (Jamilah, Nawar). Their different situations led to different resolutions.

Nawar was in a Muslim school in which she was comfortable as a practising Muslim with a religious underpinning to her teaching, time and facilities for prayer and shared social habitus with staff and pupils. However, at the end of this research she was facing the dilemma of recognising her disadvantaged position as a teacher, financially, in terms of professional status, and long-term career prospects, if she stayed in the Muslim school. Despite her negative experiences in the State system during school experience (chapter 5) she was considering moving back into that situation, if 'allowed', aware of the possible effects on her Muslim identity on her professional chances. She was in a 'no-win' situation. If she stayed where she was her Muslim identity would be satisfied, in fact she perceived herself as a moderating influence in the Muslim school, but her teacher

identity was underfulfilled. Her experiences suggested that the State system would satisfy her 'teacher identity' in terms of professional confidence, resource and in-set opportunities, and more equitable financial remuneration, but she would find it difficult as a Muslim since she would feel less comfortable, less 'accepted' and less able to sustain her religious requirements. Nevertheless, it was her intention to try to gain a job in the State system. Her fears that teaching in a Muslim school might be a handicap to moving into the State system were materialising as she failed, for the second year, to be accepted onto the City pool. The continuing marginalisation of Muslim schools and the effects on Muslim children is acknowledged, (Runnymede 1997b, 47) but the related implications for Muslim teachers have not been fully recognised.

Two years in the State education teaching profession were leading Jamilah in a direction of increasing compromise of her strongest desire, to be Muslim. Conflicts of conscience and loyalty, brought about by past and present influences on her Muslim and teacher identities, led her to decide that she no longer wanted to continue down this path of assimilation. She decided to leave full-time teaching to give herself time to pursue her interest in Islam and the possibility of being proactive for her religion in the Muslim community. Whilst she enjoyed teaching, she found the State system constraining and prescriptive in terms of what, how, and when learning took place. She also recognised that the system and the National Curriculum were not value-free but that the values imbued were not Islamic values. In fact, she believed Islam was undermined by the State system and the National Curriculum, weakening the faith of Muslim children. As the perpetuation of this effect meant a fading of the significance of Islam amongst the Muslim communities, she wanted to be proactive in helping to halt the trend. She left teaching feeling unwelcome, undervalued, disillusioned and under-used, especially in terms of what she embodied. In both year-long posts, in predominantly Asian, Muslim schools, she knew she had much more to offer than the hierarchies enabled her to contribute.

Power differentials in the immediate school figuration influenced the professional development of the Muslim women in their early teaching careers. They attached different levels of significance to relations with pupils and parents, compared to those with colleagues and the senior management. Many were in predominantly Asian Muslim schools, in which they shared much in the way of habitus with children and parents, bringing many positive experiences to their lives as teachers. The Muslim women were aware of their positive role model influence on the children, of the insights their multi-lingual skills gave them into the knowledge, skills and understanding of their young pupils, of their special affinity with some children who used the new teachers to expand their knowledge of Islam or just to share affinity by, for example, making mother-tongue contact or praying together. Respondents were aware of the many non-English speaking mothers gaining their first confidence to come into school to discuss their children's work and behaviour because they shared the same language. The teachers recognised positive responses to their Muslim identity from Muslim parents, for example the noticeable fathers' display of respect towards Salima when she adopted the hijab in her first year of teaching. There were negative responses from minorities of pupils and parents, mainly white and some African-Caribbean origin pupils, but perseverance usually turned negative relations into positive ones.

Dominant influences on the professional development of the Muslim women did not come from children and parents but from colleagues and hierarchies in the schools, who affected, through the process of interaction, the ethos of the school. Where the style of management was involved, based on leading by example, being supportive, fostering shared responsibilities, and demonstrating respect for individuals, the respondents were able to flourish. In such situations staff were regarded as 'welcoming' and 'inclusive' of new staff or students which in turn affected the Muslim women's self-confidence, sense of value, and ability to develop professionally. Unfortunately some experienced autocratic management styles in which the head teacher was distant from the staff and daily

interactions in the school, possessive of responsibilities, undemonstrative in terms of positive support for staff, and even proactive in offering negative feedback. These environments did not foster enthusiasm and commitment from older staff, affecting the ethos of the school, or offer a positive environment for professional development to students or newly qualified staff. This supports previous research and would mirror the experiences of any students or NQT's. (Boyd 1984, Campbell 1985, Whitaker 1983).

Some Muslim women recalled particularly negative interactions with head teachers and mentors. These were either brutally effective in short-term teaching-practice situations, for example those experienced by Zahra and Nawar, or more insidiously effective in full-time teaching posts, for example for Jamilah in her first school. Zahra had been publicly reduced to tears, failed and removed from the school by her head in week one of final school experience. Nawar's head had been unsympathetic to her needs as a Muslim teacher and had expressed his negative views to the tutor. The effects were the same: declining professional morale; loss of self-confidence and re-assessment of life direction. Zahra had 'fought' so hard to persuade her father to allow her to return to Greenacres that she was determined to try a repeat school-experience to enable her to graduate as a teacher. Nawar was not supported by the tutor during her difficulties, despite his awareness of the racism / religious prejudice affecting her during final school-experience, an example of a tutor's collusion in 'teaching-practice stasis' (Menter 1989). However, personal determination ensured that she survived. With three years of a B.Ed. behind her, Nawar was a mature student, aware of sacrificing much time with her husband and four children in order to reach this position on the course. She was not prepared to give-up but she was uncertain, from that time onwards, about her ability to be comfortable as a Muslim teacher in a State school. Jamilah was 'driven out' of her first full-time post after a year by the insidious nature of experiences encountered with the hierarchy, mentor and some colleagues. She changed schools, leaving with many accolades from parents and pupils and nothing positive from the hierarchy. It was interesting to note that, although two

years apart in time, it was the same head who damaged Zahra on teaching practice and later Jamilah in her first year of teaching. Also, it was this head who told Jamilah that she sometimes felt as if she was teaching in a Pakistani village. The occasion was Jamilah's interview for a post at the school!

Those in senior management and other powerful positions, such as mentor to an NQT, had the greatest effect on enabling or constraining the professional development of the Muslim students and teachers in this research. Whilst it would be difficult to prove that religious prejudice underpinned the actions of some members of the educational hierarchy in certain State schools, the experiences recounted by some respondents suggest that the question should be asked.

Throughout school-experiences and their early teaching careers, the Muslim women were differentially related to tutors, class teachers, senior managers, mentors, colleagues, children and parents. Some respondents did believe that they had to work harder than other students and teachers because they were Muslims and black, that they were 'being watched', that others were 'waiting for them to make mistakes'. Hana and Cath's teaching experiences were positive and might mirror those of any young teacher. The more prominent a person's Muslim identity became, the more conscious they became of compromising their Muslim identity in the State education system. Where respondents did not share many layers of their habitus with colleagues, relations were difficult and some feelings of isolation occurred. Lack of positive social interaction of any depth in a school environment exacerbated 'outsider' feelings. For the more religious women, thoughts were crystallised in terms of Westernised versus Islamic values which might be further understood in terms of Elias's 'Established (Westernised) / Outsider (Islamic)' theory.

This theory grew out of Elias's work on long-term tensions generated in processes of social integration. Whilst, in comparison, this research is neither long-term nor sufficiently large-scale to analyse in relation to this theory, some of the concepts will be useful for increasing

understanding of the evidence produced. Some of the Muslim women regarded perceptions of Islam amongst 'the established' in Britain as negative and heavily influenced by mediated versions of Islam, never offering them a chance to explain 'real Islam' and what it meant for them to live their lives as Muslims in Britain. Attitudes were fixed, stereotypical and non-negotiable. But in reality for them Islam was a way of life, guiding and supporting them along their chosen path to God. A religious reality-base underpinned everything they did, every action having a consequence for the Day of Judgement. They were constantly striving to behave in Islamically proper ways and this included avoidance of such things as alcohol and certain behaviour in mixed-sex company, dressing and acting in-line with requirements laid down in the Qu'ran, demonstrating a respect for their bodies and for being Muslim women.

Just as their perceptions of 'Established' views of Islam tended towards extremism, they regarded Westernised values as the antithesis of Islamic values, characterised by a directionless secular society in which drinking, exploitation of women's bodies, illicit relations between the sexes, and strivings for materialistic rewards, dominated behaviour. According to Mennell (1994) competing discourses of 'group charisma' and 'group disgrace' are more likely to be vehemently sustained where a group feels particularly threatened.

Such views were expressed by those students and teachers moving most strongly in an Islamic direction, both in the evidence collected during time at Greenacres, (eg Zauda, Zahra, Fareeda, Lina) and in early teaching careers (eg Rabiah, Jamilah). Conversations revealed deep concerns about Islam in Britain, their possible contributions through Art, teaching in the State system or in the Muslim community. Their missionary zeal for Islam was strong. These women were feeling threatened, not personally, but in terms of survival of their group, survival of Muslims who were proud of sharing a strong faith in a predominantly secular society. Time at Greenacres, and subsequently in Islamic groups through which they pursued their interest in their religion, had shifted their we-I identity

balance in the direction of we-identity, the 'we' being Muslim. An example of evidence supporting this was in the reflections of their time as pupils in British secondary schools when some 'did not realise they were transgressing religious requirements in PE'. Prior to the opportunity to study Islam and spend time developing knowledge and faith at Greenacres, and Islamic groups, their we-identity was less strong.

Fear of some respondents and their parents that some Muslims were moving in a 'Westernised direction', refers to moving away from Islam, in an integrating direction pressured by the dominant non-Muslim society, creating disintegration of the Muslim legacy. In terms of the we-I identity balance such a shift is towards the I-identity characteristic of the process of individualisation evident in twentieth century Western societies. (Elias 1991). Concerns are that such a trend will result in a loss of distinctiveness, of signs, symbols and rituals which have given meaning to lives, influencing generations of Muslims.

The women displaying the strongest Muslim we-identities were also becoming frustrated in their search for a place in which they could live their lives Islamically. Some were moving in a more religious direction than their parents creating minor tensions during their time at Greenacres. These were resolved as 'accepted differences'. In fact the more religious the women became the more tolerant they were of differences they recognised in their families as attributable to cultural rather than 'real Islam' influences. They were finding most satisfaction for their Islamic interests in new groups of young Muslims that were springing up in the region. The sense of re-newing, of reconciling past and present, using transformation and difference to give fresh meaning to 'diaspora experience', and to living, breathing 'diaspora identity', aids understanding of this phenomenon (Hall 1990). But there was, in a minority, a more frustrated sense of diaspora, of not 'belonging' anywhere in the sense of being able to live their lives as practising Muslims. Dominant secular pressures in Britain reinforced their minority, and often unpopular, status. Even in Muslim Pakistan these

women believed there were negative influences that were not reflective of real Islam.

For Jamilah one solution to her sense of diaspora was a separate space in which those of like-mind would share the same goals and values, including in the education of their children. This was indicative of Elias's 'encapsulation' theory where groups such as the German Hutterer remain distinctive in a society powerful and tolerant enough to allow this to occur. (1991). Recent evidence by the Runnymede Trust (1997a & b) suggests the people of Britain would not be tolerant enough to consider such a space at present. The continuing furore over Muslim schools offers another example of irrational intolerance. Jamilah believed, as Haw (1995) discovered, that Muslim schools could be liberating for British Muslim girls because they would build a sense of self-respect and confidence which is sometimes undermined in the State system. Having experienced the State education system as a pupil herself and now as a teacher, Jamilah believed that in practice it undervalued Islam and Muslim teachers, and had low expectations of Muslim children. Her increased consciousness of Islam, since joining Greenacres, had changed the balance of her identity and her perceptions of the British education system. Her decision to opt out of full-time teaching in order to be proactive for Islam in the Muslim community, was a conscious choice to live her preferred way of life, a statement about her strong Muslim 'We-Identity'.

At the other end of the spectrum of experiences explored in this research, Hana might be regarded as the 'most integrated' Asian Muslim teacher having lived in Asian and all-White communities for periods of several years. For her there were no conflicts of conscience and loyalty between past and present influences and no difficulties teaching as a Muslim in the State system. Her Muslim 'We-Identity' was not as strong as Jamilah's but she always regarded herself as Muslim. She did recognise that she was not 'as practising' as some, and that her hijab-wearing friends had a more difficult time. In many ways she reflected Mennell's (1991) theory that as

people come into closer contact with others they change the way in which they perceive others.

Cath's experiences differed from the rest. She was the only African-Caribbean Muslim involved from the start of the research. By the time she graduated she admitted that she no longer saw herself as Muslim. Conflicts perceived as racially motivated, between some Asian and Black Muslims had revealed a rhetoric / reality gap in the Islam she was seeking. In-depth discussions over the following year led her to express her concern that separate Muslim groups would grow in Britain, certainly for Blacks. She suggested a tripartite system existed in which Asian Muslims were more accepting of White Muslims because of their power and influence in British society. This left Black Muslims further ostracised and despite the fundamental principle that within Islam "distinctions of race, colour, wealth and power disappear" (Mawdudi 1989,11) this was not her experience. Cath's pursuit of Islam through her studies in Greenacres, and since, through exploring different channels such as Black Islamic groups, led to her vision of a future of separate development. Perhaps such a vision in Britain will mirror that of America today, where harmonious, self-sufficient 'parallel' Black Muslim communities have developed. (BBC2 Documentary 17.8.97 "Planet Islam: Who Shall Overcome?"). Despite her fears of separate development within Islam in Britain she experienced a year of teaching in a school situation which epitomised integration, in which children and staff, Black, Asian and White, worked together on the basis of individual respect. She recalled no experiences of racism or religious prejudice within the school, although in 'circle time' children had shared such experiences they had met outside of the school. Since integration is her preferred vision perhaps this experience in school has contributed to sustaining her 'neutral' position in terms of a declared faith.

Following the experiences of Muslim women in the subject of physical education over two years in initial teacher training, and two years in the teaching profession, was interesting. In relation to a process theory of identity this discussion will examine how interdependencies experienced

during training and teaching enabled or constrained them from objectively being able to see themselves as teachers of PE, and subjectively being able to teach the subject.

Their own experiences of PE as pupils in British primary and secondary schools had varied depending on the attitudes of teachers and policy-makers to their Muslim identity. For some there were no issues since their consciousness of Islam was not strong. Others experienced processes of accommodation whilst some remembered embarrassing experiences through which they 'coped' with a variety of strategies, often with more support from peers than teachers. (Benn 1994).

At Greenacres initial experiences in PE for the first cohorts of Muslim women demonstrated institutional ethnicism. Students were often compelled to transgress religious requirements due to lack of knowledge and consideration from the staff. PE became the subject which demonstrated, most visibly, accommodation in favour of the Muslim women. As a result of a number of changes described elsewhere in this thesis (see chapter 5.2), attitudes of respondents towards the subject moved in a positive direction. Subsequent experiences of PE College-based courses were also favourable, with swimming, in particular, presenting far less difficulties than anticipated. This is not to suggest that other tensions did not arise, for example with non-Muslim students and with timetabling difficulties when meeting the all-female environment requirement. Nevertheless, diary and interview data gathered during and after College course PE inputs was positive. Muslim students' reflections were enthusiastic, post-course motivations were high, there was appreciation of course content, resources and delivery and a commitment to teaching the subject in schools. The possibility of a 'halo effect' resulting from the initial focus of this research and the researcher's area of expertise cannot be ruled out. However, the Muslim women had positive images of themselves teaching PE, but there were some concerns about meeting issues in schools that had been addressed at Greenacres, for example, moving in mixed-sex

environments, having male tutors and class teachers supervising PE, particularly dance.

Responses during and post the final teaching-practice research were disappointing. Positive or negative experiences in teaching PE were dependent on the strength of the subject within each particular primary school, but generally students lost some of their enthusiasm for the subject amongst the diversity of curriculum and other responsibilities assumed and also as a result of direct encounters with less enthusiastic practising teachers. Despite the fact that they quickly realised this was a favourite subject for the majority of pupils, and therefore a valuable lever in terms of discipline, the subject's low status amongst colleagues, in the heavily core subjects dominated primary curriculum, was quickly identified.

As students, the Muslim women were quick to assimilate the ethos of the school in relation to PE. Where staff changed for PE, planned lessons in detail, maximised facility availability and were enthusiastic about the subject, students followed. Unfortunately, more frequently PE lessons were not planned, were sometimes cancelled, facility time was used for other events, staff did not change and concern for continuity and progression in this subject was rarely discussed.

Students' self-perceptions as PE teachers were particularly malleable at the teaching practice stage as they imitated the examples set by practising teachers. For example, one respondent was very upset when her class teacher insisted that she changed for PE, having demonstrated a PE lesson without changing. Such haphazard school-based influences on the 'PE teacher-training' of these primary teachers were influential in future careers. Such experiences might be encountered by any primary teacher trainee currently moving through the system since higher education / school partnership pressures are great. Accountability procedures and monitoring at the level required to improve such experiences are seriously underdeveloped (Laws 1996).

The respondents were differentially affected by their Muslim identity during PE on teaching-practice, dependent on religiosity. The mixed-sex

environment concerns did not become issues for many. The all-female environments existing in many primary, especially infant schools, helped. Where male observers watched dance lessons, students found non-participatory teaching methods, or changed arrangements if prior warning was given. For others there was no problem in 'being seen' by parents and other adult males because teaching PE, in kit, as an Asian Muslim student-teacher in a busy 'corridor-hall' was seen as 'just part of the job.' They were training to join a profession with particular expectations which they could match. Despite a range of positive and negative teaching-practice experiences, on passing their third year final practice, the Muslim women were most enthusiastic about seeing themselves as teachers, including teachers of PE.

End of fourth year interviews on perceptions of teaching PE and joining the profession revealed many changes that had occurred as a result of the nature and effect of the fourth B.Ed. year. This had been a largely main subject orientated year during which much professional enthusiasm and confidence disappeared. This was not only related to the distance of school-based experience but also to the increasing distance of specific curriculum courses such as PE. For the Muslim respondents it also included the increase in Muslim bonding, perceptions of Islam and reflections on education and Islam that had taken place during the year. For those moving most strongly in a religious direction there was a resurgence of previous uncertainties about matching their Muslim and teacher goals, about the interface between the education system and Islam. This included, for some, resurgence of anxieties about their response to older Muslim children changing and participating in mixed-sex PE environments, being Muslim teachers in mixed-sex environments and teaching subjects like dance and music. Fareeda and Zahra expressed the strongest anxieties at this point. Neither moved into full-time teaching in the State education system.

The figuration influencing the Muslim women also included the creators of the National Curriculum, including that for PE. Primary teachers in Britain have always had cross-subject responsibility including PE.

Becoming a compulsory subject legitimised by law, including activity areas and programmes of study, ensured not only a curriculum of entitlement for pupils but, interdependently, a non-negotiable responsibility for teachers in the system. Whether Muslim women decided dance, or music, were problematic for them Islamically or not, as teachers in the State system they were obliged to deliver them. The Muslim women observed, as part of this research, teaching dance during school-experience, taught some of the best lessons I have seen. However, some experienced feelings of compromise, and a preference for the use of different language such as 'movement education' to placate deep-rooted conflicts related to their Muslim identity. The subjectivity of teaching dance was not problematic but the objectivity of seeing themselves as Muslim women teaching dance, created personal identity tensions for some.

Evidence indicates that all Muslim teachers in this research taught regular PE lessons during their early teaching careers. Some were more confident than others. The key stage one teachers had a more manageable task with balancing three activity areas. Even Nawar taught dance, or 'movement education' in the Muslim school in which children made sequences to nursery rhymes and 'they loved it'. Requirements of teaching six activity areas at key stage two were problematic, especially for Cath in year six where National testing was also required. Gym, dance and games were core activity areas for most respondents but no outdoor activities occurred and athletics constituted some preparations for the summer event of sportsday.

All respondents acknowledged problems with 'subject knowledge' for development of lessons and ensuring progression in children's learning. Support levels in schools were varied but never strong. As in most of their professional development experiences the NQT's were left to learn through a process of trial and error. PE in-service opportunities only materialised for Salima, attributed to the forthcoming Ofsted inspection. Offers would not have been prioritised by most respondents, despite recognition of poor 'subject knowledge'. This was because the status of the subject, as

recognised on school-experiences, was low. It was not that they perceived the subject as unimportant but it was less important, in terms of their accountability, than pupils' skills in core subjects such as language and number work. Resources were often poorer than those teachers had met in training. It appears that PE in primary schools will not improve until better training, including tighter monitoring of school-based training experiences, and resourcing, becomes a reality. These findings support the experiences of other primary teachers. (Evans et al 1997).

In relation to being Muslim and teachers of PE, the reality created far fewer tensions than anticipated. With the pressure of 'being watched' by class teachers and tutors disappearing, and the presence of mentors rarely a reality, PE became a much more private enterprise than it had been at College or on teaching-practice. The majority of respondents were in infant schools so issues of pupils' changing arrangements and mixed-sex activities rarely arose. Where older children were encountered there was evidence, as with Asma and vicariously reported with Zauda, that sometimes the Muslim teacher was more embarrassed by the situation than the pupils who 'just got on with it', indicating less consciousness of Islam in the Muslim children. Religiosity again influenced respndents' perceptions of themselves as teachers of PE. Some were concerned about feeling uncomfortable if they changed because Asian Muslim parents would 'expect more of Asian Muslim teachers' suggesting a lack of conviction that Muslim women should set examples in relation to participation in physical activity. Although Hana continued to change for PE throughout her first two years of teaching, the majority did not. The motivation for this, whatever that was, did not need to become public because the majority of their colleagues only changed footwear so in that respect they were the same.

As indicated, the continued development of professional skills in early teaching careers was largely the result of trial and error. The lack of interaction related to their professional development and progress was the root of the greatest frustration at the start of their careers. Despite the mentoring system, assumptions were made that, as NQT's, the women

knew everything and could not only cope with all the responsibilities of becoming a class teacher but could contribute new and exciting ideas, which they felt quite inadequate to do. The mentoring system only worked for Cath where her appointed mentor had no class teacher responsibilities and was able to work with her on a weekly basis to guide her through her first year. The majority, as must be common, were left to their own devices, especially where they were thought to be coping well. Most were only seen teaching by their mentor once and had to catch fleeting meetings with queries or requests during break times. External assessment agencies such as Ofsted and National testing procedures provided useful means of judging their competence but Ofsted 'preparation pressures', described most graphically by Salima over an eighteen month period, removed any desire to foresee a long-term career in the profession.

Asma, who had to settle for supply teaching in her first two years as she failed to gain a full-time post, was even more isolated in terms of continuing professional development because she could establish no long-term relationships. She had no opportunity of a mentor or any in-service courses and lived with the daily anxiety of 'not knowing' schools, children, staff, parents, or even whether she would have work. When she arrived at schools the tacit expectation was that she would cope with whatever situation she encountered and guidance on subjects, content, levels, policies or procedures was rarely forthcoming. The school secretary was the most significant person in her life throughout that period because she knew where the classroom was for the day. Whilst the advantage of seeing different situations enabled her to gain some benefits, the transitory, lonely and repetitive nature of her work became depressing and demoralising. Lack of professional interaction with colleagues in school meant she was 'surviving teaching in no-(wo)man's land' for her first two years. There will be no recognition of the depths of perseverance required to sustain her 'teacher identity' over the last two years when she starts her first full-time teaching post in September 1997 with the status, pay, and conditions, of an NQT.

Through this discussion an attempt has been made to understand elements of the empirical evidence, produced over a four-year period, with a group of Muslim women in teacher training and their early teaching careers. Despite the small number and diverse experiences of the respondents, the discussion has traced changing self-perceptions, as Muslims and as teachers, during that time and the influences of others in their immediate figurations on those changes. Identifying difference in importance or prominence of layers of consciousness, in complex multi-layered habitus and identities, has been particularly useful in explaining why the experiences of black Muslim women have sometimes been difficult in the predominantly white, secular cultural contexts explored. The degree of religiosity experienced by each individual determined the differential effects experiences had on changing identity consciousness and consequences. Whilst ethnicism was not experienced to the same degree by all respondents, much evidence has been gathered over four years to suggest that these Muslim women suffered religious prejudice and discrimination in the State education system; most insidiously from the gate-keepers to professional development, and most significantly by those who embodied Islam most visibly.

SUMMARY AND THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS

In final reflections on the adequacy of using the process theory of identity in this analysis of life-experiences I will use the framework suggested at the end of chapter three. The premise of long-term processes of change brought about in figurations of mutually orientated, differentially related human beings, underpinned the research and interpretation. Using process theory facilitated a systematic, relatively long-term, empirical project to unfold, allowing for constantly shifting multiple realities to emerge. At each stage, for example: initial training both College-based and school-based; at the transition point between College and joining the

profession; and in their early teaching careers; the Muslim women were influenced in their beliefs, values and practices, by people in their immediate figuration. Some people remained a relatively constant, but differentially significant, influence over the four years, such as parents, and Muslim peers. Perceptions of self, role, expectations and life-direction were also influenced by other key people as contexts changed. These included College-tutors, head teachers, mentors, colleagues, pupils, and pupils' parents.

The notion of balances of power in process theory facilitated the understanding of the gradual negotiation of a more congenial environment for Muslim women at Greenacres College. This was brought about by a shift in the balance of power in favour of the Muslim community. This congeniality was rarely matched in school situations and was most problematic where the Muslim women found themselves relatively isolated in terms of their adult, professional, Muslim identity. Despite high percentages of Muslim pupils, some of these Muslim teachers felt marginalized and undervalued in a school culture dominated by the values, practices and expectations of a white, predominantly secular society. For example, some were so affected that they felt unable to ask about prayer facilities which had been one issue the respondents did address at Greenacres.

Perceptions of differential power relations resulted in school-based / professional experiences in which respondents attached relatively low importance to the excellent relations and contributions they were able to make, in their predominantly Muslim schools, with Muslim children and parents. Much more significant to the Muslim women were the attitudes of, and relations with, head teachers and, predominantly white, non-Muslim, colleagues. All of these interactions affected the Muslim women's self-perceptions in terms of their 'Muslim' and 'teacher' identities, their self-confidence, perceptions of their capability and long-term futures in the profession.

Another example of power differentials involved the notion of stasis. Early negative experiences in interactions with non-Muslim school colleagues, over matters related to Islam, resulted in most respondents choosing the path of least resistance. 'Muslim - identity - stasis', 'Islamic - main-subject stasis' and 'RE - specialist stasis' became the reality for many of these women. They chose to deny their Muslim identity by staying silent, rather than risk challenging colleagues' often closed, negative and stereotypical views of their religion and its followers.

The notion of the embodiment of Islam, which permeates the behaviour, dress and life-style choices of these Muslim women, was useful in interpreting the complexities of identity. Embodiment of Islam in this research was the outcome of the interconnectedness of gender, the body and religion. Requirements for modest dress codes are demanded as a form of respect for the body of Muslim men and women by leaders and followers who perpetuate the religion. As such the hijab outwardly symbolises the identity of being a Muslim woman. Experiences of respondents who adopted the hijab found both positive and negative power in different figurations. Evidence within the State education system, most significantly within the hierarchies, suggests that the hijab worked negatively for some Muslim teachers in terms of gaining entry to the profession and maintaining a self of value within the profession. Within their Muslim communities, and amongst Muslim pupils and parents, adoption of the hijab brought positive power.

At a deeper, more internalised level, analysis of the meanings inherent in the embodiment of Islam was facilitated by the interconnectedness of identity, embodiment and habitus in the process theory of identity. Elias's work on identity, the body and habitus, further illuminated and developed in the work of Mennell, Bourdieu and Shilling, et al, helped in the analysis of the experiences of respondents. The habitus of the Muslim women involved internalisations of shared lifestyle patterns and practices. Part of this entailed shared dress and behaviour codes, values and aspirations. In some cases these were the antithesis of Westernised values, particularly in the connection between gender and body, in religion and

secularisation. Where perceptions of Islam and Westernisation were most polarised the Muslim women were least comfortable in the school, particularly in the staffroom situation.

The notion of a 'we-I' identity balance in the process theory of identity, was valuable in the interpretation of differences in life-experiences and preferred life-courses. The Greenacres experience resulted in an environment which enabled many Muslim women to 'live their lives as Muslims'. For most this resulted in increasing religiosity. Their identity, regarded in the context of this research as multilayered and as a more conscious level of habitus, shifted in the direction of stronger Muslim 'we-identities'. Some respondents chose to reverse the process of 'individualisation' that they recognised themselves as having undergone in their earlier life experiences, in order to consciously rebuild their Muslim 'we-identities'. This brought changes in the consciousness of, and tensions between, their 'Muslim' and 'teacher' identities.

Once in teaching some respondents found no conflict of conscience or loyalty between their 'teacher' and 'Muslim' identities. They were easily able to focus on a more conscious 'teacher' identity during the working day and a more conscious 'Muslim' identity out of school. Others regarded the State education system as leading them on an assimilation path, towards Westernisation, which was destroying their preferred Muslim identity. For some, the denial, in the process of State school teaching, of the Muslim identity that they so clearly embodied, contributed to their ultimate resistance, a rejection of the profession.

The established-outsider theory offered a link beyond the micro situation with evidence suggesting that some British Muslims regarded themselves as 'outsiders' in their society, sharing negative and sometimes derogatory perceptions of Westernisation and, in particular, the objectification of women in Western society. Simultaneously they regarded 'established' views of Islam as unfair, convinced by media induced

fundamentalist views of the religion and its followers, since supported by evidence on islamophobia in Britain (Runnymede Trust 1997a & b).

Process theory enables interpretation of experiences recounted in relation to other historical and social relations. Due to the microcosmic nature of the present thesis it might be suggested that the difficulties faced by the Muslim women at Greenacres and in teaching were 'personal concerns'. However, the culmination of this project coincides with the publication of the Runnymede Trust's final report on islamophobia in Britain (1997b) and adds to evidence in an under-researched but growing area. The Christian foundations of the State education system, the increasing secularisation of the dominant society, the persistent debates about Muslim schools, racism within education and a National Curriculum within a plural but unequal society, evidence of marginalisation of Muslims in economic, social, legal and public sectors, are all issues emanating from macro figurations which were affecting the life experiences of the black British Muslim women studied in the current research. Data suggested that the women recognised these tensions in different ways for example through: comments about religious education in schools; racial and religious tensions with peers at College and in teaching; concerns about career entry and professional chances; lack of facilities for practising Muslims in State schools; views on Muslim schools; staffroom comments on fundamentalist Islam; and for some increasing sensitivity to the compulsory nature of the National Curriculum and the demands it made on their identity in terms of their preference to be practising Muslims. Even Nawar did not find the answer as she found herself in a double-bind situation. In a Muslim school she was content over being allowed and encouraged to 'be Muslim' but was not fulfilled in terms of financial remuneration, inset opportunities, resourcing, status as 'a qualified teacher', nor easily accepted back into the State system.

Finally, process theory can take account of both intended and unintended outcomes. Embarking on a four year research project with a clear vision of tracking a group of women through their initial teacher

training and early teaching careers, did not prepare me for what I encountered. Unanticipated events included: a respondent who 'disappeared' to Mozambique, others who decided after four years of training not to enter the teaching profession, some who were unable to find a job, and many who took supply jobs in preference to full-time posts. Understanding unplanned and unforeseen occurrences as inevitable in research so dependent on people enabled me to retain a sense of value in the research.

The characterising trend of the dominant society increasingly supports centralised ways of thinking, behaving and educating. Recent discussions on diversity versus traditional, 'restorationist' cultural values are indicative of the 'threat' which dominates political thought and action. The increasing voice of Britain's Muslim population has fuelled the 'moral panics' created by the media and increased perceptions of a Muslim 'threat' in the dominant society. There are indicators in this study which suggest that such fears have disadvantaged some Muslim women in their pursuit of entering and progressing in the teaching profession. Enabling British Muslims to 'be' British Muslims in their role of teacher in the State education system was more important for some respondents than others, and more successful in some schools than others. If the system is to be attractive, inviting and welcoming to potential British Muslim teachers there needs to be change in sensitivity, awareness and action in the direction of inclusion. Attracting more ethnic minority students into teaching without confronting less palatable factors within the training and profession itself which further disadvantage these students, will not increase the number of fulfilled ethnic minority teachers.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

In this thesis the experiences of a group of Muslim women were explored through a systematic empirical research project spanning four years of their lives in initial teacher training and their early teaching careers. It involved a qualitative, case study approach using observation, diary and interview techniques. As the research evolved it became increasingly dependent on the face-to-face relationship between researcher and researched. Over seventy in-depth interviews, conducted, transcribed and analysed by myself at regular points across the four years constituted the most significant data. This final section will include: i) major conclusions from the investigation, ii) acknowledgement of strengths and weaknesses in the process, iii) recommendations arising and iv) suggestions for further research.

i) CONCLUSIONS

Experiences in the lives of the Muslim women at Greenacres College reflected processes of challenge, negotiation and accommodation. Through their actions of consciousness raising regarding the religious requirements of Muslims, changes occurred in many arenas including catering, accommodation provision, the PE department, and the changing use of space to create a prayer room. Other events such as the establishment of an Islamic Society and increasing numbers of Muslim women on the B.Ed. and other new courses with similar intentions, ensured increased awareness and accommodation of the needs of Muslims in higher education. By the end of their time at Greenacres, the women felt very comfortable in the environment and particularly content with their increased religiosity and the strong friendships they had established, mainly amongst the Muslim students in the College.

Processes of change and accommodation were accompanied by other tensions, for example with non-Muslim students, as use of resources was changed or re-channelled. Despite being enabled to live their lives more fully as Muslims in the Greenacres environment, the women still experienced incidents of ethnicism directed towards their Muslim identity. These were more numerous in the lives of the hijab-wearing Muslims, for example shared experiences of being ostracised by peers from working groups. Such behaviour, and in some instances their own preferences to work in 'like-minded' groups, resulted in accommodation of the Muslim group without real integration for many. The women were not deterred by this 'parallel existence' since it had resulted in stronger 'in-group' bonding and contentment about moving in a more Islamic direction. The organisation of the fourth year of the B.Ed. course, with its lack of professional work and focus on main subject studies, also served to increase their faith, but to decrease their confidence in their professional competence. This was evident in the interviews held at the transition point between College and teaching.

Incidents of religious discrimination were more common during school-based teaching practice and, again, were experienced mainly by the hijab-wearing Muslims who so visibly embodied Islam. There were rarely provisions for religious requirements in schools, although one woman, in an all-white school, was offered a prayer-room. As student-teachers, the Muslim women were differentially related to significant others in their figuration, from head teachers to parents, and peers placed in the same situations. However, class teachers were the most influential people with regard to perceptions of progress and success. Immediate impressions of being perceived as welcome or a burden were often indicative of how relations would develop. Some experienced positive, open, genuinely inquisitive questioning about 'being Muslim' but more frequently, anti-Islamic approaches were made to them as 'representatives of Islam' except that the perceptions of Islam they faced were stereotypical and characteristic of media-driven notions of fundamentalist Islam and were

usually non-negotiable. Power differentials ensured that the students retreated and adopted 'identity stasis' with regard to their Muslim identity, a phenomenon also evident in the early teaching careers of these women. This included not contributing to staffroom conversations related to Muslims or Islam, 'playing-down' their RE specialism and their Islamic Studies main subject.

In the figuration of their full-time teaching posts, all respondents were in posts which reflected their ethnicity. Again, experiences were more difficult for the hijab-wearing Muslims where religious identity appeared to create many negative responses. Power differentials had negative effects on the development of their teacher identities. Relations with colleagues and senior managers were the most significant in developing self-perceptions as teachers. Relations with pupils and parents were most rewarding in terms of teaching / learning, understanding and helping children. Where management styles were open, involved and supportive of a shared professional ethos, respondents felt valued and able to develop professional confidence and competence. Where management styles were autocratic, distant and 'traditional', Muslim women felt constrained, undervalued and unwelcome. In situations where social relations were strained, the respondents felt more isolated, more conscious of the difference of their Muslim identity, and they experienced anxieties about its effects on interactions with others in their working situation.

In pursuing deeper understanding of the experiences of the Muslim women, sociological concepts, essentially from a process theory of identity, were used. When Muslim women described themselves as being most 'comfortable', they were describing the degrees to which they shared habitus in their interactions. Where life experiences had been most similar tacit understandings existed about preferred ways of living, intentions and interpretations of statements and behaviours. Where minimal layers of habitus were shared, there was a perceived need for: more 'justification' of self and actions; of the possibility of being misunderstood; and of having

statements or behaviour misconstrued. Ease and difficulties with social relations in schools were in part explained by levels of shared habitus.

The complex, multi-layered habitus of the Muslim, black women in the research, was linked to the more conscious multi-layered identity. As the research focused largely on their Muslim and teacher identities, evidence emerged indicative of differences in their most prominent layers of identity. These were not static but in a constant state of flux and were influenced at interstices between past experiences and present interactions. Shifts in the we-I identity balance were influenced by: being at Greenacres; moving differentially in a more Islamic direction; increasing consciousness of anti-Islamic attitudes in the education system, often from people responsible for the education of large number of British Muslim children; and personal reflection on life-path. Patterns were differentially experienced but in some of the most religious women there was a shift to a we-balance identity (we being Muslim). Fears about the future of Islam in Britain and a personal desire to be proactive in maintaining and strengthening their Muslim identity contributed to this shift. Whilst as pupils themselves in the British education system they later realised that they had often not been conscious of religious transgressions, their increased religiosity had changed their reflections on those experiences and their perceptions of themselves as teachers in the State system. Some students clearly felt strongly about ways in which their religious identity was compromised in the isolating, unsympathetic school situations they had experienced. Although there is no direct evidence from Fareeda, end of fourth year interview comments indicate that this identity shift could contribute to an explanation of why she never entered full-time teaching. For Jamilah, reflections on the personal accommodation and 'back-stage' status of her Muslim identity in the teaching situation contributed to her decision to leave.

Where the we-balance of identity was 'less Muslim', more evenly balanced, respondents managed by 'switching-on and off' in terms of the most prominent layers of their consciousness when entering and leaving

school. The education system was less problematic for these women. Where there was a weighting in the I direction, teacher consciousness was most prominent and there were negligible identity tensions during their early teaching careers. In terms of Elias's established - outsider theory those Muslim women with the weighted we-identity balance had particular views concerning other less devout Muslims. They regarded Islamic and Westernised values as moving in opposite directions, and attributed processes of Westernisation as responsible for movement away from Islam. The more devout Muslims considered 'Westernised' Muslim teachers as less helpful role models for the Muslim pupils in their schools. Non-hijab wearers considered their black identity to be most influential in their role model capacity, although their knowledge of Islam proved very useful in their school situations. For those who were highly conscious of their Muslim identity, the fact that they were Asian Muslims, as were also the majority of their pupils, was perceived as a single shared identity.

Embodiment of Muslim identity, in particular the wearing of the hijab, created, dependent on context, both positive and negative power for the women. Adopting the hijab by choice and for many relatively recently, it undoubtedly gave individuals a deep sense of personal power as an inward and outward symbol of religious conviction. In their communities, it was a positive symbol of belonging. In a wider islamophobic society it was also a symbol which made them a target for some. (Runnymede Trust 1997).

In the B.Ed. course it was clear that the organisation and placement of teaching-practices and professional / main subject inputs were crucial to the developing professional confidence and competence of the students. Evidence of students holding ethnicist views suggests that the selection procedure for teacher training offers insufficient screening, and that equity inputs are not entirely successful. Staff awareness and sensitivity to pick-up and challenge incidents would have been helpful in some of the experiences shared by the respondents, certainly in early PE experiences, and later most noticeably in RE. Initial negative experiences in PE changed when department strategies responded to Muslim students' requests. Despite

subsequent short, well-received intensive inputs of professional PE training, enthusiasm and commitment from the students towards PE declined. Initially this occurred through the assimilation of 'low-status signals' during teaching practice and later by an academic, main subject orientated, final year.

In their early teaching careers there was little in the way of support for continuing professional development. The mentor system rarely worked because mentors had other responsibilities which left them no time to provide the support preferred by the NQT's. The experience of gaining professional development was one of trial and error, lack of confidence and gradual assimilation of competencies. Workload as a primary class teacher had a profound effect on the lives of these women. Most traumatic experiences happened in the first term when the shock and unfamiliarity of all the new responsibilities College could not prepare them for, descended. There was little let-up in that workload with Ofsted bringing added pressures for some. The second year was different in that most could 'see themselves' as teachers with a classroom confidence by that stage but the work stayed as intensive. Some indicated that the second year was harder as greater professional awareness ensured more conscientious attention to aspects such as differentiation and classroom management. Support from their families and from the network of Muslim teachers that kept in contact on leaving Greenacres, helped them to survive their early careers.

As black Muslim teachers, many experienced problems being 'accepted' as a teacher in their early days, being more closely associated with the disproportionate number of Asian assistants in the majority of schools. Only the Muslim school had provision in facilities, time and space to accommodate those who wanted to participate in lunch-time prayers. Those who did, found 'no problems' praying in their classrooms but facilities and cleanliness were not really conducive. Whilst at Greenacres, they had asked for such facilities. In schools, often as 'the only Muslim' teacher, they did not feel able to approach the management.

Being Muslim and teachers of PE turned out to be less problematic than anticipated. Choices about what, when and how PE happened became a more private affair for the teacher than they had been for the student on teaching-practice. With no fear of observation, and few adult males, particularly in infant schools, anxieties about possible transgressions of Islamic requirements as Muslim women faded. There were some concerns about older primary children in mixed-sex classes, but no first-hand accounts of serious difficulties emerged in this research. Mixed-sex PE with year 5 / 6 pupils was vicariously reported to have contributed to Zauda's decision to resign from full-time teaching in her first term to do occasional supply. For others there was not a concern in the subjectivity of teaching PE. Their capabilities matched those of other generalist primary teachers but, when they looked at themselves objectively, there was some concern about anticipated negative reactions from Muslim parents.

Explaining the low numbers of practising Muslim respondents left teaching full-time in the State system at the end of the research is difficult, since responses to questionnaires from those 'out of the system' were poor. Unlike the experiences of Asma in this research, who undertook supply teaching because she could not secure a full-time post, others contacted via the questionnaire all chose occasional supply. Using vicarious information offered by respondents, and insights gathered in this study, some suggestions can be made.

Islamophobic experiences encountered during teaching-practice or early teaching careers might have deterred the women, supply offering an opportunity to retain their 'teacher status' without the need to be so concerned with others' perceptions of their Muslim identity. Supply offers a 'distance' from the requirements of the National Curriculum and from colleagues and senior management. This might be more comfortable for some Muslim teachers. Supply teaching does not require the same level of compliance to the State system as a full-time post. Supply teachers often choose what they teach and are seldom required to be accountable to the senior management of the school, other than in keeping the class working

and under control. If there are any anxieties about being Muslim and teaching subjects such as dance, PE, or music, they can be avoided without repercussions. A final suggestion is the time difference. Full-time teaching requires evening, weekend and holiday devotion. Some Muslim women prefer more free time to pursue family commitments or personal development through further Islamic Studies. Traditions within the Asian community 'give their women choices about whether they work or not'. Supply offers a balance between working and not working, between being teacher, mother, wife and member of a community. For the two Muslim women who married in the summer of 1997, they were given that choice and both decided to stay in full-time teaching.

The thematic approach to analysis of the College-based experiences of the Muslim women, followed by the case study approach to analysis in their early teaching careers section, indicates the diversity of experiences encountered as the Muslim women moved away from the 'more secure' environment of Greenacres. There were many differences, for example Nawar in a Muslim school, Asma on enforced supply, Cath a self-declared non-Muslim at the end of her College experience, the rest in such diverse State schools, meeting the demands of the teaching profession whilst differentially negotiating their Muslim identity. Such differences, many unplanned and unforeseen four years ago, have brought a richness to this research project alongside insights into similarities of experience.

A process theory of identity enabled the focus to stay on processes of change within interdependent human figurations, and more precisely on shifting consciousness of identity. Empirical evidence recorded shifting self-perceptions, influenced by interactions with others in Muslim and non-Muslim educational contexts. Relations were affected by the complex multilayered habitus embodied in each respondent. Perhaps the strongest message from the study is that Muslim women are not homogeneous. To adapt Kluckhohn and Murray's statement cited in Mennell (1994):

Every Muslim women is in certain respects:

a) Like all other women

b) Like some other women

c) Like no other woman

Experiences have been shared which would be common to all women in initial teacher training and early teaching careers. The notions of habitus and identity have helped in the analysis of what being a Muslim woman means in relation both to other Muslims and to non-Muslim groups. Finally, the insights into the individual case studies of early teaching careers revealed how some aspects of each Muslim teacher's life was 'like no other.'

ii) STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

A strength of this research is its originality. To my knowledge, no other research so specifically focused on the experiences of Muslim women in higher education and in the teaching profession has so far been attempted. The project came about 'by accident' as a situation developed at the College where I teach which led to my initial encounter with the difficulties some Muslim women were experiencing in my subject area of physical education. The initial research project that followed resulted in an extension, in depth and breadth, in the form of the current thesis which tracks the personal and professional experiences of the same group of Muslim women.

Countering the strength of originality is my concern not to misrepresent the Muslim women. Being female was essential to gaining access to respondents. Being white and non-Muslim positioned me differently. Consciousness of this ensured every effort was made not to allow this to affect my interpretation of the data. Having completed the study, I do believe that there are positive and negative aspects to 'being different'. It helped in some ways since I presented no threat to the women's

positions on Islam. Understanding more about habitus at this point, there must be many experiences of being black Muslim women that I cannot understand. The important point is the dialogue.

The quality of relationships sustained with the respondents, in some cases for four years, was another strength of the project. Without their open and honest accounts, willingness to participate and find time in their busy schedules, the research would not have been possible. Depth of interview and degree of openness increased with time and was greatest with the seven Muslim women who saw the study through to the end. To counter this strength the small numbers left at the end of the research might be criticised as insufficient for such an investigation. I had my concerns during the process as, for various reasons, numbers dropped, finally stabilizing at seven for the early teaching careers section. The diversity of their situations also concerned me because it did not offer the stability I had envisaged. However, that must be the nature of people-centred, relatively long-term, qualitative research. I now believe I maximised every possibility available along the difficult path I chose.

Another strength of the research must be the systematic, regular data collection. The advantage of researching in the education sector is the essential discipline of working within time-frames, daily and termly patterns, which set parameters for research that have to be kept. To miss any 'end-of term' interview would have been a disaster in terms of the continuity of individual contact I was seeking. Maintaining the schedule was quite a feat at some points in the year whilst balancing a full-time job. In retrospect it would have become impossible if all seventeen women who started in the project had stayed for four years!

Finally, that the major themes picked up as interview threads had emerged from issues raised by the Muslim women in our earliest encounters was also a strength. These included: influences of others including family and friends; religiosity; changes in personal life; professional development; personal and professional ambitions. These themes permeated the study.

That only the perceptions of the Muslim women were gathered might be considered a weakness. In defence the attempt to gain perceptions of influential others such as head teachers or their own parents would have altered the confidences built between researcher and researched and consequently the quality of the data.

The major focus of the study has been on the Muslim identity of these women but they were also black Muslim women and ways in which race and religion interface were perhaps not fully explored. For the non-hijab wearing Muslims their colour became most significant in terms of perceptions of interactions and role model influence, but because Islam is a way of life offering guidelines on expectations of followers, behaviour and codes of conduct, it created more tangible influences on experiences.

The greatest weakness of the thesis is the focus on the 'micro' at the expense of the influence of 'macro' factors. Whilst the research does document support for previous research into educational racism, it adds indicators that endemic religious prejudice can be potentially damaging to Muslim women entering the teaching profession. Further research is required to investigate the meaning of this in relation to policy and practice in education. The need for this research is particularly urgent in the light of the recent Runnymede (1997) research on islamophobia in Britain. The fact that these aspects are not pursued in this thesis is not a problem attributable to the nature of process theory but to the path chosen for this particular research and the parameters imposed by realistic possibilities. The focus here has been on an interpretive study exploring the experiences of Muslim women, findings were indicative of wider structural issues and forces.

The thesis has not tackled issues within Islam, for example the role of patriarchy or hegemony. There may be similarities behind the role of exercise for some 'Western women' and the covering of the body by some Muslim women, related to relations with men, and the use of feelings such as shame and guilt to control behaviour. Similarly issues related to difficulties experienced by the lack of consensus in Islam over music and

dance have been raised but remain to be tackled in a systematic way that could help future Muslim students and teachers.

The study has been a learning process through which I have learnt much about myself and, in particular, about the lives of a group of Muslim women in a particular time and place. Dealing with small numbers and particular life-paths, no claims are made that their experiences will exactly match those of any other groups of Muslim women in any other institutions. The value has to be in both the research process and in sharing some of their experiences with a wider audience. This is a much under-researched area and I feel privileged to have been given the opportunity.

iii) RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the research I have carried out is small-scale in terms of numbers, the emergence of certain evidence enables some recommendations to emerge from the study. Most importantly, the presence of islamophobia needs to be recognised and the implications of its effects in educational institutions for British Muslims. It would be helpful if there was a forum in which greater awareness between Muslims and non-Muslims could be sought. Courses related to equity need to include issues of religious difference. It would appear that there is a need for such courses in schools, higher education, and amongst the gatekeepers to professional development in the education sector. There appears to be consensus that there is a need for more ethnic minority teachers in the State system. The experiences of these Muslim women suggest others within the system do not recognise the special contribution their difference can bring. Other signals within the system appear to be more off-putting than welcoming judging by the low remaining figures of current State employed Muslim teachers indicated in this research. (Fig.4).

The issue of State support for religious schools needed to be resolved and, in fact, saw a breakthrough in the final stages of this study. State funding for two primary Muslim schools was announced in January

1998. (App. P. Independent 10.1.98). The prolonged and irrational denial for such approval finally moved in a positive direction, demonstrating more trust in the Muslim communities, affording them the beginnings of the same rights of educational choice as other religious groups in Britain. It is not only the rights of Muslim parents and pupils that are at stake but also the rights of Muslim teachers, to work in situations of their choice. Further moves in this direction might alleviate the disadvantage, uncovered in this research, of teachers in Muslim schools being stigmatized, underpaid and meeting discrimination when they wanted to move between the Muslim and State systems.

Institutes of higher education can gain much from the study. Where Muslim students are studying there should be provision for their religious requirements. Reciprocally, prospective Muslim students should take more responsibility for knowing exactly what their proposed course demands and what the institution provides or is prepared to provide to meet their religious requirements. During life in higher education, students and staff should work together to recognise and challenge incidents of racism and religious prejudice. More opportunity for Muslim teacher trainees to discuss personal concerns with Islamic Studies staff about the interface of being Muslim and teachers in the State education system would be helpful. The importance of female Muslim staff to support female Muslim women students should not be underestimated.

The dual nature of the B.Ed. degree with its vocational and main subject requirements left many areas open for renegotiation, for example: pattern of main course inputs, teaching practices and continuity of professional development. The last intake of the B.Ed. degree at Greenacres was taken in 1995 and will be phased out by 1999, a decision taken as a result of Government constraints. The remaining Postgraduate Certificate in Education course presents different problems. The unique instigation of Islamic Studies as a B.Ed. main course option to attract Muslim women into teacher training, survived for only five intakes. This is

a great loss for the education system since lessons were just beginning to be learned.

A key point which could help all student-teachers in the future would be the improvement of the higher education / school partnership relationships for the primary teacher training sector. At present there is minimum choice over partnership schools. There is lack of continuity between College and follow-up school experiences that is controlled or monitored by subjects. Questions of responsibility, accountability and quality assurance need to be addressed as schools assume increased, and often unwanted, responsibilities. Mentor training and subject liaison are also under-developed. There are particular issues in PE related to safety, management and organisation, progression of subject knowledge and learning to teach effectively in different environments such as swimming pools, halls and outside areas.

Continuing professional development for NQT's was only effective for one teacher in this research where her mentor had time and space throughout the year to fulfil the responsibilities. Multiple primary teacher responsibilities meant other mentors were under-resourced and unable to provide other than fleeting support, mostly during breaks and lunch-hours. Whilst this is not the reality for all NQT's it was the majority experience in this study. If schools are to assume increasing responsibilities and accountability for the proficiency of teachers they need resourcing, and preferably a voice in negotiating, to make that a reality.

More widespread acceptance of the need for removal of the traditional sanctity of the primary teacher assuming responsibility for all subjects would be helpful. Resources to enable better use of curriculum co-ordinators to support colleagues more ably, or to exchange teaching in some subjects, would improve use of expertise, quality of provision for children, and relieve pressure from overburdened generalists. This is particularly important at key stage two where there are six areas of activity to teach in PE and children in a 'ready state' in terms of 'the skill hungry years'. Maximising use of main subject primary trained physical education

'specialists' across their schools would facilitate better opportunities for colleagues, pupils and outside agencies currently descending from the sporting world. Similarly, teachers with other main subjects, such as RE, could also help to lift the status, quality and profile of their subject in the primary school if more flexible organisation and resourcing facilitated such development.

Similarly, a less prescriptive National Curriculum would not only be welcomed by Muslim teachers. More flexible content and ways of working would facilitate respect for difference, not only amongst pupils but also staff. For example, in Salima's school a music teacher taught all the music, taking that unwanted pressure from her but allowing her to make other positive contributions.

The rights of children have growing credibility in the 1990's but the rights of teachers, in the network of educational interdependence, cannot be ignored. Only the Muslim school offered Muslim teachers appropriate time, space and facilities for ablutions and prayer. Some Muslim teachers did not require these but the State system would be more welcoming if basic requirements were recognised and offered. It does not mean major changes, just acknowledgement and greater sensitivity, for example in provision of privacy at washing facilities for certain times and privacy in a space for prayer, which could be their own classroom or library. Lina was offered this on entering an all-white school at the start of a teaching-practice. It made a difference.

One final suggestion that might make a difference for Muslim women teachers in the State system is the possibility of a wider network support group. This could provide a forum to meet, exchange views, share experiences, successes and difficulties, advising and supporting each other. Such a forum would be an excellent springboard for initiating and negotiating opportunities to increase awareness of religious difference in the education sector, and in particular the needs and contributions of Muslim teachers and children.

iv) FURTHER RESEARCH

No answers have been provided in this study to difficult questions such as how to value difference and to live and work more equitably together in a plural but unequal society. Only a deeper understanding has been offered of how difference was experienced by a group of Muslim women in a particular time and space within that complex society. Many more questions have been raised and the following are some suggestions for follow-up research to this study.

Due to the small sample in this study but the indication of particularly negative experiences in the lives of hijab-wearing Muslim women, more research into further effects of islamophobia on the lives and professional opportunities of hijab-wearing Muslim women would be helpful. This would probably be more productive in terms of collecting evidence than trying research on the attitudes of gate-keepers, although both are needed.

The focus of this study was Muslim women but it would be equally interesting to pursue the interface of Islam and State system teaching for men. Further clarification on an agreed Islamic view on music and dance in the education process would be valuable. Planned and monitored help within the Greenacres initial teacher training courses to forewarn and address potential difficulties, learning from the experiences of these Muslim women, might be useful.

Research focused on structural issues and forces affecting the experiences of British Muslims would enable a more political agenda to be raised, balancing this interpretive investigation. This research suggests that religious prejudice can be a real barrier to professional development in the education system. First, there has to be acceptance that the situation exists, then acknowledgement that 'accessing ethnic minority students into teacher training courses' is simply not enough. Pressures in the training process and the culture of some schools, militate against such individuals maximising their potential contribution to the education system.

Much research is needed on continuity in the development of professional confidence and competence in initial teacher training and continuing professional development, including the role of the mentor. The issue of subject competence responsibilities, between higher education institutions and partnership schools, with particular focus on PE at key stage two, would be valuable.

Finally, perhaps some action research related to awareness courses to increase sensitivity towards Muslim teachers and children in schools would be helpful, including planning and negotiating input, implementation and evaluating effectiveness. A planned and monitored support network for practising Muslim women teachers might also be a useful way forward. It would need to be led from within the community of Muslim teachers.

This thesis is testimony to a journey, limited in time and place, which is already history. Whilst the personal journey carries a life-long value, I hope this study will retain something of significance for interested others with its message that research is one means of:

"...transform(ing) our senses of what it means to live, to be, in other times and different spaces..."

Bhabha (1994,239)

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APPENDIX A

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Defending the rights of Islam

INSIDE IRAN
Robert Fisk

Yes, Tehran has a human rights watchdog. And no, he has no difficulty in turning aside awkward questions by attacking the double standards of the West

Dr Saeed Rajaie Khorasani has a very impressive visiting card. "MP," it says. "Member of Foreign Relations Committee, Secretary General International Parliamentary Union Group of Iran, Chairman of the Human Rights Committee of Majlis [parliament], Imam Khomeini Street, Tehran."

It is the "human rights" bit that catches the eye. Death sentences, stonings, punishment are what we westerners think about, although – predictably – that is not quite the way Dr Khorasani regards the phrase.

"The interpretation of different nations regarding the so-called human rights situation differs very much," he says. "There are things which take place in England, for example, that create deep distress in Iran. Take sexual assaults against children. We can't tolerate this here. We believe that an innocent child only has the protection of his parents. There was a case in the German courts of a four or five-year old child who had been assaulted by his father – but the courts didn't seem to care very much."

Attack, as usual, seems to be the best form of defence on such subjects in Iran. And while we are busy objecting to Dr Khorasani's approach, trying to forget the "string-em-up" mentality that characterises many of our own dark responses – Iran's human rights leader is forging ahead in justification: "When this kind of thing happens here, people don't take it indifferently. They attack and kill the father on the spot. The brother who sexually attacks his sister – the biggest crime that can happen. In such cases, the conduct of the law in this country does not necessarily correspond with the law in Europe or America."

We recall for Mr Khorasani a widely circulating, but unconfirmed, report in Tehran that a 13-year old boy who sexually assaulted his sister was stoned to death, and that the girl will later have to marry a boy of the same age who joined her brother in the rape. "When you refer to specific cases like this, you have to realise that human rights here are not as bad as reported in the West. You choose not to take account of human rights abuses here like the over-crowding of prisoners in Kerman and Zahedan, where a great deal of drug-trafficking takes place and where jails are hopelessly overcrowded. This is an outstanding example of negligence and abuse of human rights – but such issues are not of use to westerners who wish to attack Iran."

Some women object to *hijab*, obligatory covering, but 'most women welcome it', say the authorities *Photograph: Robert Fisk*

In all conversations about human rights, we are invariably led down the same path. Different cultures, a different religion, another way of looking at morality, a defensive mechanism that turns all criticism of individual abuses into an argument about motives and the double standards of the West. So, as usual, we start again. For what crimes are defendants punished with the death sentence? And here Dr Khorasani – a small, eloquent, man who was Iran's ambassador to the United Nations in New York (where the Americans accused him of shoplifting, wrongly he says) – is very precise indeed about the issue.

"The death penalty is imposed for murder, for premeditated killing. It is imposed for drug smuggling, depending on the degree of the crime." And adultery? "If a married woman has sexual intercourse with a man, both are supposed to be sentenced to death. Usually the emotion against the man for the crime is stronger than against the woman because it is assumed that the man is more to blame. The problem comes when a woman has been involved in regular adultery with men. Then the death sentence is definitely confirmed. I am not totally against the death sentence. I can imagine a case where a woman m be sentenced to death – beca it is the unavoidable decisior the law. But, of course, I d like to see it."

If a married woman and unmarried man are found have committed adultery, punishment may not be deat unless the man has resort other legal means of sexual s isfaction and tried to seduce woman". But, if – and he repe the word "if" – children h been sentenced to death, "strongly" condemns it.

So we move on to *hijab*, obligatory covering of women which some women in Ir when they are talking to f eigners, object volubly. Not abide by this ruling is forbidd according to Islamic law, Khorasani says. "This requi that women wear *hijab*. M women welcome this. Th think it's part of their ident I appreciate the differences taste. But Islamic law does take taste into account."

Dr Khorasani swears by integrity of the Iranian cou brushing aside the fact t large number of clerics sit on judiciary, insisting they d through their expertise in risprudence rather than th theological commitment. Yes says, the penalty for alco consumption is "80 lashes", this is not often imposed.

And what of the police w stop cars at night and objec the clothes that women pass gers or drivers are wearii What of the women who h complained that they are rested merely for walking w young men not their husbar The police have merely be hunting for car thieves, he sa

There was an impatience Dr Khorasani's voice. He w happier talking about the h rific human rights abuses aga the Muslims of Bosnia, wh Iran's offer of 10,000 pea keepings troops has been turn down by the West. He is c cerned about the lack of fr dom in the Iranian pres caused by editors, he says, w have turned down his request a regular column on hun rights. "When I asked for t they said, 'You are speaking language of the enemy'. H can I expect such people to m papers available for discuss of human rights abuses?"

Why, he even wanted a n anti-corruption law to be pas in parliament that would fo members and ministers to p lish their commercial intere For once, Dr Khorasani saw Western parallels.

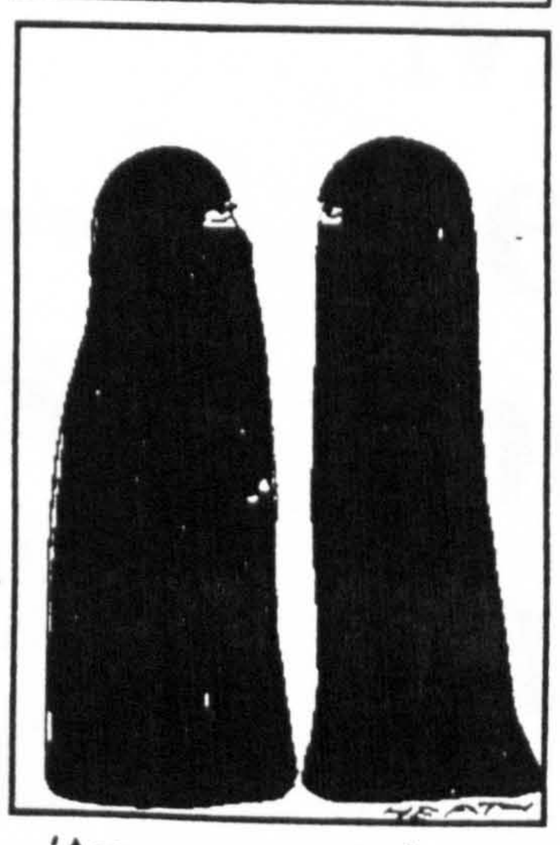
Amnesty report on abuses dismissed

Nicosia (Reuter) — Iran's state news agency, IRNA, dismissed Amnesty International allegations of human rights abuses in Iran as lacking in evidence. In the first Iranian reaction to the report, IRNA said Amnesty had merely repeated previous allegations that the government restricted its opponents and that four religious minority leaders were killed under suspicious circumstances.

Amnesty said in a 17-page report that it had uncovered abuses even though Iran shields its activities from foreigners and it urged the government in Tehran to cease the violations. "In the last 16 years, tens of thousands of suspected government opponents have been executed. In addition, a number of political prisoners who have been sentenced to death – some after grossly unfair trials by the Islamic Revolutionary Courts in previous years – are still on death row," the London-based group said.

IRNA quoted "political circles" as saying that Amnesty "has acted as per the policies of the US against Iran" since the 1979 Islamic Revolution toppled the pro-Western Shah.

MICHAEL HEATH



'Are you sure you know what you're doing, Diana?'

MAIL ON SUNDAY
10.5.97 P.51

INDEPENDENT 27.3.96

Muslim school methods criticised by inspectors

Birchfield Primary School

Mr Mohammed Mukadam

Tories attack city primary school over Moslem RE lessons

By JAYNE HOWARTH
The Birmingham Post

A Birmingham primary school which has become the first in the country to allow Moslems to have their own religious lessons was attacked last night.

Leading Tories claimed it was not the duty of the local education authority to provide religious education lessons for non-Christians.

Birchfield Primary School in Aston is the first state school in Britain to make its own arrangements for Moslem education.

Coun Anne Underwood (Con Sutton Four Oaks), the leader of the city's Conservative group and party spokesman on education, said the move undermined race relations.

Conservative MP Mr Warren Hawksley (Hall Green and Stourbridge) said: "I accept that we live in a multicultural society, but Christianity is the main religion.

"If parents want to introduce Moslem ways in the Mosque or at weekends that is acceptable, but it is not the duty of the British Government to be part of providing for any single religious organisation which is not Church of England accredited."

Dame Jill Knight, Conservative MP for Edgbaston, said although it was up to the individual school to decide on religious education, the move by Birchfield could be seen as divisive.

Parents of Birchfield's 200 children can now choose to send their children to single-faith Moslem RE lessons, or the mainstream multi-denominational classes.

The school, near the city's Saddam Hussein mosque, has the approval of Labour-controlled Birmingham City Council's education department to run the classes headed by Mr Imran Mogram, a trained Moslem teacher.

He began work in January and teaches the primary school children about their faith, as well as other religious and moral issues from an Islamic point of view.

The rest of the school's pupils attend the normal RE lessons. Both sets of lessons are said to comply with the National Curriculum requirements.

It is the second victory for parents at the school. Two years ago, it won the right to hold separate assemblies for Moslem pupils at the same time as the rest of the school meets for collective worship.

Mr Mohammed Mukadam, one of Birchfield's parent governors who has been negotiating to get the classes up and running since September with little opposition, said multi-faith education was undermining the fabric of society and created a faithless generation.

"We are not against teaching our children about other faiths, but there is a time and a place for it. Multi-faith teaching actually destroys faith. It teaches that all religions are equal and none is right," said Mr Mukadam.

Pressure group Parental Alliance For Choice in Education, which has strong backing from prominent Conservatives including Baroness Cox, also supports the approach.

Pace spokesman Mr Fred Naylor, a committed Christian, said he was convinced that the multi-faith approach had already weakened religious commitment.

Comment Page 12

B'HAM POST 5.2.96

Shephard bows to Moslem demands

Continued from Page One

still had a multi-faith approach. This assurance has been specifically denied, however, by the man spearheading the separatist drive. Parent-governor Mohammed Mukadam, head of the Birmingham Moslem Welfare Association, branded the multi-faith idea a 'confusing mish-mash' which did nothing to promote spiritual and moral development. 'By teaching our children Islam, we give them universal values,' he said.

'The multi-faith approach puts confusion in their minds. We are teaching them about Christianity and Judaism but from an Islamic perspective, based on what the Koran says.'

The other 200 Birchfield children will continue to have RE lessons with their class teachers. Despite Mr Mukadam's statement, the council insisted the only difference was that one group was taught by a practising Moslem. 'What he teaches is no different from what the other children get,' said a spokesman.

Mrs Shephard has signalled that she would be sympathetic to similar demands from groups such as fundamentalist Christians.

DAILY MAIL 22.2.96

B'HAM EVENING MAIL
23.2.96

Storm on Moslem RE teacher

THE TIMES THURSDAY DECEMBER 19 1996

INDEPENDENT 23.1.96

Disputes in education: Protest over schools

Religion classes boycotted by Muslim parents

Muslim teacher berates carollers

APPENDIX B

CHRIS THOMOND

Tuned into training: the Lancashire project helps would-be teachers from ethnic minorities overcome obstacles to joining the profession

Minorities bid to hurdle the barriers

by Rifat Malik

Student teachers from ethnic minorities must be encouraged to overcome the racism of colleagues and parents, as well as opposition from within their own communities if primary school staffs are to be representative of the population as a whole, a conference in Lancashire heard this week.

The conference, "Daring to Teach", which focused on the recruitment and experiences of newly-qualified black and Asian teachers in Britain, was organised by two Lancashire teaching colleges, Edge Hill and St Martin's, in conjunction with the county council.

It marked the third year of the Lancashire Project, also called Access to Primary Teaching for Asian and Black people (APTAB), which will produce its first graduates next year.

APTAB provides locally-based training throughout Lancashire for the first year of the degree course, and then offers ethnic minorities subsidised travel for the remaining three years. This has been of particular benefit to Asian women who make up 90 per cent of the intake, and are often denied such opportunities because of family obligations.

Co-ordinating tutor, Sughra Khan said: "Although these teaching colleges had good reputations they realised they weren't attracting blacks and Asians, despite them making up 20 per cent of the east Lancashire population. Their research found that the community did not want to leave their homes to study, so they decided to bring the degree to the community."

Ms Khan pointed out that racism encountered by many students during school placements, had driven some to drop out. "There has been a mixture of experiences. There are a lot of assumptions that they are nursery nurses or bilingual assistants or they are asked whose mum they are. Some teachers feel threatened by the presence of Asian teachers, and though this hasn't been the only factor in causing them to leave, it has been a major factor in creating needless stress."

However, many third-year students remain determined to qualify as teachers. Shagufta Shah, 30, had her third child last year and admitted: "I do find it very difficult. There was some opposition to me doing the course, but my husband and mother were very supportive. I certainly couldn't have done this if it wasn't local." She has her priorities sorted out; being a good teacher is paramount, but being a positive role model for the children she teaches and other women comes a close second.

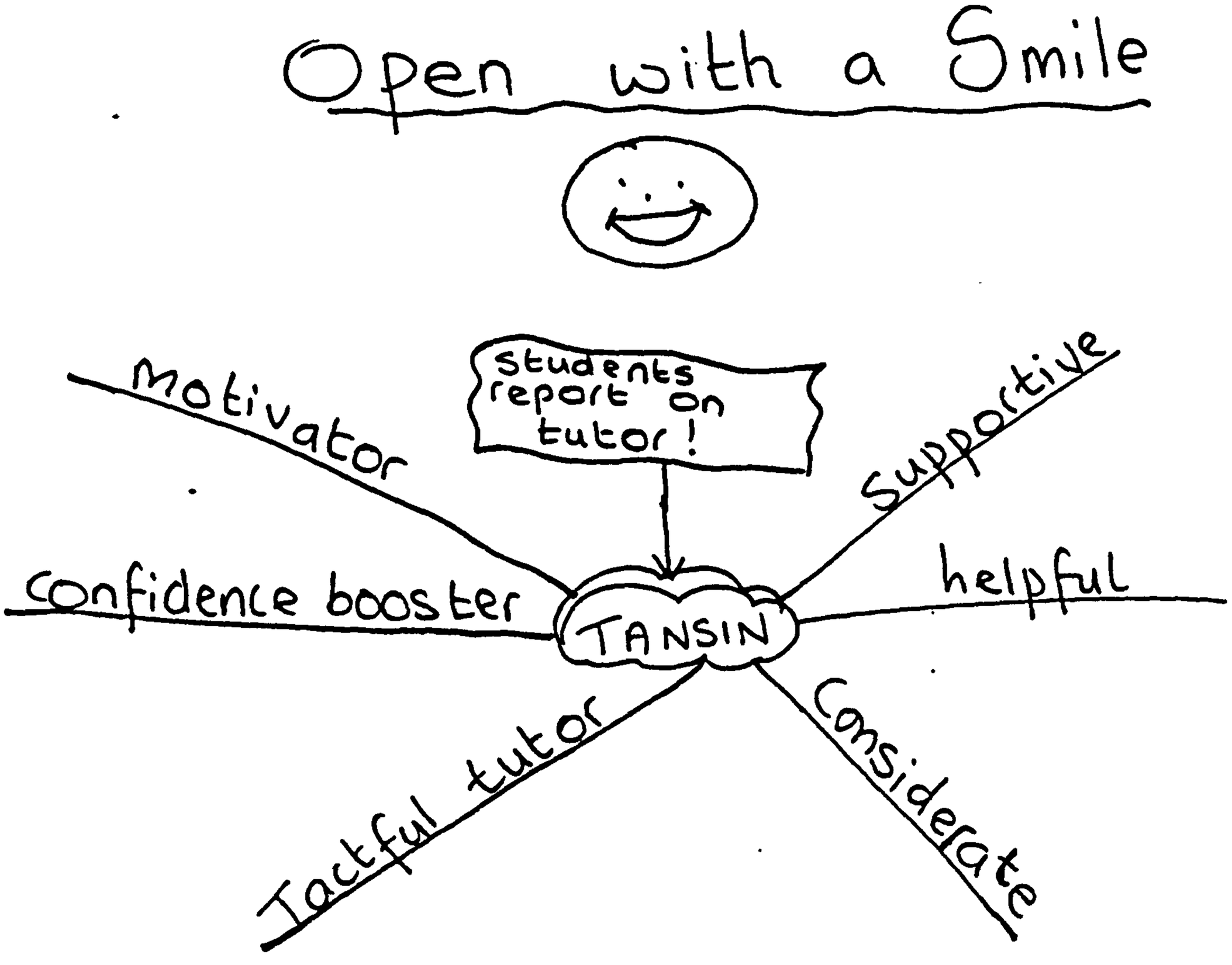
Students said that they were often forced to prove themselves far more than white trainee teachers, but added that the emphasis on personal development and counselling throughout the course had been invaluable in combating this. Also their multilingual expertise was recognised as an advantage in many schools where there were many ethnic-minority children.

Gaining acceptance among the academic fraternity was also a problem, said Margaret Entwistle, manager of the Edge Hill base.

"The course is gaining acceptance. It has taken time to permeate throughout the college, but understanding is spreading, as people realise that these students are doing exactly the same as others on BA honours teaching courses," she said.

Despite having come so far, job prospects are not that healthy for imminent graduates. As Sughra Khan pointed out: "These students will be looking for jobs in the same area, they all have the same skills and experiences, and although some schools will be eager to employ black and Asian teachers, I don't think it's going to be easy. There have already been a number of job cuts in Lancashire."

APPENDIX C


Open with a Smile
Students report on tutor!
Motivator
Supportive
confidence booster
TANSIN
helpful
Tactful tutor
Considerate

APPENDIX D

14th June, 1996

Dear Tansin,

Thankyou for your letter, and for the article which I found very interesting.
Unfortunately I will not be able to continue to assist in your research - Dr. Jawad must have misunderstood, I explained to her that I had already returned to you my slip but could not continue.
I do have various reasons - I have just moved to a completely unfurnished flat and am settling in; I have to travel to Luton often due to my mother having to go abroad and I am keeping an eye on my father, and so connot really afford time out for other things - I have not yet even been able to attend my school in which I have a teaching post to start planning, and need to do that! Furthermore, I am not too keen on keeping diaries and doing future interviews - as a commitment - and finally, I do not know whether I will continue to stay in Birmingham, as I may move up North.
In addition to these reasons, I have also just (fairly recently) committed myself to some work within the Muslim community, and thus I do not feel I will be able to put in the time and effort necessary to do your research justice.
I hope, however, that you successfully complete your important work and wish you all the

Very best.

I look forward to reading more of your papers in the future.

Yours faithfully,

Birmingham

1st September 1995.

Dear Tansin,

I recently received the transcript of the interview that I had with you at the end of the last term, together with the rest of the information you sent to me. Unfortunately, I am unable to take an active part in your research plans; as I feel that it would be too great a commitment.

I know that I did agree to helping you by involving myself in this research but then I didn't realise the extent of the commitment. I feel that in my first year of teaching, the workload will be very heavy without having the demands of extra work that this research would put on me.

I really am very sorry for any inconvenience and would like to say that I'm available to provide you with any perceptions of my development as a primary (muslim) teacher but, feel that any ongoing research would only provide me with additional work which I don't have the time to complete.

Yours sincerely.

APPENDIX E

203 Rednal Road.
Kings Norton,
Birmingham
B38 8EA

Westhill College,
Weoley Park Rd,
Selly Oak,
B'ham B29 6LL
Nov. 14th 1996

Dear Head Teacher,

I am Head of the Physical Education Department at Westhill College and am currently enrolled for a PhD with Loughborough University. My study involves following Muslim student - teachers through their training and into their early experiences in the teaching profession. One of the student-teachers / teachers I have worked with is ------- who has recently started teaching at your school.

The research is entering its fourth and final year of data collection so I am hoping you will give your permission for the research to continue in order to follow --- through her first year of teaching. The research is sociologically based and is developing two focuses:

1. The experiences of Muslim women in physical education - in initial teacher training and as NQT's.

2. The experiences of these women as Muslims going through initial teacher training and into the teaching profession.

I would appreciate knowing as much as possible about the types of school these teachers are in which means collecting information on PE policies, school 'prospectuses' etc. I am hoping this will be possible at the end of this term.

Can I assure you that pseudonyms will be used in any written material that emerges from my work. The main intention is to investigate and improve intercultural understanding of ways in which Islamic religious requirements and education in England interface.

I do hope you will support the research and perhaps allow me to conduct the end of term interviews in the school at a time convenient to her. I am happy to talk through the research with you if you wish. If you have any queries regarding this letter please do not hesitate to contact me. Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully,

T. Benn

P R I M A R Y S C H O O L

Primary School

Telephone 0121-

Headteacher

Birmingham
Fax: 0121-

10th November 1995

Tansin Benn,
203 Rednal Road,
Kings Norton,
Birmingham,
B38 8EA.

Dear Tansin,

Thank you for your letter of the 23rd instant and we note your interest. We shall be happy to be involved and help in any way that we can.

Perhaps you could let us know when you would like to come in to school.

We look forward to meeting you. تنسين!

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher.

APPENDIX F

Westhill College
1.5.'96

Dear

I realise it is coming up to your final exams and your time to move out into the teaching profession. I am hoping you can spare a minute to reflect on this letter and return the reply slip to me via my office in the near future.

As you know, after my initial interest in deepening my understanding of our Muslim students at WH and completing my Masters dissertation on a particular topic, I decided to continue the research for a PhD - spanning the next few years. I have had the good fortune to work with 5 Muslim students who left last year and the greatest joy in this year's research has been the continued relationship and meetings with these teachers.

I am hoping that you will agree to 'stay with me' in my research over the next year or two. I am particularly keen to follow some of your year group out as it was your voices that did so much good for the Muslim students in college and raised so much awareness. I think you can continue to do the same through this research.

The overall aim of my research is to follow a group of Muslim women from the '91 and '92 entrants as they move through college and out into the early years of their teaching careers. I already have data from the last two years. Whilst I am still interested in focusing on PE as part of my work, my vision has now expanded to learning about how inter-cultural factors affect your day to day lives as Muslim teachers within the teaching profession. Your involvement would mean:

1. An interview reflecting on your 4 years at WH to be held in my office, at your convenience, as soon after the exams as possible.

2. The keeping of a diary as you start teaching reflecting your thoughts and feelings in day to day happenings.

3. An interview at the end of each term. I am prepared to travel to wherever you find a job.

4. This year the teachers have also contacted me from time to time to share things that have occurred - to talk over particular incidents that have concerned them and they have thought might be relevant to the research etc.

Obviously arrangements are flexible, and made at your convenience. Don't worry if you haven't got a job at this stage.

I do hope you will consider staying with the research. I have enjoyed the relationship we have established over the last two years and I would be most appreciative of your participation. I am pleased to say Dr Haifaa Jawad has agreed to help tutor me through this research and she or I will be happy to answer any questions you might have at this stage.

Many thanks for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Tansin Benn

CONTINUING RESEARCH INTO MUSLIM WOMEN - TANSIN BENN

I am willing to / unable to continue working with you as I move out of WH this summer.

Signed ----------

If willing -

Contact address:

Contact telephone:

Possible time for summer term interview? ----------

Thank you

Tansin Benn

203 Rednal Road,
Kings Norton,
Birmingham
B38 8EA
Tel: 0121 628 8166

24th August 1995

Dear

I enclose a copy of your interview transcript and would be grateful if you could read and verify it as a true record of our recent interview. Once checked (you can write on it) please send it back in the SAE, thanks.

I also enclose the **'Diary'** in the hope that you will keep some records for me in this first term.

Purpose of the diary:

It is your perceptions of your development as a primary teacher both inside and outside of PE, that I am interested in capturing through these diaries. Some incidents might be related to you as a Muslim teacher or to particular Muslim pupils, parents or colleagues. I am also interested in those experiences which might parallel those of any Newly Qualified Teacher who is assuming responsibility for PE as a 'non-specialist' in this subject.
There are no 'rights and wrongs' I would just appreciate your being totally honest and open with me as you have been in the past.

It would be helpful if you could record what is important to you The following are some suggestions for guidance but please don't regard them as a set agenda. These, or other things might arise which are important to you. After all it is your diary.

Ideally it would be nice to have a 'daily input' no matter how short. Perhaps if we can start like this, we can review it in December. The book is deliberately blank so you can date each input as you make it. I understand some days will be highly significant and others may not be significant at all.

I will be contacting your Head Teacher early in December to explain and clear this continuing research. (Do you realise this will be our 'third year' since I started the project in your third year at College!). I will also be asking the Chief Education Officer for B'ham for his support.

I would be grateful if you could send me your weekly timetable. When we meet in December I would also appreciate a copy of the school policy for PE, if there is one, and any other material that might help me build a profile of your particular school. (I will clear this in my letter to your Head in the near future)

DIARY SUGGESTIONS:

A) PHYSICAL EDUCATION

1. Could you keep some kind of diary input for every PE lesson you have? I understand that this could be between one and five lessons a week and might include all activity areas - gym, dance, games, swimming, (athletics and outdoor & adventurous activities - KS2), so it will be important to date and identify type of activity for me each time.

Perhaps you could write something about what you did, what went well, what was difficult, anything about how you felt at the end of the lesson and why. (It is important for me to track the continuity, or lack of it, you are able to have with your children so some record of every lesson is vital - even just the date and activity type If lessons are cancelled please keep a note of this with the reason - thanks.)

2. It would also be helpful if you could record your experiences and feelings on anything else related to PE - eg 'help from the curriculum co-ordinator', 'visit from local Inspector', 'attendance at in-service PE course' etc.

B) EXPERIENCES AS A MUSLIM TEACHER OUTSIDE OF PE

I would be grateful if you could record, as soon as possible after the event, any incidents that occur, however small, which you feel are, or might be, related to you as an Asian, female, and / or Muslim teacher. These might involve: 'Religious' v 'educational' requirements, actions of, or talk with children / teacher colleagues / Head teacher / Governors / parents, or perhaps interactions with your own families concerning your new role as teacher.

I wish you every success in your teaching post and I look forward to contacting you near the end of the first term to arrange a time for an interview.

Thank you for helping me with this research. I enclose a short paper from the Selly Oak Colleges Bulletin to let you know that some of the information I have been collecting is getting out to a wider audience.

Best wishes,

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEWS - END OF YEAR 3 AT GREENACRES

SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

1. Did you feel comfortable in final SE3 placements? Why?
How has this differed from previous placements?

2. What has been the most positive aspect or incident for you on SE3?

3. Have there been any negative incidents or aspects?

4. Have you experienced any tensions between religious and professional requirements?
(Curriculum, attitudes, behaviour - children, staff, parents?

5. Have there been any other tensions for you (racial, gender?)

6. Can we discuss your experiences in teaching PE?

7. How closely did that school match the type of school you would prefer to teach in at the end of your course?

GREENACRES

1. What has been the most positive aspect of your third year at Gr?

2. Have there been negative aspects during the year?

3. Have you experienced any incidents you would describe as prejudiced in relation to your religion, ethnicity or sex?

4. Were your experiences on the third year swimming PE course positive or negative? (Expand)

5. Has your faith been strengthened, compromised, or not affected by course requirements or the community at Gr?

6. What makes you most committed to finishing your B.Ed. and joining the teaching profession?

INTERVIEWS - END OF YEAR 4 AT GREENACRES

1. What have been the most positive aspects of your fourth year at Gr.?

2. Have there been any negative aspects or incidents during the years?

3. Have you experienced any incidents you would describe as prejudiced in relation to your religion, race or gender during this year?

4. (Upper primaries only) Were your experiences on the fourth year outdoor education / athletics PE course positive or negative?

OVERALL REFLECTIONS OF THE B.Ed.

5. Reflecting on your whole course - what has been the most positive outcome for you?

6. Have there been negative outcomes?

7. Have there been times when your faith has been strengthened or compromised by course requirements or the community at Gr?

8. What hopes do you have for the contribution you can make to teaching at this stage?

9. Do you have any anxieties or concerns about joining the teaching profession?

10. Teaching PE will be part of your career - how do you feel about that at this moment?

11. Is being a Muslim teacher particularly significant to you? (Expand.)

12. How do your parents feel at this graduation / transition stage in your life?

13. Personal and professional ambitions?

INTERVIEW END OF TEACHING TERM 1

1. How have you found your first term of teaching?

2. What have you enjoyed most?

3. What difficulties have you experienced - in general?

4. How easy has it been to build relationships with - the children, parents, colleagues?

5. What has been happening in your PE lessons this term?

6. What have you enjoyed most about teaching PE?

7. Have there been any particular difficulties?

BEING MUSLIM

8. Has 'being Muslim' been of any particular significance to you in your school situation this term? (Nos. Muslim children, teachers, do colleagues, pupils, parents know / express interest etc.)

9. Have there been any incidents where you have experienced tensions related to 'being Muslim' and meeting the expectations of the culture of the school? (Curriculum content, dress codes, religious assemblies, personal interactions - P, Ch, T's)?

CONCERNS

10. In July you expressed 'pre-teaching' concerns over .....
Did these materialise, have they changed?

INTERVIEW - END OF TERM 2 - FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING

BACKGROUND OF SCHOOL - SIZE, NOS STAFF, AREA, LEVEL OF ETHNIC DIVERSITY ETC.

1. Progress as a teacher in general

2. Progress in PE.

3. Confidence in own teaching.

4. Any differences perceived as attributable to being Asian and / or Muslim? Incidents / tensions / inequalities?

5. Relationships - staff, parents, children - any changes - positive / negative?

6. Perceptions of future in teaching - ambition, ability to take on responsibility, make changes, move up the ladder?

7. Effects of teaching on personal life / religious development / family interactions / growing independence / maturity / own life plans outside of teaching?

8. Views on high profile of Muslim education at present - RE / Muslim schools?

INTERVIEWS - END OF FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING

IDENTITY & INTERACTION

1. How do you see your 'professional self' at this stage of your NQT year?
(Confident? Competent? Successful? Committed? Fulfilled?)
Can you trace the development of those feelings over your NQT year?
(Support of mentor, speed of 'assimilation' into school culture,
opportunities to learn from / contribute to the school.)

2. How has being an Asian, Muslim woman been significant to you in your professional development this year?
(Colleagues? Accepted / or isolated / ignored?
Parents - Asians & non-Asians - same / different in response?
Children - Asian / Muslims / Girls & others?)

3. The hijab gives you a particular identity as someone who has committed themselves visibly to Islam. Do you think this has influenced ways in which people have interacted with you, or might in the future, within the State education system?

CHALLENGE & ACCOMMODATION

4. As an Asian, Muslim woman have you felt uncomfortable or compromised over anything that has happened professionally this year in the State system?
Where do / might tensions / resolutions lie?
(Prayers, facilities, content, mixed-sex environment, clash of commitment to faith / teaching? Music, dance, multi-faith v Islamic RE? Treatment by others?)

5. Are there any ways in which your particular needs could be better met?

PE CASE STUDY

Discuss:

6. What value their PE has been to pupils this year, range of activities, facilities / equipment, quality of lessons, school 'ethos', guidance - documentary / curriculum leader, courses etc.

7. Personal attitude / dress / confidence / knowledge / capability.

8. Experiences concerned about in college - mixed -sex environment & teaching movement in 'public', mixed - sex classes / changing / contact activities / dance / parental concerns / level of knowledge etc.

PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING AS A CAREER

9. Have your teaching aspirations / ambitions changed?
(What? How? Possibilities / barriers?)

LIFE REFLECTIONS

10. What have been the effects of teaching on your life this year?
How do you feel about that? Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?

SECOND YEAR OF TEACHING - END OF TERM 1 - INTERVIEWS

1. Are there differences in being a 'post-NQT' teacher?

2. What is your attitude towards your school now - eg same, improving, deteriorating?

3. How do you believe you are moving professionally now?

4. Some Muslim teachers have experienced incidents of stereotyping eg concerning Asian boys / girls or Muslim women / teachers - have you experienced any such incidents recently?

5. What is happening in PE this term?

What kind of 'status' / 'ranking' does PE enjoy when it comes to planning or discussing subject areas?

Do you think you teach with continuity and development in this area?

Did you pass on records or reports for PE at the end of the first year?

6. Discussion on faith

When are you most aware of your Muslim identity? - Work / home / other?

How does being a teacher affect you as Muslim?

How does being Muslim affect you as teacher?

7. Have there been any major changes in your career or home aspirations since we last met?

SECOND YEAR OF TEACHING - END OF TERM 2

1. Individual interview developments.
(Review of previous histories and discussion of particular developments.)

2. Progress in teaching generally.

3. Progress in teaching PE.

4. Changing professional confidence / competence / attitudes towards profession.

5. Developments in arena of 'faith' and 'being Muslim'.

6. Developments in personal life / family etc.

7. Ambitions - personal / professional.

FINAL RESEARCH INTERVIEWS - END OF EARLY TEACHING CAREERS - SUMMER 1997

Review of specific school-based histories.

1. Discussion of any notable experiences this term - interactions, job satisfaction, PE etc.

2. Reflecting on your college years - what do you value most from that time in your life?

3. Can you summarise the positive and negative perspectives you have of teaching at this point?

4. Who or what has helped you through the most difficult times in your teaching experience.?

5. Reflecting on your experiences, as pupil, student and now as teacher, can you recall ways in which the requirements of the 'education system' have led to any compromise in your Islamic beliefs?

6. Would you be able to summarise what it has been like for you - being a British Muslim woman - teaching in the state education system, in particular how your experiences might equate with or differ from those of other teachers?

7. How has teaching changed for you over the last two years?

8. What have you learnt about yourself in that time?

9. What are your professional and personal ambitions at this point?

10. Do you think your experiences as a British Muslim woman have been affected by wider issues of Islam in the West (eg Muslim schools debate, media coverage of Islamic events, recent difficulties in Yugoslavia / Turkey) How and why?

APPENDIX H

APPENDIX I

APPENDIX H

Muslim Women - B.Ed. Cohort 1991 - 1995

Pseudonym	Date of Birth and Marital status	Nationality (Self description)	Background Education	B.Ed. Main Subject	Family Origin / Arrival in Britain / Religion	Father's Occupation ---------- Mother's Occupation	Siblings	Hijab	Continuation to Teaching Research
Salima	05.09.71 Single (Married Aug. 1997)	British	Britain	English	Pakistan 1960's Muslim	Shop owner Housewife	G B G G B B	Adopted Easter 1995	Yes
Jamilah	06.04.69 Divorced	Pakistani / British	Britain	Islamic Studies	Pakistan 1960's Muslim	Factory worker Housewife	B B G B B	Yes	Yes
Hana	09.06.72 Single	British	Britain	English	Pakistan 1960's Muslim	Bus driver Housewife	B B G B G B	No	Yes
Rabiah	05.07.73 Single (Married Aug. 1997)	British	Britain	Islamic Studies	Pakistan 1960's Muslim	Factory foreman Housewife	B G B G	Yes	Yes
Asma	20.07.69 Single	British	Britain	Islamic Studies	Pakistan 1960's Muslim	Quantity surveyor Housewife	B B G B	Yes	Yes (Supply)
Fatima	09.05.73 Single	British	Britain	History	India 1968 Muslim	Contract engineer	G G G B G	No	No

Muslim Women - B.Ed. Cohort 1992 - 1996

Pseudonym	Date of Birth and Marital Status	Nationality (Self description)	Background Education	B.Ed. Main Subject	Family Origin / Arrival in Britain / Religion	Father's Occupation ---------- Mother's occupation	Siblings	Hijab	Continuation to Teaching Research
Farceda	06.07.69 Divorced	British	Britain	Islamic Studies	Pakistan 1960's Muslim	Bus driver	B G G B	Yes	No
Lina	06.07.69 Single	British	Britain	Islamic Studies / Art	Pakistan 1960's Muslim	Bus driver	B G G B	Yes	No
Nawar	14.11.61 Married (4 children)	British	Britain	Islamic Studies	M - English F - Pakistan 1959 Muslim	Own Family Business	G G G	Yes	Yes (Muslim school)
Zahra	11.03.73 Single	Asian / African / British	Mosambique - 1982 Britain	Islamic Studies	African Asian 1982 Muslim	Retired farmer	B B B B B G G B B	Yes	No
Cath	05.05.65 Single (1 child)	African Caribbean / British	Britain	Islamic Studies	Jamaica 1960's	Mother - assembler	G G B G B B	No	Yes
Zauda	23.03.71 Married '96	British	Britain	Islamic Studies	African Asian 1971 Muslim	GPO Postal executive	G B G G G	Yes	No
Amira	02.05.74 Single	British	Britain	Biology	Pakistan 1960's	Machine operator	G B G G B B	Yes	No

APPENDIX I

PARTICIPATION IN YEAR 3 SCHOOL EXPERIENCE RESEARCH

	Interviewed	Observed/Visited	Diaries returned
Lina	✓	✓	X
Amira	✓	✓	✓
Fareeda	✓	✓	X
Zauda	✓	✓	X
Savima	✓	✓	✓
Asma	✓	✓	✓
Hana	✓	✓	X
Jamilah	✓	✓	✓
Rabiah	✓	✓	✓
Cath	X	✓	X
Nawar	✓	X	X
Zahra	✓	X	X
Total	11	10	5

APPENDIX J

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENT-TEACHERS ORIGINALLY INVOLVED WITH RESEARCH INTO THE EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION & TEACHING - TANSIN BENN

I am currently completing four years of research into the experiences of Muslim women in Higher Education and the teaching profession. It appears that only a small number of my 'original volunteers' are currently in full-time teaching posts. In order to be as accurate as possible about my understanding of the reasons for this I would appreciate your help via the completion and return of this questionnaire.
I can assure you that the data will be treated confidentially.
Thank you in anticipation.

Please complete as fully as possible, the spaces for 'answers' are not meant to be constraining - please write on separate paper if you wish.

Name: _____

1. Since leaving Westhill have you
   a) Been teaching full-time? Y / N
   b) Not teaching by choice? Y / N
   c) Started teaching but left? Y / N
   d) Been supply teaching by necessity?
   e) Been supply teaching by choice?
   f) Other (please state)

If you have left teaching or have chosen supply work please explain **why**:

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. In relation to your professional development as a teacher have you found your ethnicity, sex and / or religion an advantage or disadvantage? Can you explain your answer?

_____

_____

_____

3. Have there been any positive or negative experiences related to your ethnicity, sex or religious identity which have encouraged or discouraged you in the teaching profession?

5. Where do you see yourself, professionally and personally, five years from now?

6. Whether you are in teaching or not, on reflection what were the personal advantages or disadvantages of undertaking the four year B.Ed. course at Westhill?

7. Please add any further comments you would like to make related to Muslim women in H.Ed. or the teaching profession:

Thank you
Tansin Benn

APPENDIX K

ZAUDA - END OF YEAR 3 AT GREENACRES

SE 3 PLACEMENT

I - Did you feel comfortable in that placement and if you did can you tell me why - what was pleasant about it for you?

IS - All the staff were lovely, they really made you feel welcome - that's the main thing - if the staff make you feel at home then you feel at home - the main thing was the staff - I don't feel they looked upon me differently to anyone else.

I - What type of school would you describe it as?

IS - It was a Church of England school but mainly Muslims first I think, then equal proportion of Hindu / Sikh's and then Black / Afro-Caribbeans, then whites - minority in terms of white children.

I - Very mixed then?

IS - Yes

I - And your class teacher - you felt particularly comfortable with?

IS - Well, at the beginning I was a bit ..... self-conscious because she would ... in the first couple of days she'd say things like
'oh we've got Muslim girls in the class and we are doing the Victorians and I've told them that the Victorians (women) had no right to vote and they didn't go out of the house - just like Muslim women today - and they're not going to take any of this when they grow up ...' and I said 'Quite right - that's (because I knew differently), that's the only way people are going to change - if you make the change. She said 'well if you think like this why do you have a scarf on your head? She was an atheist, she said she was an atheist ..
I felt this for the first couple of days I was there and I felt that this might be a problem - I wasn't rude to her or anything and I said 'well OK - for a start ... I do this for my religion and what I feel is right because ... what you are saying is wrong.' She actually said
I've seen good things in Sikhs and good things in Hindus but I've seen nothing good in Islam - I can't see anything good in Islam - in the way people are treated.'

I said - 'Well you said about Victorian women having their vote - Islam gave it to women four hundred years ago.' Then we had a chat about certain things - she talked about Islamic states and I

clarified that there wasn't an Islamic State there were Muslim countries but there weren't any Islamic States - and I wasn't going to support them because - yes- they weren't any better off - and she was a bit surprised and I think by doing that she said 'oh well you've got until the end of teaching practice to convince me' ... We never really talked about it again as such - I thought that might've been a problem but instead I think that really helped to break the ice and I think it really made our positions clear and then just got on with it. Because she was quite open about it at the beginning ... you know why do you wear a scarf - she was obviously wondering about this Muslim woman - she's teaching - she's wearing a scarf - how can the two mix - she had confused ideas.

I - So she had a stereotypical view of Muslim women as being shut in their houses all the time - she couldn't understand how you could be in Higher Education, in teaching and out in public ...

IS - ... and at the same time agreeing that they shouldn't be stuck in so she was saying ... hang on ... she was linking the two that if I agreed women are treated badly in Muslim homes then that means I shouldn't be wearing a scarf - that I should be more Westernized - I was saying that was two different things.

I - So she didn't understand the role of women in Islam?

IS - That's right - so then - after that I think that really helped because she got it off her chest - ...I stuck to my ground ... I think that's why she respected me a lot because I did what I was supposed to do - I proved to be a good teacher ... at the same time I didn't disregard my principles or anything - so after that initial time - when I was a bit wary - I thought she's my teacher - I don't want a bad report ... you always think like that ... but after that we got along on really good terms.

I - So you weren't angry when she said those things?...

IS - No - we discussed a few things about the Imams, the local Mosques, why things are going the way they are, how culture has taken over ... lots of Muslims don't know ....

And that has led to what I'm going to do my school-focused project on as well - 'how does the media representation of Islam influence the teaching of Islam in schools' - because if she is a teacher of 23 years and she has that opinion of Muslims it's obviously been affected by the media - she obviously doesn't know the facts - and if she's like that, it's nothing personal but there must be lots of teachers like that who teach Islam to the

way they perceive it - mainly from the news and things - it's not their fault - but it's not the facts ...

I - Do you remember anything particularly positive for you as a Muslim teacher on SE3?

IS - At the beginning I got called 'Turban head' by one of my pupils - I did mention it to the class teacher but she didn't do anything about it - it was right at the beginning. At the same time I didn't emphasise it because it was the only white pupil (boy) in the class ... I don't like telling tales - because I think they don't understand - they are children ... wherever they are getting it from is from previous misconceptions - whatever they've been told - so I don't really blame the child ... it was on my preliminary visits before they saw me as teacher, so he said 'Turban head', I went 'Excuse me?', 'Turban head' - 'I'm sorry?' 'Turban head' I went 'What did you say?' and then he went 'oh sorry'. After that ... he was a bit hard ... he would play up ... not just for me ... I didn't take it personally, after the first week or so I really had him disciplined towards me - so I felt that was quite successful - I felt pleased ... - that I'd been able to get that and at the same time he respected me - that someone who thought like that about me instead of going further and further away from me actually had become more in step.

I - Because you confronted him?

IS - I think that's a good point that I could actually manage that because that's a plus point for me to know - as a Muslim because I'm going to get that a lot - maybe- in the future - from children. It was a rough class - non of the others were as rude as that, but they did have a lot of swearing a lot of bad language and they didn't really see me as a class teacher in the beginning... one of the biggest points I feel I achieved - was to have such a rough class and I was actually able to have them ... responding to me like they would to their class teacher. They are not like that with other teachers 'cos it's the roughest class - that's why she had them - she was very disciplined. So she always has year 6 ... 'cos the year 6 are always the worst. The fact that I could have the class - then she went on courses - offered me a supply teacher I said no - the fact that I could get on, get the work done and I had the control - and it took me a good three weeks to get that. That was one of the plus points for me as a teacher that I was able to do that.
Sometimes it can be very negative towards you - they just say 'shut up Paki' what can you do. Some of my pupils were problem children - would just walk out, I was told to be careful with one - I found that very constraining - told to avoid a confrontation situation

I - So you had difficult children - but only that first direct comment to you?

IS - Not in the same way but the comments were around and they were cheeky ... in the beginning.

I - Any questions about your scarf from the children?

IS - Not really - my last school experience - SE2 - mostly white - when I was teaching about the five pillars of Islam they kept asking me questions - bombarding me all the time - 'Miss why do you wear .....' Really very, very interested - never got the lesson done.
I didn't find this in this school, most of them were Muslim and they knew - by the end of the six weeks some would come up and say 'oh I'm fasting today' and 'I'd say - because it is M------' and they'd say 'yes' - they wouldn't say that to their class teacher - they'd say things to me because I'd understand.

I - So you had a special relationship with some of the children?

IS - Yes - and with the staff too - before I left one teacher said you must tell me how you do your scarf. One asked me - 'I know you are British but where do you come from?' I say that's fine - and they say I thought you might take offence - I have seen that happen. I said no - come on - I don't have an identity crisis, I know who I am, where I am , if you want to know where I was born or where my parents are from - there's no harm in that ...

I - So the longer you spent in the school the more able they were to ask questions?

IS - Yes, I think that's quite natural at first - for people not to say too much in case they upset you. ... I was quite surprised with my class teacher - she was direct straight away and I like that - instead of letting something stew up inside.

I - Were there any tensions between religious and professional requirements for you?

IS - No not at all because prayer times didn't coincide at all ... there was one thing I was worried about .... religiously the pupils were getting quite mature ... sometimes the class teacher would insist on groups being boy / girl, boy / girl. I didn't want to insist on that. If they wanted to - like some groups did - fine - but I didn't want to insist because I know what their family life is like - and I didn't feel comfortable in pursuing - telling a Muslim girl who -- for religious reasons, because they know by now, or

to upset their families - as someone who should know better than to push that. But there were no problems - I thought she (class teacher) might say that groups had to be mixed in dance. I let the children choose the groups they wanted to be in for dance .... that's what I was worried about - if they want to do holding hands and twisting around ... I didn't want them to feel uncomfortable.

I - And you did have some Muslim children in your class?

IS - Quite a few.

I - What other aspects of PE did you teach?

IS - Games - I took them out to work on rounders for six weeks.

I - Did you manage to change for PE?

IS - I never changed for rounders - the football person didn't turn up so I was expecting to teach it for the first two weeks. ... I never changed in rounders because I never moved around much in PE. It wasn't really me teaching it - we team-taught (class teacher).

I - Did she change for games?

IS - No, not shoes either.

I - In your dance lesson you joined in a lot and I think that contributed much to the success of that lesson. Would it have been a problem if you'd had a male class teacher?

IS - Yes, I would not have moved as much .... I asked my male tutor not to come in for dance. When he came in on a Tuesday morning - I swopped the lesson. He was aware of that, and the teacher. Had I had a male teacher I wouldn't have done that first sequence. The class teacher teaches without joining in - I would've used her method - explaining ' now I want you to .....' which is not very good ....

I - So you preferred being able to join in?

IS - Definitely - I like dancing anyway - and I think it works well when they can see a sequence, and I can show them moves for the group work ... the development side ... the week before you came in ... I find it much freer to do that. And I think it really motivates the children because if they know you can dance as well . a lot of the girls do dance lessons in their own time . I remember before the dance lesson they said 'Miss can you

dance?' and I said 'You'll have to wait and see' - they say ' ah ... I bet you can't dance ' because they see you again .... and I think it made them respect me more and listen.

I - So respect came with joining in?

IS - I think that goes for any sports as well - in rounders I showed them the right way to bowl - it's better than saying step forward ..... its better if you can show them you know what you are talking about.

I - This was an all-female staff - did that help you?

IS - Yes - but I was comfortable last year - again my dance lessons were very good but my class teacher was female - I think that is more important than being in an all-female school.

I - Do you think we should ask Muslim women if they would prefer a female class teacher?

IS - I think it would be very helpful. I wouldn't have asked if I'd been given a male teacher so that sounds like a good idea.

I - How closely does that school match the sort of school you'd like to teach in?

IS - They've offered me a job there if there is a place - they've asked for my address and I would take it. Some students wouldn't .... I know girls who are not as assertive as myself who wouldn't enjoy those sort of children but I love it - I like the challenge of making them like and respect you and to stimulate them in lessons. I'd really like to teach at that sort of school. I didn't feel any racism - or uncomfortable...

I - And if you did feel any from children could you cope with that?

IS - I don't take it personally from the children. Mind you there was an incident with the other student - a white boy - with a year 3 class - he had a problem child - a really naughty black boy, naughty for the teacher as well, so he was told off and one of the days the parents of the boy came in and accused the student of racism and slagged him off .... That wasn't a very good experience - but then ... that's the other side of the coin isn't it? I was warned that I might find that last year - but I didn't - I was told be careful - it was very rough, mainly white. I asked the Head teacher if I would find any racism in the school, one of my first questions, she said 'Not with the children, not with the teachers, but you might with some of the parents.' We don't allow

it in the classroom.' So - I was worried about appearance ... they never said anything to me - just looked at me dubiously because I was the only Asian person there.

YEAR 3 AT COLLEGE

I - How has the 3rd year been for you?

IS - It's been easier - whereas in the first two years we were struggling for a few things - we weren't struggling for anything this year. Swimming was great because we had an all girls group - which was sorted out last year because if it hadn't been it would've been a problem this time. So - I could actually get in the water - with my swimming costume on rather than just observe - that has been good.

I - So you feel the 'battles' are behind you?

IS - Yes - definitely - My school experience was good as well and that helped ... I had to change my school experience mind you - I don't know if you know this - I was at ------- with a teacher who was involved with SATS - who wanted me to just teach to the SATS. I went to (College Tutor) who wasn't happy about me changing so rang up the Head .... I said I also wanted a school with a good ethnic mix - this was an all-white school again and I'd asked for a different sort of school ...
I had to be assertive otherwise they don't change.

Ofsted inspectors were due in - on Eid .... I was told if the Inspector was due in to me I would have to go in, teach and take another day off. ... I said that's all very well but my family don't take a day off, my parents don't take another day off - I can't say 'mum & dad postpone Eid another week' She said - well sorry, I am sure you can this once - they weren't willing to listen. I wasn't happy - by law (City Council) we're allowed to take that day off - they should've told Ofsted - if you want to inspect Muslim students you would have to come another day. What happened was they wanted an ethnic mix - (there were only two Muslim students selected). The other Muslim student was seen on Eid - she had to compromise because she was a College student, she wasn't allowed another day off. They (Inspectors) never saw ------ a Sikh so they could've seen her instead - she was not celebrating Eid - we were.

I - So you had one day of for Eid but ---- -, a fellow Muslim was seen by the Inspector on Eid - she then took a half day off, and if you had been in the final Inspectors list you would've had to have gone into school?

IS - That's right.

I - Would you say your faith has continued to be strengthened this year?

IS - Definitely - I think I've felt more at ease, more stable this year than in any other. When you're rushed off your feet - ... you start putting others things first - your priorities get all mixed up ... you end up getting upset ... I think I've kept my priorities right - not so many problems - more settled ... and I like the course this year ...

I - So you've really enjoyed moving forward in your knowledge of Islam?

IS Yes

I - You did Hajj last year didn't you?

IS - Yes - it was a great experience but not in College.
I really did have problems then, gone through a difficult patch, with my religion as well, I was ill, school experience and that ....
I was really really down.
I was at home one day and dad said would I like to go to Hajj with him. It was an excellent opportunity for me - just to get away - it is an obligation on us - we have to go with a relative.
I rang up (Head Islamic Studies) and he wouldn't support me - .....
I was advised to get a Dr's certificate for the two or three weeks.
The Dr referred to a counsellor and she did give me time off.
..... It was suggested that I could meet this obligation any time in my life - but we have to take it when the opportunity occurs.
I gave my Dr's note in and went to Hajj.

When I came back the Dr signed me back on for College early - ----- said I'd had an emotional problem so now they were questioning my emotional stability for teaching. - made me see the College Dr .... .. she was fine ....in the end the Principal called me in .... it's on my record but no disciplinary action would be taken.

I was very upset at the way I was treated.

I - Do you think they felt you were using the system?

IS - Yes - but they weren't up front in saying that - that's what upset me - I didn't get any support.

NAWAR END OF YEAR 3 AT GREENACRES

School Experience 3

I - Did you feel comfortable in your placement? If so - why?

M - No

I - Why not?

M - I was made to feel uncomfortable right from the beginning actually - so I tried to make myself comfortable. The reason why I was made uncomfortable - the first day that I went - I met the teacher as I was going in - before meeting the teacher - on the days of my preliminary visits the teacher was absent because she was ill. The day I made an appointment to meet her ... I walked down this long corridor - ... as I went in (to the classroom) the teacher was busy - cutting and mounting work ... They've got a phone so she knew I was coming down ... she carried on doing her work ... looked at me - 'I'm Mrs ---- oh I've got a lot to do.' That was my introduction. So I just stood around, watched what she was doing ... and said 'I'm going to do my teaching practice here' - she didn't shake my hand or anything - she made me feel on edge from the beginning - it wasn't that I went in late or anything ... if I'd gone in whilst the children were there I could understand but I didn't see why she was actually like that.

I - She basically ignored you?

M - Yes. Then whilst on the preliminary visits - we're there to find out where resources are and the staff-room - she never showed me anything. There was an assistant - I asked her eventually. Mrs ---- was shouting 'I've got this to do, I've got too much to do, I don't know how I'm going to get this done .....'

I - So - she was pressured? ... Too pressured to have you there?

M - Yes - that was it - but I later on found out that I was there because she needed some sort of support. She even mentioned this to me - 'Mrs ---- (Deputy Head) has actually placed you here because she knows I've got a lot to do.'

I - Did she have a lot of responsibilities within the school?

M - She was writing up an SEN policy - in charge of Special Educational Needs and she was in charge of English ....

I - Was she an experienced teacher?

M - She was an experienced teacher but had time off last year .... health reasons .... she kept saying 'I'm going to have a nervous breakdown the way things are going.'

I - So she transmitted this pressure straight away and she acted as if there was no time to deal with you?

M - That's it.

I - So you didn't feel comfortable in that placement and it was mostly to do with the class teacher?

M - To do with the class teacher - yes. All the time I was there - she never provided any resources .... any information I needed I had to go and find myself.
I went to the secretary for a prospectus - we needed all the general information on the school .... on the third visit .... she said 'I don't think we've got a prospectus' and all I said was 'Wasn't it a statutory requirement to have these in schools?' ... At the end of the practice I found out the headmaster had spoken to my tutor saying I'd been very rude to the secretary.' ... On my report it said 'difficulties at the beginning'. I don't know how that is going to look - my second year experience report was absolutely brilliant.

The Deputy Head came to see me and said something like ' By the way you have to be careful how you speak to the staff here' - I was absolutely shocked - I didn't know what staff she was talking about at first. .... She said 'the secretary said you have been rude to her' .... right at the beginning of the practice I was upset - so I said there was no-one I would upset anyone - I'm not that sort of person - I didn't want to pressurise Mrs ---- for information so I was trying to get things for myself.' I couldn't approach her - she's not an approachable ... you couldn't approach her the way she was 'Oh I've got this to do, oh I've got that to do - and she's always saying "flippin' this and 'bloody this' - always ... you can't approach somebody like that.

I - She was very unhappy?

M - She was unhappy and I felt sorry for her. .... I felt that I didn't want to burden her in any way. So I'd get everything done myself - resources - I never asked her - if I did she seemed as if it was giving her extra pressure - so I tried to do everything. There's no way I'd be rude to anyone .... I was here ... to get the planning done before I went into school .... After she said that to me I felt that I didn't deserve what was said about me ...

I went to (college tutor) and said 'What happens if you fail your teaching practice because I think I was probably going to fail it in this school ....' I didn't feel comfortable.
I got my report and I passed but I felt ... injustice was done to me.

... I found out it was Eid on Wednesday - before the TP had actually started. I went to the headmaster but the headmaster already didn't like me because of the secretary but I didn't know about that. I said 'Is it possible that I could have Wednesday off because of Eid - I'm willing to do other time in order to have the Wednesday off.' ... All the other students .... were discussing this saying we've got the time off ... I mentioned it to the class teacher and she said 'you'll have to discus it with (Head).' I went and said 'Is it OK if I have Eid off'. He says 'Well I've got Christian teachers here, I'm a practising Christian myself and I've not allowed the teachers to have a day of for .... a special day - for a Christian festival. ... I didn't argue with him but it's not the same ... Christmas Christians have off anyway - and Easter. I said 'actually if it was for myself I wouldn't have bothered celebrating it so much whilst doing a degree course .... but the only reason I'm asking is because of my children - they are having time off and I always tend to spend Eid with them - I wouldn't have asked for myself.' I never mentioned another thing ... I did it in a nice manner ... because I know that I want to get through this teaching practice ... to make sure ... I behave in a proper ... the way they would expect me to ...
He (head) never said anything to me but he told (my tutor) that I'd asked for Eid off.

When my tutor came at the beginning I made the mistake of saying everything was OK. I wished I'd told him everything about the secretary and that ... (and the Eid request).

... (Tutor) He was a very good tutor - I've got a feeling - the way I felt - that if I hadn't had a tutor like that I wouldn't have got through. I think I got through because he was basically just, he understood. ... he picked up things - which was good.

I - Were there any other Muslim teachers in the school?

M - No

I - Can you tell me something about the make-up of the school?

M - It was 80% Sikh - there was one Asian teacher - a Sikh.

....A teacher said to me he couldn't survive a day with this teacher.

I didn't want to do anything wrong - I wanted to get through the practice. ... I wanted my attendance to be perfect - I was going to get through it no matter what - they could put me through whatever but I'm going to get through ... imagine - you're doing a course with four children and you think I've had to give up so much and not spend the time I would've liked to with them - so I'm going to get through this now that I've started - so I was determined to do everything correctly - so there's no mistakes anywhere ...

.... We (students) hadn't been going in the staffroom because we were told .... there were other students there ... and we were told the staffroom was getting over-crowded - students had to use Mrs -----'s room.

I - Your classroom?

M - Yes .... and I was always trying to put up displays and that.

(Discussion on school expectations of students and upheavals of re-wiring)

M - (Class-teacher) - There were little things - the schemes of work - right at the beginning - 'Oh we don't want this in we don't want this in - we want it like this' - I did it - I did everything the way she wanted it.
... She wouldn't check my lesson plans the night before - check it to see it was satisfactory - I'd come in early in the morning - she'd say to me - 'What are you doing?' I'd have all my lesson plans ready - all the resources I'm going to use - right - and she'd say 'Oh we need something doing about' .... something totally different and it would make me feel really .....

I - Was she asking you to change on the day you were going to teach?

M - She'd ask me to change

I - And did you?

M - Well one day .... I tried to do exactly what she wanted me to do in the first place - but then she was getting me to change again ... I said 'I've got this all prepared now ...' She didn't say anything - I thought - what am I going to do now - I'll just wait and see what she's going to say - if she wants me to change I'll have to change ... so I carried on sorting my file out.
Sometimes it made me wonder if she was trying to ....

I - Did you think she was trying to deliberately antagonise you?

M - I felt that way - I truly did ... she said to me afterwards 'Oh since you've got that prepared you might as well teach that now ....'

I - Was she critical all the way through ?

M - Critical - I mean there were no positive comments - look at my file - top of the lesson plans. The ones she did write on - OK maybe I'm not perfect ... nothing positive ...

I - So you didn't feel there was any encouragement from the class teacher?

M - No

I - Would you say anything had to do with you being Asian or Muslim?

M - Well - she said to me 'How old were you when you got married?' I said - I was young - I told her the age I was when I got married. She said 'How can these people - ... these Muslims get these girls married so young?'

I - Did she know you were Muslim?

M - She knew - yes - I never hide what I am. I always say I am a Muslim - my mother's English and my father's Pakistani - I never hide that fact - she was aware of that

I - So you were talking about Muslim marriages ...

M - She said 'I don't know how they can get their girls married so young, would you let your daughters marry so young?' and I said - if the right person had come along and they were engaged that's OK - but I wouldn't say you have to marry at a young age, or force them or anything.
So she knew I was Muslim ..... I was told by my tutor that she was racist.

I - Was that at the end of the practice?

M - At the end of the practice when the report was being written.

I - And how did he make that judgement?

M - He put something like ..... he said 'I can't actually ..... because it would cause complications ... I can't say ... ' ... She'd said something to him and he wrote something in there that would suggest she was racist but he couldn't actually say that ... '

I - Do you know if he confronted her when she made racist comments?

M - No - I don't think so

I - Because it would cause complications?

M - Yes ...

I - How did you feel - do you think she would've treated any student the same?

M - I don't know - I've got a feeling it could've been because of who I am. I didn't tell you about the RE did I?

I - No

M - I asked her what she wanted me to do for RE - my main subject - you want to teach your main subject don't you. She said - something like - 'I don't want anything to do with teaching RE, I'm not going to teach RE' - she was discussing this with another teacher - '... because I don't think it's right for people to be teaching other people about their religion.'
When I was doing my lesson plans and we came to RE I said what would you like me to do? Since we are doing Ancient Egyptians I said it would be a good idea for me to cover Moses - in the Bible and the Koran. .... She said 'Oh I don't know much about teaching RE - we'll ask Mrs ---- the co-ordinator.' I was going to do a comparison of the story of Moses in the bible and the Koran - the majority of people in present day Egypt are Muslim so it fitted in well.
(Class teacher) said we have a scheme of work for this but it's not all we taught.

I - Did she let you teach what you wanted to teach?

M - She did but she wasn't happy - she said ' The children in this school are Sikh and we don't see the importance of Islam.' I said 'It's not that I want to push Islam and I'm not pushing Islam on anyone but ....' The way they approached me together (class teacher and RE co-ordinator) as if I wanted to just teach Islam. I said .... the previous school I'd been in - I said to the teacher (all-white school) I said - 'Do you want me to do something for RE on Jesus? And she said to me 'In a school like this - they

need to know something about another religion .... I'd like you to do something on Hajj - Pilgrimage -' I was really pleased - not expecting this - easier for me since I know everything about Hajj. (This teacher) said 'Well there's mostly Sikh children in here and we don't think they would like being taught about Islam.'

I - So they don't have an RE policy?

M - They've decided to write an RE policy - all because of this ...

I - So you might've done some good - raising the issue?

M - Yes .... for this term they had ' Religious Books' - so my ideas fitted in. ... They made me think that I should never be teaching Islam.

I - ... Did you have any Muslim pupils?

M - No - I think that's a mistake - I know you've got to have experience in a variety of schools - the first school I went to - there was a majority Muslims, the second one - was a complete mixture ... but that school I was placed in .... brand new - running for 9 months before I went there - picked up children from anywhere - I missed 6 days and had a repeat practice at ---- - an all-white school. I think the teacher was very supportive ... it went quite well

I - So you felt the teachers were different towards you.

M - What I couldn't understand - there was 80% Sikhs there - all Asians - you'd think they had more understanding - they didn't make me feel as part of them - whereas the other school was all-white children and I felt so comfortable there - the Headmistress said you are welcome to come here anytime, the teacher was .... very supportive.

... I think they should place students in a variety of schools but in the third year - the most important one - if you're placed in a school where you're not happy it can mess thing up for you. What I find is - talking around - Muslim students, who had not had a good practice previously, placed in a school with Muslim children - they did well ...

I - Did they ask to be placed in a school with Muslim children?

M - I think one did - when I spoke to him about what was happening to me he said I should ask for a change of school - so I went to (tutor) (was reassured).

I - So Muslim students have found success in schools with Muslim pupils?

M - Yes - but also there are students placed in schools with all white children and teachers and they've done really well,

I - Like you on your second year?

M - Yes - it's really difficult there's someone who's failed her practice who was placed in a school with Asian children so I don't really know ...

I - So do you think it's more to do with individual teachers and how they interact with you?

M - It could be ...

<u>Teaching PE</u>

I - Let's talk about the teaching of PE on the practice here - how did you find that?

M - The lessons that I did do - they were OK.

I - Was it the teaching of gymnastics?

M - It was gymnastics - yes - but one day she said she wanted me to do games outside ... so I went out with this support teacher ....

I - So you'd changed from gym to games?

M - This was one day - we did ... games in the playground - ... she said - (probably because the weather was good that day)- to do games outside.

I - Did she tell you the day before or that morning?

M - In the morning

I - So you had no time to change the plan?

M - No ...

I - You did it off the top of your head?

M - Yes - fortunately ... the teacher (on 2nd year TP) had done something similar and I did that.

I - So you dropped back on something you'd seen? Did it go OK?

M - Yes - that was the one-off games.
I didn't like the timing for gymnastics - we only had half an hour - I would've liked longer. Do you think half an hour is short?

I - It is short but not impossible.

M - I did do it - but they didn't have as much time on the apparatus.

I - Were you able to change for PE?

M - I wore clothes suitable for PE on those days and just changed my shoes in the class-room.
... I suggested the children had bare feet for gymnastics - the children all had pumps on - she suggested it was OK so I carried on like that.

I - So you had the chance to teach gym and one lesson of games - have you had chance to teach other areas in other schools - swimming or dance or anything?

M - I did - second year experience - gymnastics ... and the teacher wasn't very confident with gymnastics - she said she was learning along with me which made me feel good ....

I - So when you go out to teach you will not have taught dance?

M - No

I - Swimming?

M - I used to go with them

I - So you observed some teaching of swimming?

M - Yes - they had ... teachers at the pool.

I - And only one lesson of games?

M - Yes ... I wouldn't be very confident ... dance I've never done - we did music.

I - Athletics or outdoor education?

M - No.

I - How did your music go?

M - Very good - but it was following the radio BBC programmes.

I - Was there any tensions for you with Islam and music?

M - Not with that programme.

Discussion on school that modify or do not modify hymns - and difficulties for some pupils.

M - At this school a boy was told off for not joining in - but it might have been offensive for him to join in. The Sikhs - it doesn't offend them at all - but for a Muslim (some words in traditional Christian hymns) might be.

I - What type of school would you choose to teach in?

M - At first, because of my main subject I thought I need to teach in an Islamic school.... I wasn't 100% sure .... Then when I went into schools and saw Muslim children - the way they were treated - not being understood, people don't understand their culture, misunderstand them, misunderstand the reason why they're doing things, then I thought ... the kids in the state schools probably need somebody like me .... it's really difficult - I don't really know .... Then I thought, after this teaching practice, that I don't want to be in a state school. I felt (second year school) that it was good to be in a school like this because they get to learn about culture, about Islam, about the people around them ...

I - You felt you had a really positive contribution to make at that school?

M - Yes - at that school. After leaving this school I felt .... they have no consideration for Muslims - for a Muslim teacher - saying no you can't have a day off. I mean .... I wouldn't have minded doing three days for that one day ....
After that last practice what I feel inside was that - I might not be able to teach in a state school because they wouldn't accept me - that's how I really feel - they wouldn't accept me - in the sense that they didn't like what I had to offer, that's how I felt, they couldn't accommodate for me - in terms of - they didn't have any compassionate considerations regarding ... Eid - you

know - and I felt that maybe I'd have great difficulties in a state school after the last practice, but I didn't feel like that after (second year TP).

I - Perhaps when you distance yourself a bit from this practice ... it's all very close to you at the moment - we'll have a chat this time next year - as you are about to start teaching.

M - At (2nd yr school) they ask me things they wanted to know, at ----- school - and I see Asian Muslim kids - the teachers are quite good, some have been there 15 - 20 years and understand the culture, ... but when I sometimes see where the teachers don't understand - I think they desperately need people that do understand - they need people like me - but ... after this last practice I'm really mixed up - if they couldn't accommodate me having a day off for Eid - if they felt so strongly that it was wrong - then I'd have to go into an Islamic school.

I - What about other needs you might have as a Muslim teacher - praying?

M - Luckily now - on this practice - there was a long day and we could get home to pray .... in the 1st year practice I did - I prayed at school, in the 2nd school I couldn't have a (private) wash so waited until I got home to pray.

I - It's just become official college policy here - to allow students Festival days off.

M - It depends on the school - and the people - it depends on the people.

<u>Year 3 at College</u>

I - Was the swimming course OK.

M - There was a problem with that - I was doing repeat TP so I missed the first session - but the school was so understanding - they said take Wednesday afternoons off to go to the course.

I - Did you go in the water?

M - Yes - there was no problem - you see - because we have that allowance (all-female) - there's nothing I could complain about ... I think we've been lucky - that we've been allowed this facility. The next year's lot are so lucky - they don't know what they're getting do they? I think there should be some kind of reminder for the new Muslim students coming in ....

I - Perhaps at the end of your fourth year we can talk to the students through the Islamic society about the 'road you've trodden'.

M - Yes ...

I - Have you enjoyed your year - have there been any incidents that made you feel uncomfortable or is life at WH getting better?

M - Life at WH is getting better.

I - What about the mixing of groups - because that was a problem last year.

M - ... The only problem I found was that - It was really a shame because we got moved - there were lots of students we didn't get to know, (introductions were missing ..) - everyone made their own little groups.

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I - Have there been any incidents you would consider prejudiced in any way - against your race, religion or gender?

M - I've heard a couple of students say that (white) lecturers - a small number - spend more time helping white students, especially around exam time.

I - Why you think that is?

M - It might be to do with .... ease of communication .... use of language ....

I - Has your faith grown this year ...

M - The good thing about this place now is ... we've got our prayer facility, we're accepted - I think that's a good thing.

I - And do you see that as a massive change from when you started in the first year.

M - Yes, definitely - and by having that - I think your faith doesn't really change - you've got a choice - of praying or not praying - you've got a choice now.

I - So the fourth year will be a happy time for you here?

M - God-willing - I think so - I hope so - we've been lucky really ...

I - What's the driving force that makes you so committed to finishing your course?

M - One I've always wanted to be a teacher, two - I've seen the misunderstandings that occur which is a real drive ...

I - You mean - about Muslim children -

M - Yes - a lot of misunderstanding

I - Have you seen more since you've been at college?

M - I've learnt that a lot of it is hidden - whereas I didn't know before. Before this practice I thought it was all a misunderstanding - people didn't understand. What I've come to learn now - people do understand sometimes but there is a prejudice as well - and there are ... hidden things about it .... some say ' We do a lot in our school to help Muslims ... we give them this, that and the other whereas it's only just to show ... maybe to keep the others quiet.

I - So you think it's superficial?

M - Superficial - that's it ....

I - So your perceptions change all the time about other people's misunderstandings and your potential role as teacher?

M - Yes

I - So you're driven because you want to be a teacher and you're driven because you want to help to clarify understanding of Muslims and Islam?

M - Yes.... I always used to think I would go out and make changes - make people accept people as they really are - ... human beings .... and to respect people.

CATH - END OF YEAR 4 - GREENACRES

I - Would you like to talk to me about how you feel at this stage of the course - finishing at WH?

S - The beginning of my 4th year was not a good start - primarily because I had to sit exams again and then in January things were slow moving. The option courses I'd taken proved problematic in as much as the first half of the year was fine then problems arose - staff illness etc. Then I had a problem with TT clashes so I missed 2 hours a week from each option. Then I took ill with appendicitis - hospitalised - operation - everything was set-back - dissertation etc. Then I was recovering for about 6 weeks - I had problems with the dissertation so didn't have as much time as I would've liked for revision. My special study was fine - I enjoyed doing that - it was just time, due to the sudden illness.

I - That sounds quite horrendous - you can't have had much time this year to reflect on being Muslim or moving out into a teaching career?

S - No - since the exams have been over I've really been examining myself and I think I needed to do that - it has been useful in that respect. I was able to allocate some time to me which is the process I am in now - it's another page really and is a case of where do we go from here. It depends on results ... I'm optimistic because I am living in the realms of possibilities at the moment.
I'd like to work to start with - where there is a suitable job. It would need to be related to teaching - in what capacity remains unknown at present. I would like to be in the classroom - that's where my experience would be best used .... someone spoke to me last week about Community Education - that's another option I hadn't thought about. I am thinking through the possibilities at present.

I - Is class teaching your first hope?

S - Oh yes - most definitely - that's really where all I want to do lies - I see myself in that setting. My experiences as a student teacher have reinforced the idea that this is where I am supposed to be ... and that has been really good - positive for me and the children with whom I've come into contact.

I - Perhaps links with the community can be incorporated?

S - Yes - I see that as a way of improving myself and helping the people around me. I feel if I can utilise the experience and qualifications I've got across the board that can be useful for other people who perhaps don't feel they can achieve such things - to

work with them might be an opportunity to help rekindle that lost spirit.

I - Can you explain the lost spirit idea?

S - The lost spirit of themselves - it's rather philosophical really - but in society today people are disillusioned much of the time and problems that one has seem to take over their lives and they sometimes can't handle that - I want to help them cope with those.

I - So you feel you could help people in that situation because of your own experiences - and now training?

S - Yes. I think that my experiences and the skills that I have would definitely be beneficial - I see myself not only as a teacher but also as a parent and someone who lives in the community and can relate my experiences to that of others - that is a useful skill to have and to be able to understand what is going on and feelings of others - this has been useful to my all my life .... I think I could do something for the less advantaged - exactly what I don't know - time will tell.
Before starting here I worked and my supervisor suggested I went into Counselling - .... that's just part of me - I have skills and need to make the most of what I've got for the benefit of people I meet and live with.

I - Your experiences must be quite unique in terms of putting you in a special position - being Black and Muslim - giving you insights that a lot of people don't have.

S - Yes, experiences firstly as a Black woman - they open my eyes to quite a number of things, ... as a Muslim then there are a number of areas that need to be reconsidered. This is why - for myself at the moment I've taken a step back to see what is going on - for my own understanding. Definitely my feelings towards Islam are rich and I believe they will continue to grow that way because I can relate to the teaching of Islam that way. It brings out the philosophical viewpoints I have, gives me something to relate to, and makes me feel able to do what I do in the way that I do it. Others don't always understand that, but I feel - as a society we need to talk more - to start to examine some of the things that are going on. Issues are often disregarded because they don't affect everyone - I think we should all be concerned with the things that are going on around us.

I - Would you like to unpack a bit ways in which you said your eyes have been opened as a Black woman.

S - Firstly, going into schools - the majority of teachers are white the majority of children, especially in City schools, are Black and Asian - a lot of problems might be dealt with differently by a white teacher than a black parent - there might be a response the child doesn't expect. It works both ways. The teacher might tell a child to do something who might retaliate for reasons that are not understood by white teachers. I find that children can relate to me - especially at that upper primary level - I find that good - my colour is not a bar ... often I think in the inner City in particular the black teacher is welcome - from the children's perspective.

I - And the parents?

S - Yes - but even that is problematic - the situation is so complex - some parents don't welcome a black teacher ... you get it (prejudice) from all angles. .... I know black teachers in the profession experiencing difficulties with parents who perhaps don't understand the problems in education and where the barriers come from .... it's breaking down the barriers and for example, for first generation Blacks ... there were problems coming through the system - the school dealt with the problem.

I - Do you mean the schools didn't communicate with the parents?

S - Well it was more - whatever the schools did the school was right - because of the experiences our parents had gained in the Caribbean. For many differences in experiences for Black children were not recognised. Things are better now - with closer community involvement. .... There are a number of complexities involved.

I - Are you keen, then, to work towards breaking racial barriers down?

S - Oh yes - it's all to do with how people interact .... it's a case of increasing understanding and maximising education opportunities.

I - Why do you think so few Black or Muslim teachers come into H.Ed. to train as teachers - how can we improve the situation?

S - It's not that they don't want to come into education - unfortunately they see barriers there as well. It depends on the Institution too - many Black and Asian people study in London. It can depend on the reputation of an Institution. They can see - they know. Many people I know started on teacher training and changed course - the Institutions deterred them from pursuing their goals. They feel they don't need that and they move elsewhere.

I - That doesn't change anything then does it?

S - No - it doesn't change the situation or opportunities in Higher Education. Most people don't feel comfortable where there are predominantly white middle class people...

I -What about you - have you felt comfortable or has it gone in waves?

S - Most definitely in waves - there have been a number of situations where I've had to stay calm - involving lecturers and other students ....

I - Things that have been said?

S - Things that have been said and things that have been done. ..... I've had to re-examine me - direct some energy back ..... My experiences here - well they were not what I thought they would be .... I was looking forward to it - the information I was sent - it didn't meet that at all unfortunately - that's the academic side. My school experiences have been good. I did pick up negative vibes here - coming from students and staff.

I - So do you feel you've been fighting to get to the end?

S - It feels like that - I have been concentrating a lot of my energies on achieving what I set out to do - because I really want to work with children. It has been a difficult road - I have no regrets - this is what I mean about being a Black woman - there is lack of understanding ... on the surface things seem OK but deeper down you experience it.

I - We don't have many Black staff do we?

S - Very few - only one comes to mind immediately - there was another person but she went and that hasn't helped. And there are not many Black students - more Asians.

I - Perhaps Islamic studies has given an opportunity to Asian women but not Black women?

S - Definitely - because you see Islam has always been associated here with the Asians - but there are a number of non Asians who have accepted the Islamic faith in recent years .... you definitely have the issue of racism within that too - unfortunately ...

I - Do you mean Asian Muslims versus non-Asian Muslims.

S - Yes ... there is still that aspect - although within the teachings of Islam that is not supposed to be the case. Unfortunately we are dealing with people here.

I - Has that been the case for you here?

S - Most definitely ... they know because I speak my mind ... at one point I thought I can't believe this - I really can't believe what is actually taking place amongst the Muslim students. It really has been an awful experience to tell you the truth ....

I - Have you had any people you would call friends with whom you could share this.

S - They all know - how I feel - the Muslim students ....

I - Are there other non Asian Muslims on your course?

S - Not in my year - there was another white student who started with me but she dropped out - another Black student dropped out ... so really I've been on my own - as a Black student amongst Asian Muslims.

I - So you've felt isolated?

S - Yes ... there have been a couple who have been OK and who have tried to make situations better - and who are OK as people and Muslims - you can see the caring there - a small minority.

I - How has this affected you being a Muslim - that must have been a struggle for you as well?

S - Most definitely - Islam is what I aspire to and I will continue to look towards Islam but I've had to take a step back because of my experiences here. I was so excited when I started because I had only recently started to learn about Islam and I was so thrilled that I could learn about Islam and move in that direction - it came to a halt in my second year .... I still aspire to Islamic teaching and observe Islamic principles - that would be my ultimate goal.

I - But you did not find this a supportive environment within which to do that?

S - No.

I - Do you think this is related to the majority of Muslims here being Asian?

S - It's got a lot to do with it. I'm not the only Black student who feels that way - I know of other students in lower years who feel the same way. You can see the negativeness in them which is sad - it's just a very sad situation - it's not as pretty as it seems to be.

I - Are these students questioning their belief?

S - It's not so much their faith - it's the fact that they chose not to be intimidated by the other Muslims.

I - So they have to fight to stay on an Islamic path?

S - Yes - and it's a very hard fight....
I think it's that we were not born into the Islamic faith - it's like - you can't tell me anything about my religion - although the religion doesn't belong to anyone. It's that type of scenario - that's difficult - the sharing aspect is put on hold - it's like - they prefer to tell you rather than look at something together - it's difficult to comprehend ....

I - Are you dealing with a more superior attitude amongst the Asian Muslims?

S - Yes - you'll find across the board that a lot of Black reverts to Islam have that experience - male and female - it's a widespread problem.

I - The majority of British Muslims are Asian.

S - Yes - and the percentage of Muslims in the Caribbean is low. In African countries there are more ...

I - So the ideal that Islam is a World religion and accepting of all who claim to be Muslim - in reality it's not quite like that?

S - It can be what it professes to be - it comes back in my opinion to the individual. It's OK to say that this is what Islam is about and what I and you should be doing .... but taking it on board is another thing. This is not applicable to all Muslims - please don't misunderstand me .... it's just that in my experience - I've had to stand back ....

I - So in a sense you've been doubly isolated here - both as a Black woman and a Muslim?

S - Yes, my feelings are - that where I am now - I have yet to be convinced - I wouldn't say I was Muslim.

I - Have you moved in the other direction?

S - No - I've stopped - I've taken a back seat for now - I don't know for how long. I still take on board the teachings.

I - So you still want Islam in your life but your experiences here have put you off for the moment?

S - Definitely.... We as individuals need to be aware of what is going on in order to eliminate the problem. It's OK superficially - people are willing to listen but the shift to action that brings real change is huge.

I - Do you think things would have been different if you'd taken another main subject?

S - Interestingly I wanted to take English originally but there was no space. I was quite happy to do Islam - I was just beginning to learn about it and the teachings. I can really relate to these and see how people could make it work - but in reality .... there's much to be done on personal relationships - within the Muslim world.

I - OK - let's move on from these unfortunate experiences - you did a PE course this year - how did you find it?

S - Yes - that was fine - interesting.

I - Do you have any concerns about joining the teaching profession?

S - No - I'm raring to go - I think that's where I should be. I've already had one pool interview but I was unsuccessful - the informality of the situation threw me - I knew I'd messed up. Unfortunately I didn't get sorted out for the B'ham application. I've applied to Suffolk and Havering - I get the TES regularly.

I - You don't mind moving then?

S - I'd like to stay in B'ham - this is where I grew up - then sometimes I think it would be good to move away - to sort me out. I'm quite flexible - as long as I teach - that will be fine.

I - Because I'm interested in PE can we talk about that for a bit?

S - I love PE - the best part for me was swimming - I love to teach swimming - I find it amazing to watch their progress in the water. I get enthusiastic about all the activities - I want to join in with them. I really enjoy teaching PE - there are areas I need to improve on within PE but I think that will come with experience.

I - So you are very positive about everything?

S - I think dance is the area I need to really develop.

I - So it's just confidence really - nothing to do with dance as an activity area.

S - That's right. ... I just want to get into school and do some work - I did some drama and so many ideas came from the children- they created so much around this one thing - it was fabulous. I want to get something good off the ground and be able to feel that the ideas and experiences I've got will be good for the children and me - I really want to be involved with children - and witness their positive learning. I would welcome the opportunity to help to develop them.

I - The last question I have is about being a Muslim teacher and how important it is to you - obviously this is difficult for you at this stage - what about the significance of being a Black teacher?

S - Well - my experiences in school have been that children really want to be in my group. I've always found this - I think it's more to do with the sort of person I am than that I am a Black teacher.
... I think my experiences as Black and Muslim, are part of me and are not easily separated out .... the relationships I've enjoyed in schools have been positive.
One experience in school - I was doing Islam with the class and one Muslim boy was just amazed at what we were doing. He wanted to share his ideas about Islam with the rest of the class which I welcomed. The teacher emphasised his parents were very strict but there were no problems.

I - So you inspired him?

S - And he inspired the class .... it's been good. The school has asked me to go back and help with development of work on Islam - I said I'd be happy to do that.

I - We spoke a few months ago about the issue that blew up at Birchfield school - Muslim (WH) parent Governor and so on - would you like to talk about your concerns over this?

S - A lot comes back to individuals. ..... There is a lot of room for questioning ... the media blew it out of proportion. This goes back to problems within the Muslim world - even locally - it's not quite right. They are entitled to do what they do but it could appear forceful and problematic to the authorities.

I - Did it concern you?

S - Yes - it really did - the Muslims have a bad press anyway - I was thinking 'Oh my goodness - Muslim students applying for jobs at this stage - they are not going to want us.' The application forms had gone out - you'd already said your main subject was Islam and it was difficult to know what the attitudes of people interviewing you would be. I still have that concern ... but generally speaking I just feel really that those problems will continue because there are so many things that need to be done because people are not moving towards real improvement.

I think the NC can work - it's a matter of how it's delivered. Time constraints are serious but I think it can be done effectively and all children would begin to understand more about their world - different religious beliefs and so on ....

I - I think you have much to offer the teaching profession.

S - I really want to get out there

I - I think all the things you are will come through in how you teach. I wish you the best of luck in finding a job.

(Discussion about being a mature student and college support systems)

S - The reading weeks were moved to coincide with the school half terms but that was all.
(Black students support group did exist and Sharon found that helpful - it disbanded when the co-ordinating member of staff left. S. had joined the Islamic Society but left when she felt unwelcome - predominantly Asian)

FAREEDA - END OF YR 4 AT GREENACRES

I - Thanks for coming in for this interview - I hear you are busy going off on interviews.

M - Yes - yesterday I went to 2 supply agencies - one was HMS and the other Select - just informal interviews - filling in forms and things like that ...

I - Is that what you want - supply teaching?

M - Yes - I had a phone call this morning from a Head about a full time post but I told her I'd rather supply for the first year - the reason is I've just started taking Islamic lectures - going regularly to these meetings. I find that my life is empty if I'm not doing any Islamic work because that's the most important thing to me at the moment, and second to that is designing . Because I'm really getting my head into that at the moment I want to sort that out and see where that leads me. Because all my designing is self taught I want to find some courses and obviously I'm going to have to fund myself
because my grants run out after 4 years ... and also be able to teach - so basically its incorporating everything so I don't miss out on anything and because I'm so unsure about what I want to do next year I don't want to commit myself to one thing and find out it's the wrong thing - so I'm going to take a slice out of everything and see where it leads me.

I - Why do you feel so unsure at the moment? ... When you came into Gr. 4 years ago was it teaching that attracted you - or the Islamic studies?

M - It was Islamic studies that brought me here but - to be honest straight after my 3rd year practice that's when I realised that I really did enjoy teaching and being with children. And because my fashion designing is still very important to me I don't want to lose that

I - Islamic fashion design?

M - Not exactly Islamic ... it's open to all spectrums - Islamically orientated but open to non Muslims ... the designing is so important to me - this year I've done nothing and I don't want to lose it - or just close the door on it - I want to keep that door open and see what avenues are open to me.

I - You were designing before coming to college?

M - Since I was 11 - but ... more seriously in the middle of my 1st year here.

I - Who makes up your clothes?

M - Me - I do everything

I - Do you do exhibitions?

M - I've been to a number of exhibitions - I've displayed a few times - it goes really well - there's a definite need for Islamic clothing because ... when Muslim women want to find something different - covering, non transparent and loose it's very hard to find it down town in High St. stores - although this year you find there are a lot of long skirts and dresses around but they are often tight, low cut or sleeveless - so there's a definite need for the market I'm targeting.

I - Is your uncertainty anything to do with your 4th year at Gr.?

M - No - the 4th year has been the worst at Gr. - we've had lots of problems (staff member in hospital etc.)
.... For a long time I've felt I wanted to do something Islamically orientated - even though I'm doing it in my designing - being committed to going to the meetings - and learning more about it - I feel - I'm committed to these meetings, it's really changing me - it's making me feel a much happier and contented person. In the past I've always said I want to do it but never did - all talk and no action, now I'm actually putting into practice it's a new field for me - so it's something I don't want to lose sight of - for years I've wanted to grasp this - teaching I still want to do - it might even be 5 days a week - but supply for now - so I can keep all my doors open.

I can't say specifically what it is - up until 3 weeks ago I was seriously going to go into a full time teaching job - then I thought about everything, my designing would have to stop and it might affect my meetings and I don't want that to happen - so the only way I can compromise is by doing it this way.

I - So what are your views on teaching at the moment -

M - I really enjoyed teaching - the best thing I ever faced - but in teaching you can't apply yourself totally in a State school - being a practising Muslim - because you will face certain problems such as - you can't really teach music for Islamic reasons. In years 5 & 6 boys and girls should be segregated and you are going to find that a problem in a State school - and ... art as well ... I've heard two sides of the argument but I'm not too sure of the art - when they are doing figurative drawings they are doing it to learn - not for any other reason .... I'm not really sure about it ... I do want to teach but I have other interests and I want to take them into consideration.

I - So would a commitment to teaching take these other things out of your life?

M - Yes - and teaching isn't my main interest . Above everything else is my religion and I wouldn't let a career come in front - after that would come my designing - I don't want to commit myself until I'm sure about what I want to do. I need to be really sure before I take a full-time teaching post.

I - And you feel you can explore that through supply?

M - Yes - it will give me more areas, more schools, more of an insight into how schools are run, I am even interested in Special Education - I did my dissertation in this area ...

I - With some of the possible difficulties in the State system - in a sense versus Islamic requirements - is that something that has become more uppermost in your consciousness as a result of this course? Were you as aware before or have you grown into that awareness?

M - I certainly wasn't aware before when I first came to the course - but now that I know more about my religion - about what we should and shouldn't do - it does make you think about whether the State school can really accommodate Muslim teachers and Muslim children? It's an area we have to look at because - I personally think that they can't - for instance if you look at the history - it's all British history - 99.9% is British history - it doesn't incorporate much of other religions or religious history. If everything is taught from a British point of view - you've got to assess what the children are taking in . If you want them to learn about Islamic history they would not learn it through the State system. If I had children I would think seriously about enrolling them into a Muslim school because I'm not sure a state school would adequately provide what I would want my child to learn.

I - Have you been into a Muslim school?

M - No - but we've looked at Islamic curriculum - how it incorporates National Curriculum and teaches it from an Islamic not a Christian point of view. I haven't had first hand experience.

I - Have you thought about applying for a job in a Muslim school?

M - No - because I'm not sure that I want to be a full-time teacher - I'm not 100% sure about that. I might be content doing supply or taking on a job-share - that will allow me to do other things. ... I need to be happy in what I'm doing - I don't want to limit myself.

I - If you get a supply job in the State system will you be looking at how you yourself - as a Muslim teacher - fit into that system - is that something you want to test out still?

M - Well I want to see how I fit in and how they accommodate a Muslim teacher and also the Muslim religion - alongside other religions. For instance I turned down a job in London where they accommodated all the major religions and seemed very keen to have a multi-ethnic population with regards to staff and children. When I looked at the RE curriculum I found that Christianity and Judaism were taught in all years and Islam as well except in Year 6 - and I think it's very important that they have all religions in their final year. I always find in any school - if anything is taken out - it's always Islam.

I - Last year you spoke about the importance of Muslim teachers in multi-ethnic or all-white schools - do you still feel that way?

M - I think that is very important - especially in the State system. In a Muslim school that will be provided anyway - in a State school they need to understand and accept what a Muslim really is and what Islam means and how to accept other religions and cultures - I think it is an important role - but then you can't cut off your nose despite your face - teachers shouldn't have to compromise their beliefs ...

I - The difficulties you mentioned about music etc. and Islam - there is no consensus on them Islamically is there?

M - No - I did teach all those areas on 3rd year school experience but I was not as aware of it then. If I have to teach them on supply - I'm going to have to do it but I'm going to see if there are ways - eg separating the girls and boys ...

I - Would you do that if the majority of the children were non-Muslims? Is it an issue for you or for Muslim children?

M - It's more of an issue for Muslim kids -

I - So will it be a case of responding to needs of the particular children you meet?

M - Yes - I know I've got to compromise but until I can be more sure ... I have to look at the position first.

I - (Discussion on 2nd year dance research project and findings - dance & Islam)

M - At that time I guess I didn't know much about the issues - of it being mixed and so on - I can honestly say it's only come to a head in the 4th year - in my 2nd year it would have been more acceptable but now - I see it from a different point of view - especially if its year 5 & 6 children - they should be separate.
I've spoken to R------ about this and she is concerned about mixed swimming with her future class

I - Is this with predominantly Muslim children?

M - Yes

I - What about strategies such as ensuring non-contact and not pushing mixed sex groupings - are those ways of helping the situation?

M - Yes - that's how I'd deal with it on supply - but it would be better if they were separate - as they become increasingly aware of their sexuality.

(Discussed the change that has come about in her as she has found this Islamic group and started to commit herself more fully in that direction in the last month)

The group (Travelling people) meets Fridays and Saturdays - it's about developing your Islamic personality and how you can do Dowa - (Islamic work) that is working for Islam in a non-Muslim environment - making people aware of what Islam really means - concepts, codes, about an Islamic state and things like that - I'm not committed to the group but I'm committed to the meetings - the difference is I'm committed to the meetings to learn but I am not committed to the group until I'm sure - if I am dedicated I will go into it but at the moment I am just going along.

I - Is it mixed?

M - Yes - at the moment men sit at the front, women at the back - ideally we should run completely separately but it's a new group. We don't talk to each other because we know that we shouldn't socially mix with a man unless it's for education - for learning - not socially for a casual chat ...

I - Are you happy with that?

M - Yes I'm totally happy with that because I know the Islamic concept, the code - the etiquette - it's just all about modesty - about hijab. Now hijab has a wider meaning - there's inner hijab and outer hijab - it means covering - it also means being aware of etiquette being aware of the way you present yourself - the way you look,

not being flirtatious, not being outwardly or inwardly attractive to the opposite sex - you've got to guard against things like that.

I - So hijab is very symbolic of what you have adopted / taken on?

M - Yes - both physically and emotionally - very much so.

I - Are the lecturers men?

M - Yes - the ones on Friday and Saturday

I - Are there women?

M - Yes there are sisters - in the foreseeable future we are getting a lady to come in to speak to us - as it gets bigger etc.

I - If you chose to adopt the group completely will it influence your teaching - would you always have to have it at the front of your thinking that your responsibility was to represent Islam?

M - Do you mean to indoctrinate?

I - No - would you see yourself as having a particular role in life to educate others about Islam specifically ...

M - I don't think my perspective on teaching would change - I don't see why it should. My Islam is very personal - it's not for me to tell others how to be or to behave - I'm just interested in becoming a stronger person myself.

I - As very visibly Muslim do you think you make statements - not verbally - about Muslim women through the way in which you behave and treat others?

M - Yes - I hope that would come through anyway - as a person and as a Muslim I would treat children with kindness and respect with understanding, I'd listen to them and treat them equally and treat all religions as important as each other - that's part of being a teacher and a Muslim - that wouldn't change.

I've think I've told you this - do you remember my second year teacher who took one look at me and assumed I'd be out to indoctrinate the children?

I - Yes -

M - She should've given me a chance first before judging me - for instance this supply agency man yesterday he thought women who wore the veil across the face are under the thumb of their men. That is not true - all the ones I know wear it by choice and even their

husbands would prefer them to remove it. People judge by the way others look and this should stop - Muslim women wear their clothing by choice not pressure.

I - Where do you think people get their attitudes from?

M - Media does a lot of damage - for example the TV programmes during Ramadan - I don't know where they get some of the people from - they have backward views and un-Islamic. 'East' recently was talking about polygamy ... and a 'Muslim woman' said she would kill her husband if he took another wife. A practising Muslim woman wouldn't say she would kill her husband if he took another wife ...

I - Are you saying you agree with polygamy?

M - Islamically - yes - it's OK.

I - It must be very difficult to live in a dominant secular society in which your religious beliefs are actually against the law?

M - The problem is people look at it sexually - and it's not like that - for example if the first wife can't have a baby the husband can marry somebody else and have children - there are lots of reasons. Some polygamous marriages work very well ....
For instance there's a couple in Norwich - the gentleman took another wife - she must've been about 25 and he was 50 - both ladies get on well - they both have separate houses - they work together, look after each others children ... the man has to take them on equally and treat them equally

I - So this is happening in Britain today despite the law?

M - Yes - it's happening - it works for some.

I - What are the equivalent rights of women - for example if a woman could not have children because of her first husband could she take a second husband?

M - No ..... I don't think I could answer that properly?

I - They can divorce and re-marry can't they?

M - Yes there are circumstances for divorce. ... We look at it this way - we follow examples shown by the Prophet ... PBUH -having said that you don't just follow something without reason or explanation - because I can't answer that I'm going to have to find out ...

I - So you've changed a lot in the 4th year, including Islamically?

M - Yes, ... and in my designing - it was always an ambition to pick it up after my Degree.

I - OK - Let's think about you going out as a supply teacher - and PE. You had an Outdoor Education / Athletics course this year?

M - Yes - it was a lot of fun - all of us enjoyed it and it helped us think about more games we could play with the children - that they could take an interest in, and games for getting the children involved - maybe it looked more holistic than previously - it was wonderful.

I - So if you get to teach PE on your supply days how would you feel about that? We've discussed Islamic requirements ... would there be any problems with teaching any PE activities?

M - No - the children need to know all areas of the PE curriculum - I would take certain things into consideration in terms of structuring and organising - but I certainly wouldn't have any problems teaching it. Anyway, in many cases, culturally, children - especially girls - don't get chance to do anything active. PE is important for them.

I - What about music?

M - Personally I don't listen to music any more - (explained situation in which she felt 'intoxicated' by the music - with the power of the music - that effect is anti-Islamic)
Musical instruments are limited in Islam - lots of concerns are about sexual connotations - lots of songs are about things like that, gays and homosexuality and other things that are prohibited in Islam.

I - Would this affect your teaching of music?

M - I'm not sure - the mixed PE thing would give me more problems. I'd focus on the learning of rhythm and so on

I - As in dance you would focus on the action content for instance?

M - Once children become aware of each others bodies - as they get older - it's all about being modest -

I - Am I right in thinking it's not about the activities themselves?

M - The PE isn't a problem - it's the situation.

I - Did you go into primary because you would be dealing with pre-pubescent children?

M - When I first came to the course I didn't have very much knowledge - now my outlook has changed.

I - So has teaching become more problematic since you've been here - as you've become more religious - and indeed has changed at the end of the 4th year in relation to where you were at the end of last year?

M - Yes

I - No-one knows what's in front do we?
(Re-cap through questions - all covered. Return to how media influences could be changed)

M - It's asking questions - not allowing media to influence so much.

I - How do you view the role of teacher as an instrument of change?

M - Obviously - as I teach different religions will come up - it's important to educate children about what and how people behave.

I think people will learn best by interacting with Muslims - people will learn about the Islamic character that way. For instance the gentleman I spoke to yesterday - just by talking to him he opened his mind - I think he had pre-conceived ideas - he was narrow minded and he changed his views. Lots of change is achieved through education - such a powerful tool - and it's obviously important that Muslims go out to demonstrate how Muslims live their lives.

I - So Muslim teachers in the State system could be important?

M - Yes, it's very important to get Muslim teachers in the State system - to educate the teachers, adults - parents, and obviously future generations - so there is more understanding and ability to have more knowledge of different religions in the world and be able to accept one another without having prejudiced and racist views.

I - Yes, for instance the man yesterday may never have had an opportunity to speak to a Muslim woman before?

M - Yes - but there is little you can do until faced with particular situations.

I - You've been through H.Ed. trained in teaching and so on ...

M - Yes - we do have a very important role - I did find that many WH students left the course with very narrow views and maybe prejudiced views about Islam - and other religions - which is such a

shame when they've had the opportunity to learn - they've been in an environment where they can learn ... very few have taken the opportunity to speak to us. I found the men were more open minded and accepting than the ladies.

I - So do you feel that you've come through WH as a group that's been segregated?

M - Definitely - it takes two to tango but I found that once you make an effort with non-Muslims and you get knocked back you are not going to go and be knocked back again - we are all adults and should be accepting of one another. For example when we broke into groups - we've wanted to mix ..... I'm very used to mixing with non-Muslims, previously because I've not been wearing hijab very long so people were more accepting of me - since I've been wearing hijab they don't approach me so much now. When we did want to join groups the non-Muslims didn't want to join with us - it must have been the way we looked and pre-conceived ideas about Islam - once things start going like that you just stay in your own group.

I - Did you find in your 4th year - more main subject orientated - that you had a lot less contact with other students?

M - Yes - we did get involved with the B.Theol students - some did but not many.

I - When you said you were 'knocked back' what did you mean exactly.

M - We wanted to join together for academic work - the issue was nothing to do with religion - but it was for them.

I - When you say it's the way you look - do you think it's more to do with wearing hijab or being Asian?

M - .... when I didn't wear hijab being Asian was never a factor for me ... since I've been wearing my scarf people behave differently - they tend to look at the way you look if they're not used to being seen with people like you they won't mix with you ... there are people who look further and accept you for who you are. For the others - it just brings back prejudice and even racism in some cases.

Does that help?

I - Yes - greatly, thanks.
Are you going back home now?

M - Not to live I'm hoping to live in B'ham

(Mother ill - in Nottingham, brothers working in London, father travels away a lot so there is concern for mother's health and care. Parents want to go back to Pakistan but won't until R & M are married so M. has asked them to move in with her in B'ham.To be discussed - no decisions made yet.)

I - Why do you want to stay in B'ham?

M - Firstly for my Islam - it grows when I'm in B'ham because of the contacts that I've got. I know when I'm in Nottingham it just drops and I don't want that to happen again. The second reason is jobs because there is more work for me here, and finally because I want to get married and my prospects are better here than they are in Nottingham .... for designing it makes no difference either way.

I - How do your parents feel about your graduation?

M - They are very pleased - my mother is coming to the graduation - I think my father will be away - but he's really proud and pleased that all his kids have finally graduated and could be financially stable. That was an ambition of his.

I - So he's always been supportive of you going into H.Ed

M - Yes - never any problems - even encouraging us to stay here because we have work to do - stay there and do your work. Dad has been absolutely wonderful - and mum .... financially they have always been there. You can't communicate with my father - it's hello / goodbye and few words inbetween but everyone shows love in different ways and our father shows it by supporting us financially. This may be a weird way but that's just the way he knows. He doesn't have to give us money to show us he loves us but that's just one of his ways.

I - Has becoming more Islamic had an effect on them?

M - Yes - (Father knows Qu'ran and translation off by heart) - because we hadn't been the ideal daughters - we've given them a bit more pain - especially me - I got married, then I left him, and we were divorced - that happened and all the community life inbetween - he can't understand how we can learn this and not put it into practice. He uses the pain we made him suffer on us sometimes.
My mother is much more accepting and open-minded than my father but because my Islam is so important to me - that' where I'm going to put my foot down and say I want to be a better person so just help me. As I learn it's helping me to have more patience with my parents - life is an education - a learning process - and it's all about change.

I - They are practising Muslims?

M - Yes - but more cultural than religious - there's a lot I don't agree with - some of it is un-Islamic. There's pros and cons.

I - So your father is not finding it easy to accept your movement in an Islamic direction?

M - I think he's pleased we started wearing hijab but he doesn't know about my Islamic meetings and I'll have to break that to him somehow.

I - Would that upset him?

M - Yes - because - he likes control - he'd like to know what we are doing, where, when and how. He'd rather we just stayed in the house with him so he knew what we were doing all the time. When we tell our parents about Islam my father thinks we are being condescending but we are not. ... He uses his knowledge in a cultural and not Islamic way. When we've wanted to go to meetings before he's said no, why bother .... My mum knows about my meetings - I've told her I'm adamant - ... if there is something that disturbs me I question it - I know I have that right and I will do that because it's the most important thing in the world to me.

I - So there could be tensions if you lived together next year?

M - There would be tensions but ... it would be better that way.

I - You said you wanted to get married - is that in the near future?

M - Well, my body clock is ticking away (26) and I'd like to have my own kids. But then in Islam we believe all lives are predestined - so if and when you are destined to have children that's going to happen - you just need patience and faith in God. But as for the partner situation - I've met a few people./ I've got a blind date today - through a friend - I'm not too sure about it but I'll go in relaxed and just see how it goes. I've met a few people but I tend to get scared because of my past but anyone going into the unknown would feel the same. Because I've been married - even though it didn't work - I know the joy that you can get out of it .... I'd like to start off again and having a child would be wonderful.

I - Are you going to choose your own husband then?

M - Yes - as I did last time (We've discussed this before) He was white - I met him at college - my parents were against it - but now they want to see me married again - they've done their bit but the people they come up with aren't even debatable. They know they

haven't really got the contacts either - we've got friends involved in things ...

I - So you've a friend who has set this up today - a Muslim?

M - A friend from college - There are lots of sisters here at WH and she knows someone who might want to get married. We'll just see how it goes.

I - Good luck .... I'll let you get off - thanks for talking to me.

HANA - END OF FIRST TERM OF TEACHING

I - How have you found your first term in teaching?

S - Hard work, very tiring, lots to do. I think it was just the day to day planning that was most .... I know you do it on TP but just for 6 weeks - it's all the other things that go along with running a class - you just don't realise what it's going to entail.

I - So it's very different to TP?

S - Definitely... All the books ... I've got such a wide range of ability in this class - I've got 2 who can't write their names and they can't even trace over them .. so when you try to differentiate for groups - because there are some that can - you have to differentiate even within that group ... it just takes so long and I think - oh my god I'll never get through this.

I - Do you get support?

S - Some (odd days)

I - So it's mainly you and 27 -5 year olds?

S - Yes - I started with 30 ... 3 have gone to Pakistan. One was supposed to be back after 6 weeks but we haven't heard anything.

I - So how long ago was that?

S - She has missed virtually the whole term.

I - Is this common in the school?

S - Oh yes - mainly to Pakistan.

I - What percentage of your class have links with Pakistan?

S - All of them .... one is a Sikh but most of the school is Muslim.

I - How does that mirror the school?

S - It's 100% Asian but within that we have different language speakers - mostly Punjabi

I - Do you use your Punjabi with them?

S - Sometimes - with the lower ones, but mainly English. I thought I'd try it with some to try to get a response but I didn't.
Some of them understand English better anyway.

I - Has it been harder or easier than you thought?

S - I don't know ... I knew it was going to be hard. Knowing the school before helped, from TP - I know how everything worked, I knew the staff ...

I - The familiarity helped? ... You weren't as nervous at the start of term?

S - I was nervous - meeting the children - on that first day - I don't know what I did - don't ask me - I just thought 'oh my god I've got 30 children in front of me' ... It's gone alright so far.

I - What have you enjoyed most?

S - Being with the children - their responses to things - things they enjoy doing - some of things they say are just so funny ...

I - So you chose the right age group? You really enjoy the little ones?

S - Yes

I - What difficulties have you experienced in general?

S - ... The planning - we do year group planning (3) but then you pick what you want to do ... termly planning - but we have weekly meetings ... if there are any problems.
It's just trying to get progression through what you're doing - making sure you remember to do it because you've got so much going on all the time - it's quite hard - sticking to your timetable as well - there's so much work to carry on into the next lesson and so on ...

I - So you never catch up with yourself/

S - No ... we do a weekly forecast at the beginning of the week there's always things on there you've not managed to cover. You think - 'Oh no - I should 've done this and that' - I'm worried that everyone else will have done everything and I haven't - there's always that difficulty.

I - So you plan flexibly as a team but can do your own thing inside that?

S - Yes ....with attainment targets ....

I - Was any of your work at college particularly useful?

S - We have different sheets we have to use ... and the NC has changed as well - we just plot the PoS we are covering ....
I've had a look through my Curriculum Area folders for ideas ...

I - So you are quite clear on what is expected of you ...?

S - yes ... I've got a mentor - she's only been given the opportunity to come in once --- she said she would like to come in more often.

I - Does she have a class?

S - Yes

I - So the problem is with releasing her from her class?

S - Yes .... I can talk to her if I have any problems ... the head hasn't been in or the adviser yet. ....
I don't know if what I'm doing is right ...

I - How easy has it been to build relationships with children, parents and staff?

S - The staff - fine - I know them anyway. The children - brilliant, really easy - I think because they are so young ...
The parents ..... I've written in my book about that ... some of the parents were a bit ... they didn't think I was a teacher. Maybe because I was Asian, maybe because I was so young, one of them asked me - are you their class teacher? I said 'Yes'. She said 'Have you done a course or something?' I said 'Yes I've done a course' ... She was fine about it afterwards .. they are just not used to seeing it I suppose.

I - Are there any other Asian teachers?

S - Just one and she's much older - been here a long time. They might've seen me here before - as a student - perhaps they thought I was still a student. They all know now. But a couple of them were funny with me in the beginning - just looking at me - not talking to me - but they are now. ... I speak to them as well - in Punjabi if they speak Punjabi - they are alright now - ... the younger ones were alright - it was some of the older ones.
Even one of the dinner ladies after a few weeks said - 'Where's their teacher? I said 'It's me!!!!' She said 'Oh'. I think they are just not used to it - seeing an Asian teacher.
... Even one of the junior girls came up to me and said 'Are you a teacher?' and I said 'Yes' She said 'I thought you were just a worker'
We have a lot of 'work experience' girls from B..... School - lots of Asians ...

I - So they thought you were one of those?

S - Yes - they all know now.

I - Do they speak to you in Punjabi?

S - Some of them ....

I - What has been happening in your PE lessons this term? Have you done any?

S - Yes - we do it on a rotational basis - week one - large apparatus, week 2 - small apparatus. Large apparatus - we've been focusing on different ways of moving - ... small apparatus we've just done getting used to the apparatus really - they didn't know how to use it .... hoops, large balls....

I - Is there a curriculum co-ordinator for PE?

S - We've just had one because the person in charge of PE got a deputy head-ship so she left at the beginning of term and there's been a supply teacher in her classroom until now ... the PE co-ordinator's new as well.

I - Was there a PE policy? Did you know what was expected of you?

S - There is a PE policy - Well I knew how it worked because I was here on teaching practice, in the policy there are lots of ideas of what to do and so on .....
We do swimming in Yr. 2 ....
We do a big topic plan for the whole term - and a half term plan - and a weekly forecast.

I - And do you relate PE if you can?

S - Yes

I - How have you felt in your PE lessons?

S - The first large apparatus .... I've 3 children with special needs - one with splints on his legs - I was really worried - felt 'oh I can't cope' - but he was fine - better than some of the others - I was just worried ... so I asked the Deputy Head to come in. I was just worried because I had not been able to see how he copes with it ... if he has an accident with just me there ... I couldn't watch just him and all the others. In reception there was always a nursery nurse with him who stayed with him. But he was alright - he tends to rush

on the - you have to watch when he's on the climbing frame and balance beam - other than that he's alright.

I - What are your other special needs?

S - One is speech and the other behaviour - and I don't know what is going on with him.

I - So did you feel confident after that first lesson in which you had that support?

S - The next lesson - I was watching him - I watched him all the time - he's been alright since.

I - Do you get the apparatus out for them?

S - Only the climbing frame .... the children help with everything else.

I - What do you enjoy most about teaching PE?

S - ... The children really love it ... they love the big apparatus ... I think it's just seeing them working in a different environment and how they get on with each other .... seeing them trying to work together.

I - And moving in a larger space?

S - Yes - I was worried about that at the beginning - with the behaviour of some of them - but they've been alright.
.....

I - So in terms of major difficulties it was handling special needs mainly?

S - And ideas - small apparatus - I know they have to practise the skills but in interesting ways .... I need to look at books and that

I - Do they have resources here for you?

S - Yes

I - Let's talk a bit about 'being Muslim' - has it been of any particular significance to you in the school?

S - I don't really think being Muslim has been ..... I think it's just being an Asian face rather than being a Muslim. Some of the children say 'are you Muslim?' and I say 'Yes' and that's it ...

I - Why do you think they ask?

S - I don't know - maybe they think you're the same colour and might also be a Muslim. I don't think it's 'being Muslim' ...

I - So being Asian is more important?

S - Yes - to them - because they see that you're the same, them being so young as well ...

I - Yes they are young - how much to you think they know about 'being Muslim'?

S - They talk about going to the Mosque and things but ..

I - Would they go at that age?

S - Yes

I - Boys and girls?

S - Yes

I - How often?

S - Everyday

I - What percentage of your class?

S - About half I think

I - Does it depend on how strict the family is?

S - Not really - it's just like an after school club where they learn to speak Arabic, they might learn to write Urdu one day ... non of them are really strict Muslims here ... it's just that it's important for you to learn it - never mind if you don't know what it means .... it's just a thing that everybody does, I used to go ...

I - So it's part of the culture?

S - Yes

I - Have there been any incidents or tensions that you have recognised (being Muslim) that might affect the children?

S - No - perhaps because they are so young, it doesn't matter at that age.

I - Anything in curriculum content?

S - No

I - Can they wear track-suits in PE?

S - They can but they don't ... perhaps when we go outside.

I - What about assemblies.

S - They celebrate different religious Festivals but ... they are moral really ...

I - What about Christmas?

S - They have the story but they don't act it out or anything?

I - Might that be a problem?

S - It might be...

I - They acted out 'Rama and Sita' for Diwali ... I didn't hear of any problems.

S - They sing songs like Jingle bells ....

I - So the emphasis is on the celebratory side of Christmas?

S - Yes

I - Returning to your TP school was positive for you?

S - Yes - because I'd enjoyed it so much .... and I did my dissertation here - some said 'You're not new...'

I - You seem to have settled in OK and to be handling everything well.

S - I don't know if I'm doing it right - I'm just coping with how I think I should be doing it.

I - How do you feel about teaching now ...

S - ... I'm just happy with where I am at the moment - at the moment I think I'll stay for a while.

I - What about you yourself and the move towards Islam we discussed last time?

S - That's on hold really - you hardly have time to yourself.

I - What time do you arrive in school?

S - 8.00 o-clock - it takes me all morning to set up ... you think 'What have I been doing?' and it's just things like getting the crisps and the milk register and stuff done like that - it takes so long ....

...(Discussion on organisation of the day - the large size and the school and the effect on dinner rotas and the one and a half hour lunch break.)

I - What time do you leave?

S - About half four - quarter to five.

I - And the weekends?

S - I try not to do anything Saturdays but Sunday ... it's all the planning for the week...

I - But you are coping

S - Yes - can't wait for the holiday .....

SALIMA - END OF NQT YEAR IN TEACHING

I - How do you see your 'professional self' now you've finished your NQT year?

T - I've done a year but I still don't see myself as a teacher. There is so much more I could do to make myself better and things I need to improve.

I - You are very hard on yourself?

T - I can see myself teaching for two or three years then I want out.

I - Let's go to my last question then - where do you see yourself in five years time?

T - I've no idea really. I want to start a family in two years but career wise I've no idea.

I - You weren't sure when you started. You thought you might like to do a Masters Degree?

T - I don't want to do that now. I don't want to do any more studying.

I - Then you thought you'd only stay a year - now you've survived and are going into your second year.

T - Yes - that's true.

I - And you thought you might want to leave that school at the end of the year?

T - There have been good and bad moments - it's not a bad school - it's quite a good school. Some of the teachers rub me up the wrong way. M------- (year team teacher) is moving up to Yr 6 now and I'm getting an NQT. I'll find that strange. The Head said 'You'll be very good for her and I've got no worries' but I feel sometimes that I'm still finding my feet. I've met the NQT - she's got a lot of questions, is very nervous but .... I can see myself like her a year ago. I think there will be some problems, that I will expect her to do this and that, and there are expectations of me to support her a lot. I think I'll find it difficult.

I - So you don't feel confident to take on an NQT - you don't really feel confident in your own teaching?

T - No. I think I'm a better teacher than I was a year ago but it's a long process. I've had some schemes and lessons which have gone really wrong. The first term was the worst - not in pressures - but in what I taught - basically it was rubbish. I think English and maths lessons are fine but science is bad - I didn't have any control over it because M---- used to tell me what to teach - he'd say 'You are going to do this today'. I had no control over it. I'm the sort of person who needs to go home and read up on it - particularly in science and he used to tell me what to teach on the day. I had totally no idea what I was doing and felt completely out of control and I think the children missed out.
The NQT is quite confident with Science - she's just done a big project on forces so she said she'll bring that in ... it's nice in a sense that I am in control ...

I - Yes - I met her last week didn't I - she seems very nice.

T - Yes - she's very nice, very nervous.

I - Well it can't be all bad because you're still there. You suggested (when I came into school last week) that the Head had been particularly supportive recently - what has she said?

T - She is good - I had an NQT development meeting - she was well pleased - I sometimes feel false - as if I don't deserve the things she says. She didn't say anything bad at all. She said there was nothing she could pick up on that I need to develop, 'You're fine as it is - there have been no problems.' Sometimes I feel I don't deserve all this praise because she does let other teachers know how NQT's have done.

I - Is she pleased with all of you?

T - Yes but I came out on top. I feel embarrassed, I don't feel worthy of it. I can produce good lessons when somebody is there, but when I know there is no pressure on I'll take the easy road, take it slowly, do it my own way. That's something I need to improve. I do good lessons under pressure but have coasted through sometimes.

I - So you want to make changes next year?

T - Yes, and we'll be Ofsteded in the summer so she'll be very strict in the autumn and spring. We're sorting out our schemes. She knows a lot of other Heads in the area and she gets good schemes for us. She is a great help, I don't see her as the enemy any more .... (giggles)

I - There was a time when you did. She put a lot of pressure on you at one time?

T - Yes - she still does, and there have been complications with other teachers but basically she says it's her job on the line and she wants the school to have a good reputation, and the teachers.

I - So you can see that now?

T - Yes, I can, I get on with her now.
I was embarrassed when I sat there and she told me everything.
I told her that sometimes I don't think I deserve all this, and that sometimes I don't see myself as a teacher. She says she sees me perhaps going into management. She wanted me to take a responsibility point. Technology was on offer. I said give me anything but technology - so I'm going on as I was. She said we'll have a talk again at the end of next year.

I - So are you saying you feel valued at that school now?

T - Yes - but along with all of the NQT's we feel that some of the teachers don't like us because we've done so well. (4 NQT's) - we don't boast or go around saying anything but word gets around through senior management and things are said in Staff meetings sometimes - no names but it's obvious who they are talking about. M---- makes comments sometimes.

I - Like what?

T - He called me a creep .... I think he's been joking - he doesn't get on with the Head at all - he's called me 'a creep', 'the apple in the Head's eye', 'star' ... sometimes it bugs me and sometimes I just ignore him. He's not been doing too well and that's his own fault.

I - I thought you enjoyed working with him?

T - The first term we got on really well - best friends - but in the spring term he changed and that's when he started making comments. I'm really relieved he's been moved to another year.

I - Why did the change happen?

T - When I started going off and doing things for myself. We had formal observations - I would come out better - he would cóme and tell me he hadn't done too well - I wouldn't tell him but I'd done much better. He didn't like that at all - there were sarci comments. There were a few times when I'd answer him back but usually I just took it because I don't like confrontations.

There were times when he didn't speak to me for a week. ----- would say go and apologise to him and I'd say 'I'm not apologising - I haven't done anything wrong'.

I - Are there other staff who've had problems?

T - From the Head yes .... one teacher walked out. The Head came round without any warning to see if teachers were doing what they had planned to do - and only one was (The NQT's were out on a course that day). She had a meeting with the staff and blew her top. One teacher said she wasn't feeling well. The Head said if she wasn't well she shouldn't be in school so she packed up and walked out. She's on sick leave until September - stress. It was a pity - she was a nice person.

I - It's a difficult job.

T - Yes. I said to C---- (mentor) - I don't feel I deserve all this praise. When Ofsted come - if I don't do well - I'll feel as if I'vc let them down.

I - Are you going to worry about that for the next year?

T - Probably.

I - You seem much happier with the school now?

T - It's a nice school to work in. Everyone who comes in says it's a good school, friendly staff. I think - 'yes - you have to work here a long time to really know what is going on' - but on the whole it's a nice school.

I - What about mentor support?

T - We've always had a good relationship (since SE3). She's really helped sort the maths out. She's done 4 sessions of helping us in the classroom and then she does an assessment at the end - she's very good. I've been able to say anything to her, and ask her anything. I talked to her about M----- - she said - let him do what he wants and pull yourself up because if you follow him you will be slated basically. The first time my file was not up to scratch the Head said she would've expected a bit more. I said I thought that was how it was done because that's how M----- does it. She said no and showed me other ways to do it and it's been OK since then. I think the Head realised she wouldn't put an NQT with him again.

I - Was there anything you would've liked that you didn't get from your mentor?

T - Just time to talk - to sit together and talk - quality time. We had to do it at breaks and lunch-times. There have been a lot of people off sick and C--- has had to cover and so on - it's been very busy. We'll have 2 new NQT's next year, the Deputy Head is pregnant - having a term out. It's all change.
I feel science is my weakness and I've made this known and the Head has said if there are any local courses for science next year she'll send me.

I - Can we talk about how significant you think being Asian and Muslim has been this year?

T - I've had real positive feedback from some of the parents, especially when I started to wear the hijab properly. This happened after Easter. I went in for a teachers' day without it and decided I would wear it into school the next day when the children returned. It was a big step I was very nervous but I said I was going to do it and I did.

I - Who did you say that to?

T - The classroom assistants. They just looked at me and said we don't believe you. They all expected me to stop wearing it within 2 or 3 weeks - that I wouldn't stick with it. But I couldn't take it off now - I'd feel really uncomfortable. All the staff said it looked nice - they said it made me look more feminine, more glamorous which wasn't the point.
The children - most had questions - why do you wear it, why have you got that on, why now? I came in the first day and they just sat there and looked. Then they started talking amongst themselves and I said 'Stop - you are probably wondering about this - are there any questions you want to ask?' and one or two boys put their hands up. They asked why and why now? I said 'I'm a Muslim and as a Muslim woman I should cover my hair'. They asked why now and I said 'I'm ready for it now'. They were saying they have some cousins who wear it, relatives. They all said it looked nice. They asked when I was going to take it off. They realise it is a part of me now. That first day I was more nervous of the children's reaction than the staff. It didn't bother me what the staff would say but for the children - there was no slow build up - one day I didn't wear it the next I did. Although I wore it out of school they didn't know that.
The parents have said it looks nice. They thought I'd done the Hajj which I hadn't. So they asked why I was wearing it then and I said it was part of being a Muslim because I was building up my faith. I will probably do Hajj one day. They said I should do it because it's a very nice experience. There has been nice feedback from the parents especially on parents morning.

I - You obviously feel very comfortable with the hijab now.

T - Yes, I do.

I - What about your colleagues?

T - They comment sometimes like in the hot weather 'Aren't you hot under there?' On the first day they all had something positive or a question to ask about it - they didn't just look.

I - How have you found time to build your faith during this busy year? You've obviously found some space. Was it family support?

T - No - it wasn't family - I don't think they like it at all. It's been through friends and through my own reading. There have been a lot of meetings in B'ham - especially our area - but I'm not allowed to attend them. My parents assume it is all fundamentalist - they don't like it at all - they won't even let me go to all women's meetings.

I - So what has influenced you?

T - Reading and my friends. Most of them wear hijab and their faith is much stronger. I talk to them a lot - yes.

I - So what was your parents reaction?

T - Mum was in Pakistan when I started wearing hijab.
Dad didn't say anything - didn't know how to react so didn't say anything.
My sisters - one thought it was just a fashion stage .... the younger sister said she could see it in me and wasn't surprised at all. She will probably follow in a few years time - she's finding where she is and what she wants at the moment.
My brothers were positive. They didn't say it looks nice or was good. They trusted me more. They didn't ask where I was going if I went out. I expected that before - if I went out I had to tell them - especially my elder brother but now - no they trust me. There used to be comments about what I wore but not now.
Mum just doesn't like it because it's not a Pakistani 'thing'. She doesn't think it fits in with the culture. The funny thing is - her friends - the community has said what a positive thing it is. But mum doesn't know how to take it - she has just smiled or ignored the comments.

I - So she doesn't wear hijab?

T - She wears the scarf but not hijab.

I think my parents find it scary. Dad goes to the local Mosque - there is this fear of a young Muslim trend growing and they find it scary in that the young are very outspoken, forthright and will say when things are 'cultural' not Islamic.
They are scared I will turn around one day and say something but I wouldn't - I wouldn't do that to them. There's no point in doing that - it wouldn't get me far. I think my faith building up has made me see them in a more understanding light. I didn't understand where they were coming from - now I do sort of accept - it was the way they were brought up and the way they are.
They do think it's who I hang around with now but I would never speak up to like that - it's just not in me - there's no real threat there. They should be proud that at least one of their children is taking a more positive step - but not yet - maybe in 5 or 6 years.

I - The friends that have influenced you - were they from college?

T - From college - yes - the closest (I don't know you remember her .....?) has gone to London - but it's the phone calls .... I have to pay now!!!!

I - How do you cope with not being allowed to go to meetings and things whilst you have a professional job and so on?

T - I can understand - in a sense they feel they are losing control - there's only a couple of months before I leave so there's no point in rocking the boat.

I - Where are you going?

T - I'm getting married.....

I - Well it's been on the agenda!!!

T - I've put it off for 6 years now.

I - Are you happy?

T - I can't see myself married in a couple of weeks - it will be August - no definite date.

I - Are you and your sister marrying these brothers we talked about last time?

T - Yes.

I - Are they from Pakistan?

T - They are in Pakistan, born here, went over when they were about 10. It's not forced, more accepted .... my family have said I couldn't marry out of the immediate culture - it had to be somebody inside - so I had to accept eventually ....
My friends say how do you feel? I don't feel anything - I can't see it - I just can't imagine being married - I think when it happens it will smack me in the face.

I - So what were your parents criteria for your partners?

T - They had to be of Pakistani origin, Muslim, and related to the family - not close, they are a far relation - but they had to be part of the family.

I - Have you met your partner?

T - No -

I - I thought they were coming in May?

T - They are coming but they are waiting for us to set a date before they come over.

I - Have you written, exchanged photographs?

T - No - nothing. I know what my sisters looks like - very tall and good-looking but - quite immature.

I - What are the positives about getting married?

T - I can escape from home - I want to move out - it's time - I'm stressed out at home. I'll be in control of my life in that I don't have to answer to anybody. I'll be in charge.
The two brothers we are marrying are coming down on buying a house together - but I've said no I don't want to live with another couple. I think my sister needs her space too. I'm not having a shared house. My sister thought it would be nice - but I don't want that.
To start off with I'll move in with his family in Washwood Heath.

I - Have you met them?

T - Yes - they are much more 'with it' than our parents. You can talk to them - that's the main thing you can ask questions. They're not very tight on where you are and where you are going, why you're doing this or that.

I - Will you start going to your Islamic meetings then?

T - Yes - probably - take him along.

I - Is he a strong Muslim?

T - No - but we can build .... we'll have to see - I can't imagine the future at all - so I'm just living day by day.

I - Have you got everything ready?

T - No - not even the wedding outfits. Nowhere is booked yet. They want a Registry Office wedding but I've refused - I don't want that - it'll probably be in a hall somewhere.

I - Do they know at school that you're going to be married?

T - Yes - C---- knew all along - she knows everything. I think she understands. She said look at it from his point of view as well he's probably very nervous as well.

I - When do you meet?

T - As soon as they come over. I don't mind if he says there is somebody else for him but other than that I think it will go ahead.

I - Do you want to go through with it?

T - I don't know - I want to in a sense that it will be nice to move out of home - that is the only positive thing.

I - Can't you just move out and buy your own house?

T - No - I wouldn't do that to them - it would be like a rejection and I would be an outcast and it would seriously hurt them. (Parents)

I - Are they proud of you as a teacher?

T - No - teaching is not high status in Pakistani culture, not valued at all, devalued actually - not regarded as a profession.... I think they value that I have a Degree. My sister has done Pharmacy - anything to do with medicine would've been more highly valued.

I - Well the marriage issue has been on the agenda for many of our interviews - it must've been at the back of your mind all year?

T - It has been - because I did see myself as settling down and having children - it's hard not seeing him, not knowing him, I

can't see where my future is ... I want a family but I have to have it with a marriage - not without a marriage.

I - My next question seems very apt for you at this time - do you think the hijab, as a visible symbol of your commitment to Islam, influences the way in which people interact with you?

T - Yes, the first time I wore it I was conscious of people looking - I didn't like that. I got more attention. I realised afterwards it was more positive attention. With the men you get more respect - Muslims and Asian men - look the other way - you won't get approached.

I - So the men treat you differently?

T - Yes - on the street. The fathers of the children at school said it was a nice thing. They thought I had been to Hajj. I explained I had made the decision myself - they regard it as a good thing, they were pleased I had done it myself, I wasn't forced to do it. It's a nice image for the girls in the school - so it's been positive. But I did notice a difference - everyone looking at you to start with - but you realise it's a different kind of looking - respectful, especially the men. I don't get rude comments when I'm walking down the road. It's nice like that.

I - What about the women or girls?

T - The girls at school were positive, a couple brought their scarves in and put it on. I think they realise being a Muslim is important - so they brought these in and they do ask questions which is nice.
I don't get so much positive feedback from the young girls in the community - they don't know how to take it. They expect you to have changed overnight - it's not like that - I've made a statement about my faith.
There's a different image between this and the shalwar kameez - Pakistani - image - there's a big, big difference. This does stand out. The hijab says you are Muslim, the shalwar kameez says you are Pakistani, and I do wear it sometimes although I don't like wearing it. I don't associate myself with Pakistan at all. It is the country where my parents were born and my relatives are but I wouldn't want to live there. I've visited. There is a lot of work to do there.

I - So your husband doesn't want to live in Pakistan?

T - I don't know!!! (giggles) I think one of them has to go back - they have a business and a house there and they don't want to let it rot away. It's a nice house as well - I've seen it - a nice middle of

the City house. I wouldn't mind a break there - a nice change - but I wouldn't want to stay there for the rest of my life.
One of them is expected to go back.

I - I though the parents were over here?

T - The mother is here - came for the eldest sons wedding and is waiting for us to be married .....

I - So to go back to the hijab - it did change the way people acted towards you?

T - It did - the first couple of weeks it was strange - now its just part of me.

I - Why have your parents been less supportive of you wearing it than others?

T - No-one in the family has ever done anything like this - they don't know how to respond or to take it. Mum has made negative comments, dad hasn't ....

I - Do they see you in a sense going against their culture to become more Islamic?

T - Yes, I look differently at Pakistani culture - there are so many discrepancies between Islam and Pakistani culture. I would never blame my parents - I can understand .... and I think it is scary for them ... I think there is this strong feeling in the community that the new young Muslim trend is coming out and they don't know how to respond to it - they feel their culture will die out. They regard it as fundamentalist. There have been confrontations in the local Mosque ..... they view that as a threat.

I - Do they regard the hijab as fundamentalist?

T - Yes

I - But you don't regard yourself that way?

T - No - when I think fundamentalist it conjures up terrorists and so on - I'm not like that. It's just a symbol of growing commitment.

I - Can you explain that to them?

T - No - we don't communicate at all - just live in the same house.
I think I can understand dad - lived with a lot of males, left home at 10. He didn't know how to respond to daughters. They've seen

young girls around they didn't want us to be like them so they came down very hard. Mum - whatever dad says goes .... it's hard to communicate with both of them really. Mum says 'it's very important that you talk to us, that you tell us ' - but I go to my aunt. They know we do it but they don't like it.

I - Having said that you obviously love them

T - Yes, I wouldn't hurt them .... A year ago I was thinking of leaving but I've seen other families where that has happened and it's destroyed the whole family.

I - So - you are doing the marriage thing for them but also for yourself?

T - Yes - let's get married and see where it goes

I - It takes you out of your immediate family situation?

T - Yes

I - My next question was about any tensions or compromises experienced because you are Muslim - we have talked about this throughout the year.

T - I think I'm strong enough now - I've never experienced any real problems. I think the school is very good like that - people do try to understand the background, the community, they know it's mostly Muslim children - they do understand - the Head was very good like that,

I - So you felt very comfortable in the school?

T - Yes, very good like that.
Facilities for prayer? Private space is good - a parents room - its just time - but I can pray later when I get home. Some friends said I should not be working with M---- (a male colleague) especially the first term when we got on so well. Maybe it's a good thing there's a barrier now and he's moving. I don't find it a problem working alongside men. Sometimes parents would come in and go to shake my hand and I'd say 'No' and they'd think 'Oh yes' - I wasn't trying to embarrass them but I wouldn't shake hands now.

I - Can we just spend some time discussing PE? Let's talk about the activities covered.

T - Games, dance, swimming, athletics, no apparatus in gymnastics - we only did it for a term!!!!

We are having an Indian dancer in next term - a professional - for our year - that will be good.
I've spoken towards the PE co-ordinator and she said towards the top end of juniors they stop taking apparatus out anyway.

I - Why?

T - I don't know - the infants have it out all the time.
We didn't do gym again after Christmas.
I enjoyed dance and games. M------- was very into games - he took mine because he wanted me to teach his drama - we did a swap - but I didn't like losing my class. I would've preferred teaching my class.

I - Have there been any problems in PE with regard to Muslim children and specific activities?

T - I had a letter from the parents of one girl saying she wasn't to do swimming because she was a Muslim. It was a mixed-sex environment.

I - Did you feel able to address that?

T - No - I wouldn't push it. I wouldn't want to push it with her parents - with some I could. She wasn't in my class but in my swimming group.

I - How do you feel about that?

T - I think it is a pity - she just sits there doing nothing - she wants to take part.

I - Did you take it to the PE co-ordinator?

T - I don't feel I can approach her - she's older, white-haired, everything has to be organised just so .....

I - How do you feel about teaching PE now?

T - I enjoy it - I am more confident because I don't see myself having a discipline problem with the children any more, especially now - everyone keeps sending me their naughty children to discipline!!! (Giggles)
(Still changes for PE)

I - Discipline & safety were a concern at the start weren't they?

T - Yes - that's OK now - I'm more confident.

I - What about your perceptions of teaching as a career - have they changed?

T - I think a lot needs to be done. You can get away with doing some work which is not worthwhile at all.

I - It's hit your conscience?

T - Yes - I know I've done it - just to keep them busy and quiet - you give them something just to make them sit there.
I've stopped mixed ability groups now because I found that didn't work. It's much easier to get differentiation with ability groups. With the Asian parents - some say the discipline in the school is not very good - and in Pakistan it would not be like that - the children would listen to the teacher and respect everything said. This parent said some children need a good smack .... I said we can't do that .... they want it more formalised. I've had some parents in and they seem surprised at the discipline- I'm happy with my discipline - I've got to the stage where I can just look at them and they get on with their work.

I - And next year?

T - I've got the same year but different children - so I can use some resources again. They all wanted to be in my class. When we went for our classes - they were calling names and the children were whispering 'yes' 'yes' .... when they were called out as in my class ... (giggles)

I - Did that make you feel good?

T - It did - it was sad for the ones I had to let go - the Head wouldn't let me move up with them. She wants me to move phases next year - perhaps a Yr 5 or 6, I said no to infants - I don't know how to communicate with them.

I - It seems a very caring, comfortable school?

T - It is - you can get into a routine ..... the Head was saying she sees me there another couple of years and then I should go for promotion. She said she didn't want to say that really but that's best for me - to go for it, for promotion in another school. I just said I want to be an ordinary teacher. I don't want responsibility - I can't cope with the things we have to do as a class teacher.

I - Have you surprised yourself this year - because you had no confidence to start with?

T - Yes - I coped and you just go on .... it helped when I stopped relying on others and pulled myself up - no-one will do it for you ....

I - What about the effect on the rest of your life - has it got better?

T - No - the summer term was hard because of the reports - getting them done, what to write, being positive .... Saturday I usually take a day off and Sunday night I do a bit .....

I - Do you think the marriage will change next year for you?

T - I will have to change ... I'm going to have to change as a person - everyone says they feel sorry for him because I'm not a very emotional person - I like my space, I'm not clingy. At home I'm usually on my own in my room or in the garden.

I - So you are hoping he's a similar sort of person?

T - (Giggles) - .... go our own two ways.

I - You get a new sort of independence ....moving away from home ...

T - And another set of responsibilities ....
I don't do anything around the house. In his parents house they will expect me to do it.

I - They might be going back to Pakistan in the near future ...

T - Then I'll get him to do it (giggles)

I - Well I wish you the best of luck with all the plans for the summer .....

ASMA - END OF SPRING TERM IN SECOND YEAR OF SUPPLY TEACHING 1997

(Asma came into college for her interview after hearing, that afternoon, she would not be required in her favourite school after Easter. She was upset and disappointed. She had popped home to tell her mum then came straight in to see me for the interview that had been prearranged.)

I - At this point in our relationship and the research I am picking up threads within your specific interviews since each situation is developing in such a unique way.
At our last interview you were feeling more confident in teaching and had been proactive in getting yourself a five-day week commitment, between two schools - in language support work. You were looking forward to this. How has it worked out?

A - That's right - I've done a full term for the first time. I was supposed to be a language support teacher. In theory I was supposed to move around helping children with language difficulties, E2L children, not special needs or have particular learning difficulties - I am supposed to help with translating where there are difficulties or misunderstandings about the culture, expectations and so on. Most of the time it's OK but in the second school I went to I was just put in because - as a one form entry school - they couldn't afford teaching assistants etc. I was put in as a Section 11 support teacher, paid for elsewhere, but they use me around school in whatever way they can.

I - So are you doing all kinds of support?

A - Doing all sorts - for children on the special needs register, with learning difficulties, not particularly language difficulties. They are not using the language input so much.

I - So you are paid to go in as a language support teacher and are being used for other situations?

A - Yes, they are not supposed to do that, I am not paid for that ....

I - How do you feel about that?

A - I am angry and I've gone back and said how I'm being used, I am supposed to be a bi-lingual support teacher. There was another one there too - being used as a classroom assistant - not as bi-

lingual support. The system is just buggered-up ... nobody knows what is going on, if you say something nothing happens.
But I've got a whole term under my belt .... before I've been counting days and so on, Sept - Dec was only two days a week, but with this I've worked the whole term, I've got a good report and I've got an interview for the pool on Wednesday.

I - Well done

A - I haven't had an interview for yonks .... the head has given me reference, I put college and the one Head - (H---------). It's the other school where there have been more difficulties. I'm happier at H---------. But nobody knows what is going on - I'm supposed to be monitoring the language progress within the Section 11 job but I didn't know .... apparently if there is no evidence of the children progressing there is no need for us to be there. Nobody told me .... at Section 11 or at school ...

I - Did you feel thrown in at the deep end then?

A - A lot of the time yes .... I am picking up things as I go along .... why couldn't they give me some guidelines on what we should be doing?

I - Do you work with the same group of children so you can monitor progress then?

A - I'm supposed to be working with the same group of kids but week to week I'm rotated around the classrooms -

I - How can you monitor progress?

A - Exactly .... nobody told me ..... I would have done it next term but I've just been told I'm not needed - at H---------. It was pretty definite for the whole term that I would be staying on but today I was called in and told I would not be needed.

I - Why?

A - Because the teacher I was replacing - her retirement has been deferred to the end of the school year - I would have had a full week in H--------- - now she's working until August - and another teacher I was a fill-in for two days a week, is coming back.

I - So are you disappointed?

A - Yes, you could say that .... I knew St. C--------- was going - I didn't care about that one but I was hoping to be at H--------- - I lose out everywhere - I've got nothing. The one good thing is I've got onto the staffing agency in B'ham LEA through this job ... because I'm funded through the staffing agency - so they have to put me on the agency. I tried to get onto it for ages but I needed an equivalent of one year full-time in a school - which I didn't have - but now they've taken me on and I'll be on that agency as well now.

I - So you'll not have section 11 work after Easter?

A - No - I'll just be ordinary supply - back to where I was -

I - That's a shame because you were much happier about the future at Christmas.

A - I know - it's not the Head's fault but I blame him ..... he was the only in front of me so I was having a go at him, he was saying 'it's not our fault .... '
I'll see how this interview works out on Wednesday .... I am hoping for a job through the pool .... to tell you the truth I want to get a full-time post - for one year, get my one year out of the way, then I want to leave. I'm fed up now, I've had enough ..... because I thought I was going somewhere .... but I'm not -
(breaking point)

I - But you might be going somewhere - you might get a good job after Wednesday?

A - Yes, I'll get my one year out of the way - no-one is guaranteed a permanent job, or any promises after the one year contract. It's getting harder ... the Head said it's getting harder - he was really apologetic and everything - suggested I looked through the Vacancy Bulletins and so on ..... but I said I have been doing this - the majority of jobs want particular expertise, responsibilities, or senior management posts .... there's nothing there for me - every week I go in I look at the Bulletin but nothing is there for me - if there is I apply but get told the post has gone internally or has been filled - I've applied for three or four like that ... it's getting harder. The only jobs that are really coming up are at places nobody wants to be .... at the good schools nobody is moving ... like H---------.

Section 11 funding is stopping - I wouldn't have minded staying with this work - at least I knew I had to get up in the morning and I knew where I was going - I hate waiting for the phone calls (on supply). I've got used to not having to wait for the phone calls, I don't know how I'll feel about going back to that now. I don't know whether I am going to do any supply yet .... the way I feel at the moment .....

I - What about other LEA's?

A - I want to work in B'ham - why shouldn't I - I've always lived here?

I - Do you think there are too many teachers for too few jobs?

A - Well, there is that possibility but there are not enough teachers out there who can support through different languages. ..... I know it's unfair on the monolingual teachers - and they're doing a good job - but at the end of the day you're assessing some of the children incorrectly. There was one kid who had gone through the whole of his schooling as 'special needs' and he isn't - he had language problems that were eventually picked up by a classroom assistant. Even within the section 11 teachers - how can they assess a child's difficulties when they can't speak the language?
I went in recently - I'm doing speaking and listening skills at the moment - the teacher goes 'I've been trying to speak to this child and I can't get any answers?' I spoke to him and the child knew what was going on but did not have the English to answer.

I - How do you deal with the diversity of Asian languages?

A - The majority of mine at H--------- are Punjabi speakers - Mirpuri, I speak Mirpuri - Punjabi, Urdu and Hindi. At St. C-------- - they needed a Bengali translator for a child - which I couldn't help with - but luckily the parents spoke Urdu so I could speak to them in Urdu.

I - So you feel you've got a lot of skills to offer some B'ham schools but are not appreciated for those skills?

A - That's right - language support systems are changing - schools have to apply through the Home Office but financial support is given directly through schools now.

I - So do you feel you are not being given a chance through any route to contribute?

A - That's right.

I - Well I think you've tried hard to be proactive - getting the section 11 work through persisting with phone calls and so on ...

A - Yes, but where else can I go now? The Head was really nice - encouraging me to go through the Bulletins etc. He knew I was looking for a job in mainstream - I wanted a class of my own. He knew that and in fact raised it with me - that I was a qualified teacher and perhaps not in language support work by choice at the time. I said no - not at the beginning - I wanted a classroom job from the beginning. I don't even know where the Vacancy Bulletin's are in some schools.

I - So you feel disadvantaged in many ways?

A - Yes

I - Do you think any of these experiences are related to your being Asian and / or Muslim?

A - I try to separate my being a teacher from me being a Muslim - I don't know, maybe somebody else who is more sensitive to it might pick it up in that way but I haven't picked it up in that way. But saying that - at parents evening in H--------- - some of the parents were asking for collective Islamic worship because the majority of children are Muslim. But some of the teachers took it the wrong way. I have no objections - but if I wanted to work in a Muslim school I'd go and work in one, but they were saying 'Oh I think they (the parents) are pushing for this school to become a Muslim school' - there was a big fuss in the staffroom but nobody would look me in the eye - I was the only Asian, Muslim person in the staffroom at the time and nobody would look at me - they must have thought I'd be on their (the parents) side, or would be strongly for it or something .... they knew I was there but they weren't interested in how I felt about it or asking my perspective on the request - what my views might have been on the subject ... perhaps they felt their jobs might be on the line - I don't know - I think it (their treatment of me at that time) was because I was Muslim.
Other than that I have enjoyed being there, being with the children and so on.

I - Did the joint planning materialise?

A - To begin with I was in on the outline planning and decisions on how I could help within that, but this term planning has been in the hands of the teachers and I didn't know what I was doing. I wasn't 'in control' of my part of the lesson. Originally I was in charge of my part of the lesson but this term they were the 'class teacher' and I was the support teacher. It's just the way it worked out - there wasn't time to take a slice out of the timetable for my part of the teaching. As it worked out - when the children finished my part of the lesson I felt lost - so did the kids, I didn't know what I was supposed to do with them or where to send them.

I - So the job didn't fulfill the promise you hoped at Christmas?

A - No, no...

I - So you wouldn't have done any PE again this term?

A - No ...

I - Or had chance to observe any or offer language support through PE?

A - No ... the school had a PE INSET day, somebody came in, but then I was left with a group of children in the classroom, I wasn't invited in to it ... the class teachers went in and a supply covered and I was given a group.

I - So you haven't had any opportunities on INSET?

A - No

I - Do you see that as another area of disadvantage in your current position?

A - Yes

I - You didn't have any support in your first year either did you?

A - No

I - There does not seem too much that is positive?

A - Not this term there isn't - last term there were meetings put on days suitable to me - when I was in and I was involved in that planning. Now - they have meetings, often on days I'm not in, and they present me with their planning and tell me what they've done. It's not the same being presented with ideas on paper, I picked up a lot in discussions last term.

I - So in terms of your professional development - do you think you are making progress?

A - No ... the relationship with the children is better with some continuity of contact .... not so much cheek, or bad behaviour.

I - So that's a plus but am I right in thinking you are feeling generally disappointed with teaching at the moment?

A - Yes .... I was told at break time this afternoon. I went home to tell my mum and just walked out to come here, that's when I rang you to say I'd be a bit late. I told them (parents) the other day that St. C--------- job had gone because there were changes in the Section 11 funding - I finish next Wednesday. Originally I was to be there until the summer, but then the Head told me I'd finish at March. At least I thought I had H--------- - it was pretty promising up until Friday - Friday I was told at least you've got your 3 days and if you are not at St. C--------- the other two days we'll fill up those times using you as supply now you're on the register. Now - two days later I have no job.

I - How do you feel?

A - What can I do? I tried writing to individual schools last year when I did not get my application into the pool. I rang schools, talked to Heads, was asked to send my CV in and was told I'd be considered when vacancies arose. Then, when they did arise I'd get my CV back with a note to say the vacancy had been filled or something .... it's gone internally .... I have a massive pile of rejection letters - it would be nice to have a letter of acceptance for a change ....
Now ... I just want to get my 'NQT' year out of the way ....

I - Do you have to work?

A - No ... my parents are easy going .... they'd probably marry me off (laughs) ... they are trying. I haven't really found anybody yet - you know, you've got to click ... my parents know that and are

accepting .... They'd like me to work just so that I don't become brain-dead sitting at home ....

I - You seem to be trying very hard for a teaching post?

A - I am ... who can I go to .... there's no point in putting people's backs up .... I wish he hadn't told me today with my interview on Wednesday ... I was happy until afternoon break today. I'm angry that he told me today - he could've chosen his time better - I will tell him, we were interrupted by a phone call - but I will tell him.

I - Are you going to be positive in your interview on Wednesday?

A - Yes, I know I must be ... but when I come across this I think 'Well is teaching really for me?' I really want it ... but how long am I supposed to fight for it? ....It doesn't have to an Asian school, I've been in a variety of schools and do have something to offer, especially to Asian children who might need some kind of support in language ....
Some people have chosen to go into supply but I didn't, I gave supply a shot for one year, then this bi-lingual support position, but I want an all-round job - I want to teach everything ... to develop all-round ... I might forget things like PE or English ....

I - Do you feel you are losing touch with some curriculum areas?

A - Well yes .... I am thinking will I know what level the children are at in different subjects ... because I'm not a 'teacher' I don't get sent on GEST courses or anything. Some friends of mine were sent on a bi-lingual course. Because I was Section 11 - a language support teacher - they assume you know everything about it and I didn't know anything - I took the job to get into schools. They didn't send me on the course because it was just for 'teachers'.

I - Are you suggesting you are perceived as 'inferior' to 'teachers' in your current position?

A - In many ways yes ... more like a classroom assistant ...

I - S------- was sent on this course - you could ring her for information?

A - I could but it's different to actually being sent on the course .... there are a lot of things - assessment, monitoring children and so on

- because I was Section 11 they assume things and nobody tells you anything.

I - Were there any terms in your contract?

A - I never had a contract .... they decided to employ me until December and then on a temporary basis .... I've never had a contract or any support ...

I - So what you've learnt has been through the job and people you came into contact with?

A - Sometimes I think the classroom assistants know more than me ... at the beginning I asked the teachers what I was supposed to do - they got frustrated with me because they assumed I knew .... so that happened for a while but I picked the job up ...

I - So what will happen if they offer you a job on Wednesday?

A - Today is a bad day to ask that ... but tomorrow I will pick myself up, brush myself off and get ready for Wednesday .... and the head said 'See you tomorrow' and I thought 'I suppose so...' He hated telling me that I had no job - he didn't choose me in the first place I was sent to the school but he tried to be very nice .... The deputy Head frightens me ... she says 'What is your job Aliya?' and I say 'I don't know what I am doing' - sometimes I don't know what I'm doing .... at the beginning of the year she said to the other staff in front of me .... 'If you can use Aliya - fit her in - if not leave her out'.... I don't think she thinks much of me ... or the language support job .... perhaps it is because I am Asian or a Muslim, I don't know ....

I - So she was discussing your job with you there without addressing you?

A - Yes - in front of me - that was my job they were talking about ....

I - So no-one made a good enough case for you --- you're leaving?

A - I'm not sure whether they would've kept me on - nobody says anything. The Head gave me a copy of my reference - it was good.

I - Have you thought about Muslim schools?

A - It's not what I fancy at the moment - I think they need to sort themselves out. I don't want to put my career on hold to help sort them out ... I want to get my year out of the way before I think about other areas or directions ... until I have that I can't do anything else ....

I - I wish you the best of luck on Wednesday - let's keep in touch ...

A - I'll ring you if I get a job - and if I don't you know I'll have committed suicide (laughs)

I - It's not worth that .... you have a lot of support from your family and so on ... you might not even like full-time teaching?

A - Exactly - but I'd like to be given the choice - doors are slamming in my face - it would be nice to say 'no' if I want to .... no I really want to get into school, try out all my ideas and so on ...

I - Well I look forward to seeing you in July .... Perhaps this evening was a bad time for the interview?

A - No - it probably was a very good time otherwise I might have covered it up or something ....

JAMILAH - END OF SECOND YEAR OF TEACHING

Review of previous discussions

I - What's changed since our last meeting?

M - I'm keener to do supply - to get some experience of the older children - key stage 2 - I didn't really consider them as an option before because I felt more at ease with the infants - I like a lot of the infanty things like just singing rhymes with them for instance. But I thought it would be interesting - I'd like to see what juniors are like - break myself into it - yr 3 then 4 and so on ... I've had juniors in with me at lunch-times helping in the classroom - they can do more and you can speak to them at a higher level. It would be interesting to do that. I'm also looking forward to just going into school - having a class for a day then being able to leave at 3.30 - 4.00 instead of having to stay behind to do displays and record - keeping - what have you.

I - So the change in level of responsibility appeals to you because it frees up time for other things?

M - Yes

I - What about the freedom to do what you want to do on those days?

M - Yes ... they might set work - but that's good as well ... I'm beginning to question - you notice how much they pick - when you say to a child cross your legs - fold your arms - and you wonder if the role model you are giving is really good .. what they are picking up from you - You have this idea - you walk in in the morning and you are going to be all positive with them and try to praise everybody and by the end of the day ... you're probably not as near to your goal as you want to be ... things add up - if you are not relaxed and comfortable with what you are teaching, doing .. if you don't feel as in control - totally - maybe that shows in different ways - maybe you get more irritated or something.

I - What are you uncomfortable about - can you give me any examples?

M - For example - the other teacher (team teach) she's part of the senior management - so we might have a timetable but she's got the freedom to change ... to say forget the timetable - the children are getting restless now so I'm going to do this now - that's how I think it should be ... but I can't do that ... probably

due to my own fault - I don't feel able to do that ... if it's on the timetable ... so I guess I don't feel totally in control - when they are not ready for something I should change track ... to have that sort of power would be good - help you to relax more and create a more efficient class.

I - Do you feel overly constrained sometimes?

M - In some ways - it might be just the way I perceive things to be ... we sit down and do our team planning together and I don't think I can just change what we've planned mid-week ... it's OK for the other teacher to change because she's the person 'in charge' and she can change things because no-one is going to question why aren't you sticking to the timetable? She is part of the senior management. I'm not saying she shouldn't change - she can justify why she is doing what she is doing - but I don't feel I can just do that.

I - Would supply, where you are not planning with others, be a better situation for you?

M - I'd really like to go into the Mosque system and try to do something there where hopefully you'd have a lot more control there - or opening up my house and having Muslim children in for classes on a voluntary basis ... perhaps some kind of Islamic studies because I really feel this is something Muslim children aren't getting.
In this school they have assemblies where they think they are trying to help them - stories about God and Noah and so on ... they assume the children, coming from a religious background, will understand where they are coming from - but they don't always.

(Collective worship - teacher trying very hard ..)

M - Religious understanding is not necessarily there ... people think because they do they are quite well informed about religion but they are not. When they go to Mosque what they mainly do is learn Arabic - and at home - in a lot of families they don't. Their homes in some cases won't be very different from any other Asian home, you'd go in and a video would be playing or something.
I think 'who is going to do something about it ... ?' I think it needs to be people who can communicate in English well and who can explain things to them ... if the Muslim community want their children to have some understanding about their faith they are going to have to do something about it ... at the moment you get a child who goes to Mosque - learns Arabic, goes home and doesn't learn anything about Islam at a deep

level. Goes to school - OK learns a little about Islam in RE - by the time they are 16 - unless they take an active role themselves they won't know much about Islam.

I - So you'd like to take a more active role yourself?

M - Definitely. I think I'd feel more comfortable that way.

I - Can you get in at a Mosque?

M - I'll try but if I feel I'm being constrained I'll start something at home.
It appeals to me - having a small group of children - you know the children and their parents - I think it would be fulfilling to have that - so you have total control over what you do with them.

I - Do you feel constrained in the state education system?

M - I think RE is a 'back-seat subject'.

I - What about starting an Islamic club or something?

M - I'd like that - but am a bit hesitant - if RE has a back-seat anyway - many teachers don't give religion a high standing - you'd feel the odd one out and you wonder about being labelled as some kind of extremist ..

I - These children might have responded positively?

M - Definitely - the children gain such a lot just by knowing that someone from their own cultural background is in such a position (as teacher) - that alone speaks volumes to them, you don't even have to open your mouth - but if you do open your mouth and speak the same dialect as them they are completely shocked. Because it's OK to hear a teacher speaking Urdu which is considered to be a posher language. But if you open your mouth and speak exactly the same dialect as their mum, that really throws some of them ... you can see it on their faces, and they say - 'Oh miss you speak .... '

I - So you have enjoyed some really positive experiences through your understanding and affinity with the children?

M - Yes - especially here in reception because their English language skills are not always good. They speak so freely to me in mother-tongue and yet cannot explain things in English - if you don't speak the language you'd miss out on all of that. We have a girl who was trying to tell a story that was shown to her

in pictures. In English she was stilted and struggling, in mother tongue she was off - '...the mothers doing this and the fathers doing that' and so on . she *knows* - it's amazing - it's nice for them to be able to express themselves - it probably makes them feel more comfortable as well - I know it does. Even for those who don't speak my language ... because of the clothes I wear which is like those her mother wears - she would go to me or classroom assistants who wore similar clothes. All of these things add up - it does make a difference - definitely.

I - It is a pity you are leaving tomorrow - these children will miss you?

M - Well, you have to think about what you are doing and why - I think I can be more effective working differently (teaching Islam to those who want to know). I worry about them picking things up from me ... like raising the voice - Islamically I shouldn't do that - it's not the sort of behaviour I am trying to aspire to - the ideal situation would be when you don't have to raise your voice. The discipline needs to be consistent - at home and school - they don't listen ... I'm probably living in a dream world here but I would love to work with a small group of children and their parents, together ... and maybe for me - it's about trying to work in an Islamic framework and thinking about things Islamically and hopefully working with parents on that level ... ideally I would like to work with parents who are similarly minded to me - they want their children to learn about Islam and to practise Islam so you both have these goals and you've got this unity and you realise how important it is to listen to you - first time not fifth time - I think discipline is very important and respect for elders is important, respect for teachers is important, sometimes you get confused thinking about freedom and choice ... there also needs to be discipline - Islamically a 7 year old should be praying - if they can't sit still how can they pray - if that's the aim for a 7 year old then the expectations have to be higher at a younger age.

I - So do you think within the state education system you are being constrained because you can't teach Islamically? Does that contribute to your leaving?

M - In some ways ..

I - You are looking for something that suits you better Islamically?

M - Yes ... I've stopped going to Islamic study circle on Sundays but I'm still going to Arabic on Saturdays.

I - Would you say then that the state education system has never made you feel welcome or fulfilled as a teacher?

M - Yes

I - Did you ever resolve any of the question marks you had in some curriculum areas? Does it still concern you about being a role model and giving the wrong messages through areas of the curriculum?

M - I can't think of any - the clay activity we talked about last time...

I - So it was the lack of freedom to change the activity from making animals to making something else that was problematic?

M - Yes

I - Is there anything else that has happened since Easter that you'd like to share?

M - Well they are appointing 3 new NQT's starting, replacing 3 leaving staff - and they've had lots of expensive work done on the entrance hall and yet they told me they couldn't promise me a job because of financial constraints.
It might have been my fault because I told them I was moving to Walsall so they probably assumed I was leaving. I did say I had applied to the pool and was thinking of doing supply teaching, but nothing was said at all ... at one stage I said I might need to work because I was unsure of the financial position I would be in ... but no-one really enquired about what I was doing - and it's all (appointments) been a bit secretive. Although I work with ----- on senior management she never told me who or when she was interviewing for the new posts and everything ... I was surprised in a way ...

I- So you haven't felt really welcome?

M - I never got the impression that they would've wanted me here.

I - So you're not sorry to be going?

M - No

I - Was it better at this school?

M - In some ways yes - with the parents and children - I can form good relationships....I've had parents in saying their

children are happy and they've enjoyed having me and what have you...
I will definitely use my teaching skills in supply work - I will start off with days and if I enjoy it I might build up to a full week of supply teaching because a full week of supply is not like a full week of full-time teaching - you've just got that 9 - 4 commitment. Even if I don't do that I'll be teaching - maybe on a voluntary basis - that's still teaching...

I - So you haven't found anything in the last two years that makes you feel welcome and valued in the state system?

M - No

I - OK - thinking back to WH - what did you value most about your time at college?

M - ... the opportunity to learn about Islam and I didn't find that anywhere else ....I really value that because it's opened a door for me ---- and friendships that were formed which I am still keeping.

I - Do you mean friendships particularly within the Muslim community?

M - Yes

I - Did college prepare you for teaching?

M - I suppose it had to have done ... but I've learnt a lot along the way, since.

(PE)

I - What did you do in PE this term?

M - Games - they need a lot of time on games and taking turns.

I - Do you think PE at KS2 might be problematic for you?

M - I think it might - would I have to do PE on supply?
(Giggles)
Sometimes on supply you aren't sure how they'd behave in PE ... It's knowing what to do ... with younger ones I know, but I'd be a bit unsure at KS2.

I - So it's nothing to do with any Islamic / PE tensions?

M - No - I'll work my way up - with years 3 and 4 and we'll see how it goes.

I - Can you summarise positive and negative experiences in teaching - what has been good about it?

M - Just the knowledge that's been gained - all the skills, management, discipline, record-keeping. I think I've learnt a lot about interacting with other staff - learning from them in terms of their ideas

I - So lots of professional and personal skills?

M - Yes

I - What about your move to here & changing the way you interacted with the deliberate intention to have a lower 'Islamic' profile - how did that change things for you?

M - It can be difficult at times - it takes until the end of year to be building the strongest relationships - in my last school I knew my friend from WH - so going in - that was fine, but here - I know people better now ...
It's difficult sometimes because you don't feel as free to say things - to talk about things ... it affects you - in terms of stress ... speaking in general - going to the staffroom for a break - if you have people there you have a good rapport with - that alleviates the stress and you can go back into the classroom feeling as though you've had a break. But if you go into the staff room and there are not people you can really connect with then your stress isn't going to be relieved - it just builds up.
If you've formed solid friendships in the classroom I think that would affect you psychologically in how you are - you'd go back into the classroom a more relaxed person because you've had that opportunity to relate on a one to one or group basis.

I - Can you explain a bit further about what you mean when you talk about being able to connect with somebody?

M - I think making connections with people in terms of feeling comfortable with them, feeling relaxed with them, feeling able to be yourself with them.

I - Does that involve sharing similar experiences?

M - It has to - how can anybody know who you are if you don't share anything - it has to be mutual obviously - mutual sharing and mutual understanding.

I - What if you have a Muslim teacher and a Christian teacher

I - What if you have a Muslim teacher and a Christian teacher could you connect?

M - I think you can definitely connect at a deeper level with people who share the same concepts as you and have the same understanding ... and similar life-experiences.
I have friends who aren't practising Muslims but because you've got similar life-experiences and are from the same background - there is so much background information you have got about your communities that you can relate to and connect with ...

I - So you can connect at different levels depending on how much you share for example religion and background at one level, background but no religion at another, and religion with no background at another?

M - Yes (Story of Christian friendship) She said because of her religion, when she talks to people, they sometimes think she is odd, because she is religious. We connected well .... she was quite an orthodox Christian so there were many similarities with Islam.

I - But you also shared being religious in a predominantly secular society?

M - Yes ....
I think good relationships in the staffroom in the school are important for the teacher's well-being.

I - Have you felt isolated then in the staffroom?

M - I am very busy with the children, isolating is a bit of an extreme word to use but there has been a feeling of not connecting as much as I'd want to with people. The ideal situation would be where you would connect with people in the staffroom and that would aid your day.

I - Would more Muslim teachers help? What about Muslim schools?

I - Yes, maybe, but I really feel as if I want to move away from being told how to work and what to do and I think that might happen in a Muslim school. I want to move away from that - I am not bothered about the pay ... it's the dilemmas - like this shouting - I am a Muslim - we were told the role model influence is so important - so I think - I shouldn't be raising my voice.
First of all you have to clarify what is a Muslim teacher ... perhaps I should be more dignified in my behaviour...

I - So have you become much more conscious about what you are doing - about your whole self in front of the children?

M - Definitely .... it's like my team teacher making an unpleasant face when a child showed her some work - I think - is that how a Muslim teacher should act?

I - Where do you get answers to all your questions?

M - It's only now I'm remembering my Muslim education course when we looked at historical aspects of this ... it's only now that I'm thinking well how should a Muslim teacher be, how should she act and so on ... the role model element seems so huge (daunting).

I - Where does this leave you now?

M - I think you have to be happy with yourself and where you are at and not get too wound up about things and looking for ways to improve. Yet acknowledging that you don't want to be at a standstill that you want to have a positive effect on these children. I use the example of shouting at the kids because I am sure about that Islamically - raising the voice - children will copy it ... I am thinking - am I responsible for that? Not in a stressed out way but in a way that - OK - there's something here that I have to look at and improve (Bell).
If you don't have a class you feel in control of ... if it's not working the way you want it to work - how are you going to change things. If you have a class you can experiment with - and the confidence and control to respond to different situations - you've got to look at numbers and everything - how can you do that with 34 children?

I - Would you say becoming more Islamic and teaching in the state education system has created more dilemmas and questions for you?

M - I think being a Muslim has probably raised dilemmas and questions which I probably wouldn't have asked - but I think analysing your own behaviour and the responses of children is a good thing - thinking about your responsibility, thinking about how you can become a better teacher. So I think being Muslim makes me want to be a better teacher, because it makes me more aware of a sense of responsibility - what are they taking from me, something positive or negative - if it's negative what are you doing about it - and it's not necessarily what you say but what you do .. your mannerisms and everything.

I have realised how important teaching is - I definitely want teaching.

I - But you don't want a full-time post?

M - I want to develop myself as a teacher in my own way - (supply or Islamic classes) learn from my own experiences, see what works with a class and see what I feel happy with as a Muslim ...
I think there are young Muslim girls who are really looking for role models who have questions and are looking for answers - I would like to help.
I would still like to offer a package to school - offering to go in to explain Islam. Sometimes I think there is a lack of knowledge about what Islam is ... even teachers who have been involved in RE for a long time are surprised about the similarities between Islam and Christianity - for example the stories we share - like Joseph and Noah ... they are in both traditions. I am thinking I wouldn't mind pursuing that idea - originally I thought that was something I'd be able to offer anyway but it's the status of RE in relation to other subjects - and sometimes the atmosphere is such that you don't feel comfortable - or you're not approached ... if RE had a higher status and staff would think - yes I could ask - perhaps I could ask this person who has done a degree in Islam to give up a dinner time or something ...

I - You have never found that kind of openness?

M - No

I - Didn't you do an INSET on Islam on 3rd year TP?

M - Yes but I arranged that .... I find it quite surprising because I just think if I was a head teacher of a school that was mainly Muslim I'd want to know about this religion and their background, and I'd want my staff to know that they could have a better understanding - I find it quite surprising ...

I - Do you mean the lack of interest and the missed opportunity of having a Muslim teacher in such a school?

M - Yes

I - So you are exploring alternative ways of finding something better?

M - Yes ... I do think the rapport thing is so important - for example here there is a team teaching situation where two Asian teachers work together - from where I am that situation seems

to work really well ... my analysis of that would be that they are both from very similar backgrounds, similar cultures, they can connect easily - there is so much knowledge they have of each other - that they don't even have to talk about because they know .. therefore - that's it they've connected and in terms of working together ... they are fine - comfortable to say things - to agree and disagree. Sometimes - with people from different cultural backgrounds that can be more difficult.

I - Like your situation ... was your team teaching situation before Christmas better than the current one, when you worked with the other new teacher?

M - Yes ... now the situation is more hierarchical ---- being a member of senior management and so on ... I feel less able to contribute, and sometimes I'm not sure that she wants me to ... it's very odd because you are thinking - the plan is there and - if you have an idea it won't be used - so you think what's the point ... then it might be perceived as though you don't do any work ... sometimes you are not sure of where you stand and what is expected of you.

I - You've had a lot of changes in the last two years - constantly new positions - new schools, new team partners - it must have been difficult to feel settled?

M - Yes

I - Who or what has helped you through the most difficult times in teaching?

M - I haven't had many difficult times at this school ... friends I suppose - people I met at Gr - we'll telephone each other ... talk things through - that definitely helps ... (the telephone network) and you find others have similar experiences - it's not only you - then you put things down to experience and realise that maybe you shouldn't have been so naive in the first place to think that it was going to be so ideal.

(Discussion on the possibility of J. setting up a more official group for Muslim teachers).

I - How has teaching changed you over the last two years?

M - It's made me realise I need to be more analytical of myself ...

I - You are very self-critical ...

M - Yes .... I am more confident in some ways - occasionally I feel unconfident and think about the cause and try to do something about it. I think I have gained a lot - inter-personal skills, relaying information in front of an audience and so on ... as I'm thinking of taking a more active role in society these sorts of skills will be very valuable.

I - Can you go on explaining about being 'uncomfortable' because it's a term that you commonly used?

M - Yes --- for instance a Muslim - Christian group they wanted a photo and this man put his hand on my shoulder ... and I thought 'Oh no, what is he doing' - you understand they are not doing things on purpose but it's this mismatch between ways of behaving that are acceptable or not acceptable. ...As Muslims we should really be involved with fighting causes with others - non-Muslim to tackle problems of wider societal problems like drugs and so on - but sometimes things happen when you join other groups - because there is not an understanding of ways of behaving and relating to each other - Muslims could feel uncomfortable.

I - It's difficult because if there is no way of relating .... what does the future hold in this society?

M - I think it could be easily solved .... the group that isn't Muslim could be told about what is acceptable and so on ... Muslims don't want to offend people - like shaking hands - that is not really acceptable for Muslim women to shake men's hands .... it's just knowing ...

I - So there is much ignorance in society and education is not working at the moment to help this? Shouldn't schools be working to share knowledge about all cultures?

M - In terms of the secular society and Western culture - the Muslims know - they pick it up on TV and through the media...

I - Can you expand on that?

M - For example - in Western society if a man and woman who were not related talk to each other they would look at each other, in Muslim community they would talk to each other and look down, this behaviour might be interpreted as being rude from a Western perspective. That's the sort of thing I am talking about - in Western society men and women shaking hands is not considered to be a big thing - in Muslim societies it is ....

I - We've talked about professional ambitions - what about personal ambitions - when are you getting married?

(Discussion about her delayed wedding due to her father's house-building in Pakistan. She has rung him twice and written twice but he does not indicate when he is coming back - she wants to wait for him but is now thinking they might go ahead with the ceremony without him and leave the reception - that's what his side are saying - until he returns. He has just asked for more money to be sent over so she doesn't think he plans to return soon.)

The problem is with the builders - dad is a laid back person ... He's not supposed to be building anything massive - my brothers and mother didn't want him to build anything over there.

I - Then why is he building it?

M - For himself, for his reputation - 'Others thinking he's come from England after so many years and you haven't got a decent house' - obviously if you go for a holiday you need a decent house - they had a house but not a decent one - so he's probably thinking he'll do a good job with this one to give us somewhere nice when we go over ... the family will go for a holiday but not to live back there.

I - Is your mum happier about your marriage yet?

M - Not really, not that much but I think she will be when she finds out that the people are OK .... we are all waiting for dad to come back ..
I have been very busy so it's not been too bad - it would have been very hectic - I've got so much to sort out ... there's always things to do - I want to push ahead with Arabic, but I wanted to get it over with this summer - by Sept.

I - What about your fiancé - how does he feel?

M - They are just waiting on our side.

I - Have you seen him?

M - No - not since I met him, I speak to him on the phone ...

I - So you can't use this time to get to know each other at all?

M - Not really - well I am finding out - speaking to him on the phone ... we know our limits as to what to say and what not to

say ... about dad and his family as well - I need to know if they are getting more hyper so I'd have to push things a bit harder ...

I - As a Muslim woman in Britain do you think you are affected by what is happening to Muslim women elsewhere in the world? (Turkey, Human rights issues etc. oppression of women in Islam reports etc.)

M - I think Islam can be used wrongly sometimes - they say this is Islam and it isn't - there are other motives, power, control, greed ... that is being done everywhere to some extent - even in our communities here - people say this is what Islam says - it isn't what Islam says. Women need to find out what Islam does say ... there may be times when they find things that are hard to take up - that challenges what they have thought as they've grown up ... if they've decided to live by Islam they have to really think about these issues.

In terms of seclusion - there may be different perspectives on it - someone might be happy to be at home and to have someone with her when she goes out. If that's the case that's OK ...

I - Do you mean if they are happy and staying in situations by their own choice?

M - Yes ... coercion, to force anybody - is unislamic - and you can't force anyone to have faith - it comes from inside. In terms of freedom - you can't have it can you - for example living here - if you've got conflicting views. For example Muslims might have views on covering the body and might want their children to walk out into wider society and not be confronted with seeing body parts they shouldn't be seeing .... but they are not free to do that because the dominant culture is such that freedom allows these people to dress how they like.

I - So do you find it offensive to see how some Western women dress in the streets?

M - Yes ...

I - So how do you live your ideal life?

M - In terms of the environment I would like to bring my children into - I'd like it if the values I am trying to instil - to reinforce are reinforced by the wider society as well - so that it's easier for them - so they don't find these conflicts. Obviously I believe they need to be informed about different cultures, peoples, views, attitudes, so they are not narrow minded people who know nothing outside of their basic way of life.

It's like Muslim schools - I get the impression that there is a fear of Muslim schools - that it's not going to allow people to integrate. But I think it should enable them to integrate more ... because if children are brought up in a Muslim school and are taught properly what Islam is about ... and if they become confident in that .... then you will hopefully get people who value being Muslim and Islamic values and so on ... have high aspirations, they would be taught to be self sufficient to contribute to society to treat people properly - all these values with the religious emphasis as well, but the schools would also have a responsibility to educate more widely - about other people - so their children would not be ignorant - at the end they would be more confident people and able to offer more to society.

(Discussion Haw's findings)

I - If you go right down that line - are you arguing for a separatist system rather than an integrationist perspective?

M - Yes ... they could mix in the pursuit of good causes and they will in the work force - I think they would be better at interacting because they'd be more confident in themselves and happy with who they are. I think if they go into the secondary state system there is a big issue of their self esteem ... the dominant culture is there in terms of staff and teaching - in terms of everything that may erode their own culture, so how can you expect them to succeed if they start from a position of having no self-esteem?

I - So was Gr a time in your life where you felt most comfortable as a Muslim - despite the religious prejudice and so on?

M - Definitely - that support network is so important and through that you can achieve so much . It's not been the same in school ... when I was a pupil I was not a practising Muslim but I do feel that there is this issue in the secondary school that your culture is not really valued and you are not allowed to speak about your culture in a way that is valued.

This school - is perhaps more open because we have a number of Asian assistants but sometimes I cannot relate to that ... they are complaining about not being able to do this or that ... it's so negative . I do agree there are oppressed women in our community as there are in any community - I think there is enough negative information on our community anyway. They need more positive information - the wider community doesn't get to see the positive side. An Asian community does not

consist of oppressed Asian women, there are some oppressed Asian women and some oppressed Asian men (giggles).
I know households where the women are too domineering - making all the decisions in he house.

I - Do you think the wider society looks for the negative?

M - Sometimes I feel it's like - '...our way of life is better - you don't give your women the right to have a job - whereas we might say you don't give your women a chance to stay at home. I do feel that Asian teachers in state schools who are more Westernised would probably feel more comfortable in the situation but to me that is negative for the girls because I feel they need practising Muslim role models because that's what's important to me.

I'm not sure how much Asian children integrate anyway - what do we mean by integrate? The communities are getting weaker - more lax (giggles) - the state education system weakens their faith .... in the community we have many parents who have been through the education system, their faith is weakening - their children go through the system with weaker emphasis on religion in the home - eventually they are going to lose their faith completely - unless people do something about it ...

I - Are you going to be radical and do something about it?

M - I'll try my best .... laughs

RABIAH - END OF SECOND YEAR OF TEACHING

Review of interview overview from last two years into discussion

I - How has the new Head changed things for you here?

R - My expectations had been lowered - the area, the parents, the children, the behaviour of the children - it gets you down. He (the new Head) is enthusiastic - he has worked hard at getting to know us. For all staff he's always there - to listen, one of his aims was to get to know the staff, he had fresh ideas ... gave us more of a boost - more enthusiasm, the old head was probably worn down by the problems in the school.

I - What about your problem with the difficult boy?

R - He's better when his step-father is away. I have two difficult boys - cheeky, but they do the same with their mums - their home-life probably influences them - I understand more - the mums support me.

I - Tell me about your new job - when you rang up you were really excited about it.

R - (Adderley school Saltley) Yes, I think the teachers' expectations there are probably different to ours here - the area is different. In terms of planning its going to be much better - the school's more organised, compared to us here - in that all the planning is done - they're into initiative - numeracy and literacy - we don't have that here - having these up and running probably makes their lives easier than here. It will probably be less stressful - the classes are bigger, I have 20 here and will have 34 there - but they have more adults available - I'll have a classroom assistant for half a week and a language assistant. I have responsibility for equal opportunities, extra adults, and for finding funding for the school.

R - The equal opportunities post is interesting in relation to your history here - I just applied for a post of responsibility - it didn't say for what - there were a number of initiatives and I chose, well 'awards' was the only one I showed enthusiasm for and the others were pushed on me. So I've got those three posts but no subject area. I've got year 2 - SATS - more pressure next summer. The school is slightly closer to my home.

(R. didn't write to schools to be proactive for jobs - thought it inappropriate - applied for Adderley post through bulletin)

I - What will you miss?

R - Not having the freedom of picking what you want to teach and when, that school has a definite structure and timetable that they want to follow - especially with reading - they have 1 hour of literacy and 1 hour of numeracy a day and here I spend lots of time on those subjects. The interesting thing is - within that school - they have teachers who specialise in science, music and PE who will be teaching across the whole school - with PE it's only KS2 that will be benefiting but science and music will be good, and they do team teaching.

I - So you have a new future

R - Yes, also ... shall I say this? ... OK - because the school is based in a predominantly Asian area I don't think we'll have all these family break-ups and I think that'll work in my favour ... here there are a lot of one parent families and lots struggle to discipline the children - especially with the one or two misbehave in this school .... the father figure is not there ...

I - Are you saying the behaviour problems are related to family break-ups and Asian families are more likely to stay together?

R - Maybe for the wrong reasons or whatever but Asian families do stay together - most of them do stay together - yes I'm probably saying that ... here although the Asian children are the majority the discipline problems are from other children - mainly the black children ... I'm not being prejudiced but the single parents have so much to do .... having said that I've got a really rude Asian child in my class too.

I - As you told me - you are hoping to be married, if you marry in the summer will that affect your career?

R - Well - I'm hoping that when I start this new job some of this pressure will ease off. If it doesn't I'm considering change of career maybe, it's at the back of my mind ... it's really affecting my health - the first term I was really stressed out, and the autumn term last year ... I don't think it's worth that.

I - So you'll give your new school a chance?

R - Yes, but if it's the same there I will probably reconsider.

I - What thoughts have you got for a career change?

R - I don't know, I'm hoping I won't have to cross that bridge ... because my main stress-cause is behaviour and indiscipline. Marriage wouldn't change my career but children might, I haven't thought about that yet ...

I - How is the Masters?

R - I don't know how I'm going to cope with that as well, it's going OK ... did I tell you about my epilepsy ... I was given the all-clear but I was really knocked sideways ... it took me ages to get over that ... I used to feel really down ... I used to have panic attacks, the waiting period made it worse - I dreaded asking in case I had it, I thought I probably did have it - that stressed me out as well .... now a new job, and a husband.

I - Thinking back to Westhill what do you think was the most valuable aspect of the course for you?

R - The Islamic element, it has to be, and also the friendships that developed there - the genuineness - I just felt so at home there - and that developed over the four years ...

I - And do you miss that?

R - Yes - you don't get that in a place of work - there are so many other things going on - gossip and all sorts - so - yes I do miss it. A classroom assistant has converted to Islam here. There are two of us - 'us' - you are going to make a note of that now aren't you? There are two of us - Muslims. Now she has converted - through the influence of her sons at University.

I - Do you see your college Muslim friends?

R - Every break we go for a pizza, we ring a lot but don't meet often.

I - So the faith and friendships were the most important aspects. What about professionally?

R - I don't think WH prepares you for teaching ... in terms of the community and everything it was great .... but when it comes down to preparing us for teaching reading, writing and numeracy - it didn't do very well - those three especially - some courses were good - foundation subjects are not a problem. But it's the behaviour I can't stand ...

I - Thinking back over your time in the education system have you ever been forced to compromise your beliefs?

R - At KS1 it's not a problem .... singing perhaps - singing songs that we know are wrong Islamically - but then you're caught between ... if you're not singing the children and teachers are watching, if you're singing you are thinking 'I shouldn't be singing this' so you just keep

quiet ... things like Away in a Manger - the little 'Lord Jesus' - it's Christmas and Easter ... but then I think you make changes as you go along - I had an INSET day - and I raised that - equal opportunities - treating all children fairly - and yet when it comes down to singing we are doing things which people don't identify with - yet at the same time - I said we can't really force children to sing because some of the songs might be against their faith.

I - What response did you get to that?

R - The teachers were OK - ... the head said the problem was we didn't know if they weren't singing on religious grounds or whether they just weren't singing - it's a thin line.

I - Do you have similar problems with music?

R - No - I just don't teach it - well I've taught six lessons this year - when the naughtiest children were away otherwise it's just too problematic in terms of their behaviour.

I - So was the small number of music lessons due to your religious beliefs or their behaviour?

R - Their behaviour.

I - How do you manage in PE if their behaviour is a problem?

R - They want to do it - they know the rules ... they are better in PE.

I - Don't you think the music problem could be sorted out easily if Muslim teachers and others sat down together around a table?

R - Yes - if you are prepared to resolve it you could resolve it. And PE - the issue of country dancing we've discussed before - if I was teaching KS2 there might be a problem, I'd probably feel I didn't want to do it. It's just so different at KS1.

I - Did you choose KS1 for that reason?

R - No - I made an unconscious choice - I wasn't thinking about anything. I'd had some experience of KS2 and found some children rude so I thought I'd go for KS1. I think I would like to teach KS2 children but I feel PE would cause problems ... as would sex education.

I - Have you other friends who've found that problem?

R - Yes

I - Has it taken them out of the profession?

R - There is Ish.... isn't there - what I've heard is that through something she was doing she was compromising her beliefs so she packed her job in.

I - Isn't she doing supply?

R - Yes

I - What's the difference?

R - You probably don't do half the things that you'd be doing as a full-time teacher ... you can go in and do your own thing - choose what you do .... there again if the school is organised you might be told what to do ...
There again - if we do leave because we are compromising our beliefs what are we going to do - just leave Muslim children in the schools with no Muslim teachers?

I - I hope not - the system won't ever change

R - Even if they do know they won't make changes ... sometimes you are banging your head against a brick wall - every time you raise something it's a fuss at the beginning - then it gets sorted and they say 'it's such a small thing anyway what's the point of having all the fuss?'
(International evening hot dogs / samosas)

I - How are changes going to be made ... doesn't it require some negotiation?

R - Then you need Muslim teachers who are prepared to fight ...
(Masters research - issue of Collective Worship - Christian belief-system being continued.)
I handed out a questionnaire in this school - asking if collective worship should be predominantly Christian based and I had 3 teachers saying 'Yes - because we have a Christian country and therefore all children be involved in Christian worship' ... in this school!!! (Over 80% non-Christian children)
Some say things are changing in society but I have living examples of people I am working with, who have those views - forcing non Christians into Christian worship ... yet their views are not flashed all over the newspaper - they are not treated - like the Muslims - as if they are all fundamentalists.

I - So do you feel the media is still working against Islam and the Muslim community?

R - The media - yes, the media ... I thought views were changing ... but finding the 'Christianity in education' views still thriving and views on persuading others to become Christians ... I was shocked.

I - At WH - the environment was more comfortable - there problems with racism and religious prejudice but on the whole you recalled it as a congenial environment for you - do you think that made moving into schools more difficult?

R - WH is just one institution isn't it - there was a wide Muslim community - if you wanted to share something or bring something up there was always somebody there but in schools you are alone - in society you are also alone, aren't you, you don't have the support, you don't feel as comfortable raising things - they are more likely to fall flat because you have nobody backing you up.

I - What about the Muslim teachers' association?

R - I don't think that's materialised yet .... the other problem is - you might have people working on problems in their own schools - there may only be two of you - and the number of non-Muslims is large - then you might have parents who don't back you up - not practising or whatever ....
... Don't you think it is easier to relate to someone who understands .... it's difficult to relate to ... even for us ... to really understand without being on the same wavelength?

I - Then how can we begin to relate - how can we make a difference - change levels of understanding?

R - It's not *relating* to you - it's trying to *help you to understand* ... that sounds horrible doesn't it - it's not that I don't respect you but I do feel like that because there is so much back-biting and everything here at school and we never had that at college - things were just easier there because we came from similar backgrounds and had similar aims ....

I - So inside your group at college you were really happy - and now you are 'on your own' amongst non-Muslims and you are finding that difficult?

R - Yes ... and you don't have similar things to talk about - our purpose is different .... the more practising you become the harder it gets because your purpose is different to others - to live our lives Islamically. You just don't see petty things as a problem
And in my place of work you have to be so 'fake' ... like this problem I've had with this boy who gets taken out by the secretary ... it undermines me ... (They'd had disagreements)

If she was a Muslim - because we would know that our intention was genuine - I would find it easier to tell her how I feel and she would find it easier to accept because our aim would be this child here.
(Child misbehaves - is reprimanded and runs off to secretary who looks after him for a while rather than sending him back - she thinks she can control him)
I had a moan to somebody about this one day and it got back to her - she went mad 'How dare you say I undermine your authority' ... even then I couldn't say 'You do' because I know she wouldn't understand - she wouldn't see it like that.

I - Would a lack of trust be the right phrase to describe those feelings?

R - I think so ....

I - What has led to this 'lack of trust' that is between Muslims and non-Muslims?

R - I would say if your ultimate aim is to do good for God - for the hereafter - you do things with a good heart - and you are, from the beginning, trying to avoid things that you know are wrong, or people say to you should you be doing that - if you are not made aware of things you become blind to them.

I - Has it become harder for you to be a practising Muslim since you went into teaching?

R - I feel I can't be open - with colleagues - if I'd been open I would have said she should send the child back to me when he runs to her ... that she was creating the problem - but I couldn't say it ...
There are other things ... today I went for some forms for someone who has been off sick - this person refused to sign them. I wanted to say 'How can you not sign them - she has been off sick' - but I didn't - I just nodded, because I know if I was to say what I felt it would have created tension between us two - do you see what I mean?

I - Would the tension have been there because you are Muslim?

R - What I'm saying is - if that person had been a Muslim - then I would not have felt any tension because I could speak openly ...

I - So the tension is created both ways is it - it's how you perceive them and how you think they are perceiving you ... we are all making assumptions about how others are seeing us - it seems to create mistrust and suspicion?

R - Suspicion sounds so wrong - but I suppose you are right ...

but don't you feel that you could relate better to somebody who is white than somebody who is not white?

I - All I can say is - before this research I never had the chance to have conversations with Asian, black, Muslim women, this experience of the last four years has changed me - having the opportunity to build those relationships, friendships - to have all those conversations - so ... I grew up (by the coast) and never had chance to meet Muslim women in the past. Yes it does work both ways doesn't it but we need to make and take such opportunities to know and understand each other better.

R - So are you pleased you did the research - with what you've discovered?

I - I don't think I've discovered anything ... but of course I am glad I have done this research ...

R - So you don't see us as 'Ogres' then? (Giggles)

I - No - not at all - and I hope one of the things I can do - if it doesn't sound too arrogant - is to give Muslim women a 'voice' in academia

R - And you are doing it aren't you .... do you see us - Muslim women - as oppressed

I - Yes

R - You do see us as oppressed - in what way?

I - As disadvantaged

R - Oppressed by our religion - do you see us oppressed by our religion?

I - No - by wider society

R - At college we asked a lecturer a straight question and she said she did see us as oppressed by our religion - did you come in (to the research) with that view?

I - I hope not - I wanted to understand things differently and early on read for example Faruqui's work on feminist perspectives and her view was that such frameworks were Western and inappropriate for understanding Islam.
Don't you make positive choices for yourself about Islam - for those who have chosen not to go into teaching from college - they have made a personal choice.

R - I think if they had gone into teaching they might have found it was not so problematic in relation to Islam. I do not feel my faith is compromised in teaching - I do feel I've faced a lot of problems - being undermined - the practicalities ... praying etc. yes, but more importantly it's attitudes. In this multicultural context I am mixing with different people everyday. I face 'lack of respect' from parents, not the Asian parents, but with others, and Governors - I have to work harder than my colleagues at building positive relationships. I observe relationships between some parents, Governors and other teachers - and it's different. For example, the two white women Governors have a great relationship with others but I feel, to improve things between us, I would have to try really hard - I do smile and that but we haven't really got to know each other.

I - So are you saying - because of who you are - that you have to make more effort with everyone here?

R - Yes, and with the ones I've got in my classroom I have seen positive changes - one little white girl - initially she wouldn't speak to me - she wasn't rude, I think she felt a bit reluctant, hesitant, maybe shocked ... the first parents evening father came and stood, didn't sit down, to talk to me - now they both come and smile and talk quite closely - it's there now - nothing comes easily - I've had to work at it ...

I - So are you glad - looking back - that you've been here?

R - Yes ... I've now built good relationships with the children in my class, and the black boys who've been problematic ... it's taken time but I've made a change ...
I don't think I should've had that negative experience with that boy and his parents - father's back now and he came to fetch him last night - I do feel threatened by him ... and he affects the way in which the mother relates to me.

I - So you'll be glad to leave next week?

R - Yes, but it probably also means that I won't make much of a difference in my new school because - compared with all the positive relationships I've built here ... there has only been that one really negative one ... if I go into this predominantly Muslim area then I won't have the opportunity to make changes... with colleagues I will because I'll always have white colleagues won't I? But with the diversity of parents here - that will not be the same.

Part of me does look forward to moving there because it's always such a battle - it'll be good to be accepted for what you are right

from the outset - without having to prove yourself - not to have to ... 'play these games' - to build relationships.

I - Do you think this would take some of the strain out of teaching for you?

R - Yes ... but the behaviour here has got me down and that was based - with that particular boy - on lack of respect for me - by the time we got to round to him respecting me it was too late because he was so used to doing the things he was doing.

I - Can we round off our discussions on PE - how has that gone this term?

R - Dance - I'll never be any good because I'm so short of ideas - the children say what shall we do miss - and in the end say - make up a dance ....
This term we've been doing games and I like that - that's been fine.

I - So how do you cope with dance?

R - Don't do it! (Giggles) No - it wasn't on the TT this term.

I - OK - thinking back over the last two years - what have you learnt about yourself?

R - .... That's difficult ... nothing ...
I don't love teaching, my confidence has gone down - in college - with all the support you develop lots of confidence - once out in teaching - all that support has gone and there's a decline in confidence.

I - What about your Masters - does that change your confidence?

R - No - well I'm behind with the essays and I don't know how I'm going to do it with the busy summer ahead - it's increased my workload - it hasn't made a difference - I am doing it for the future. I don't know about teaching - the behaviour and the amount of work has got me down here but that might be different in my new school.

I - What about ambition?

R - My only ambition is to get married this summer (Fiancé is now over in B'ham, they have met for 2 days in the last three weeks, he and his sister will marry R and her brother, R's family have bought them a house but also a large family house in case they all move in together. The biggest problem is finding a suitable venue for all the guests at the wedding. R. feels she is trying harder than her parents to find a suitable venue - the timing is getting crucial as they are

trying to put it later and she wants to start her new school in Sept. married.)

If I was to change career what could I do?

I - What do you want to do?

R - I was quite happy being receptionist at the Dr's surgery in the summer holidays ....

(Discussion moved on to Westernised and Islamic values)

R - There's definitely a difference between Westernised and Islamic values ... your ultimate aim is different isn't it ...

I - How would you define Westernised values?

R - Westernised *habits* might be more appropriate - the social life, the drinking, the smoking, the partying ... the relationships, thinking of yourself - independence and being self-centred - compared with the community you'd always think about if you followed Islamic values.

I - Can you sum up Islamic values for me?

R - Islamic values means being accountable to God for what you do - doing what Islam requires, and benefits the community .. in line with God's requirements.

I - How do you respond to people who say Muslim women are oppressed?

R - I would say - we are not oppressed by our religion. In Pakistan you could say that, or in a country where Islam is not practised as it should be - they are probably oppressed by culture, by what people think Islam is rather than what Islam really is ... culture oppresses women, along with others such as the poor and so on.
Some Western values oppress women, for example - things like the role of media and treatment of women - that they should fit into clothes sized 10 or 12, look good in bikinis constantly ...

I - Is there a place where you could live your life Islamically?

R - Probably not .... if you could develop a community within this country - you could ... but we haven't got that have we ... but then you've got to live to the best of your ability - that's a test isn't it - to live in a society where there is temptation all around and you rise above it.

I - Do you think Muslim schools might offer a more comfortable environment for those college students who feel unable to go into the state system?

R - It's worth considering ... but Muslim schools are not well resourced or financed at the moment, it might meet their needs Islamically but there are other difficulties.

Further discussion on the research, R.'s forthcoming marriage. She is very happy at the prospect.

APPENDIX L

27th March 1996

I had a meeting with my mentor and advisor today. I do not think that it was that useful, basically I felt that they were beating around the bush and being very 'wishy washy'. They kept going on about how wonderful the classroom was and how well I was doing. This just didn't make sense to me, if I was doing so well, they should give me a permanent, the union was suggesting that the only reason why a school should give you a temporary is if they had some serious doubts about you.

Basically my understanding of the situation is that the head just wants to assert her power by giving me a temporary - what she has got planned for me down the line, I don't know (and I'm not sure whether I should trust her). My mentor, previous to the heads intervention had not given any indication that there were any serious problems.

And even now both the mentor and the advisor are saying that there are no serious problems, its just that they feel that they feel I need an extra 6 months.

I have found out that the mentor has more power than the advisor because the advisor said that she goes by what the school says and if the school says that they are not happy with the progress an NQT has made, then she would suggest that they extend the induction period.

I explained about the contradictory advice and the answer I got was that teaching is a complex issue and that you as a teacher have to decide what is relevant to the children and the context you are working in. I explained that it would be more helpful if the school's philosophy was made more clearer, so that you knew what you had to do .

They talked about how you were always learning and not to look at it negativly etc etc and to look forward. I raised the issue of justice and about considering whether something is just or not. The advisor said that to put it bluntly the decision had been made and I had two choices, I could either just move forward from here and carry on and then pass the induction etc or if I am not happy here I could go through the pool and look for another job.

I feel that the situation is totally unfair. Why should the head be allowed to abuse her power? why should everybody else just rally around the head, even though she may be acting unprofessionally. The advisor may as well not exist, if in the end what she says doesn't count. And surely if you have worked hard and have not got a permanent contract, it means that in someway the mentor and the school have failed!

I wonder whether it would be a good idea to get the union

involved - at the end of the day if people are not doing their jobs properly, if there is abuse of power then I think it should be addressed. Although of course, I dont like the idea of creating 'trouble'.

At the end of the meeting they basically said that I should carry on as I am, so there was nothing concrete that I could work on. And I think that they think that I have probably got an attitude problem. My opinion on that is that anyone who doesn't toe the line and anyone who asks to be treated fairly and justly is considered to have an 'attitude problem'.

The more I think about it the more the Muslim school option seems to be appealing - it really may be the kind of environment that is ideal for me.

higher course. It can be said that it was just a mistake, however a number of people have said that it was probably deliberatly

done just to 'get at me'.

The school has won the 'investors in people' award - what a joke! apparently this award is suppose to show that the staff in this school are valued and appreciated! Basically, a lot of paper work was shown and 'suitable' people were interviewed, the staff were not really able to give information in a confidential way.

I still have not got use to the assemblies at this school; they seem to be getting worse and worse! recently I saw girls (with heavy make up) dancing to an indian love song. The words of the songs included phrases like "there is majic in my thin waist" (to which the girls gyrated their hips in a very provocative way). One of the English teachers sitting by me was quite shocked and stated that she would not want her daugter doing that.

I do not understand why this obsession with love/romance/sex that is prevalent in the wider society has to be brought into primary schools! surely there must be some 'innocent' songs that children could dance to.

The parents were sad to learn that I was leaving, one of them asked me if I would change my mind and joked that she would get the parents to stand outside the school gate with placards. I was really touched by the way the parents reacted. One of the mothers sent me a "sorry your'e leaving card" and wrote how it was such a loss to the school that I was leaving and how I was a favourite with the kids and the parents, it was really touching.

I was also amazed by the response of the children. Children from classes other than my own (who's names I didn't even know) were coming and giving me cards that they made and one girl even gave me a necklace. One boy wrote "plese dont leve, I will give you anything you wont", another girl wrote "Please don't leave because you are a muslim I like you."

To me, these children are just happy to see a teacher who is 'like them' in school. A teacher who speaks the same languuage that they do and wears clothes similar to their mom's. I suppose it may in some way make them feel more 'at home' when they are at school.

Previously I use to pay lip service to the idea of being a role model for Muslim children. It is only now that I have been in school that I fully realise how important this is. I notice

I went to have a look at a Muslim school and I liked what I saw. The children in the reception class were doing sums! something that is completely unheard of in the school that I am currently working in.

There were less children in the classes, however the rooms were also smaller. In terms of physical working conditions and resources the state schools are definetly better. However in terms of the standards of education and the discipline, I liked the way the Muslim school was run.

On reflection and in comparison to the state school, I would say that there is more 'harmony' in the Muslim school. In other words the child is not given conflicting messages, what is taught at school, is supported in the home environment. In state schools, children are probablu getting conflicting messages.

One example that springs to mind is of a boy in my class who had a hat on. In the Muslim culture there is nothing wrong with wearing a hat, in fact when praying it is recommended for boys/men to wear hats. However in English culture it is considered disrespectful to wear a hat (eg when going into church people take their hats off or when eating a meal etc).

The boy was sitting down, when the classroom assistant looked at him sternly and then went up to him and angrily took his hat off his head. It has to be said that it a baseball cap that the boy was wearing, however the point is that in this situation the boy does not understand what he has done wrong. At home he probably wears the hat all the time and nobody says anything to him - it is not a big issue. The classroom assistant is a lovely person and she may not have acted so sternly if she had been more aware of the differences between the culture in school and the culture at home. I am not saying that the boy should be allowed to wear the cap, all I am suggesting is that he should have been dealt with a bit more kindly.

DIARY July '96

30-4-96. Dance. HANA

As this was the first dance lesson I'd done with the children, it was very much an introductory lesson - getting the chn to listen + respond to the music. We played a lot of games at 1st which involved listening skills & moving in different ways + stopping when music stopped. - listening to the music + moving appropriately & quick, slow, heavy, light. The chn all enjoyed this + most responded well - some need to get used to listening + not speaking but generally with a lot of instruction from me the children worked well.

7.5.96. Large Apparatus.

The chn are now very able to get the apparatus out safely + quickly. They know the routine

from Hana

Xmas '96-

1st term of my second year in teaching - well, I haven't really been able to relax much more & the term has been as hectic as before. I think now that I'm in my second year, I'm more aware of what I should be doing & what the children should be achieving so I'm always running around like a headless chicken trying to get everything sorted out & ready for each lesson. Preparation time for lessons still takes up a large percentage of my time both in school and at home & I'm still trying to figure out how other teachers manage it! The class that I have got this year seem to be more able than my previous class, although again there is

DIARY - RABIAH

1st ½ of Autumn Term.

Areas - Gym. + Games.

Gym -
WK ① - Jumping skills.
No apparatus put out, just mats + Arm to se what ch can do. Look at diff. ways of moving on app, whether ch can do rolls, etc.
Basic Assessment.

Felt abit nervous c. teaching P.E. worried c. how I'm going to lay app. out not necessary the hall layout, but more so, how the app. are put out + made safe.

Would have been better if someone has shown me how the frames go together initially. But no one did.

WK ④ Felt better about laying out app. because yr 6 girls like helping + I asked them c. how app go fit together Lesson focus = Rolling on mat + Jump off app in sequence

At this stage feel that maybe because we put the out app together, were not always hearing instructions loud out Instead we all put out what we want to.

Other T's don't seem concerned Maybe they don't know.

2nd ½ of Autumn term.

Discov sc has xmas meal (staff).

Too much time = spnt upon hymn - singing xmas songs
Don't agree with some of them
But what cn I do?

Head said something c. Muslim girls being quiet + passive + whether it was a cultural thing that they are not pushed for enough.

International Evening -
Head said - Mus ladies don't often go out + look on the face indicated that they were glad to have an international evening. Impression I got was that she ~~st~~

Dance
Abit concerned about what I'm going to teach.
Sc Tidy's on indiv. plans in everythin = so tedious because too much work + want to prioritise. Don't want to plan my own Dance scheme. I want to follow a radio programme becaus feel they are beneficial. Sometimes I really hate to school
I have spent the whole of my ½ term holiday working. I'm fed up.

5

Lessun ①

Did lessan on animal
m'ments 4 dance ch enjoyed
it but I felt as if short
on ideas O·K 4 ① lessan
but would have problems doing
a whole scheme on it.

Would prefr to use Radio
programme. Make life alot
easy.

Been told can use radio
programme. Will go ahead
with it.

Head saw Muslim women
as prisoners, who were let
out for interchord evening +
so there was a spark
in their eyes.

My ~~member~~ mentor comented c.
Muslim women around her not
going into town + I said
~~to~~ something on lines of just
because they don't go in
town don't mean to say that
they are deprived or don't
lead an active social life

we did not get any experience or an insight into the teaching of other Key Stages

Supplying - I've taught mainly English + maths in different forms + methods.

I have taught quite a bit of PE both in infant + junior ages.

one thing which really sticks in my mind which I found shocking was usually in the later junior years boys + girls get changed in different areas and this was usually

been the case but recently I went to a school where 99.9% if not 100% of the pupil are Asian Muslims and their years were 9-10 a year 5 class and both sexes were getting changed in the same area - I asked if either the boys or the girls got changed elsewhere but they replied that they just get changed together in the same class
I didn't spend many days there so I didn't feel right in asking any of them how they felt about it.
But I felt shocked, embarra

and angry that they should I have to put up with this.

I've been to schools where there are no Asians at all and had a year 4 class and the boys went out to the cloakroom in the corridor and get changed there whilst the girls remained in the classroom.

So why can't the first school change their policy. They are big on getting chocolate machines fitted in the corridor + selling

crisps to the children

the same happened for swimming the girls were led into a communal room to get changed. a yr 3 class + a year 5 class I found it embarrassing. the boys were led into another room with a male supervisor.

I took a group of children for their swimming lesson. I had asked beforehand if I was to take a group + what level they were. I was told that I would not have to take any children so NOT TO WORRY

DIARY

SALIMA

8.10.25

Lesson: Reading time

Time: 1:00pm

Incident - A similar occurrence as before. I was to take corrective time. I explained to the class that another teacher would look after them. Again a similar question was asked, this time from another boy. Questioning my status as being a 'real' coach. This rewarded with corrective action. I did speak to him at first with [illegible] a child at my class who was upset and told [illegible]

12.9.25

Lesson: English

Time - 11:30 - 12:00 p.m.

Incident - I was called out of class for [illegible] review and [illegible] last year would look after them for [illegible]. One boy asked 'is that real teacher coming?' I responded by telling him that I was a real teacher as well. It made me reflect on that as a child in my class had some misconceptions about what a teacher is and as after school I am [illegible]

to her improve.

This conversation made me stop and think, is this how I come across to children, in the way I remember and to parents? Do I need to change my approach?

The conversation distressed me more and more as I kept thinking about it, especially the term 'recruit'. I myself have used the term 'recruit', and I don't like using it, but to be honest as we are reading quite distressing.

It also made me analyse the children perceptions of me - do they see me as being 'assessing' and is it me or I influence them to become more withdrawn in the sessions or is it my personality - I'm going to

30.10.25

Lesson: Break

Time: 10:30 - 10:45 am

Including: As a year group we have a number of children with social learning & behaviour difficulties, we have additional support from an integration assistant, an extra form parent. She helps us in the morning walking with specific children. One the past few weeks I have gotten to know her fairly well, and have a good rapport with her, however on Monday and Tuesday she and her which caused me to evaluate myself.

During playtime we were chatting away about this and that, and our conversation led us to talking about our culture - we are both Muslim. She confided in me that when she first realised I'm not going

APPENDIX M

FINAL - YR 3 - SCHOOL EXPERIENCE FIELD NOTES

ASMA

A Church of England school with a predominance of African-Caribbean children some Asian and whites. Class teacher very experienced and able to handle the difficult power struggles going on in her class during the summer term of their last year (Yr6).

A difficult place to put a student because the class were about to leave and spent their time arguing, fighting, being unhelpful to each other. The class teacher had an excellent rapport with them but that came from twenty years experience, from knowing these children for several years and from the intuitive knowledge that comes from being with a class daily for almost a year.

There were no other Muslim or Asian teachers in the school. As I became aware of the antagonism between the dominant African-Caribbean boys and girls and the Asian and white children, and discussed the issue of racism the class teacher had addressed after the students early visits I guessed it would not be easy.

In the end the children largely 'ignored' the student-teacher, not in a pointed direct way but they were so engrossed in each other and the plays for power that were going on between them that their focus on work and teacher interaction was minimal.
There were successful moments, for instance she led an excellent discussion with the children, they preferred to talk rather than write. She worked hard in relation to preparation, struggled initially to gain attention and respect as 'teacher', tried several ways of organising her classroom to maximise pupils learning and minimise their bickering but they always found a way. She did succeed in persuading the children to do some work. She worked with the children, supporting, cajoling, persuading rather than confronting and that earned a respect from the children. She was not afraid to confront where necessary.

I would not have enjoyed teaching this class because the children were much more interested in taunting each other from 9.00 - 3.30 than doing any work and in the end you stop looking for the problem in the work provided. They would talk, with enthusiasm, interest and intelligence but they never wanted to produce any written work, however it was wrapped up to be exciting and appealing. It was always too much trouble. I sometimes wonder why we put students in such difficult positions. The salvation of this school experience was related to the student's ability to 'persuade' pupils rather than confront, which they appreciated. She treated them like 'Year 6 leavers' and never gave up on the preparation and evaluation demands.

The insights, support, encouragement and experience of the class teacher led to the survival of the student. She gradually diminished her support as the student progressed but was always close at hand in case of an emergency. She showed a genuine interest in the student and her success and not as some kind of extension of her own capability.

JAMILAH

Predominantly Asian school, large, many Muslims, all-white staff.
I have seen some good students in fifteen years but this was one of the best. I was impressed by her capability from our first meeting. Not only did she talk me through the most amazing mind-mapping scheme preparation I have ever seen but that early understanding, insight and competence was sustained throughout the experience. She worked at an incredible rate producing resources, visual and practical aids for the classroom. Her grasp of the needs of the individuals in her class was excellent. She was organised, thoroughly prepared, competent in teaching and critically reflective of her practice from the first day. Her focus on the learning of the children never wavered, the children loved her, her bi-lingual skills were a great advantage.

Not only did Jamilah make an outstanding impact in the classroom but she made some impact on the school which is quite unusual for a student in a large primary school. In her quiet, unassuming way she gained the respect of her colleagues and responded positively when the possibility arose of leading an Inset session to help them with their understanding of Islam and its effects on their Muslim pupils. Apparently this was a great success and her own confidence was boosted as a result.

Jamilah gave and earned respect in this school with children and staff. She treated each child in her class fairly, monitored progress keenly and worked hard to provide stimulating lessons and environment for them. She was always ready to learn, seeking criticism and advice from class teacher and tutor throughout. The head was more distant, with students being a low priority in her busy school but she was aware that all was going well with this student. It is difficult for students to build relationships with parents over 5 or 6 weeks. As student-teachers they do not have the same status and respect as the class teacher and it is difficult to make judgements on this aspect of the SE. However, there did not seem to be any difficulties for Jamilah which is why I was surprised to read the comment in her diary about a 'look from a parent' which shows a sensitivity I was unaware of ....

FAREEDA

All-white school, middle-class area in suburbia.
This SE was a great success because Fareeda went from strength to strength in her confidence as teacher. This came from the rapport she had

with the children, the constant praise and positive feedback from her Head and the fact that the class teacher, (and tutor to a degree) 'left her alone' interpreted as 'must be doing OK'. Fareeda changed radically as a result of this practice. She started final SE with no confidence having had unpleasant experiences in years 1 and 2. As she found perhaps an 'unexpected respect' as the only ethnic minority person in this school she grew in self confidence and teaching competence. Her greatest enthusiasm came from the children. She found them 'polite', inquisitive but very accepting and respectful of her dress and religion. The school had offered her a prayer room, acknowledging her possible needs. She felt altogether valued, respected and supported. The offer to apply for a job there after her fourth year was the icing on the cake.

AMIRA

Church of England school, predominantly Asian Muslim, all-white staff, male class teacher. Despite some personal concerns about having a male class teacher Raybeena 'got on with it'. She enjoyed the support of having more than one student in the school and a number of NQT's who were at Greenacres the year before. Relations with staff were good. Relations with children were often a struggle. Amira did have some behaviour problems, especially with some of the boys. The class teacher had been very supportive and had gradually left her to assume increasing responsibility but she continued to struggle with discipline on occasions, particularly in PE.

The Head invited me into her office for a chat. She did have concerns about Amira's hijab and had rung college after her first visit to ask if there were likely to be any problems with health and safety issues. She was particularly concerned about PE. The school had a rule that all staff always changed for PE and she wondered what College did about the head scarf. She was told there should be no difficulties. They can wear them secured for PE at College. This satisfied her but she was concerned that seeing the teacher in hijab might encourage the children to want to wear them and the school had a rule that they could not wear them. It seems to me the Head would have benefited from a discussion with Amira about the issue.

LINA

All-white school - management problems - Acting Head, 'Link tutor' class teacher 'busy'.
Lina really enjoyed this SE because she had a good rapport with the children. She earned their respect early and did not experience any racial tensions, only inquisitiveness which she interpreted as positive and empowering because she could portray Islam, and being Muslim in a positive light.

Having a Link Tutor when the staffing side of the school was under pressure was not helpful. She did not have many visits from the Deputy Head 'Link'. She was quite assertive about when she did or did not want him in and she always insisted on notice.
In many respects Lina was left to her own devices. She did not receive regular support but when it did happen it was not negative so she built her confidence largely in relation to her own judgements of her own professional progress.

APPENDIX N

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENT-TEACHERS ORIGINALLY INVOLVED WITH RESEARCH INTO THE EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION & TEACHING - TANSIN BENN

I am currently completing four years of research into the experiences of Muslim women in Higher Education and the teaching profession. It appears that only a small number of my 'original volunteers' are currently in full-time teaching posts. In order to be as accurate as possible about my understanding of the reasons for this I would appreciate your help via the completion and return of this questionnaire.
I can assure you that the data will be treated confidentially.
Thank you in anticipation.

Please complete as fully as possible, the spaces for 'answers' are not meant to be constraining - please write on separate paper if you wish.

Name: _

1. Since leaving Westhill have you
   a) Been teaching full-time? (Y) / N
   b) Not teaching by choice? Y / N
   c) Started teaching but left? Y / N
   d) Been supply teaching by necessity?
   e) Been supply teaching by choice?
   f) Other (please state)

If you have left teaching or have chosen supply work please explain **why**:

2. In relation to your professional development as a teacher have you found your ethnicity, sex and / or religion an advantage or disadvantage? Can you explain your answer?

I have found my ethnicity an advantage because the children are of the same ethnicity, thus I am able to relate to their cultural and social needs. I am also aware of the childrens religious affiliation.

3. Have there been any positive or negative experiences related to your ethnicity. sex or religious identity which have encouraged or discouraged you in the teaching profession?

- I was able to organize a festival (Eid) assembly, and I also undertake collective worship assemblies thus I have a significant role to play

5. Where do you see yourself, professionally and personally, five years from now?

I would like a co-ordinators post in any subject.

6. Whether you are in teaching or not, on reflection what were the personal advantages or disadvantages of undertaking the four year B.Ed. course at Westhill?

- I developed self-esteem, confidence, became mature, broaden my horizons, perspective, outlook on life,

7. Please add any further comments you would like to make related to Muslim women in H.Ed. or the teaching profession:

Muslim women have an important role to play in the education system as they will be role models to the younger generation.

Thank you
Tansin Benn

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Name: _

1. Since leaving Westhill have you
   a) Been teaching full-time? ~~Y~~/ N
   b) Not teaching by choice? ~~Y~~ / N
   c) Started teaching but left? ~~Y~~/ N
   d) Been supply teaching by necessity? ~~✓~~
   e) Been supply teaching by choice? ✓
   f) Other (please state)

If you have left teaching or have chosen supply work please explain **why**:

I feel I need to expand my teaching experience via supply teaching which gives me an insight into educational establishments of various kinds. Thus I do not need to commit myself to a school that I might feel hinders my teaching skills.

2. In relation to your professional development as a teacher have you found your ethnicity, sex and / or religion an advantage or disadvantage? Can you explain your answer?

Often agencies may sent you to a school that holds children of your ethnicity/ religion I feel this gives them an opportunity to show schools that they have sent a teacher that holds and I will respect the needs of the children. ie gets along with parents.

3. Have there been any positive or negative experiences related to your ethnicity, sex or religious identity which have encouraged or discouraged you in the teaching profession?

On one occasion in a school in Sandwell, the deputy head who is of Asian origin repeatedly professed that "Asian people" don't have the same opportunities as "white teachers" "we always get the menial jobs" such a teacher should put a newly qualified teacher off teacher since he is the delegated mentor. Luckily I was only there for a week.

5. Where do you see yourself, professionally and personally, five years from now?

I feel I should hold some knowledge and key experience to either accept a part-time post with responsibility again or enter supply teaching as an agent.

6. Whether you are in teaching or not, on reflection what were the personal advantages or disadvantages of undertaking the four year B.Ed. course at Westhill?

The course itself takes a long time, the vacations and "Study weeks" could be reduced changing the B.Ed to a three year course. Teaching practice needs to cover varied schools and undertaken twice a year

7. Please add any further comments you would like to make related to Muslim women in H.Ed. or the teaching profession:

Being a Muslim will hinder your development if you make it an issue. Various schools I have been to in Birmingham and Sandwell have accepted 'hijab', fasting etc as part of school life. Without any outside intervention. Often other religious teachers bring Islam to school.

Thank you
Tansin Benn

After family life is a very issue when H Ed. is undertaken. If the family can support and encourage their females to take an interest in education alongside family life. There might be a fairer distribution of females and males in professional jobs.

APPENDIX O

To Miss

Thank you for helping my son settle into school.

...I'll miss you
so much.

You have been a great credit to this school, it is such a shame that they are losing a very good & valuable teacher like you. They say variety is the spice of life, so enjoy it while you have it. You are going to be a great loss to Somerville, you were a favourite with all the kids & their parents. We wish you every success in your career & all the best wishes for the future!

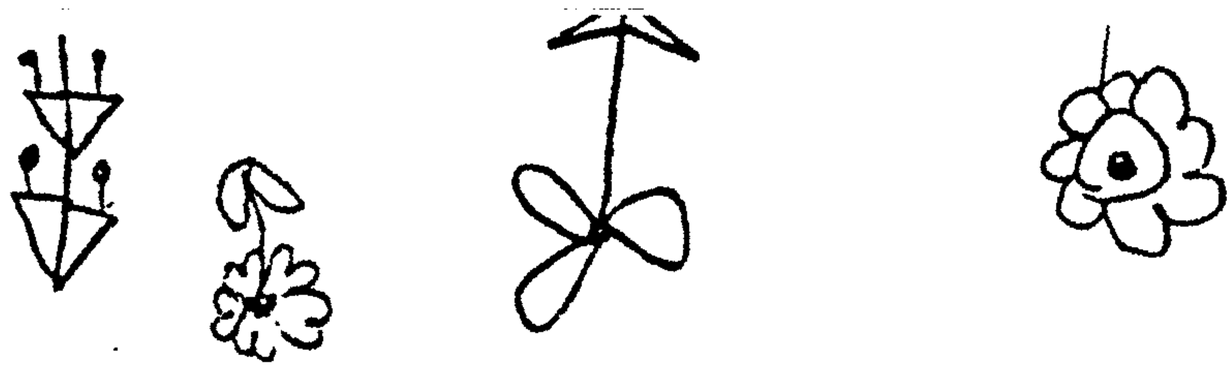
Lots of Love from Hasan & family.

To Miss

Good luck.

love.

HASAN.



To miss

Please don't leave

because you are a muslim I like

you. have a

Nice time.

From ALIMA class 2G

have a lovely time.

APPENDIX P

INDEPENDENT

10.1.1998

4

Muslim schools win historic fight for state funding

The first two Muslim schools to receive state funding were announced by the Government yesterday. *Judith Judd*, Education Editor, explains how an 11-year fight came to an end.

For years, Muslims have complained that white middle-class parents could send their children to religious schools free while Muslim, often working-class, parents had to pay.

Previous governments twice turned down applications but now David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education, has agreed Muslims should be allowed state-funded schools in the same way as Anglicans and Roman Catholics. The two schools are the Islamia primary School in Brent, London, founded by Yusuf Islam, formerly the singer Cat Stevens, and the Al Furqan primary school in Sparkhill, Birmingham. At present, parents at both pay fees. Two Jewish schools will also get public funding - the Mathilda Marks Kennedy primary School in Barnet, London and a new Jewish primary school in Hertsmere, Hertfordshire.

Last month the Islamia school threatened to sue the Government because it had received no decision on an application for state-funding submitted a year earlier.

The three existing schools have been given grant-maintained status but will be expected to become voluntary-aided, like other church schools, when a Bill which abolishes grant-maintained status becomes law later this year.

Mr Blunkett is also expected to approve a new Jewish Orthodox primary school in Hertfordshire.

Officials made it clear that the Government had consistently said that applications for state funding would be decided on their merits.

Previous applications have been turned down because buildings or the curriculum were unsuitable or because there were already too many school places in the area.

Mr Blunkett yesterday reassured critics of state-funded Muslim schools that boys and girls would be treated equally and the national curriculum, which has brought complaints from some Muslim parents, would be taught. "I am pleased to be able to approve sound proposals which demonstrate that these new schools will comply with the statutory provisions governing all maintained schools, such as delivering the national curriculum and offering equal access to the curriculum for boys and girls."

Schools have to meet criteria which include a good standard of education, the national curriculum, suitably qualified staff, equal opportunities for boys and girls, suitable buildings and financial competence.

Zafar Ashraf, a spokesman at the over-subscribed Islamia school, said the school, which charges £2,200 a year, faced a shortfall of £250,000 this year. "For many years Muslim parents have, through their taxes, been funding schools for other denominations. This has caused great anger and resentment."

Trevor Phillips, page 19