

Diversity: Social and Cognitive Consequences

An investigation into the reasons for and the impact of diversity in schools

Staffordshire University Student and Staff Questionnaire Results and Analysis



Diversity: Social and Cognitive Consequences UK

An investigation into the reasons for and the impact of diversity in schools

Barbara Emadi-Coffin, Department of History and International Relations, Staffordshire University

Bobbie Fletcher, Department of Games Design and Technology, Staffordshire University

Janet Hetherington, Creative Communities Unit, Staffordshire University

Research and Survey Results UK

The strategy to be adopted in tackling discrimination in the learning environment must be

1. Tailored to causes of discrimination at different stages of education
2. Designed to promote Intervention at an early stage
3. Designed to combat student isolation

Contents

Research and Survey Results UK	1
Introduction	3
The @MINDSET project and its objectives.....	3
Target groups	4
Age Range Considered in this Report.....	4
The scope of this document.....	6
Methodological framework.....	6
Diversity and its origins	7
Diversity in the educational environment.....	10
School Students.....	10
AE Learners.....	11
A research on the causes of discriminatory behaviour.....	13
Discriminatory Behaviour in School Students	13
Discriminatory Behaviour as seen by AE Learners in Society.....	13
Consequences at Cognitive and Social Level.....	16
Cognitive Consequences in School Students.....	16
Cognitive Consequences in AE Learners UK.....	17
Cognitive Consequences Perceived by AE Trainers.....	17
Social Consequences in AE Learners	18
Where do the teachers stand?.....	19
Student/Learner Perspective	19
Teacher/Trainer Perspective	20
Conclusions and recommendations	21
List of References	22
List of Figures	24

Introduction

This report looks at the issues around discrimination in learning environments in the UK. The learning environments considered in this report are:

- Primary Education 4 years old - 11 years old
- Secondary Education 11 years old-18 years old
- College Education (FE) 16 years old-18 years old
- Adult Education 18 years Old +.

The report discusses the methodologies used in gathering the data as well as the origins of Diversity Issues in the UK. It also looks at causes, consequences and strategies for handling discriminatory behaviour in a learning environment.

The @MINDSET project and its objectives

The objective of the @MINDSET project is to actively support diversity management within education settings, by equipping teachers with the appropriate tools to deal with diversity issues, while better encouraging students to become active citizens and empathizing adults. The project aims to identify the most common types of diversity in the school environment and develop on one hand the tools for the teachers to better manage it within the classroom and the school in general. While on the other promote the issue of diversity and what it entails within society for pupils and help them embrace it.

Age Range Considered in this Report

School Students

The Ditch the Label 2014 Bullying Survey reports the following findings for children in secondary and further education:

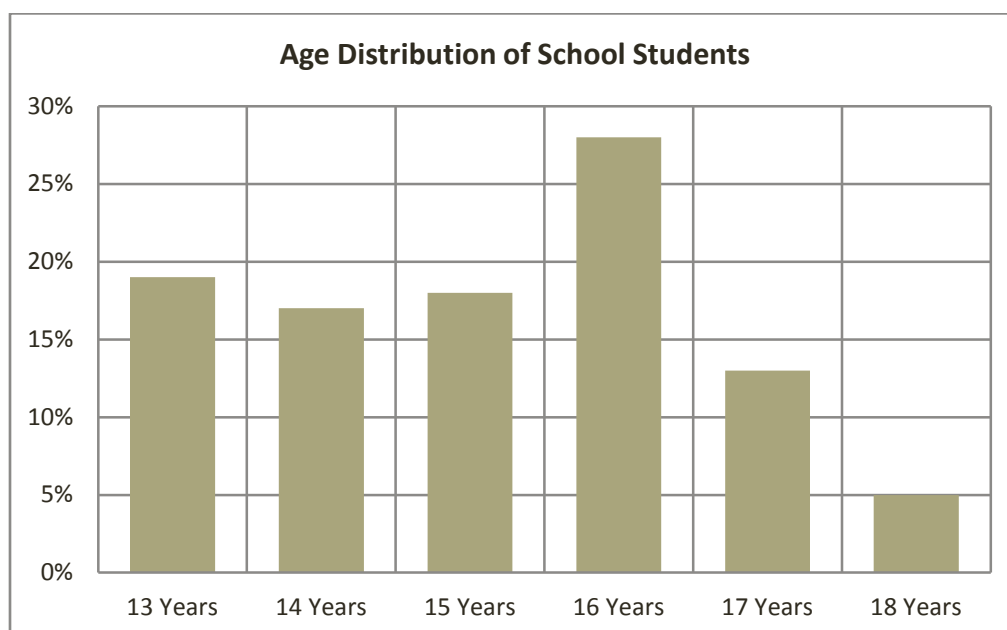


FIGURE 1 AGE DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE 2014 DITCH THE LABEL BULLYING SURVEY

The average age of participants in the Ditch the Label Survey is 15.1 years.

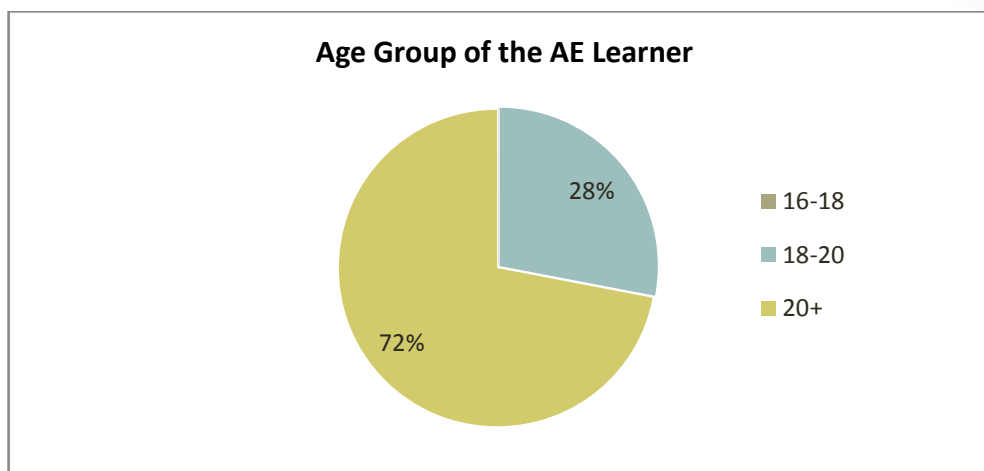


FIGURE 2 AGE GROUPS OF ADULT LEARNERS (AE) IN THE UK SURVEY

AE Trainers

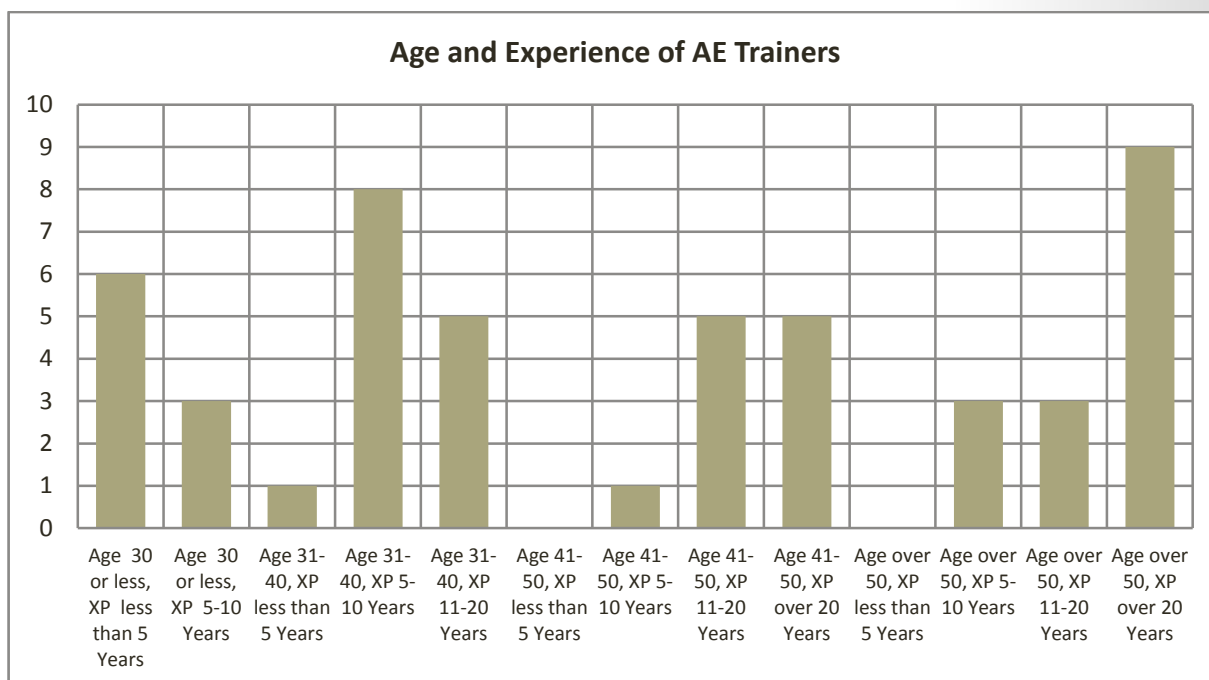


FIGURE 3 AGE AND EXPERIENCE OF ADULT EDUCATION (AE) TRAINERS IN THE UK SURVEY

The scope of this document

This document presents the UK findings from the initial @mindset questionnaire administered by Staffordshire University. It examines the results from Higher Education Learners and Educators and includes a synopsis of the key findings.

The report includes a review of the methodology and contextual information about Staffordshire University.

The findings are further analysed in relation to the key issues associated with diversity as identified by the @Mindset project and the report draws upon wider literature concerning educators and learners experiences of diversity in an educational context in the UK.

Data from The Ditch the Label (2014) survey is also provided in this report as it is a significant annual national-level study. Ditch the Label is research undertaken in partnership with 37 schools and colleges from across the UK and has surveyed over 3,600 young people aged 13-18 as a means of measuring the current climate of bullying across the country.

Methodological framework

The results in the report are based upon the data gathered from staff and students at Staffordshire University. As a partner in the @mindset project, the researchers were able to gain access to both staff and students across a wide range of disciplines primarily in the Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies.

Staffordshire University is a Higher Education corporation with charitable status. The legal status of the university is that of a body governed by public law and is not-for-profit. Staffordshire University has a proven track record for achieving excellence in teaching quality, developing innovative courses and providing opportunities to study in challenging and exciting ways. The Faculty of Arts and Creative Technology has two research centres: the Institute for Applied Creative Thinking and the Centre for Media Arts and Technology. These centres cover a diverse portfolio of academic and creative skills from across the Faculty of Arts and faculty academic work in collaboration with partners in business, commerce and the wider community. Activities range from helping fledgling creative businesses to flourish to improving the quality of life in our communities.

A range of methods were used to conduct the questionnaire. The student questionnaires were completed by students whilst they were attended university during January 2015. The methods we used therefore needed to be suitable for the learning environment and the time restriction impacting the students. The students surveyed are taught by the UK @Mindset Team. The

MINDSET – Managing Social Relations in Schools (project number: 2014-1-UK01-KA200-001766: This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

students included Undergraduate Computer Games students and Postgraduate Community Practice and Community Arts students. In taking this approach, we ensured that students were familiar with the member of staff conducting the questionnaire. This therefore ensured students were fully informed about the purpose of the questionnaire and that staff were available if any sensitive issues arose regarding their responses to it. Also this approach also ensured the sample group was balanced in terms of gender, age, and disability and to a certain extent ethnicity. Students were given a verbal explanation of the purpose of the questionnaire. Their participation was voluntary and they were free to withdraw at any stage. Students were given the option to complete it themselves in class or at home (in a paper version) or through an interview with the member of staff, who completed the form verbatim on their behalf.

In the case of teaching staff participation, the sample consisted mainly of academic staff with teaching responsibilities at Staffordshire University during January 2015. Staff in the Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies were either personally approached by the @mindset team or invited to participate via email. Staff members were given the same information about the project as the students and had the same options in regards to how the survey was completed. The @mindset team also approached (via email) teaching staff affiliated to the university who have taught at Staffordshire University.

To assist with data comparison and to get a more general picture of how diversity is experienced in the wider education sector, we have included the findings from the Ditch the Label 2014 Bullying Survey which was conducted in UK secondary schools in 2014.

The @ Mindset survey was conducted having received full ethical approval from the Staffordshire University Ethics Committee and was delivered in accordance with the university's ethical regulations.

Diversity and its origins

Ethnic Origin

The United Kingdom has found racial diversity to be one of the most challenging diversity issues it has faced over the last 70 years. (BBC News) The indigenous population of the UK is Northern European in origin. Before the end of the Second World War, immigration into the UK from outside of Western Europe was very limited. The labour shortages that followed the Second World War, however, meant that Britain began to encourage immigration from the colonies in order to enhance the work force that was now required to deliver public services such as nursing and transportation, and to work in mining and industry. Immigrants from the West Indies began to arrive in 1948; the HMT Empire Windrush was the first ship to arrive filled with immigrants responding to advertisements for labourers. Mass immigration from the colonies followed, and the ethnic minority

population increased from a few thousand at the end of the war to more than 1.4 million by 1970.

In 1976, the Commission on Racial Equality was formed to address the issues raised by a now multi-ethnic British society. Racial tensions, discrimination, and violence increased, and in 1981, there were race riots in a number of large British cities. The Scarman Report that followed these riots noted that “racial disadvantage is a fact of current British life.” (cited in BBC News) The increase in immigration from Eastern Europe after the transition in 1989 and acceptance into the European Union, as well as the increase in number of asylum seekers from Africa, Asia and South America, has added to the ethnic diversity issues in the UK. In 2002, the right-wing British National Party began to win seats on local councils, and has been joined by other right-wing parties such as the English Defense League, Britain First and UKIP. Despite the passing of the Equality Act in 2010, designed to protect people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society, discrimination against minority ethnic communities is still a significant problem in the UK today, despite the relatively low percentage of minority ethnic groups in UK society.

The 2011 census shows following distribution of ethnic groupings in the UK today:

- 87.1% White
- 7.0% Asian
- 3.0% Black
- 2.0% Mixed
- 0.9% others

The census data shows that the minority ethnic population is approximately 13% of the total UK population. This contrasts with other countries such as the United States, where non-Hispanic whites constitute 63% of the current population and among children younger than 5, 49.4% are from minority ethnic groups. (NBC News, 2013)

The Ditch the Label Survey (2014) demonstrates that young people in the UK today experience high levels of bullying linked to personal appearance, which may be linked in part to ethnic background. The Mindset research for the UK also demonstrates that a majority of young people have experienced bullying based on ethnic origin while in either primary or secondary school (Figure 4 below).

The Ditch the Label statistics demonstrate that the majority of young people claim to have been bullied as a direct result of the attitudes towards their appearance, weight or body shape. (2014, p. 4) In addition, the survey found that young people currently have strong prejudice-based ideas and beliefs; namely on the basis of sexuality, race, disability, gender identity and culture. When combined together, prejudice based bullying accounted as the second most frequent basis of attack. The survey found that young people were less willing to incorporate students who are transgendered, autistic, those with a learning disability or those who do not look or dress favourably. (2014, p. 4)

Other sources of inequality in the UK

Macionis and Plummer argue that there are a variety of sources of discrimination in modern society. In addition to ethnicity and race, these include: social class, gender, age, national identity, sexual identity, and disability and ill health. (2012, p. 253)

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's Triennial Review recommended substantial action in the UK to reduce the incidence of both hate crimes and bullying based on sexual identity, disability and religious belief in the workplace and schools. (2010)

Like other contemporary European societies, citizens in the United Kingdom may face discrimination on a wide variety of grounds. While there are legal protections, such as the Equality Act 2010, these are unable to entirely reverse centuries of custom and practice that result in the unfair treatment of people in a diverse society. The reduction and eventual elimination of discriminatory attitudes will require widespread campaigning aimed at young people designed to promote respect for diversity.

Diversity in the educational environment

With Diversity in the Educational Environment there are three main questions to ask

- Who is experiencing the discrimination?
- What type of discrimination are they encountering?
- How often are they encountering this?

Who is experiencing the Discrimination in Schools

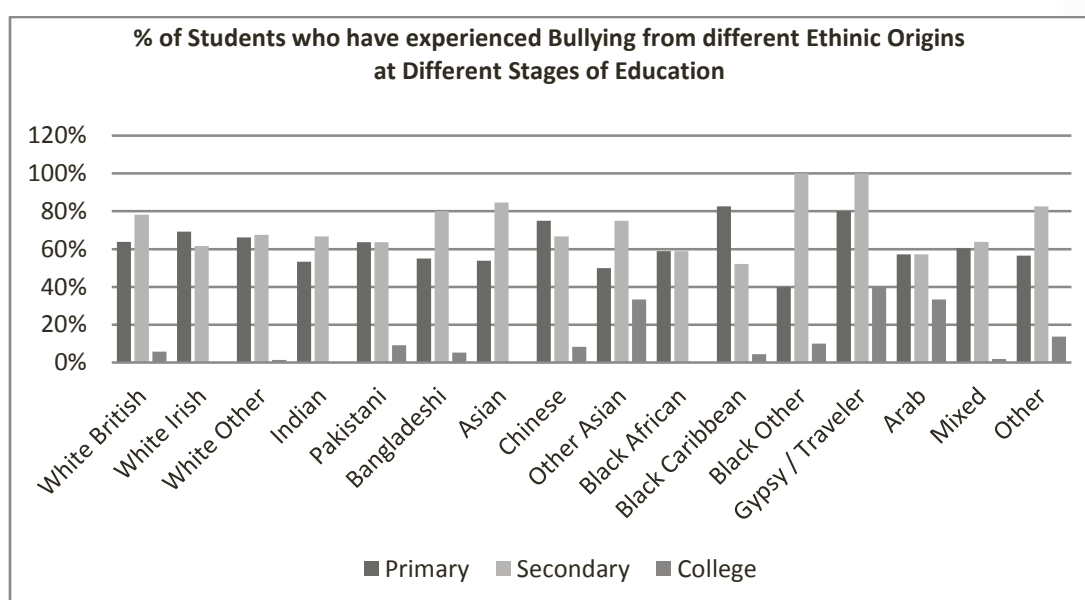


FIGURE 4 EXPERIENCES OF BULLYING AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF EDUCATION EXPERIENCED BY DIFFERENT ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS

From Fig 4 we can see that most discrimination happens at Secondary School level in most ethnic groups. There are exceptions to this such as White Irish, Chinese and Black Caribbean who suffer more discrimination in Primary School. By the time students get to College most of the discrimination has died away, but still a larger than expected amount regarding Other Asian, Gypsy/Travelers and Arab students. These are more likely to be linked to the political situation commonly as commonly portrayed in the media.

The Types and Frequency of Discrimination in Schools

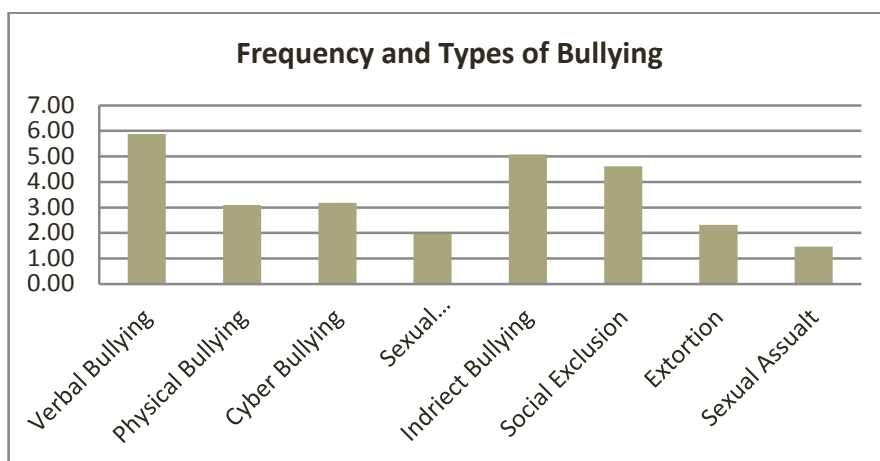


FIGURE 5 FREQUENCY AND TYPES OF BULLYING

In Fig 5 students who were bullied, were asked on a scale of 1 -10 the frequency of each with 1 being never, 5 being often and 10 being frequent. Verbal Bullying, Indirect Bullying, and Social Exclusion were the most frequently encountered types of bullying.

Who is encountering Discrimination in the AE Learning Environment

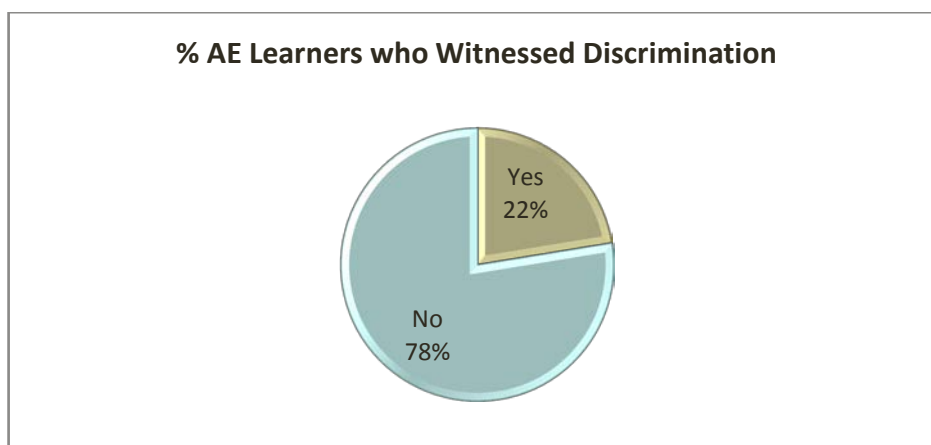


FIGURE 6 PERCENTAGE OF AE LEARNERS WHO WITNESSED DISCRIMINATION

In relation to the data above, a relatively small percentage of students witnessed discrimination in HE as compared to incidents witnessed in schools. However, nearly one quarter of all students in HE claimed to have witnessed discrimination. This disparity may be due to the fact that more emphasis is placed on teaching and discussing themes associated with diversity in primary and secondary school environments, so that those students are more aware of the relevant issues and more likely to report bullying. The data on young people was obtained by organisations with an interest in diversity whereas the HE data was collected by the @ Mindset



team, who are not primarily concerned with promoting respect for diversity in their daily teaching roles. It may also be the case that students in adult education spend less time in the classroom and also choose to be there. Adult Education is focussed on learning as opposed to the enforced prolonged social interaction that is found in compulsory education. This may give rise to less bullying in FE and HE settings, as seen in Fig 4.

Research on the causes of discriminatory behaviour

Discriminatory Behaviour in School Students

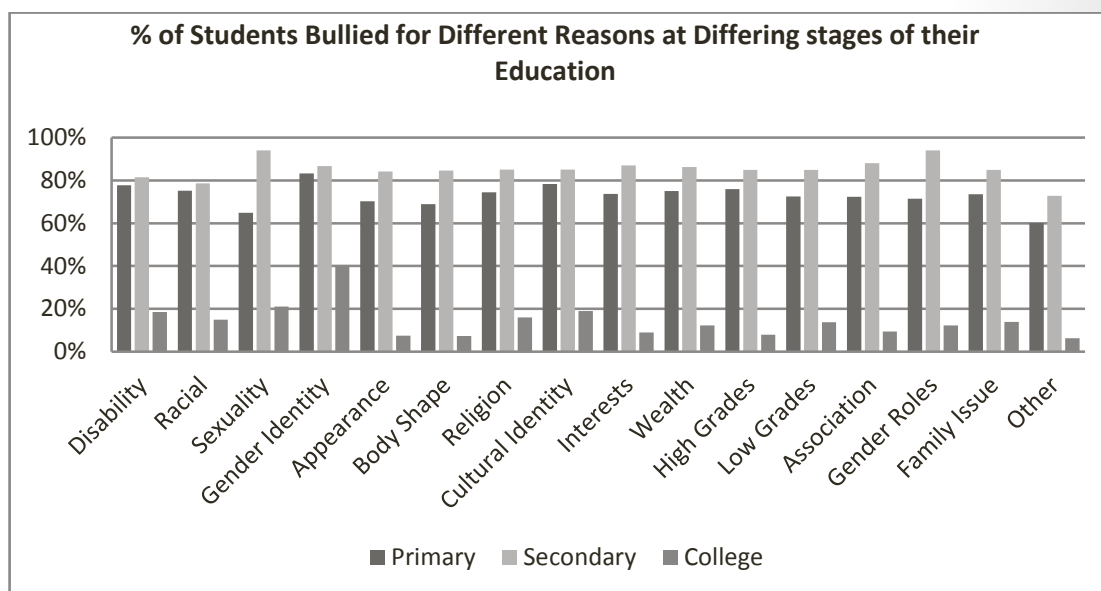


FIGURE 7 REASONS FOR BULLYING AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF EDUCATION AS EXPERIENCED BY DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS

Discriminatory Behaviour as seen by AE Learners in Society

Among AE Learners, the following were the first, second and third choices selected as reasons why they think young people discriminated against each other.

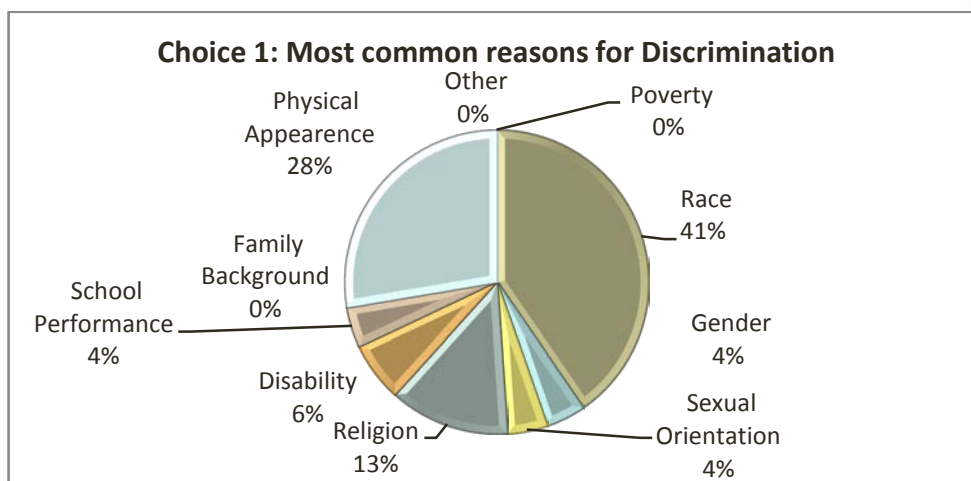


FIGURE 8 AE LEARNERS PERCEPTION OF WHY YOUNG PEOPLE DISCRIMINATE CHOICE NUMBER 1

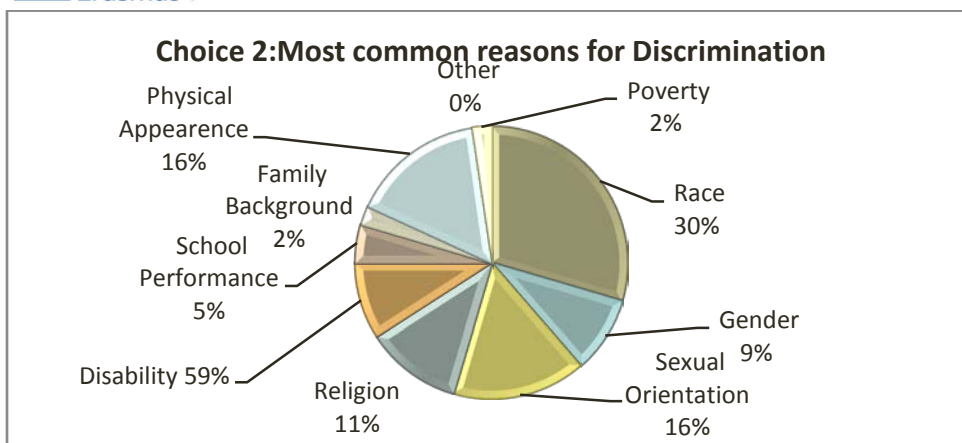


FIGURE 9 AE LEARNERS PERCEPTION OF WHY YOUNG PEOPLE DISCRIMINATE CHOICE NUMBER 2

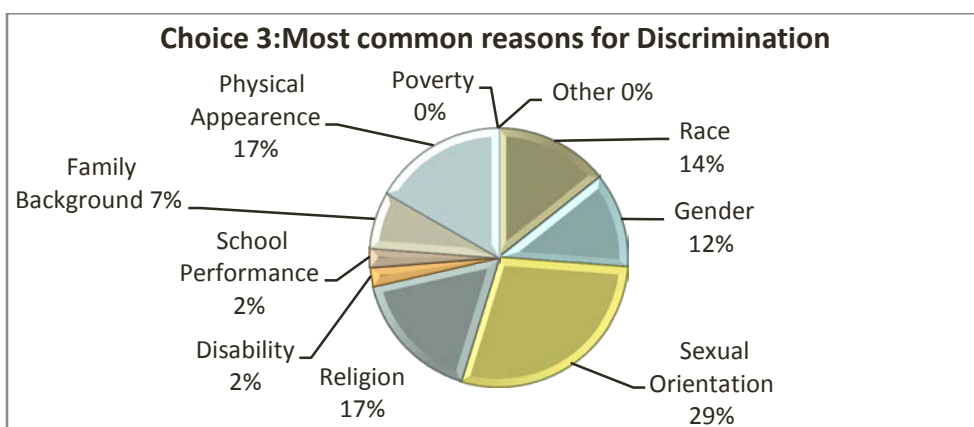


FIGURE 10 AE LEARNERS PERCEPTION OF WHY YOUNG PEOPLE DISCRIMINATE CHOICE NUMBER 3

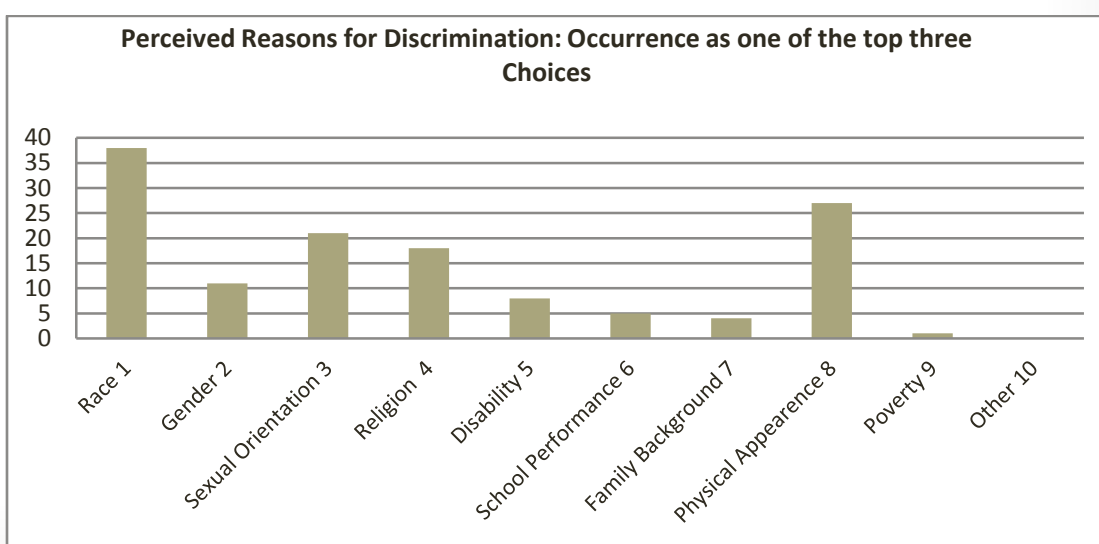


FIGURE 11 PERCEIVED REASONS FOR DISCRIMINATION: OCCURRENCE AS ONE OF THE TOP THREE CHOICES

MINDSET – Managing Social Relations in Schools (project number: 2014-1-UK01-KA200-001766: This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

The perception of AE Learner in society as oppose to in the AE Learning Environment, was that Race then physical Appearance followed by Sexual Orientation where the main causes of discrimination AE Learners the majority, when asked "why" it happened in the AE Learning Environment as oppose to in society in general, responded with comments such as "for amusement", "because they think it's funny" and "Because it's found funny by both parties and accepted". The feeling is that most discrimination is done for amusement of the individual or group doing the discriminating. This as a reason why was followed by, because of Sexual Discrimination, Sexual Orientation and Race equally.

An extensive study by Ditch the Label shows that in the Learning Environment Gender Identity then Cultural Identity followed by Race were the top three.

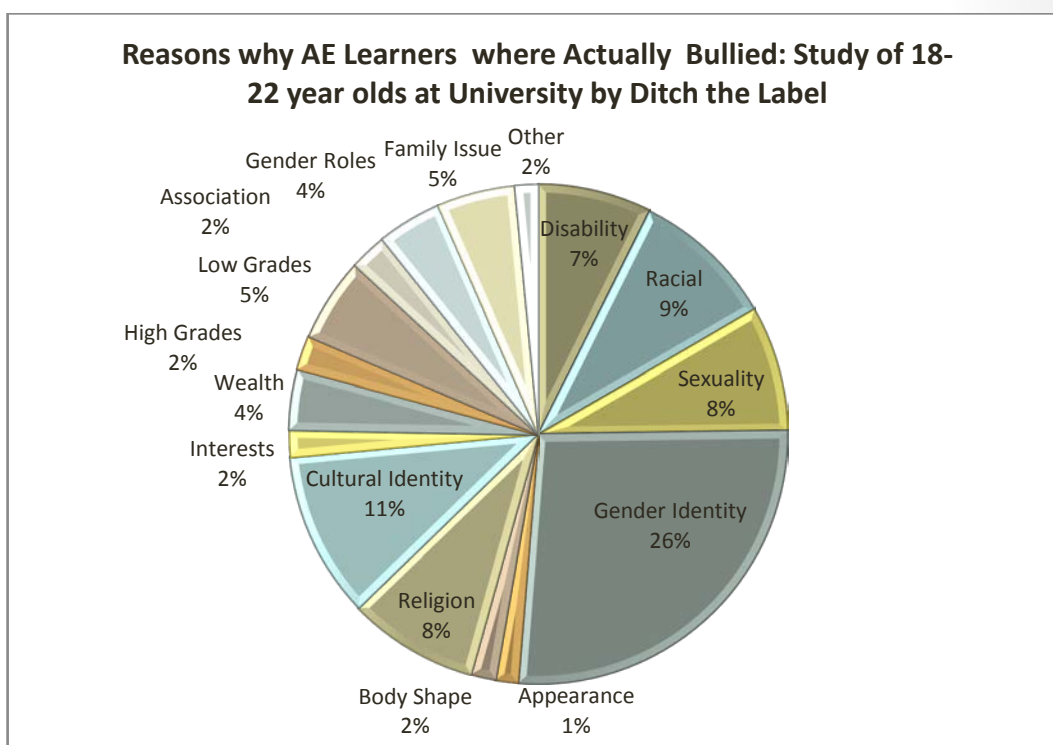


FIGURE 12 REASONS WHY AE LEARNERS WHERE ACTUALLY BULLIED: STUDY OF 18 YEAR OLDS AT UNIVERSITY BY DITCH THE LABEL

Consequences at Cognitive and Social Level

Cognitive Consequences in School Students

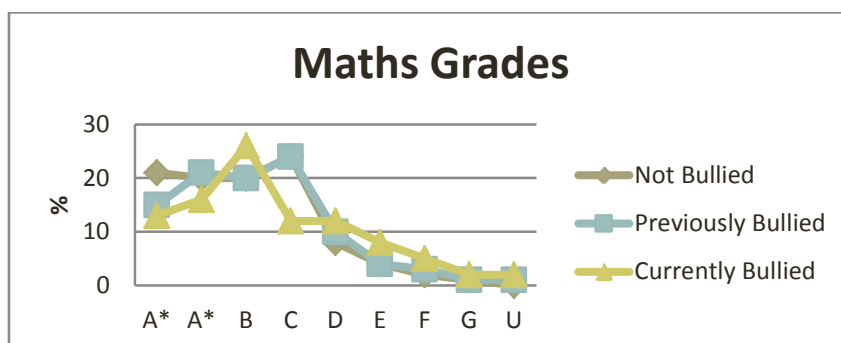


FIGURE 13 COGNITIVE CONSEQUENCES TO BULLYING ON MATHS GRADES

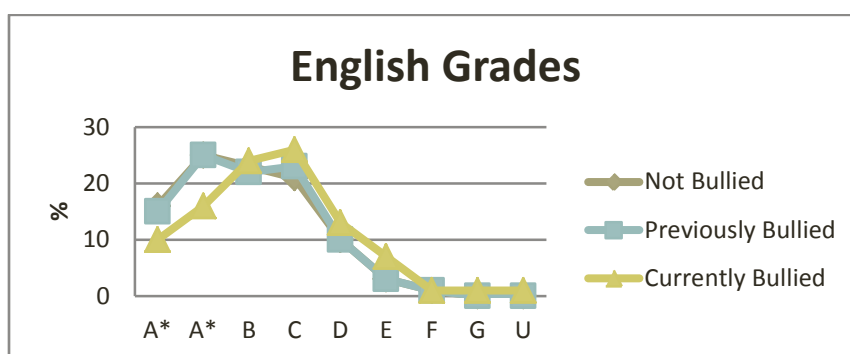


FIGURE 14 COGNITIVE CONSEQUENCES TO BULLYING ON ENGLISH GRADES

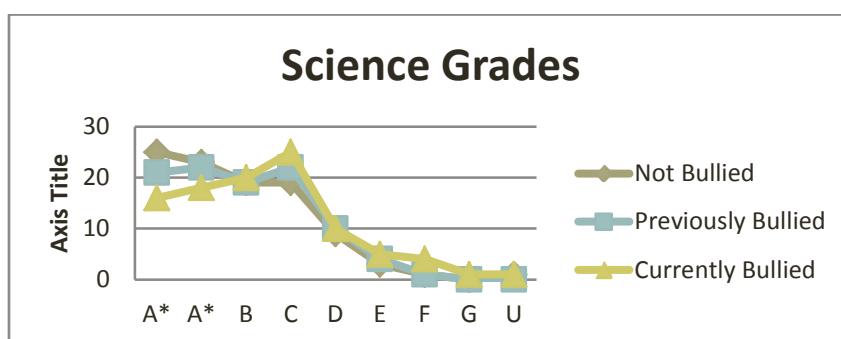


FIGURE 15 COGNITIVE CONSEQUENCES TO BULLYING ON SCIENCE GRADES

Those students who had not been bullied did better overall, than those who had previously been bullied or who were currently being bullied. However the curves for those Not Bullied or Previously Bullied were reasonably similar and significantly different from those Currently

Bullied. This shows that during periods of bullying students' performance is effected by the bullying, but can bounce back again if bullying is stopped.

Cognitive Consequences in AE Learners UK

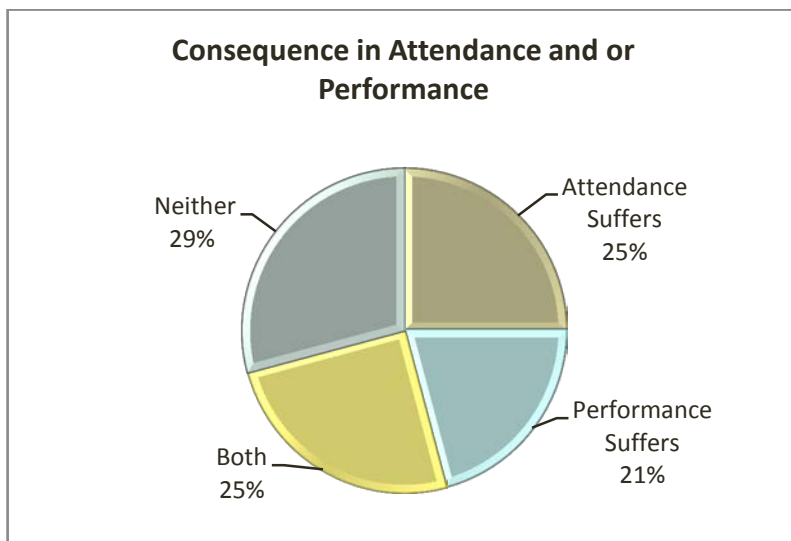


FIGURE 16 AE LEARNERS BELIEF IN WHAT THE CONSEQUENCES ARE FOR DISCRIMINATED AGAINST STUDENTS

Cognitive Consequences Perceived by AE Trainers

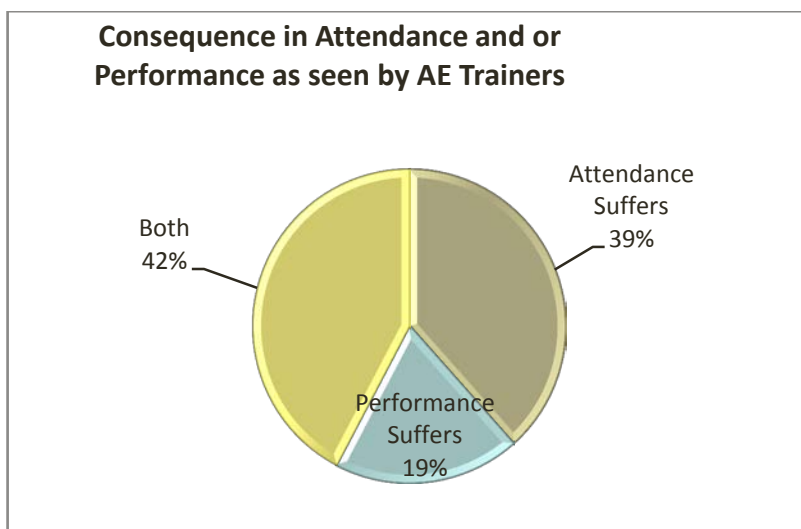


FIGURE 17 CONSEQUENCES IN ATTENDANCE AND OR PERFORMANCE AS SEEN BY AE TRAINERS

Interesting that the largest proportion of AE learners said neither attendance nor performance suffered. This is due to many of the AE Learners do not believe that discrimination occurs at this level of education. This is born out in with the fact that 78% of them have not observed any discriminatory behaviour in the AE Learning environment. At first glance this may look as if there

is a lack of understanding from educators, but AE learners have a short period of time in that environment, where as many of the AE trainers have had at least 11 years experience to draw their answer from and over that period will have observed more incidence of discrimination.

Social Consequences in AE Learners

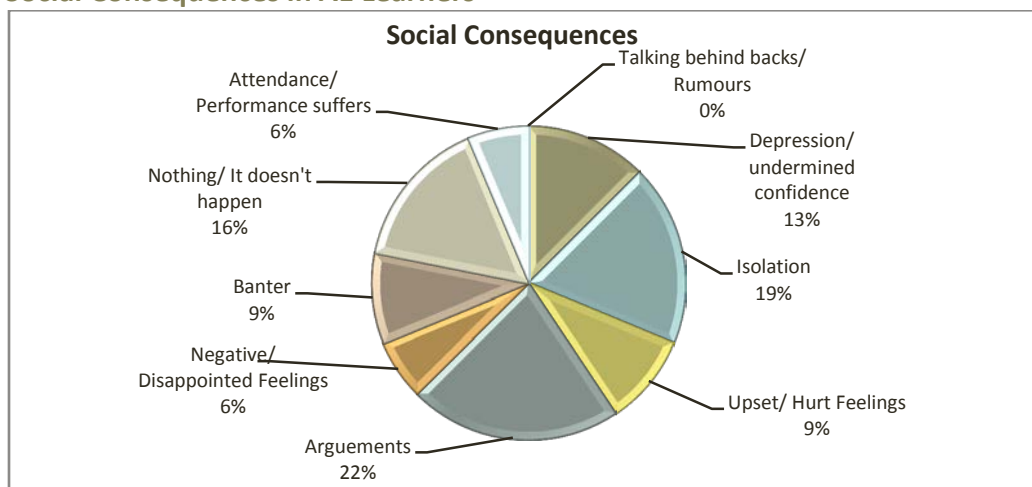


FIGURE 18 SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES IN AE LEARNERS OF DISCRIMINATION

Again it can be seen that 16% of the AE Learners do not believe there is any social consequence as they have not observed discrimination.

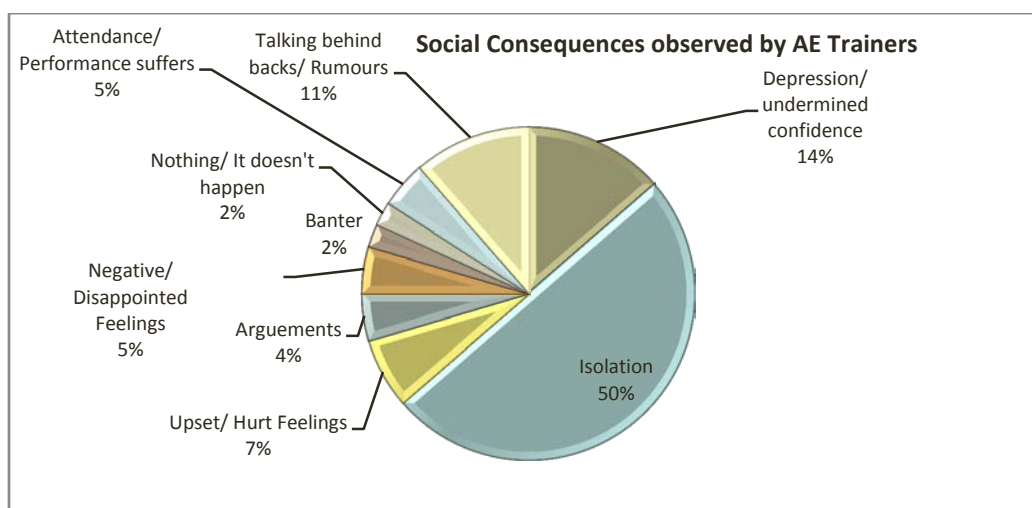


FIGURE 19 SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OBSERVED BY AE TRAINERS

The overwhelming observations by AE trainers are one of observing isolation. The AE learners report a larger number of arguments whereas the Trainers observe talking behind each other's backs and the spreading of rumors.

Where do the teachers stand?

Student/Learner Perspective

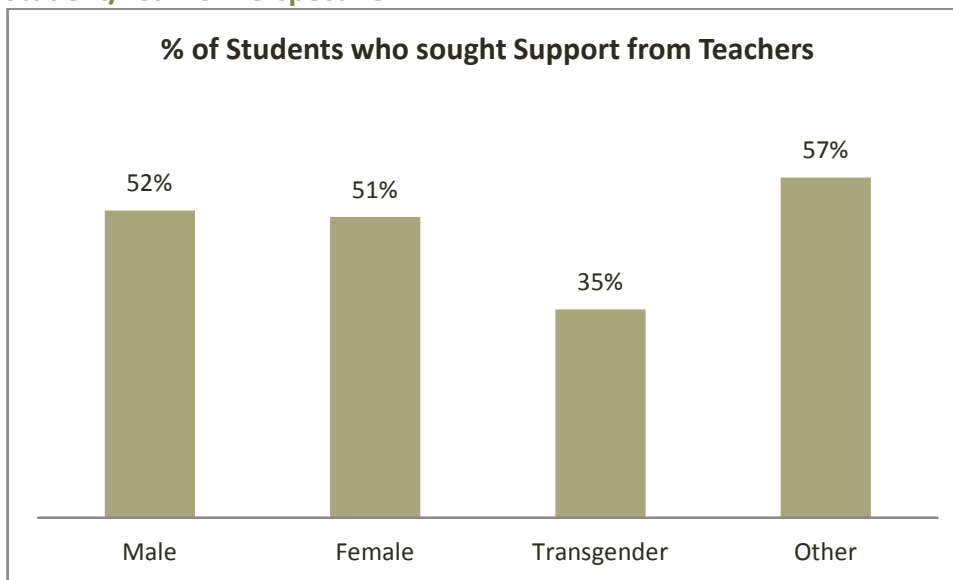


FIGURE 20 PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO SOUGHT SUPPORT FROM TEACHERS

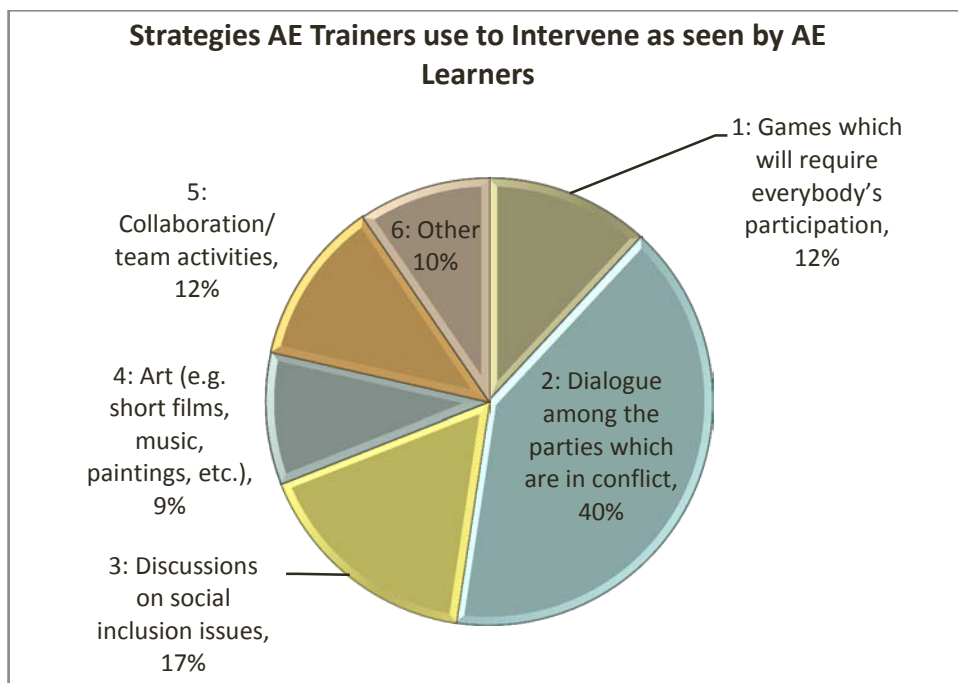


FIGURE 21 STRATEGIES AE TRAINERS USE TO INTERVENE AS SEEN BY AE LEARNERS

Other consists of Not Applicable, Nothing happens or the discriminator is asked to leave.

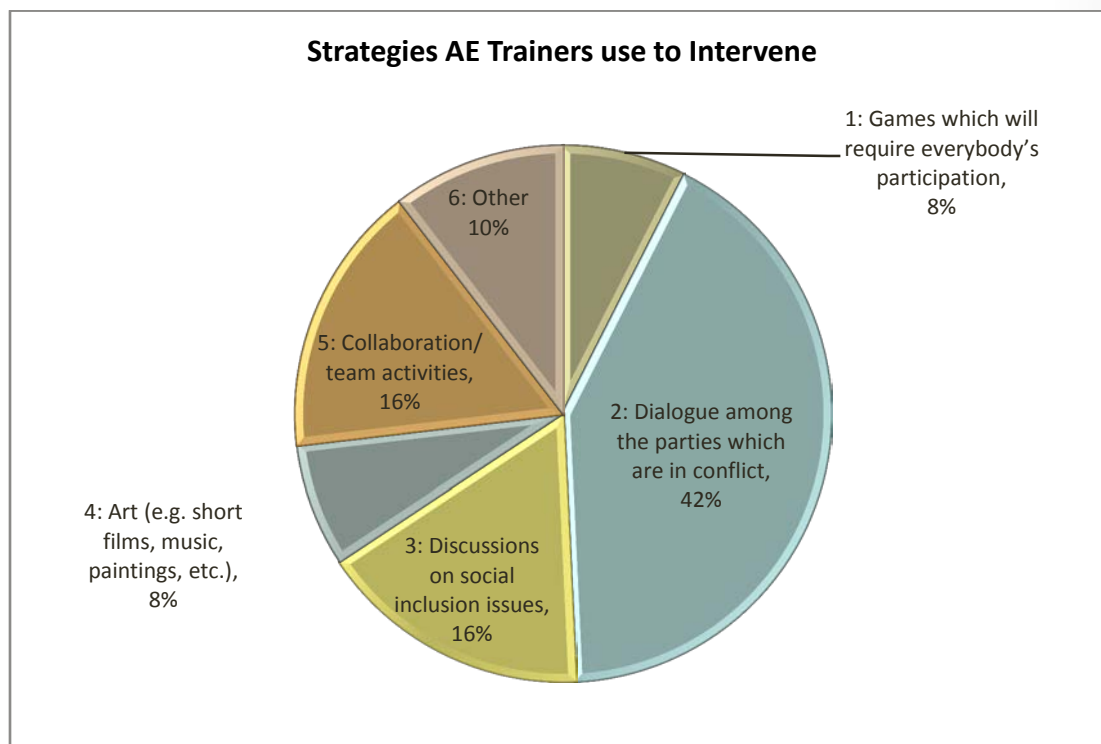


FIGURE 22 STRATEGIES AE TRAINERS USE TO INTERVENE

Strategies perceived and employed by AE Trainers do corroborate that Dialogue between parties and Discussions about Social Inclusion make up more than half of the strategies. However it is interesting to note that there is an even distribution other activities, which encourage groups to work with each other on collaborative exercises or joint group participation.

Conclusions and recommendations

It is clear that there is a difference in the perception of the causes of discrimination in society as opposed to in the learning environment. In Primary School Gender Identity, followed by Disability then Race and Cultural Identity are the highest causes. By Secondary School Sexuality and Gender take over and Race drops to the least. By College Gender Identity and Sexuality dominate. In the schools study, by Ditch the Label, Gender Identity then Cultural Identity followed by Race are foremost and, in our study, AE Learners identified Sexual Discrimination, Sexual Orientation and Race. What is clear that the causes of discrimination are different at different points in the educational journey of learners. However, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, cultural identity (religion?), and appearance are the most significant issues leading to bullying for learners in the UK.

The effect of discrimination on cognitive performance is clear and has a detrimental effect most noticeably whilst the student is experiencing bullying. There is no data on whether attendance decreased in this time so it is unclear whether both attendance and performance suffered as only performance is quantified. Anecdotally, AE trainers believe that both occur. Once a student has been bullied, but is no longer being bullied, their grades do show a slight dip when compared to those who have never been bullied, but their grades can bounce back again if bullying is stopped.

It is interesting that AE trainers observed isolation as a major social consequence, as well as talking behind each other's backs and the spreading of rumors. AE learners, however, report a larger number of arguments. This may be either the nature of the relationship of Trainer to Learner or Trainers are observing the talking behind backs etc as the root of arguments that occur as a result of this behaviour.

The research in the UK suggests that the strategy to be adopted in tackling discrimination in the learning environment must be:

1. Tailored to causes of discrimination at different stages of education
2. Designed to include intervention at an early stage
3. Designed to combat student isolation

A number of additional strategies are also suggested by the research:

1. It is clear from anecdotal evidence that educators need to better understand the contexts of their learners' lives. Educators in the UK often feel at a loss because of their lack of knowledge about the lives of their students. For example, relevant issues include: how are holidays celebrated in other religions and cultures, what is the difference between different ethnic groups (e.g. how are Pakistanis different from Iraqis, and different from Afghans?), what types of

conflict are refugees fleeing from and how does this affect them, how are gypsy-traveller and Roma societies different from mainstream British society, and how to respond to the needs of children struggling with their gender identity and/or sexual orientation?

2. Given that dialogue is the preferred method of HE educator engagement when intervening concerning a diversity issue, it is clear that further work needs to be done in this area to develop discussion strategies that will be useful across a range of types of schools and diversity issues.

3. The research has not investigated why alternatives to dialogue in FE and HE are not being used, but the development of the course material should provide credible and reliable alternatives to dialogue, and encourage teachers to learn about and implement new methods.

4. For students in primary and secondary education, failure to attend is a significant impact of bullying. It is important that the diversity course development explores ways to manage diversity that are directly related to maintaining attendance.

The UK research at primary, secondary and HE levels has brought to light a number of significant issues that, when incorporated into course development, offer the possibility of helping educators more effectively manage diversity in the classroom in this country and elsewhere in Europe.

List of References

BBC News (no date). A Short History of Immigration. Available at:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/uk/2002/race/short_history_of_immigration.stm Accessed on 13.02.15.

Ditch the Label (2014). The Annual Bullying Survey 2014. Available at:
<http://www.ditchthelabel.org/> Accessed on 13.02.15.

Macdonald, J. J. & Plummer, K. (2012). Sociology: A global introduction. Harlow: Pearson Education.

NBC News (13.06.13) Census: White Majority in U.S. Gone by 2043. Available at:
<http://usnews.nbcnews.com/news/2013/06/13/18934111-census-white-majority-in-us-gone-by-2043> Accessed on 15.02.15.

United Kingdom, Office of National Statistics (2012). Ethnic and National Identity in England and Wales 2011. Available at:
<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/rpt-ethnicity.html> Accessed on 13.02.15.

MINDSET – Managing Social Relations in Schools (project number: 2014-1-UK01-KA200-001766: This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



United Kingdom, Equality and Human Rights Commission (2010) Creating a Fairer Britain: Triennial Review. Available at: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/our-work/key-projects/how-fair-is-britain> Accessed 13.02.15.

List of Figures

Figure 1 Age Distribution Of School Students In The 2014 Ditch The Label Bullying Survey	4
Figure 2 Age Groups Of Adult Learners (AE) In The UK Survey	5
Figure 3 Age And Experience Of Adult Education (AE) Trainers In The Uk Survey.....	5
Figure 4 Experiences Of Bullying At Different Stages Of Education Experienced By Different Ethnic Backgrounds.....	10
Figure 5 Frequency and Types of Bullying.....	11
Figure 6 Percentage Of AE Learners Who Witnessed Discrimination	11
Figure 7 Reasons For Bullying At Different Stages Of Education As Experienced By Different Ethnic Groups	13
Figure 8 AE Learners Perception Of Why Young People Discriminate Choice Number 1	13
Figure 9 AE Learners Perception Of Why Young People Discriminate Choice Number 2	14
Figure 10 AE Learners Perception Of Why Young People Discriminate Choice Number 3	14
Figure 11 Perceived Reasons For Discrimination: Occurrence As One Of The Top Three Choices	14
Figure 12 Reasons Why AE Learners Where ACTUALLY BULLIED: Study Of 18 Year Olds At University By Ditch The Label.....	15
Figure 13 Cognitive Consequences To Bullying On Maths Grades.....	16
Figure 14 Cognitive Consequences To Bullying On English Grades.....	16
Figure 15 Cognitive Consequences To Bullying On Science Grades.....	16
Figure 16 AE Learners Belief In What The Consequences Are For Discriminated Against Students	17
Figure 17 Consequences In Attendance And Or Performance As Seen By AE Trainers	17
Figure 18 Social Consequences In AE Learners Of Discrimination	18
Figure 19 Social Consequences Observed By AE Trainers.....	18
Figure 20 Percentage Of Students Who Sought Support From Teachers	19
Figure 21 Strategies AE Trainers Use To Intervene As Seen By AE Learners.....	19
Figure 22 Strategies AE Trainers Use To Intervene	20