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| **International Froebel Conference 2023** | |
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| **Presentation Title** | ‘Deferred, denied and dying dreams’: The visual narratives of minoritized ethnic young people interested in pursuing primary teaching as a career. |
| **Abstract** | Notwithstanding efforts to increase higher education participation in Ireland, there remains inadequate representation from groups such as lower socio-economic, minority ethnic and individuals with a disability (HEA, 2016). This is particularly the case for primary initial teacher education (ITE) in Ireland, where despite the diversification of teaching emerging as somewhat of a policy priority in recent years (DES, 2018), student teachers remain overwhelming White, female, settled, middle-class and Catholic (Keane & Heinz, 2016). Students from under-represented and racialised groups face a myriad of cultural complexities, institutional limitations, and economic constraints to becoming a primary teacher. These barriers span the continuum of access and admissions, post-entry to ITE and transition to teaching.  Critical Race Theory (CRT) draws upon a series of innovative methodological tools to address racism, discrimination, and relentless inequalities in society. Counter-storytelling, also known ‘oppositional storytelling’ (Delgado, 1995, p. xv) is one such device in the ‘conceptual toolbox’ of CRT (Gillborn, 2007). Counter-stories centre the significance of experiential knowledge and are positioned in direct opposition to stereotypical scripts or ‘stock stories’, (Delgado, 1989). This presentation will use the tool of counter-storytelling (Delgado, 1989; 1995), within a critical race theory framework, to reveal findings from a PhotoVoice research project with minoritized ethnic young people interested in pursuing a career in primary teaching. Through symbolic image-narratives, counter stories will be shared relating to identity and belonging, the centrality of racism in the educational experiences of the young people, and their narrative responses to the persistent injustices and barriers they have faced in pursuit of their teaching dream.  The use of photographs as a creative methodology in this research contributed to the enactment of a Froebelian ethos, through ‘ideas being given visible form’. These photos and the accompanying rich narratives represent first-hand experience of exclusion and marginalisation from ITE, and aim to foreground authentic voices which have been hitherto silenced in dominant discourse about diversifying the teaching profession in Ireland. |
| **Key words** | Primary teaching, counter-storytelling, diversity. |