DEVELOPING WORKSHOP MATERIALS SUMMARISING EVIDENCE-BASED CLASSROOM APPROACHES TO SUPPORT STUDENT TEACHERS IN RESPONDING EFFECTIVELY TO ISSUES OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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Research can inform teaching by providing evidence in relation to the diversity of the classroom, and on the outcomes of applied theory-driven classroom approaches. Such evidence can support or oppose existing ideas, can reveal barriers and facilitators to undertaking learning activities, and can highlight perspectives not yet incorporated into student teachers’ theoretical positions. Nevertheless, the role of research-informed teaching in enabling learning and influencing classroom practice itself requires to be investigated. There is a need to explore the role that research-informed teaching plays in enabling student teachers to respond effectively to issues of diversity and inclusion in their nurseries and classrooms, and to act towards closing educational achievement gaps.

The overall aim of this project is to prepare, and make a preliminary evaluation of, materials for initial teacher education students in higher education that provide information about current understandings of the influences exerted by developmental, social, religious, cultural and linguistic factors on child attainment and wellbeing, and of their inter-relationships. Understandings have been informed by recent analyses of whole-population data-sets and large-scale studies that provide a powerful body of evidence which both stimulates educational thinking and challenges some classroom practice. It has also informed teaching approaches that aim to enhance child experiences and learning. The evidence and interventions are relatively new, and provide a corpus of research that can be discussed with initial teacher education students in order to consider its impact on their thinking and practices.

The project will therefore summarise results of large-scale studies that provide information on the relationships amongst biological, psychological and social aspects of child experience and of selected evidence-based classroom ‘interventions’ and approaches, and prepare workshop materials for student use in reflecting upon the issues raised.