



## **Brenda Campbell: becoming a teacher educator**

*The Manchester College*

I left school in 1979 to become a secretary and embarked upon a number of courses that included shorthand, typing and administration training. I worked in this role from 1987 until 1993 before being made redundant. In 1995, I returned to education, as I wanted to improve my English and maths, in particular maths as I had left school without this. Furthermore, I wanted to undertake a Psychology course in the hope of becoming a counsellor. Teaching was the furthest thing from my mind at that point.

I chose an access course and excelled in both the course work and exams. I did particularly well in maths and found myself helping some of the other learners who were struggling. My then English teacher, Lorna Roberts, asked me if I had thought about going to university.

Her belief and unwavering support that I could do this helped me make the decision to apply for three different university courses and I finally chose to study a BA in Applied Human Communication because it was psychology-based. I successfully completed this in 1998 and over the following summer I became restless and knew that I would like to progress further but was unsure about the area I wanted to pursue. I spoke to Joe Whittaker, a lecturer at the University of Bolton, and decided to apply for the pre-service PGCE and to teach English as my subject specialism.

Once qualified, my first teaching post was at a local community centre where I taught 16-18 year olds life skills, including English and Maths, in order to prepare them for either further education, training or employment. A significant moment was when I saw the learners, all of whom had been previously excluded from school and felt that they could not turn their lives around, successfully complete, and either get jobs or progress to other courses. I continued this work until 2002 as I felt I needed to move onto a larger organisation to reach a wider cohort which included teachers. I then joined The Prince's Trust, a charity working with unemployed young people, as a teacher with responsibility for embedding English and maths into community programmes for 16-25 year olds. Alongside this, I also successfully completed my level 4 literacy subject specialist certificate. In 2005, I was again made redundant. A vacancy became available within the Teacher Education department at MANCAT, subsequently renamed The Manchester College following a merger, where I have remained to date. Moving into teacher education was a key moment in my career. It has seen me teach a number of initial teacher education awards from level 3 to level 7, as well as being given the responsibility for delivering CPD for colleagues across the College. This has been both challenging and rewarding.

A number of people have inspired me on my journey to becoming a teacher educator. Joe Whittaker, who taught me on the PGCE, was a strong advocate for inclusive learning. I gained an immense wealth of knowledge from him that I would go on to apply to my teaching years after qualifying. **Creativity is an important element of my teaching and I ensure that this is embedded in each lesson that I deliver, modelling effective practice.** The Teacher Education team at The Manchester College, along with two members that have now left, Libby Mooney and Dr. Titilola Olukoga, have inspired my creative teaching. As a team we share ideas and plan lessons together to ensure that our trainees have the best experience. Modelling our practice ensures that lessons are fun and engaging as well as delivered to a high standard.

**I have gained in-depth knowledge of teacher education through academic critical friendships, scholarly activity and informal discussions** regarding teaching and learning, which enabled me to gain the confidence to move forward to complete my MA in Education. This developed my research skills and directed my interest in the areas of autoethnography and Critical Race Theory. I hope to progress further by completing a doctorate.