

Respecting students' wishes

Trevor Phillips is guilty of gross exaggeration when he accuses universities of a 'lethal' twist to racial separation because he doesn't like what students choose (Segregation, 2006 style, Education Guardian 3 January 2006). Tariq Modood says it creates a problem if some students don't want to go to a Russell Group university. Nowhere in their pieces is there any respect, or even any place, for the actual wishes of students.

In a letter (3 January 3) Ian Swanson complains of lack of respect in schools for the pupils' primary culture, which many pupils naturally wish to learn and follow. In a lifetime spent in education at various levels I have found that a deleterious factor is top-down insistence that the true wishes of students come second to outcomes desired by those in charge. This is contrary to the human rights of students.

Francis Bennion, Emeritus chairman, Professional Association of Teachers.

Published in *The Guardian*, Education Guardian, 10 January 2006.