

This research was undertaken by an autistic teacher-researcher working with an autistic trainee-teacher to explore his PGCE experience.

The research used creative methodologies, including visual images (Kara, 2020) and used the metaphor of Swifts – *Apus apus* – to explore the autistic trainee's experience.

Many autistic adults within education communities, including the trainee in question, will 'mask' to hide their autism due to fear of discrimination (Lawrence, 2019) and distress at the way that they see autistic pupils being treated and discussed (Wood and Happé, 2021).



This presentation opens for discussion the following questions:

- How much should we support the trainees to 'fit the mould' to meet the requirements of the course, and how much should we encourage, value and celebrate the trainees' autistic differences?
- How can we support trainee teachers to meet the needs of autistic pupils if we as teacher-educators do not ourselves deeply understand inclusion?
- How can we use creative approaches to adapt learning to better support autistic pupils, students and teachers?

References

- Kara, H. (2020). *Creative research methods: A practical guide*. Policy Press.
- Lawrence, C. (2019). "I can be a role model for autistic pupils": investigating the voice of the autistic teacher. *Teacher Education Advancement Network Journal*, 11(2), 50-58.
- Wood, R., & Happé, F. (2021). What are the views and experiences of autistic teachers? Findings from an online survey in the UK. *Disability & Society*, 1-26.