

## **Selecting Inclusive Teacher Candidates: Validity and Reliability Issues in Admission Policy and Practice**

**By Christopher DeLuca**

Promoting educational inclusivity has been a central priority of research, policy, and practice in recent years throughout countries with high levels of diversity (Hutchinson, 2010; Jennings, 2007; OECD, 2010). While inclusivity represents a complex educational construct that is often associated with varied theoretical and practical orientations, fundamentally, educational inclusivity refers to supporting and accepting the full range of diversities within a learning context to promote equitable education within a more cohesive society (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). Results from numerous studies have identified significant benefits of inclusive education on reducing the achievement gap, promoting student self-perceptions and well-being, and supporting a socially integrated community of learning (e.g., Blais & Ouedraogo, 2008; Mueller & O'Connor, 2007; OECD, 2010; Smith & Schonfeld, 2000). Accordingly, literature recommends that pre-service teacher education programs focus on selecting teacher candidates with a propensity for inclusive teaching and that programs promote inclusivity as a fundamental pedagogical principle (Ball & Tyson, 2011). While there has been substantial research on pedagogical and programmatic structures that support teacher education commitments to inclusivity (Gross-

---

*Christopher DeLuca is  
an assistant professor  
with the Faculty of  
Education at Queen's  
University, Kingston,  
Ontario, Canada.*

### *Selecting Inclusive Teacher Candidates*

---

man, 2005; Hollins & Guzman, 2005), there has been notably little research into the process of selecting teacher candidates who value educational inclusivity and who would benefit from pre-service education that develops their practice of inclusive education (Villegas & Davis, 2007).

Admission policy plays a dominant role in the systematic selection of teacher candidates and serves as the primary gatekeeping structure for entry into the teaching profession in jurisdictions where teacher education is a university-based program of study (Young, Hall, & Clarke, 2007). In practice, Solomon (2002) contends that concerns for inclusivity can be supported not only through program structures, curricula, and pedagogies that examine and modify beliefs about diversity but also through a recruitment and admission policy that enables a representative and responsive teacher candidate population. Similarly, Casey and Childs (2007) argue that admission policy should support the integrity of teaching values, such as inclusivity, and promote diversity within the teaching profession through equity-based admission processes. While there is recognition across this literature that teacher candidates need not enter their pre-service programs already having the skills and knowledge to create inclusive classroom contexts, there is acknowledgement that teacher candidates must maintain an interest in and propensity for developing this core teacher capacity throughout their teacher education program.

Admitting and selecting teacher candidates with a propensity for inclusive teaching is a complex assessment process that is often confounded by a high number of applicants and short decision-making periods. Smithrim (2000) acknowledges two core prerequisites for teacher candidate selection: (a) an applicant's personal dispositions (i.e., qualities and beliefs), and (b) an applicant's subject scholarship (i.e., grade point average in teachable subject areas). While fairly stable and effective indicators of subject scholarship exist, systematic assessment of personal dispositions is more difficult because they represent complex, socially-dependant constructs that are widely interpretable. Assessing personal dispositions is a subjective process reliant upon how admission committee members, individually and collectively, interpret and value dispositional constructs and upon the selection indicators and practices that determine admission decisions (Malvern, 1991). Consequently, the reliability of selection practices and the resulting validity of admission decisions may be threatened (Casey & Childs, 2007).

To date, research on admission processes has largely focused on either selection trends or on determining the predictive and concurrent validity of admission indicators (Caskey, Peterson, & Temple, 2001). Unfortunately, comparatively little research has examined the subjective processes used in the selection of personal dispositions related to inclusivity and the impact of these processes on the validity and reliability of admission decisions (Lundy, Sparkes, & Lawrence, 2001). As contemporary validity relies on multiple perspectives to generate situated judgments about the accuracy and appropriateness of admission decisions (Kane, 2006; Messick, 1998; Moss, Girard, & Haniford, 2006), examining the subjective and

interpretive processes in selection is a necessary component to understanding the general validity of teacher education admission policy and practice. Accordingly, this study examined issues in the assessment of prerequisite personal dispositions to contribute to understandings of the validity of teacher candidate selection decisions. Specifically, the purpose of this research was to examine how indicators of applicants' propensity for inclusive teaching were considered and integrated into admission and selection decisions for entry into one teacher education program.

The following research questions guided data collection:

1. What provisions support the selection of inclusive teacher candidates into the teacher education program?
2. How do selection committee members and senior program administrators interpret and integrate applicant information to render a judgment on applicants' propensity for inclusive teaching?

A qualitative research design involving in-depth interviews with selection committee members and senior program administrators was used to respond to these research questions. The findings from this research point to issues and challenges in promoting inclusivity in teaching and teacher education through current admission policy and practice.

### **Teacher Education Admission Policy and Practice**

Research suggests a high degree of consistency in admission policy and practice across teacher education programs in Canada (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008) and in Australia and New Zealand. Programs in the U.S. and the U.K. maintain greater variability in selection indicators and procedures, in part due to a greater number of program options leading to teacher certification (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). Existing admission research generally focuses on two main areas of inquiry: (a) studies on the reliability, predictive validity, and utility of selection indicators; and (b) studies on the value of equity-based admission policies. Below, I provide a brief synthesis of each of these areas.

#### ***Selection Indicators***

Undergraduate grade point average (GPA) is by far the most commonly used criteria and often the strongest weighted factor in admission decisions, especially for consecutive teacher education programs (i.e., post-degree teacher certification programs). For concurrent teacher education programs (i.e., undergraduate education programs), applicants' GPA are often considered in conjunction with results from large-scale assessments such as the SAT (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). In their review of teacher education programs, Crocker and Dibbon (2008) concluded that faculty members preferred GPA as the primary criteria for entry into teacher education programs, but that they also supported the use of a variety of indicators

### *Selecting Inclusive Teacher Candidates*

---

in combination with GPA. Casey and Childs (2007) documented the value of other types of selection indicators including written statements, interviews, reference letters, standardized test results, and performance in prerequisite education courses. Casey and Childs noted that these indicators provide different information about applicants' readiness to teach.

While Casey and Childs (2007) cautioned that rating information from written or oral sources might maintain lower inter-rater reliability due to evaluators' personal biases and subjectivities, other researchers have suggested that reliability issues can be strengthened through rater training and by increasing the number of raters per application (e.g., Byrnes, Kiger, & Shechtman, 2000; Caskey et al., 2001; Smith & Pratt, 1996). In their study of 10 selection indicators used with 141 applicants, Caskey et al. found that inter-rater reliability on essay items were approximately 0.9. They also noted that the essay ratings maintained a high correlation with applicants' overall file ratings (0.88), reference letters (0.77), and to a lesser extent GPA (0.42). Similarly, in their quantitative study of 68 U.S. teacher candidates, Byrnes et al. (2000) observed that ratings for applicants on group-interviews proved to be more reliable predictors of performance in the pre-service teacher education program and were a better indicator of success than academic criteria alone. These studies suggest that threats to rating reliability could be reduced for written and oral indicators through rater training and that these indicators could yield a high degree of concurrent validity evidence with other indicators.

Few studies have examined the use of subjective indicators for selecting applicants with a propensity for inclusive teaching. Instead, studies have examined selection trends based on applicant diversity characteristics (e.g., gender, age, socio-economic status, race) in an effort to facilitate a representative teacher population with that of the general student population. While increasing the level of teacher candidate diversity does not necessarily imply the selection of candidates with a propensity for inclusivity, increasing diversity in a teacher education program may provide greater opportunity to learn about diversity and a foundation for practicing inclusivity.

In examining demographic characteristics of applicants, Smith and Pratt (1996) examined correlations between socio-economic status (SES), gender, and teacher candidate selection in their study on the integration of biographical data (as collected through applicants' personal statements) within teacher education admission. In their study, admission procedures involved equal weighting of applicants' GPA rating and personal statement ratings, which were independently scored by two reviewers. Based on data from a two cohorts sample and 50 reviewers, findings identified biases in ratings based on gender: (a) male reviewers tended to give higher average ratings than female reviewers regardless of applicant's gender, and (b) both male and female reviewers tended to rate female applicants higher than male applicants. These rating biases resulted in increased females admitted into the teacher education program. This trend was substantiated in a similar study conducted by Lundy et al. (2001) who found that, despite commit-

ments to equitable practice, selection decisions favored female applicants based on GPA admission criteria.

Smith and Pratt (1996) also found that in contrast to research on undergraduate program admission, selection of applicants to teacher education program maintained a low correlation to SES (as measured by parental income and employment status), accounting for less than 5% of the variance in admission decisions. The researchers suggested that correlation differences between undergraduate/post-degree status with SES might result from initial streaming at an undergraduate level, resulting in fewer students from lower SES backgrounds applying to teacher education programs. This suggestion aligns with Lundy et al's (2001) research that noted both applicants to teacher education programs and those that are admitted into teacher education programs maintain a higher SES compared to general population demographics. In response to these selection trends and in alignment with more general trends in higher education admissions (Gale, 2001), many teacher education programs have adopted equity-based admission policies.

#### ***Equity-based Admission Policies***

While equity-based admission policies do not assess an applicant's personal disposition to inclusive teaching, they do make provisions for entry of diverse applicants into teacher education programs, which not only helps to facilitate a more representative teaching workforce but also provides a more authentic context for learning about and practicing inclusivity within teacher education programs. Equity-based admission policies recognize that ascribed status such as gender, racial/ethnic background, and ability should not affect access to educational programs and professions (Allen, 2003; Gale, 2001). Throughout various countries, these policies are supported through federal and local legislation (Anderson, 2004). Currently equity-based admission policies largely focus on four identifiable groups of people including: gender, people with disabilities (or differently-abled persons), Aboriginals, and visible minorities, where visible minority refers to any racialized person (other than Aboriginals) and who are non-Caucasian in race (Allen, 2003). Generally, an applicant's identification to any of these specified groups is based on a self-identification process; however, this information integrates into admission decisions differently depending upon institution (Lundy et al., 2001). For example, some institutions use this information for initial screening and selection of applicants while others use this information after applicants have been ranked using the general selection procedures.

Lundy et al. (2001) studied the practice and effectiveness of an equity-based admission policy in relation to increasing racial minorities in one teacher education program. Findings indicated that the affirmative action program increased the visible cultural representation of minority groups within the program and suggested that equity admissions work when in place. However, affirmative action programs are only effective for clearly defined criteria and only address certain

### *Selecting Inclusive Teacher Candidates*

---

underrepresented groups. In addition, the equity-based process requires applicants to self-identify their equity status, which some applicants may be reluctant to do. Therefore, while equity-based admission policies may increase the presence of certain diverse groups within teacher education programs, students from other underrepresented groups continue to face restrictions due to systemic and internal barriers (Chapman, 2011). These barriers include tradition of practice, definition of the university's role in society, funding, affordability, admission criteria, elitism, and broader societal inequities that lead to disadvantages in early schooling and provisions for educational supports (Brathwaite, 2003). Given these barriers, data on admission into universities continue to point toward a largely homogeneous teacher candidate populace, resulting in a homogeneous teaching workforce (Blais & Ouedraogo, 2008; Little & Bartlett, 2010; Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli, 2009). Hence selecting diverse teacher candidates through teacher education admission policy and practice remains a continued challenge.

#### **Summary**

Consistent across teacher education admission research are calls for reliable alternative indicators and policies that address the assessment and selection of applicants with a propensity for inclusive teaching (Ackley, Fallon, & Brouwer, 2007; Caskey et al., 2001; Denner, Salzman, & Newsome, 2001). Further, the majority of studies to date have used a quantitative methodology to track the impact of admission structures on candidate selection. While these studies are useful in establishing admission trends, they fall short in analyzing the subjective processes involved in assessing applicants' personal dispositions. Therefore, research that qualitatively documents selection procedures and admission committee members' interpretations and valuing of dispositional constructs is warranted and will serve to advance admission policy and practice.

#### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this research incorporates constructs from the domains of assessment and inclusivity. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to explore issues of reliability and validity as related to the assessment of applicants' dispositions towards inclusivity. Drawn from contemporary assessment theory, reliability is understood as the degree of consistency, stability, and dependability of scores from an assessment process (McMillan, 2011). In applicant selection, reliability refers to how consistently ratings are applied to each applicant's profile. Highly subjective rating practices that do not maintain clear, measurable, and observable criteria often result in reduced reliability leading to measurement error (Casey & Childs, 2007). Furthermore, reliability and validity are not disconnected: measurement error due to reliability threats impacts the validity of interpretations made from assessment scores. In selection practices, validity refers to the ap-

propriateness and legitimacy of admission decisions as rendered from ratings of applicants' admission profiles (Messick, 1989; Moss, 2003).

While much of early validity research focused on psychometric evidence in supporting validity claims, contemporary research recognizes that additional evidences are required to understand the accuracy of assessment scores in relation to (a) the complexity of constructs assessed through selection processes; and (b) the contexts in which assessment scores are interpreted (Moss, 2003, 2007; Moss, Girard, & Haniford 2006; Shepard 1993). Thus validity is not viewed as an all-or-none measure but rather as a socially situated articulation of score interpretation and use with consideration for multiple evidences (Messick, 1989, 1998; Kane, 2006). Given the subjectivity involved in rating applicants' dispositional indicators, I follow this conception of validity and draw on a qualitative methodology to examine the subjective and interpretive practices in selection processes. Previously, qualitative methods (e.g., interviews, focus groups, and personal statements) have been effectively used in validity research in relation to classroom, large-scale, and language assessments (Chen & DeLuca, 2011; Moss et al., 2006).

As this research examines validity and reliability issues in selecting inclusive teacher candidates, inclusivity as an educational construct also comprises the theoretical framework for this study. While there is general agreement that fundamentally, educational inclusivity involves supporting multiple diversities within a learning context, there remains significant ambiguity and variance over more complex meanings, which result in diverse teaching and learning practices (Cochran-Smith, Gleeson, & Mitchell, 2010; Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow, & Mitescu, 2010; Lucas & Beresford, 2010). Cochran-Smith and Fries (2011) further recognize that global educational policies and constructs, such as promoting inclusivity in education, are associated with overlapping interests, varied interpretations, and values-oriented language.

Variance in conceptualizations of inclusivity is also due to the fact that the concept is relatively new in educational discourse, which has been under-theorized (McDonald & Zeichner, 2009) and largely parsed into specific sub-disciplines (e.g., multicultural education, special education, gender and queer education, global studies and internationalization). Inclusivity from these various perspectives holds multiple meanings both philosophically and pedagogically (Florian, 2005); however, across these perspectives, inclusivity is generally viewed as the treatment of diversity within educational and social contexts. Hence diversity and inclusivity are related but not synonymous constructs: inclusivity involves a recognition and response to diversity. The presence of diversity in a learning system makes inclusivity a necessary teaching principle. Given the degree of conceptual variability associated with inclusivity, there is a need for teacher education research to address and account for multiple conceptions when examining systematic processes that promote inclusivity. Accordingly, in this research, I consider participants' diverse interpretations

## *Selecting Inclusive Teacher Candidates*

---

of inclusivity as a focal construct in teacher education when examining issues of validity and reliability in teacher candidate selection.

### **Methods**

This research used a qualitative methodology involving in-depth interviews to examine the admission policy and selection practices at one teacher education program in relation to the program's commitment to promote inclusivity as a fundamental educational principle.

### **Context**

This research was conducted in an Ontario-based teacher education program that offered both consecutive and concurrent programs. The program graduated between 650 and 750 teacher candidates each year across Primary-Junior (Grades K-6, elementary level) and Intermediate-Senior (Grades 7-12, secondary level) teaching divisions. As the vast majority of the teacher candidates (approximately 550) were enrolled in the eight-month (one academic year) consecutive program, this research focused solely on consecutive entry requirements and procedures. Admission for all teacher candidates into the consecutive program was based on a composite score derived from equal weighting of an applicant's GPA (based on three years of undergraduate coursework) and Personal Statement of Experience (PSE) rating. The PSE was a 500-word statement that applicants submitted to describe their previous teaching experiences and the learning that emerged from those experiences. Additional details regarding the admission policy and selection practices for the consecutive program are presented below in the Findings section.

The teacher education program was guided by a mission statement that delineated core program characteristics and a vision for graduates. Embedded within the mission statement was an explicit commitment *to promote inclusivity as a fundamental pedagogical principle*. Furthermore, the university as a whole maintained a stated responsibility to enhanced equity and diversity through admission and teaching processes. This teacher education program was selected because the program maintained an explicit commitment to promote inclusivity and maintained a structure and credentialing requirements consistent with the majority of teacher education programs in Ontario and Canada based on characteristics described in Crocker and Dibbon's (2008) baseline study of Canadian teacher education programs.

### **Participants**

Data were collected from 10 program faculty members who served on the admission committee and 4 senior program administrators including the Dean, two Associate Deans (current and former), and the Faculty Registrar. Criteria for selecting faculty members consisted of those who: (a) taught in the teacher education program during the 2008-09 academic year, and (b) participated in reading

and rating the 2008 personal statements for applicant admission. A purposeful sample for 4 of the 10 faculty members was obtained to ensure representation of those who taught courses in the program explicitly in the areas of inclusivity in education. The remaining six faculty members were randomly selected based on the selection criteria.

All participants were familiar with the structure of the teacher education program and the admission policy. Senior program administrators ranged in their tenure as administrators from one to over 10 years. As the current Associate Dean had only held his position for one year, data was also collected from the former Associate Dean, who had held the position for over 10 years. At the time of data collection, the Dean was in her role for seven years and the Registrar had been in his role for two years. Faculty members ranged in their duration as program instructors from two years to over 10 years. Of these participants, five were tenured professors, four were sessional adjuncts, and one was a graduate teaching fellow. In addition, six were female and four were male with ages ranging from 39 to 70. Prior to assuming their instructor roles within the teacher education program, eight of the faculty members had taught in K-12 public education contexts. In 2008-09, all faculty member participants taught at least one course in the teacher education program and were also actively involved in reading and rating the Personal Statements of Experience as part of the admission and selection process.

#### ***Data Collection and Analyses***

Data were collected through in-depth interviews that focused on (a) participants' interpretations of the program's mission to promote inclusivity as a fundamental pedagogical principle, and (b) participants' experiences with teacher candidate admission policy and selection procedures. Interviews were used in this research because they allow the researcher to "enter into the other person's perspective" (Patton, 2002, p. 341) and contribute rich data for understanding complex and subjective educational processes. Conducted by the researcher, interviews were semi-structured, audio-recorded, and approximately one-hour in length. Interview questions for faculty member participants and senior program administrators are presented in the Appendix.

Data collected through interviews were thematically analyzed using an inductive approach based on data-driven codes (Patton, 2002). From an initial analysis of data, a code list was generated relating admission and selection practices as well as participants' interpretations of the program's aim to promote inclusivity in education. Two researchers independently coded the data, with an inter-rater reliability of 96%. When researchers disagreed on coding, data were discussed and re-coded. Based on the identified codes, broader thematic categories were constructed. For example, codes of *quality of PSEs*, *reliability of PSE*, and *scoring of PSE* were thematically grouped in relation to *PSE selection indicator*. Similarly, in relation to participants' interpretations of inclusivity as a focal construct, three dominant

### *Selecting Inclusive Teacher Candidates*

---

themes were constructed based on the data that described inclusivity as *integrative*, *dialogical*, and *transgressive*. The specific terminology for these themes was derived from the researcher and based on participant language as a means of representing the complexity of each interpretation.

Based on initial analysis from all interview data, a group-wide summary statement was generated and distributed to faculty member participants for member checking. The summary statement articulated the identified themes and procedures related to teacher candidate selection as well as participants' interpretations of inclusivity as a fundamental pedagogical principle. The member checking process asked participants to respond to the summary statement by indicating areas of agreement or disagreement, offering examples, or providing further insights into the identified themes and description of procedures. This process was used to check that participants' views were accurately represented in the findings, to verify the appropriateness of identified themes (e.g., integrative, dialogical, and transgressive), and to allow participants to further clarify and expand on their responses (Patton, 2002). A total of 10 out of the 14 participants completed this portion of data collection within two weeks of initial summary distribution. Based on participant responses, analysis was adjusted to better reflect participant perspectives on the program's admission policy and practices.

### **Findings**

Findings from this research describe one teacher education program's approach to promoting inclusivity through their admission policy. First, I present findings in relation to participants' expressed interpretations of inclusivity as a focal construct for teacher education, then I examine how these interpretations are supported through an analysis of admission policy and selection practices.

#### ***Interpretations of Inclusivity***

In alignment with previous research, faculty members and administrators expressed varied interpretations of inclusivity as a principle for teaching and teacher education. Based on a two-stage thematic analysis, three dominant interpretations were identified that represented qualitatively different understandings of this educational principle. Based on participant language, I have termed these interpretations of inclusivity: (a) integrative, (b) dialogical, and (c) transgressive. Participants in this study expressed commitments to at least one of these conceptions of inclusivity; no participant articulated all three conceptions. The majority of participants described either an integrative or dialogical conception, depending upon educational context. As such, while faculty members and administrators maintained a common commitment to promoting inclusivity in the teacher education program, their conception of what inclusivity meant was less common. This finding suggests that faculty members and administrators may be selecting 'inclusive' teacher can-

didates on foundationally different premises depending upon their interpretation of inclusivity. Each interpretation is described below.

**Integrative.** Two administrator and the majority of faculty members expressed an integrative interpretation of inclusivity, describing it as the inclusion of diverse learners into the school setting through academic accommodation, modification, or alternative programming. The emphasis in this interpretation was on facilitating the academic needs of students to “enable access and exposure to a common curriculum” (faculty member) and “providing accommodations to support standards-based learning” (faculty member). Accordingly, the integrative view first relies on the identification of student difference followed by a formal institutional response (Thomas, Walker, & Webb, 1998). While the integrative view was most often described through examples from special education and provisions for students with exceptionalities, there was recognition among faculty members that any educational structure that enabled formal academic accommodations for students who were identifiably different or who had specific learning needs promoted an integrative interpretation of inclusivity: “when I think of inclusivity I first think of special education services, but it is really anything that allows students to learn the material being taught, so it could serve other students too” (faculty member).

**Dialogical.** Dialogical inclusivity was the most commonly articulated interpretation across participants and with a high degree of consensus. Participants who articulated a dialogical process identified diversity as a central feature of learning contexts in which multiple perspectives are “brought into dialogue with one another” (faculty member). Similarly, another faculty member noted that dialogical inclusivity “means honoring and respecting everything that each individual brings into the classroom whether I understand it or not.” Accepting different student perspectives, cultures, and backgrounds into the learning environment was viewed as a keystone feature of this interpretation of inclusivity: “inclusion means allowing diversity to have life in your classroom, and when I say ‘diversity’, I mean any form from culture to ability to gender to a student’s personality” (administrator). Accordingly, the dialogical interpretation relates to forms of multicultural and diversity education initiatives (Banks & McGee Banks, 2007; Dei et al., 2000; Neito, 2007) and differs from the integrative interpretation by focusing on socio-cultural inclusion rather than solely on academic inclusion. One faculty member stated that inclusivity was about “being able to relate to one another in a classroom in a social way, fostering collaboration and caring between students.” That faculty member further distinguished this conception of inclusivity from the integrative view stating: “it is more than just academic accommodations, although those are very important, its about creating a community in your classroom.”

**Transgressive.** The transgressive interpretation was only expressed by two administrators and two faculty members, both of whom taught explicit courses

### *Selecting Inclusive Teacher Candidates*

---

in social justice education. The transgressive interpretation recognizes that all individuals in a classroom are culturally complex and that each context of learning is unique. Teaching and learning in these contexts were described as “shared” and “emergent” (faculty member), and based on the interactions amongst students and teachers, suggesting intercultural exchange and the development of mutual understandings. Student diversity was suggested as a “vehicle for the generation of new knowledge and the co-construction of curriculum, teaching, and learning” (faculty member). The transgressive interpretation was demarcated from the dialogical interpretation of inclusivity in that learning not only happened *with* and *about* diverse students but learning also happened *from* diverse students; hence, learning transgresses beyond strictly individual knowledge-making and moves toward group meaning-making. One faculty member described the transgressive interpretation as “the difference that makes a difference.” Faculty members further linked the transgressive interpretation with frameworks of social justice education (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Kelly & Brandes, 2001) as there was recognition that a fundamental purpose of this form of learning was to “create a set of conditions where we are committed to shared access to resources and shared conditions of learning” (faculty member).

#### **Admission Policy**

The admission requirements to the consecutive teacher education program consisted of GPA and PSE indicators. Applicants were required to have a minimum of 15 undergraduate credits (with a suggested minimum B, 70% average) and to submit a 500-word PSE that identified and described learning from five teaching-related experiences. Specifically, applicants were asked to respond to the prompt for the PSE: *Identify five teaching related activities and explain how these experiences have shaped your interest and readiness to teach.* Applicants to the Intermediate-Senior (i.e., secondary) teaching division were also required to have at least five credits in their primary teaching subject and three credits in their second. Additional language requirements also exist for applicants whose first language is not English (i.e., must have studied at an English-speaking university or achieved a satisfactory score on a comprehensive English test). Based on these requirements, selection was determined through: (a) meeting minimum academic admission requirements (i.e., courses and credits); (b) scaled GPA rating; (c) average PSE rating from two raters; and (d) number of available spaces in teachable division and subject area. Ratings from GPA and PSEs were equally weighted (i.e., 50%) in the selection process.

In addition to the general admission requirements, the teacher education program maintained an Equity Admission Policy, which complied with the university’s mandate to attempt to, admit a student body that reflects the general population of Canada and whose members bring to their pre-service professional preparation, understanding and personal experience of working towards educational context that are free from prejudice and discrimination and characterized by inclusivity. Accord-

ingly, the Equity Admission Policy reserves a number of “equity admission places” (Registrar) for those applicants that self-identify with one of three underrepresented groups including, Aboriginal/First Nations, racial minorities, and differently-abled persons. Further to a formal self-identification process, all applicants can describe their propensity for inclusivity and experience with diversity in their PSE.

In describing the integration of applicant equity status into selection decision, the Registrar stated, “equity applicants must meet the same minimum admission criteria and are ranked using the same process as other applicants.” However, when making offers of admission, the Registrar considers the equity status of the applicant and offers admission to those highest ranked applicants to fill the designated number of places. He further described efforts to admit teacher candidates who were from underrepresented groups but not classified under the Equity Admission Policy; for example, “I focused on enhancing our numbers of male elementary teacher candidates and female teacher candidates in technology-based teaching areas.” Selection of applicants within these groups was at the discretion of the Registrar who typically extended offers to these applicants during the second round of admission. As acknowledged by the Registrar, “this ad hoc selection process does not address all gaps across the program,” which points to the need for extending the Equity Admission Policy to systematically select additional underrepresented groups within the teaching workforce. Overall, the Equity Admission Policy and the Registrar’s additional efforts to select underrepresented teacher candidates reflected an integrative orientation to inclusivity as applicant diversity was explicitly identified and there was a formal institutional response involving accommodation and modification to entry procedures.

### **Selection Practices**

Selection decisions were based on an equally weighted composite score derived from applicants’ GPA and PSE ratings. While GPA ratings were viewed as non-discriminatory in relation to an applicant’s propensity for inclusivity, the PSEs provided an opportunity for applicants to communicate their diverse backgrounds and inclusive approach to teaching and learning. However, applicant names, gender, age, and equity-status are removed from the PSEs prior to rating (i.e., a blind rating process). Each PSE was independently read by two raters, one faculty member and one teaching professional, and assessed on a 10-point scale. In advance of rating applicant PSEs, raters were required to attend a two-hour training session in which evaluation criteria, rating procedures, and potential rating biases were discussed. In addition, raters engaged in jointly rating one PSE to generate greater rating reliability. The Registrar commented that he felt this training “provided a minimum standard and expectation for how to read the statements with some attention to bias and consistency.” In rating PSEs, each rater holistically assessed each PSE based on a suggested list of desirable teacher characteristics, one of which was “demonstrates a commitment to diversity and inclusive teaching” (Registrar). Statements

### *Selecting Inclusive Teacher Candidates*

---

with ratings that maintain over a 3-point difference between the two raters received a third review by the Registrar. Ratings were averaged and recorded for admission calculation with GPA rating.

**PSE selection indicator.** Both faculty members and administrators expressed a need to have an indicator for assessing applicants' personal dispositions. In general, they believed that using a numerical rating based solely on academic grades was problematic. One faculty member stated

If applicants feel safe enough to tell us about their life experiences, for instances if they have a disability, then we get a very different group than if we didn't have the PSE—better candidates than if we just relied on marks. The people who get As don't always know about inclusivity.

Despite the widespread desire for an additional indicator for admission decisions, the use of PSEs as an indicator was still contentious amongst participants. Some faculty members strongly believed that PSEs were not useful indicators of an applicant's ability to teach while others noted that these statements provided critical information for admission decisions. In favor of PSEs, faculty members argued that PSEs provided an opportunity to pre-select educators who have an inclusive disposition. For example, the PSE "tells us when someone has had an experience working with diverse communities and we can then bring multiple experiences and perspectives into the program" (faculty member). Another faculty member stated, "I find the PSEs the most useful indicators because grades alone do not tell me whether or not you can create a community in your classroom." Accordingly, the PSE was viewed as a structure that enabled the potential selection of inclusive teacher candidates who maintained various interpretations of inclusivity (i.e., integrative, dialogical, and transgressive) as dependent upon raters reading and rating of the statements. At minimum, selecting applicants with diverse backgrounds and experiences provides a basis for dialogical teaching and learning within the teacher education program.

In contrast, several participants highlighted negative aspects of using PSEs as a section indicator. Specifically, three critiques were levied related to their (a) veracity, (b) quality, and (c) rating process.

**Veracity of PSEs.** The credibility and authenticity of PSEs was one of the most commonly mentioned objections to using the PSE in admission decisions. One faculty member stated, "we have no way of knowing who wrote the PSE and therefore we have no way of knowing for sure who we are picking until we see the whites of their eyes and then, sometimes you think, how did you get here?" In addition to questioning the credibility of PSEs, concern was also raised over their authenticity. One faculty member noted, "no one ever says, 'I am a racist homophobic pig' on their PSE. And yet they come here and they are. There is no way to do this because there is no good test for judging inclusivity and they are going to falsify their results. Everyone knows the right answer." One mechanism by which

the Registrar addressed this concern was to randomly phone applicants' referees to verify the accuracy of applicant claims. However, as noted by the Registrar, "this is not a consistent practice used with all applicants"; therefore, the concern for PSE veracity still remains.

**Quality of PSEs.** Raters observed that statements vary widely in their focus and detail. Moreover, several faculty members commented that statements tended to use politically correct language related to issues of inclusion and social justice and that applicants used educational buzz words rather than articulating a personally situated understanding of inclusivity. The majority of faculty members believed PSEs to be fairly generic and provided little guidance toward applicants' personal positions to teaching and learning. Specifically, faculty members described the majority of PSEs as "bland," "unspecific," "generic," or "too theoretical." One faculty member said, "hopefully we'll rethink the prompt and get more of candidates' stories back in the personal statements. We were trying but we didn't ask the right questions [prompt] this year and so, they spouted theory instead of experience."

Beyond the generic quality of PSEs, one administrator acknowledged that PSEs were used to measure several different criteria including applicants' abilities to communicate and write, their level of critical reflection, their breadth of experience, their disposition towards inclusivity, and their passion for teaching. He further recognized that "when we ask applicants to do so much in one page, they do none of it well and the statements become very simplistic. Only about 10-15% communicate a deep understanding of inclusivity issues, so you could pick those out but the rest you couldn't." One of the administrators commented, "the PSE is a step in the right direction, but it doesn't provide the whole picture; it may be the best we can do to better understand our applicants given our resources and the number of applicants to our program." Accordingly, faculty members and administrators questioned the PSEs' usefulness as a discriminating indicator for teacher candidate selection while expressing some of the limitations in using alternative indicators.

**PSE Rating Process.** A third objection to using PSEs in admission decisions related to the rating protocol and evaluation criteria. While the training session discussed "look fors" (administrator), raters were not provided with any pre-established criteria for point allocation. Further, one faculty member identified that "the problem with the system is that we have no way of ranking all the life experiences within the group because each PSE is only read by two people." This suggests that while the end-goal is to normatively rank all applicants based on their PSE rating, no consistent rating process exists that allows simultaneous comparison of all statements. Ratings are subjectively applied to PSEs yet ranked as if they were assessed using the same criteria. One faculty member recognized that

This process gives us a false sense that we are being fair in our ratings, and by fair I mean standardized, but we are not. We fall into the trap that we can unbiasedly as-

### *Selecting Inclusive Teacher Candidates*

---

sess raters and that we are all looking for the same thing and interpreting concepts like 'inclusivity' in the same way. Again, I don't think we are.

In addition to acknowledging the non-standardized rating procedure, this quotation further recognizes that raters maintained various conceptions toward dispositional constructs. As noted previously, even among the 14 participants in this study, three dominant conceptions of inclusivity were apparent. The results of these various interpretations impact on the reliability of PSE ratings (i.e., potentially decreased inter-rater reliability) and on the validity of decisions made from this selection indicator (i.e., the same score could represent propensity toward different conceptions of inclusivity).

Perhaps most widely discussed was the biased nature of PSE rating. One faculty member noted that "with any judgment system there's always bias...and it is impossible to remove ourselves completely from that. What we need to do is keep checking ourselves to see if the rules we put in place to rate statements are putting barriers in places that we should not put them." This quotation speaks to the inherent subjectivity of PSE ratings; however, it also suggests that such subjectivities can be mitigated through rater reflexivity. In an effort to 'blind' raters from applicants' differences and promote less biased ratings, the Registrar removed the names and identifying information on raters' copies of the PSEs. However, as one faculty member acknowledged, a blind rating approach might in fact yield an opposite result to the program's intention to diversify the teacher candidate cohort. "If raters are unaware of the diverse background of applicants, then how can they actively select for a diverse cohort into the program?" (faculty member). While there may be perceived benefits of reduced rater bias with blind rating processes, there may also be potentially negative effects on a rater's ability to select diverse teacher candidates and rate statements in a way that recognizes (and awards points for) diversity.

Regardless of blind review protocols, some raters acknowledged that rating bias cannot be fully removed. To this end, raters acknowledged specific PSE features to which they awarded higher ratings, suggesting bias towards particular experiences, writing styles, or dispositions. When asked, "What features in a PSE generate a higher rating from you?" and "What do you look for in rating PSEs?" faculty members' responses varied widely. Table 1 presents the variety of responses to these questions from participants. The various responses suggest preferences toward particular applicant experiences and toward particular ways of communicating previous teaching experiences. These preferences function in relation to assumptions that link particular experiences (e.g., parent, living abroad, working with students with exceptionalities) to applicants' teaching readiness and disposition of inclusivity. One administrator cautioned against operating on this assumption by stating, "some of the people you would think by their life experiences should be the most inclusive because of their negative life experience and demographic group may not be inclusive of other groups."

**Table I**  
**Select participant responses (direct quotations)**  
**in relation to interview questions:**  
**What features in a PSE generate a higher rating from you? and**  
**What do you look for in rating PSEs?**

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Quotation</i>
Faculty member	People who are parents, I want them to be in here. People who speak more than one language, I want them to be in here. People who have worked in other countries and jobs are the people who I want in here. The people I don't want to are the people who have wanted to be teachers from their childhood. They are the suspicious ones.
Faculty member	Stories where they show me when they've been inclusive. Whether that is working at home with their own siblings, if they can't afford to be camp counselors. Any indication where they've demonstrated the ability to see the world through someone else's perspective.
Faculty member	When I read a statement, I want to hear their voice. It's not just words, it's what they know about themselves.
Administrator	I like it when they talk about what happened to them in school. For example, you were the kid who was really quiet so wanted a teacher who would work and connect with you, especially kids with unidentified learning disabilities.
Faculty member	It's the applicant who says, 'my brother or my sister or whatever is Down's syndrome, so I understand that very well,' or 'I am a person that is different and I want to be included and my difference helps me to understand other people.'
Faculty member	When they ask questions. I love it when they ask questions. When they tell me things that they've learned and they admit what they used to think before.
Administrator	I read it and ask 'would I like to have you teaching beside me? Are you passionate about teaching and children? Or, do you give me all the buzz words?' For example, some might say, I would be very conscious of social justice but they don't say how. I want to know, what does that look like? How do you relate that to your experiences?

However, perhaps even more significant in responses was the lack of consensus and high degree of variance in what faculty members looked for when rating PSEs. Raters appeared to award points for vastly different criteria in personal statements. Interestingly, while this variance in criteria raised concerns over the reliability of PSE ratings, it may have served to increase diversity within admitted students. This variance suggests that there was not a systematic valuing of specific experiences or backgrounds; rather, selection was based on multiple values leading to the selection

### *Selecting Inclusive Teacher Candidates*

---

of applicants with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Selecting applicants with diverse backgrounds and experiences may support the intake of applicants who subscribe to various interpretations of inclusivity and, at least, provides a strong foundation for potentially creating dialogical and transgressive learning contexts within the teacher education program.

Overall, findings from this study suggested that the program's explicit commitment to promote inclusivity was considered in admission policy and selection procedures; however, underlying these policies and procedures were multiple conceptions of inclusivity that contributed to the selection of teacher candidates who subscribe to qualitatively different conceptions of inclusivity. Evidence also suggested that various admission structures (i.e., general admission policy, Equity Admission Policy, PSE indicator) served to promote diverse forms of inclusivity ranging from integrative to transgressive. For instance, the Equity Admission Policy facilitated an integrative form of inclusivity by offering admission modifications for three specific groups of applicants while other admission processes (e.g., PSEs) potentially promoted dialogical and/or transgressive forms of inclusivity.

### **Validity and Reliability Issues**

As the primary gatekeeping structure for entry into the teaching profession, teacher education admission policy plays a significant role in selecting inclusive teacher candidates (Young et al., 2007). While the majority of research on admission policy has aimed to trace selection trends over time and determine measures of concurrent validity, this research served to examine the selection processes used to assess applicants' personal dispositions related to inclusive teaching. In alignment with previous research (Ackley et al., 2007; Casey & Childs, 2007; Caskey et al., 2001), participants in this study recognized that current indicators for the selection of personal dispositions including PSEs were subjective and biased indicators, leading faculty members and program administrators to have mixed-reactions to their use in admission decisions. Specifically, concerns were raised about PSEs as an effective indicator due to issues of veracity, quality of writing, and rating practices. While previous studies have shown that PSE ratings correlated highly with other admission indicators (Caskey et al., 2001) and that scoring reliability can be enhanced through rater training (Byrnes et al., 2000), this study raised concerns related to PSE rating reliability and to the validity of resulting admission decisions. These concerns may be attributed to the qualitative methodology used in this research compared to the quantitative approach used in the majority of previous research.

In this section, I delineate three specific issues related to the reliability and validity of selecting inclusive teacher candidates. First, despite participating in a training session, raters maintained qualitatively different interpretations of inclusivity as represented by integrative, dialogical, and transgressive processes to inclusion. These interpretations operated on qualitatively different assumptions and experi-

ences as related most closely to academic accommodations and a special education model (Clough, 2000; Hutchinson, 2010; Thomas et al., 1998), social- and multi-cultural inclusion (Banks & McGee Banks, 2007; Dei et al., 2000; Nieto, 2007), and social justice frameworks of education (Adams et al., 1997; Kelly & Brandes, 2001), respectively. The lack of a common conception of inclusivity led raters to rate applicants' propensity for inclusivity differently and inconsistently. Raters in this study acknowledged that they looked for vastly different criteria when selecting teacher candidates' personal dispositions related to inclusivity. Therefore, while applicants may receive the same score on their PSEs, fallaciously suggesting high inter-rater reliability, scores may represent applicants with very different approaches to inclusivity. This lack of reliability ultimately impacts the validity of decisions rendered about applicant propensity for inclusive teaching.

Despite this systematic measurement error, using diverse criteria reliant on multiple conceptions of inclusivity for rating PSEs may arguably serve to increase the diversity of applicants accepted into the teacher education program, although in an ad hoc and unpredictable way. While a common response to this measurement error is to seek consensus amongst raters through rater training (Byrnes et al., 2000; Caskey et al, 2001) and to prescribe rating criteria that align to one conception of inclusivity, this response may negate the positive benefits of this process and result in the phenomenon of rater consensus bias. That is, raters are trained only to look for one form of inclusivity thereby limiting the selection of applicants who subscribe to diverse conceptions of inclusivity and invoking little rater subjectivity or discretion (Peshkin, 1985, 1988). Accordingly, it is necessary to find ways to enhance rater reliability without prescribing a narrow definition of inclusivity and thus limiting the selection of diverse applicants. One way of achieving this aim might be to construct a conceptual framework of inclusivity to guide rater scoring that acknowledges the various ways an applicant can demonstrate inclusivity. The three conceptions of inclusivity presented in this study (i.e., integrative, dialogical, and transgressive) could form the basis of this framework. Based on this conceptual framework, analytic scoring rubrics could be constructed to increase rater reliability and enhance judgments on applicant diversity and propensity for inclusive teaching, while still leaving room for raters to identify specific experiences that they value in applicant PSEs.

A second area of concern centers on the blind review process, which was intended to reduce raters' biases when rating PSEs (Lundy et al., 2001). Findings from this research suggest that this practice may limit raters' ability to select diverse applicants into a teacher education program. Participants acknowledged that the blind review process did not provide them with the necessary information about applicants' diversity (i.e., gender, age, and potentially ethnicity) to situate their PSE ratings. In the absence of contextual information about applicant diversity, rating validity may be reduced as Moss (1994) asserts that validity is a matter of "contextualized judgments" (p. 5). Hence non-blind rating processes may provide critical information that benefits

### *Selecting Inclusive Teacher Candidates*

---

the validity of interpretations made from ratings and that outweigh the potential negative impact of this information on biasing ratings.

Further, participants noted that the blind review process assumed that personal bias would result in lower ratings and that raters would be unable to correct their biases when rating PSEs. However in such a blind process, raters may be less likely or able to compensate for the impact of applicants' diversity (e.g., writing style, language use, opportunity for teaching experiences). Moreover, nearly all raters in this study articulated that they intentionally endeavored to be mindful of their biases and to regulate their judgments accordingly. Therefore, in contrast to previous research, this study suggests that raters may not be as discriminatory as expected and that a non-blind rating process may facilitate a more equitable admission process aimed at selecting inclusive teacher candidates. This finding may be linked to increased awareness amongst education professionals on issues of diversity since blind rating processes were first introduced (Brathwaite, 2003). Raters may now be more likely to look favorably upon applicant diversity and therefore be less biased in their ratings of these applicants. Admission research may benefit from contemporary studies discretely focused on blind review processes in light of potential changes in raters' responses to applicants' diverse backgrounds.

Finally, while participants cited the Equity Admission Policy as one of the dominant mechanisms for admitting diverse applicants, the policy was limited in its ability to facilitate a high degree of diversity within the teacher education program. Although the policy provided a reliable method for the selection of applicants from three underrepresented groups and increased diversity within the teacher candidate population, there was recognition that it did not necessarily facilitate the selection of teacher candidates who maintained inclusive dispositions. Thus the Equity Admission Policy, while reliable, does not provide strong validity evidence in support of the program's aim to promote inclusivity in the teacher education program.

The current self-identification process represented an integrative conception of inclusivity by affording a modified admission process for applicants from specific underrepresented groups. Missing from the Equity Policy was recognition of other diversities including, but not limited to, those of sexual orientation, gender identity, age, and religious affiliation. As these groups remain underrepresented in certain divisions of the teaching workforce, the absence of these groups within equity initiatives perpetuates systemic discouragement of these groups into the teaching profession (Allen, 2003). Paired with targeted recruitment initiatives, a broader Equity Admission Policy could potentially serve to positively change the demographic profile of the teaching profession, increasing diversity and inclusivity within classrooms and schools (Lundy et al., 2001).

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this research was to explore admission policy and practice for selecting teacher candidates with a propensity for inclusive teaching in order to elucidate validity and reliability issues. While findings from this research have pointed towards several critical issues, the research maintains limitations based on its methodology. The issues described in this paper are based on one teacher education program in Ontario and on a sample of 14 participants and therefore not generalizable to all teacher education contexts. However, as the majority of teacher education programs employ equity-based admission policies and use additional indicators to GPA to assess applicants' readiness to teach, this research will help teacher education programs examine the implications of their own admission policy and practices in light of the identified validity and reliability issues.

This research also provides a basis for future studies into admission processes and suggests the necessity and value of qualitative and mixed-methods research. Specifically, I assert that future research should examine program-specific policies and practices through contemporary validation approaches (e.g., validity-as-argument process, Kane, 2006), which serve to collect and analyze evidentiary, interpretive, and consequential data related to admission decisions based on multiple sources and perspectives (DeLuca, 2011; Messick, 1989, 1998; Moss, et al., 2006). While this research approach is different than traditional, psychometric methods to admission and validity research, it maintains the capacity to integrate quantitative evidences and also provides an overarching structure that considers additional evidences related to the complex constructs and subjective processes associated with teacher candidate selection (Kane, 2006; Malvern, 1991; Moss et al., 2006). Further, generating a population of descriptive program-specific admission studies will provide a basis for generalizable trends and comparisons of traditional and innovative practices through cross-case analyses (Stake, 2008), which may provoke new ideas for alternative entry into teacher education programs.

In conclusion, while admission policies are critical to promoting inclusivity within teacher education programs, current policies face notable challenges in facilitating a high-level of access for diverse applicants and in assessing applicants' personal dispositions related to inclusivity (Jennings, 2007). Contemporary equity-based policies and alternative admission indicators (such as PSEs) are initial steps in moving toward the selection of inclusive teacher candidates; however, based on this research, these mechanisms currently fall short in addressing the existing demographic gaps within the teaching profession and ensuring the systematic selection of inclusive teacher candidates. Accordingly, in addition to descriptive studies of admission policies and practices, future research should address the development of broader equity-based admission initiatives and the development of assessment methods for alternative admission indicators including non-blind review processes and criteria-based rating systems. Given the global need for recruiting diverse teachers who have a propensity for inclusive teaching (Blais & Ouedraogo,

### *Selecting Inclusive Teacher Candidates*

---

2008; OECD, 2010; Villegas & Davis, 2007), it is imperative that teacher education administrators and researchers find ways to enhance recruitment and selection procedures into teacher education programs, edifying commitments to inclusivity as a fundamental principle of teaching and teacher education.

### **References**

- Ackley, B. C., Fallon, M. A., & Brouwer, N. (2007). Intake assessments for alternative teacher education: Moving from legitimation towards predictive validity. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 32(6), 657-665.
- Adams, M., Bell, L. A., & Griffin, P. (Ed.) (1997). *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook*. New York: Routledge.
- Allen, K. A. (2003). University access and educational opportunity: A Canadian perspective. In K. S. Brathwaite (Ed.), *Access and equity in the university* (pp. 79-92). Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Anderson, T. H. (2004). *The pursuit of fairness: A history of affirmative action*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Ball, A. F., & Tyson, C. A. (2011). Preparing teachers for diversity in the twenty-first century. In A. F. Ball & C. A. Tyson (Eds.), *Studying diversity in teacher education* (pp. 399-416). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Banks, J. A., & McGee Banks, C. A. (Eds.). (2007). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (6th ed.). Danvers, MA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Blais, J. G., & Ouedraogo, D. M. (2008). A cross-sectional sketch of a few demographic characteristics of teachers in Canada. In D. Gerin-Lajoie (Ed.), *Educators' discourses on student diversity in Canada: Context, policy, and practice* (pp. 29-50). Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Brathwaite, K. S. (2003). Access and equity in the university: An introduction. In K. S. Brathwaite (Ed.), *Access and equity in the university* (pp. 11-22). Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Byrnes, D. A., Kiger, G., & Shechtman, Z. (2000, April). Evaluating the use of group interviews to select students into teacher education programs. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.
- Casey, C. E., & Childs, R. A. (2007). Teacher education program admission criteria and what beginning teachers need to know to be successful teachers. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 67. Retrieved from [http://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap/articles/casey\\_childs.html](http://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap/articles/casey_childs.html)
- Caskey, M. M., Peterson, K. D., & Temple, J. B. (2001). Complex admission selection procedures for a graduate preservice teacher education program. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 28(4), 7-21.
- Chapman, T. K. (2011). A critical race theory analysis of past and present institutional processes and policies in teacher education. In A. F. Ball & C. A. Tyson (Eds.), *Studying diversity in teacher education* (pp. 237-256). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Chen, L., & DeLuca, C. (2011) Voices from test-takers: Further evidence for language assessment validation and use. *Educational Assessment*, 16(2), 104-122.
- Clough, P. (2000). Routes to inclusion. In P. Clough & J. Corbett (Eds.), *Theories of inclusive education: A student's guide* (pp. 3-30). London, UK: Paul Chapman.

- Cochran-Smith, M., & Fries, K. (2011). Teacher education for diversity: Policy and politics. In A. F. Ball & C. A. Tyson (Eds.), *Studying diversity in teacher education* (pp. 339-362). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Cochran-Smith, M., Gleeson, A. M., & Mitchell, K. (2010). Teacher education for social justice: What's pupil learning got to do with it? *Berkeley Review of Education*, 1(1), 35-61.
- Crocker, R., & Dibbon, D. (2008). *Teacher education in Canada: A baseline study*. Kelowna, Ontario, Canada: Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Banks, J., Zumwalt, K., Gomez, L., Sherin, M. G., Griesdorn, J., & Finn, L. E. (2005). Educational goals and purposes: Developing a curricular vision for teaching. In L. Darling-Hammond & J. Bransford (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do* (pp. 169-200). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Dei, G. J. S., James, I. M., James-Wilson, S., Karumanchery, L. L., & Zine, J. (2000). *Removing the margins: The challenges and possibilities of inclusive schooling*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- DeLuca, C. (2011). Interpretive validity theory: mapping a methodology for validating educational assessments. *Educational Research*, 53(3), 303-320.
- Denner, P. R., Salzman, S. A., & Newsome, J. D. (2001). Selecting the qualified: A standards-based teacher education admission process. *Journal of Personnel Evaluations in Education*, 15(3), 165-180.
- Enterline, S., Cochran-Smith, M., Ludlow, L. H., & Mitescu, E. (2008). Learning to teach for social justice: Measuring change in the beliefs of teacher candidates. *The New Educator*, 4, 267-290.
- Florian, L. (2005). Inclusive practice: What, why and how? In K. Topping & S. Maloney (Eds.), *The RoutledgeFalmer reader in inclusive education* (pp. 29-40). New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Gale, T. (2001). Critical policy sociology: Historiography, archaeology and genealogy as methods of policy analysis. *Journal of Education Policy*, 16(5), 379-393.
- Grossman, P. (2005). Research on pedagogical approaches in teacher education. In M. Cochran-Smith & K. M. Zeichner (Eds.), *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education* (pp. 425-476). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association and Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Hollins, E., & Guzman, M. E. (2005). Research on preparing teachers for diverse populations. In M. Cochran-Smith & K. Zeichner (Eds.), *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education* (pp. 477-548). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Hutchinson, N. L. (2010). *Inclusion of exceptional learners in Canadian schools: A practical handbook for teachers* (3rd ed.). Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Prentice Hall.
- Jennings, T. (2007). Addressing diversity in US teacher preparation programs: A survey of elementary and secondary programs' priorities and challenges from across the United States of America. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23, 1258-1271.
- Kane, M. T. (2006). Validation. In R. L. Brennan (Ed.), *Educational measurement* (4th ed., pp. 17-64). Westport, CT: American Council on Education/Praeger.
- Kelly, D. M., & Brandes, G. M. (2001). Shifting out of "neutral": Beginning teachers' struggles with teaching for social justice. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 26, 437-454.
- Little, J. W., & Bartlett, L. (2010). The teacher workforce and problems of educational equity.

### *Selecting Inclusive Teacher Candidates*

---

- Review of Research in Education*, 34, 285-328.
- Lucas, S. R., & Beresford, L. (2010). Naming and classifying: Theory, evidence, and equity in education. *Review of Research in Education*, 34, 25-84.
- Lundy, J., Sparkes, A., & Lawrence, D. (2001). Equitable access to teacher education for Aboriginals and visible minorities: A Canadian case study. *Proceedings of the Learning Conference, Greece*, 3-22.
- Malvern, D. D. (1991). Assessing the personal qualities of applicants to teacher training. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 17, 239-253.
- McDonald, M., & Zeichner, K. (2009). Social justice teacher education. In W. Ayers, T. Quinn, & K. Stovall (Eds.), *Handbook on social justice in education* (pp. 595-610). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- McMillan, J. H. (2011). *Classroom assessment: Principles and practice for effective standards-based instruction* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Messick, S. (1989). Validity. In R. L. Linn (Ed.), *Educational Measurement* (3rd ed., pp. 13-103). New York: American Council on Education/Macmillan.
- Messick, S. (1998). Test validity: A matter of consequence. *Social Indicators Research*, 45, 35-44.
- Moss, P. A. (1994). Can there be validity without reliability? *Educational Researcher*, 23, 5-12.
- Moss, P. A. (2003). Reconceptualizing validity for classroom assessment. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 22(4), 13-25.
- Moss, P. A. (2007). Reconstructing validity. *Educational Researcher*, 36(8), 470-476.
- Moss, P. A., Girard, B. J., & Haniford, L. C. (2006). Validity in educational assessment. *Review of Research in Education*, 30, 109-62.
- Mueller, J., & O'Connor, C. (2007). Telling and retelling about self and "others": How preservice teachers (re)interpret privilege and disadvantage in one college classroom. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23, 840-856.
- Nieto, S. (2007). School reform and student learning: A multicultural perspective. In J. A. Banks & C. A. McGee Banks (Eds.), *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (6th ed., pp. 425-444). Danvers, MA: John Wiley & Sons.
- OECD. (2010). *Educating teachers for diversity: Meeting the challenge*. Retrieved January 15, 2011 from [http://www.oecd.org/document/38/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_35845581\\_44572006\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/38/0,3343,en_2649_35845581_44572006_1_1_1_1,00.html)
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Peshkin, A. (1988). In search of subjectivity—one's own. *Educational Researcher*, 17(7), 17-21.
- Peshkin, A. (1985). Virtuous subjectivity: in the participant-observer's eyes. In D. Berg & K. Smith (Eds.), *Exploring clinical method for social research* (pp. 267-281). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Ryan, J., Pollock, K., & Antonelli, F. (2009). Teacher diversity in Canada: Leaky pipelines, bottlenecks, and glass ceilings. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 32, 591-617.
- Shepard, L. A. (1993). Evaluating test validity. *Review of Research in Education*, 19, 405-450.
- Smith, D., & Schonfeld, N. (2000). The benefits of diversity: What the research tells us. *About Campus*, 5(5), 16-23.
- Smith, H. A., & Pratt, D. (1996). The use of biodata in admissions to teacher education.
-

- Journal of Teacher Education*, 47(1), 43-52.
- Smithrim, K. (2000). Who will teach? In Rena Upitis (Ed.), *Who will teach? A case study of teacher education reform* (pp. 13-26). San Francisco: Caddo Gap Press.
- Solomon, R. P. (2002). Reconstructing teacher education for education equity and diversity. In C. Reynolds & A. I. Griffith (Eds.), *Equity and globalization in education* (pp. 261-300). Calgary, Alberta, Canada: Detselig Enterprises.
- Stake, R. E. (2008). Qualitative Case Studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (3rd ed.) (pp. 1-43). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Thomas, G., Walker, D., & Webb, J. (1998). In G. Thomas, D. Walker, & J. Webb (Eds.), *The making of the inclusive school* (pp. 3-25). London, UK: Routledge.
- Villegas, A., & Davis, D. (2007). Approaches to diversifying the teaching force: Attending to issues of recruitment, preparation and retention. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 34(4), 137-147.
- Young, J., Hall, C., & Clark, T. (2007). Challenges to university autonomy in initial teacher education programmes: The cases of England, Manitoba and British Columbia. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23(1), 81-93.
- Zumwalt, K., & Craig, E. (2005). Teachers' characteristics: Research on the indicators of quality. In M. Cochran-Smith & K. Zeichner (Eds.), *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education* (pp. 157-260). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

## **Appendix A**

### **Semi-structured Interview Protocol**

1. One of the core tenets of the teacher education program is to promote inclusivity as a fundamental pedagogical principle. Why do you think this statement was selected as a core tenet of the teacher education program?
2. What does inclusivity in education mean to you?
3. What does inclusivity look like in practice?
4. How does the teacher education program support its mission to promote inclusivity in education through teacher candidate recruitment?
5. How does the teacher education program support its mission to promote inclusivity in education through its admission policy?
6. Having participated in the admissions process, how does the teacher education program select candidates that are prepared to become inclusive teachers?
7. What indicators do you look for in teacher candidate statements that suggest a disposition toward inclusivity?
8. What features in a PSE generate a higher rating from you?