Highly Qualified
Minority Teachers:
Do High-Stakes Teacher Tests
Weed Out Those We Need Most?

Julie Esparza Brown
Portland State University

As we enter the 21ˢᵗ century, our nation's public education system is under stress. Draconian budget cuts, and the impending retirement of an estimated three million teachers by the end of this decade (United States Department of Education, 2000) have teamed up with traditional problems of chronic teacher shortages. These shortages are found both in urban and rural schools and pose new challenges to those who will educate our next generation of students. Adding stress to this already taxed educational system is the largest generation of immigrant children our nation has seen (Obiakor & Utley, 1996; Locke, 2002). All of this increases the risk of leaving behind those who have the least voice in our school system—children of immigrants and non-native English speakers. It is of paramount importance that *all* of our students, both mainstream and diverse, have a cohort of qualified teachers able to address their unique needs.

In pursuing this course, we must consider how the requirement of "highly qualified teachers" in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (*No Child Left Behind Act of 2001,* 2001) affects our efforts to educate a new generation of teachers. This Act will leave neither students nor teachers untested. Teacher licensure candidates will need to demonstrate their competencies for licensure in the same way that public school students

Address all correspondence to: Julie Esparza Brown, Graduate School of Education, Portland State University, Portland, OR 97201. E-mail: jbrown@pdx.edu

must demonstrate their achievement through a single source of data—a standardized test. But the results of standardized teacher tests may not be valid for all groups of teacher licensure candidates.

It is my contention that the excessive focus on high stakes teacher tests to demonstrate licensure competencies will adversely impact our ability to provide the teachers who are best suited to address the needs of our diverse student population—minority and bilingual teachers. Minority and bilingual teacher licensure candidates, as all teacher licensure candidates, must pass a standardized teacher test in order to meet the federal definition of highly qualified to be eligible for licensure. These tests, however, may unwittingly function as closed gates to prevent non-traditional prospective teachers from successfully entering the teaching field. Further, it is my argument that the use of these tests will have the same sort of segregationist effect on our teacher population as explicitly discriminatory policies did prior to the civil rights movement.

In most states demonstration of licensure competencies is achieved by a passing score on a standardized teacher test. The use of teacher tests or professional exams dates back 35 years but their use for high-stakes decisions increased in 1998 when Congress passed the Higher Education Act (Wakefield, 2003). This Act mandated that states submit annual reports on teacher preparation and licensing. "States found the easiest way to fulfill Title II demands was to generate quantitative data to address a qualitative issue" (Wakefield, 2003, p. 380). Since then, high-stake assessments in the education arena have become political fodder. High-stakes tests, however, are not without controversy, particularly in regard to their use with diverse populations (Fowler, 2001; Hood & Parker, 1991; Latham, Gitomer, & Ziomek, 1999).

Controversy over this topic also reigns in my state of Oregon even though we currently have an alternative assessment option for linguistic minority licensure candidates. The purpose of this paper is to examine the use of standardized teacher tests as demonstration of licensure competencies for diverse candidates in Oregon and nationally. The following four areas and their accompanying questions will guide the development of this paper.

1. Principles and Practices of Learning: Why would a diverse teacher workforce help close the achievement gap?

2. Politics and Policy: What are the barriers that exist to meeting the need for diverse educators?

3. Research: What type of research will be needed to validate alternative assessments as viable options?

4. Organizational Leadership: What qualities in leaders produce policies for equity?

At the conclusion of this paper I will provide a compelling example of a bilingual/bicultural teacher that successfully followed an alternative assessment option available in Oregon to linguistic minority teacher candidates whose current students are not only succeeding academically but are outperforming their peers.

Oregon's Teacher Workforce

In 1991, the Oregon Legislature, recognizing the disparity between its diverse student population and predominantly European-American teacher workforce, drafted the Minority Teacher Act (Minority Teacher Act, 1991). It reads:

> The State of Oregon is committed to ethnic-racial equity and, therefore, it is the goal of the state that by the year 2001, the number of minority teachers, including administrators, employed by school districts and education service districts shall be approximately proportionate to the number of minority children enrolled in the public schools of this state. (Oregon University System, 2003, p. 1)

This Act was designed to provide a blueprint for providing a teacher workforce that would mirror the diversity of the public school student body. Sadly, this goal has not been realized as can be seen in the following figures (see Figure 1) from data reported in a 2003 report by the Oregon University System. As can be seen, between 2001 and 2003 the discrepancy between Oregon's minority students and minority teachers grew from 15.2% to 17.0% (Oregon University System, 2003). Not only are we *not* making progress in fulfilling the Minority Teacher Act's mandate, but the gap is widening.

Since the Minority Teacher Act did not achieve its goals by 2001, the intent of this directive remains even more relevant today as the numbers of culturally and/or linguistically diverse students continue to grow in our state. What, then, are the forces that have kept the teacher workforce so homogenized? One possible reason is the reliance of high stakes standardized teacher test scores to demonstrate competencies for teacher licensure. The following section will illuminate some of the reasons why these tests are problematic for diverse test-takers.

Review of the Literature on Standardized Assessment and Bias

The literature related to standardized assessment and diverse individuals reflects the continuing controversy regarding the existence of

Figure 1.
Percentage of Minority Teachers and Students in Oregon
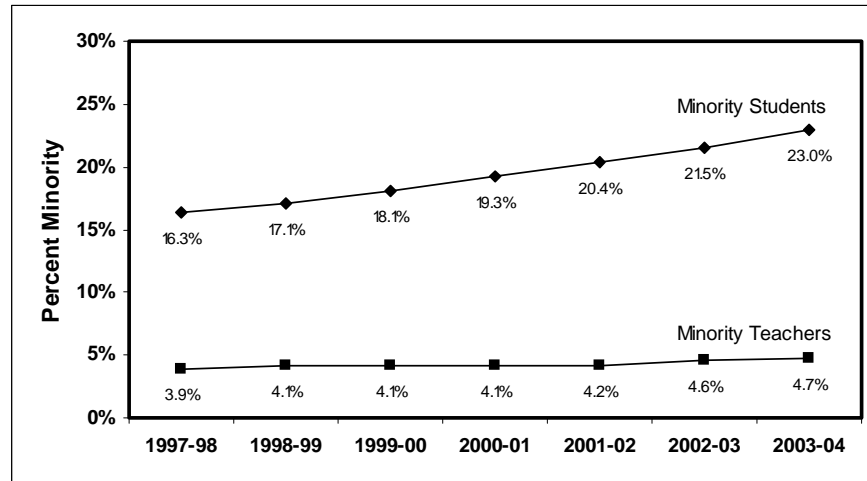
test bias. The first issue to examine is the basic assumption regarding standardized tests. All standardized instruments are based on the assumption that the normative framework (psychometric, criterion, or rubrics-based) on which the test scores are based exhibits a high degree of experiential homogeneity, cultural/linguistic similarity and equity in learning opportunities among test takers (Figueroa & Hernandez, 2000). This assumption is problematic when the test-taker is culturally and/or linguistically diverse. In order to determine if test scores are a valid estimate of abilities for individuals whose culture, socioeconomic status, and/or language are different from the majority language and culture, the *reliability* and *validity* of the test must be established. Reliability is defined here as the "extent to which individual differences in test scores are attributable to 'true' differences in the characteristic under consideration and the extent to which they are attributable to chance errors (as cited in Crehan, Hess, & D'Agostino, 2000, p. 84). Validity is also a fundamental consideration in assessment and is defined as the "degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretation of test scores entailed by proposed uses of tests" (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association and the National Council on Measurement in Education,1999, p. 9). When we consider these issues, it is clear we cannot assume that standardized assessments will provide fair and equitable results for diverse test-takers. As Figueroa and Hernandez (2000) reflect, "tests work best in a perfect democracy of monolingual and monocultural citizens" (p. 9).

Organizations such as the American Psychological Association caution educators concerning the interpretation of test scores for non-traditional and minority populations. The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education, 1999) maintain that norms developed for English-speaking populations should not be used because such tests may fail to measure what they intend to measure in a bilingual individual. No standardized instruments, for use with children or adults for any educational purpose, have controlled for linguistic and cultural differences in diverse populations. Nevertheless, we continue to rely on standardized instruments to make high-stake decisions for diverse individuals. Next, we will examine the literature on how language and cultural differences cause bias in standardized test scores.

The Nature of Bias

Bias has been defined as "the presence of some characteristic of an item that results in differential performance for individuals of the same ability but from different ethnic, sex, cultural, or religious groups" (Hambleton & Rogers, 1995). Bias in testing can stem from one of four primary sources including: (1) the cultural content embedded in any given test; (2) the linguistic demands inherent in any given test; (3) lack of representation within norm samples for individuals from diverse backgrounds in any given test; and (4) a belief that language reduced tests alone are sufficient to overcome bias and communication barriers (Ortiz & Ochoa, 2005; Valdez & Figueroa, 1994).

The bias inherent in standardized instruments cannot continue to be ignored. Policymakers and test consumers must understand that comparisons are invalid when individuals from diverse backgrounds whose educational experiences, language, backgrounds, and other life experiences (acculturation) have simply not afforded them the same opportunities as people from the majority culture. Unfortunately, it is all too common that invalid assumptions and inferences are made on the basis of scores from standardized instruments that continue to adversely impact or discriminate against non-white and non-middle-class test takers.

We need diverse teachers in our nation given our rapid demographic changes and society's need for future generations of educated workforces. To ensure this, however, requires us to close the achievement gap and ensure that all students have an equal access to high quality instruction.

Principles and Practices of Learning:
Why Do Learners Need Minority Teachers?

For more than 100 years, there have been two diametrically opposed models of teaching: the mechanical, factory model, and the more critical interactive model (Shor, 1987). In 1985, a report supporting the interaction model, *Teacher Development in Schools* (cited in Shor, 1987, p. 18) suggested that "the teacher's learning process required far more than information skills or mechanical grasp of subject matter." In spite of this, the mechanical, factory models seems to be the endorsed by the field as evidenced by the focus on standardized, high-stakes assessments. High-stakes tests for teachers blindly adopt a "one size fits all" approach to the evaluation of teachers' competency, test the mechanics of teaching, and measure many random facts concerning curricular content areas. These tests ignore other fundamental knowledge today's teachers must have such as knowing the cultures and languages of the students they teach. Minority teachers often lack what Bourdieu (as cited in Driessen, 2001) terms "cultural capital." Cultural capital can be defined as the important learning that is acquired during "primary socialization within the family and upbringing by parents" (as cited in Driessen, 2001, p. 515), and I will broaden the concept to include learning from the community as well. If the parents belong to the dominant culture, the child will be a good fit in our educational system given that "the dominant culture lies at the core of the—hidden—educational curriculum" (p. 515). In other words, students possess class-based knowledge. If the knowledge students come to school possessing is of the dominant class, they will have the social and linguistic competence required and valued by the school curriculum and will excel.

The same holds for standardized tests. All standardized tests are built upon this knowledge base as well. Therefore, the cultural capital measured in standardized teacher tests may make minority teachers *appear* to not meet licensure competency requirements. If these teachers fail and do not become licensed, the much-discussed achievement gap may widen because diverse students will lack the type of teachers who can facilitate their academic achievement and their connection to learning. Below, I will review the achievement data of minority students in Oregon, discuss the ways that minority teachers who understand, or are from their students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, can boost minority students' achievement, and the reasons why minority teachers' competencies cannot be captured by a standardized teacher test.

Minority Teachers as One Solution to Closing the Achievement Gap

The gap between the achievement of minority students and white students is one of the most pressing concerns in education today. "Minority students continue to have disproportionately high dropout rates. They are underrepresented in honors advanced courses and overrepresented in special education" (Reid, 2002, p. 1). A 2002 report by Education Trust, stated that Latino 8th graders in Oregon score about two years behind white students in the state in science, reading and math and more than one year behind in writing (Education Trust, 2001). The graduation rates of African American, Native American, and Latino students were lower than that of white students with the Asian subgroup achieving higher graduation rates than white students. Native American, African American, and Latino students were underrepresented in gifted and talented programs (Education Trust, 2001). Overall, we can conclude that minority students in Oregon are not succeeding as well academically as their white counterparts and fewer minority students are graduating from high school as compared to white students (exception of Asian students). These statistics are not unusual in light of national data (Singham, 2003; Reid, 2002). This is an obvious problem that we must address. One way is to provide *all* students, but *particularly* minority or culturally and linguistically diverse students, with high quality teachers that understand their particular needs and a relevant curriculum.

Current high-stakes testing, however, premised on a "one size fits all" approach, proclaims to ensure the "high quality" of a teacher without problematizing "quality." In the case here, I define "quality" as a teacher who can ensure academic success for both white and non-white students. According to Reyes and Halcon (2000), teachers who are the most successful in working with non-white students have a strong academic knowledge base and expect their students to acquire a large knowledge base as well. These successful teachers often share a cultural discourse style with their students while, at the same time, appropriately mentoring students in dominant discourse styles. Successful teachers recognize and create a curriculum and learning environment where students see themselves reflected and can build on their lived experiences. These skills are not measurable by a standardized exam.

Culture

Von Glasersfeld (cited in Phillips & Soltis, 1998) states "teachers cannot assume that the 'understandings' of their students resemble their own" (p. 51). For dominant culture teachers, however, their mainstream students' understandings and worldviews are more congruent with their own, that is, they are usually based on the understandings, assumptions

and discourse styles that are the foundations of American education. As an example, American policymakers value and test how well students remember "disconnected bits of information" (Rogoff, 1990, p.46). In many other cultures, the participants' world view is framed around the *interconnectedness of* all living things and to making meaning holistically. Teachers from such non-dominant cultures understand how to help students construct the bridge that links both world views as they are also participants in both worlds. That is, they know how to connect these "disconnected bits" of information to the students' experiences and do so in a social context. They also understand that their diverse students must, at the same time, acquire mainstream cultural norms such as a sense of autonomy, self-reliance, and individualism. Diverse teachers know that these values may not innately be part of their diverse students' nature but must be learned in order for them to be academically successful in an American school (Sheets, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1994); Sleeter & Bernal, 2004).

Another connection minority teachers may have with their diverse students is in understanding the collectivist nature of most recent immigrant and indigenous groups (Rothstein-Fisch, Trumbull, Isaac, Daley, & Perez, 2003). This understanding may lower some anxiety felt by many students that resulted from attempting, in essence, to make meaning in a foreign and sometimes hostile environment. Diverse students may even have fallen prey to victim blaming by some educators who are not knowledgeable in the values and mores of their cultures or their particular life circumstances. When students are accepted for who they are and allowed to construct meaning in culturally congruent ways, high levels of learning and academic success are highly probable, and the achievement gap separating under- and over-served students shrinks (Bell, 2002; Singham, 2003; Reid, 2002).

Language

Students' linguistic needs must also be met. Many educators have written about the role of language as a transmitter of culture "crucial to the survival of a cultural community. Within the student's native language is contained the codification of lived experiences that provide the avenues for students to express their own realities and to question the wider social order" (Darder, 1991, p. 37). It is, therefore, critical that students have role models who speak their native languages and in turn allow them to use their native language in the learning environment. To not have these language models robs students of their voices. They are silenced. When they are silenced, they do not become engaged in learning and, often feeling hopeless, may eventually leave school. They do not

"drop out" but are "pushed out." Understanding that it may not always be possible to provide a language match between a teacher and student, there are many of the more common languages where this may not be as difficult a task. Further, very often a diverse individual will at least have the basic understanding of the critical nature of learning about students' languages, communities, cultural traditions, and so forth.

In 2002, Thomas and Collier published the results of a longitudinal study that examined the education of language minority students in five school districts nationwide. Their findings have significant implications for the types of educational models that lead to high academic achievement by linguistic minority students as well as the skills needed by their teachers. What they found was that *"bilingually schooled students outperform comparable monolingually schooled students in academic achievement in all subjects, after 4-7 years of dual language schooling"* [italics added](Thomas & Collier, 2002, p. 313). Further, they found that programs that allowed students some instruction in their native language led to fewer dropouts of minority students. When students do not have instruction in their native language, according to Thomas and Collier, even the highest quality ESL program would close only about half the total achievement gap. Native language instruction is only half the equation, however. Thomas and Collier also found that the following needs must be met as well: cognitive, emotional, social, physical, linguistic and academic. They concluded that schools need to "use students' bilingual-bicultural knowledge to bridge to new knowledge across the curriculum" (p. 315). The use of students' native language appears to be essential for the success of linguistically diverse students, but this requires a highly trained cadre of bilingual/bicultural teachers.

Teachers as Culture and Language Brokers

To be knowledgeable about students' cultures and languages is a powerful thing. Teachers who are knowledgeable about the culture and language of the students they teach, according to Lisa Delpit (1995), are better able to serve as culture and language brokers who can use students' language and culture as a process to negotiate the dominant academic discourse they are charged to teach. Furthermore, the use of students' language and culture will also validate them as cultural and linguistic beings that possess a wealth of knowledge which is valuable but not always recognized by the mainstream curriculum or teachers. As Jim Gee (as cited in Macedo & Bartolome, 1999) says:

> Certain cultures, as well as unschooled people in our culture, simply do not have, and do not use the conventions prevalent in our schools that in

certain contrived situations (like "show and tell time") one pretends that people do now know or see what they obviously do know and see…. Such assumptions—that one should ignore what the hearer knows and explicitly say it anyway—are . . . the hallmark of many middle-class home-based practices with children (e.g., having the child repeat back an often read book or rehearse at the dinner table daily events that one already knows about). In other social groups . . . such explicitness may be seen as rude because it is distancing, blunt, or condescending to the hearer's intelligence. (p. 61)

What teachers as "cultural brokers" can do, in fact, is apprentice non-mainstream students into the academic discourse community without having to sacrifice the knowledge base they bring to the classroom. This form of teaching also conforms with a humanizing pedagogy—a pedagogy that enables historically disenfranchised students to make meaning through strategies that use students' language and culture in order to make sense of the white middle class curriculum (Freire & Macedo, 1987). This type of teaching further conforms to a constructivist perspective.

The basic tenet of constructivism is that "all knowledge is constructed" (Simpson, 2001, p. 18). Constructivism is described by Von Glasersfeld (cited in Lesh, Doer, Carmona & Hjalmarson, 2003) as "…the world which is constructed is an experiential world that consists of experiences and makes no claim whatsoever about 'truth' in the sense of correspondence with ontological reality" (p.211). Reality, from a constructivist perspective, is constructed by an individual based on his or own lived experiences, and knowledge is acquired based on how it "fits" with those experiences. Therefore, successful teachers for diverse students make a basic investment in human beings and value what they bring with them to school as opposed to less successful ones who have often focused on a skills-based curriculum and a " banking" model of teaching for these, as well as special needs, students. When teachers do not build on student's existing knowledge, this banking model often robs students of their cultural and linguistic points of reference in the meaning-making process.

Again, it is imperative that teachers instruct in culturally responsive ways. Trueba (as cited in Gallegos & McCarty, 2000,) noted that "teachers who are trained in traditional programs often define their roles as 'agents of knowledge transfer to students' who are considered passive receivers of instruction" (p. 265). Gay (1989) reinforces this notion and says:

Most graduates of typical teacher-education programs know little about cultural traits, behaviors, values, and attitudes different ethnic minority groups bring to the classroom, and how they affect the ways these students act and react to instructional situations. They do not know how to

> understand and use the school behaviors of these students, which differ
> from their normative expectations, as aides to teaching. Therefore, they
> tend to misinterpret them as deviant and treat them putatively. (p. 177)

Although Gay wrote this in 1989, her statements continue to ring true today. Most preservice programs understand the need to address diversity issues at some level, but many programs continue to package all diversity issues neatly into one multicultural course, or as I call it, the "isms course" (e.g., racism, sexism, classism). Instead, these critical issues should be the very foundation upon which preservice education programs and curriculum are built.

Building on the Strengths of Cultural and Linguistic Minority Teachers

   It is unlikely that white middle-class prospective teachers alone will be able to acquire the necessary cultural and linguistic knowledge to effectively address the needs of the ever-growing multilingual and multicultural student population in our urban schools (Futrell, 1999). For this reason, it makes more sense to recruit minority teacher candidates who already possess the requisite cultural and linguistic knowledge. By adding the pedagogical and disciplinary knowledge, these teachers are in a better position to engage effectively in a culturally and linguistically responsive education than their white middle-class counterparts. In this sense, these teachers adhere to Freire's model of education in that they develop pedagogical structures that provide students with the opportunity to use their own reality as a basis of literacy that includes the languages they bring to the classroom. To do otherwise is to deny students the rights that lie at the core of the notion of democratic literacy (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Simply put, teachers of culturally and linguistically minority students must embrace a pedagogy that is "rooted in the cultural capital of [their students] and have as its point of departure the native language and culture" (Freire & Macedo, 1987, p. 151). When students feel connected to the curriculum, engage in the learning process as an equal team member, are allowed to use their native language when necessary, and are guided by someone who understands their varied experiences, students will stay in school and succeed. After all, no one really wants to fail.

   Given that current high-stakes testing ignores these linguistic and cultural knowledges, I advocate for an assessment approach for teachers *and* students that is convergent in nature rather than exclusionary. Futrell (1999) reminds us, "minority educators enhance our students' understanding of the intellectual, social, political, and economic complexity of our democratic society." If minority educators can make significant positive changes to our educational system and student achievement,

why aren't all state licensing agencies enacting policies to increase the number of minority educators? Are there specific barriers that can be addressed and removed in order to create policies for equity?

Politics and Policy:
What Are the Barriers That Exist
To Meeting the Need for Diverse Educators?

Public Policy

The rapid racial diversification of our nation creates the need for new dialogues in the public sphere. Equity, justice, cultural competence and anti-discrimination are hot topics in all arenas from the private sector to public education. Vavrus (2003) points out that "issues of race and racism are now legitimate public forum topics" (p. 13). In Oregon, these issues are a concern in the educational community as we struggle with developing a teaching workforce that is more reflective of our student populations. To help in this endeavor, Oregon has enacted licensure policies that allow a linguistically diverse licensure candidate to submit an alternative assessment portfolio in lieu of a passing standardized teacher test score. While this sounds like an inclusive policy that should solve the problem, we need to examine it more closely as well as address the implications of not continuing an inclusive policy. In Oregon, the relevant stakeholders include: (1) the state licensing board, (2) teacher preparation programs, (3) national organizations that set professional standards such as the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), (4) local school districts, and (5) teacher licensure candidates. Given vast implications policies have on any system, I will deconstruct the policies using Les and Stewarts' policy cycle framework (2000). They define public policy as:

> a process or a series of patterns of governmental activities or decisions that are designed to remedy some public problem, either real or imagined. The special characteristic of public policy is that it is formulated, implemented, and evaluated by authorities in a political system, for example, legislators, judges, executives, and administrators. Public policies are always subject to change on the basis of new (or better) information about their effects. (p. 4)

Public policies, I believe, are also subject to change when some stakeholders begin to view policies as unfair. It should be mentioned that in Oregon, licensure policies are established by The Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) established in 1973 (Board, 2003) and one of only nine independent boards in the nation. TSPC reports directly to

Oregon's legislature but has full autonomy in educational standards and practice decisions.

Stage 1: Agenda Setting

John Kingdon (cited in Lester & Stewart, 2000) defines agenda setting as "the list of subjects or problems to which government officials…are paying some serious attention at any given time" (p. 5). Oregon's agenda for creating inclusive policies came about as a result of three policy streams: the problem stream, the policy stream, and the political stream (Kingdon as cited in Lester & Stewart, 2000).

The Problem Stream: How a Public Problem is Defined. Oregon's problem stream was that standardized teacher tests were judged to be discriminatory to non-mainstream candidates. In other states where licensure boards have held firm to standardized test scores, teacher competency testing lawsuits have been filed (McDonough & Wolf, 1988; Pascoe & Halpin, 2001; and Sireci & Green, 2000) under both Title VII and the Equal Protection Clause. The lawsuits have asserted that certain segments of the examinee population are likely to score disproportionately lower on standardized teacher tests than others, and therefore, are unjustly prevented from entering the field of education (Lawrence & Crehan, 2001). According to Gitomer et al (1999) "the effect of testing on the diversity of the teaching force is not promising…it takes a predominantly white population of potential teachers and creates an even more homogenous group" (p. 38) Hence, the problem.

The Policy Stream: Feasible Proposed Solutions. To address the problem, Oregon's licensure board established a policy that allows a non-native English speaking teacher licensure candidate to submit an alternative assessment after two failures on a Praxis II exam. One attempt at the Praxis exam must be made with accommodations provided for non-native English speaking examinees (extended time). The alternative assessment portfolio consists of documentation of successful completion of a teacher preparation program, observations by university supervisors and school district personnel, letters of recommendation, submission of two failing Praxis scores, a passing score on a basic skills test or, as an alternative, a passing score on a computerized criterion-referenced alternative, and a comprehensive ten-lesson work sample. While this may appear to have solved the problem of linguistically diverse licensure candidates having an alternative to a standardized teacher test, they must first face the humiliation and expense of failing a Praxis exam not once, but twice. One can question whether this is in fact an equitable and viable solution.

Another policy was recently established by TSPC and also reflects

their attempt to establish more inclusive policies. In apparent recognition that scores from standardized, norm-referenced tests are often unreliable, TSPC includes as a passing score any scores which when added to one standard error of measurement (SEM) for each Praxis exam, reaches the minimum passing score as set by TSPC. By using the SEM, a confidence band or interval is established within which the individual's true score lies with a probability of 68% of the time. On the surface, this simply appears to lower the standard for passing, but in fact, actually reflects effective policy and an understanding of statistics about the correct manner in which such scores should be interpreted. There has been some discussion, though, that when the original cut scores were set, these scores were already set at least one SEM below what the review panel suggested as an appropriate passing score as ETS recommends (L. Samek, personal communication, April 14, 2005). It is likely that such a policy will result in the inclusion of more people, both minority and non-minority, in the passing group, some of whom would have previously been excluded—not for lack of ability, however, but because of the measurement error inherent in all tests.

Both policies have increased the number of linguistic minority teachers in Oregon. Yet, given the current high-stakes testing craze, I am not confident in the long-term commitment to these inclusive and critical policies.

The Political Stream: Public Opinion. As with any board that oversees teacher licensure decisions, there are inherent tensions between respected ability to meet the needs of the diversity of its stakeholders and the need for efficiency as an organization. High-stakes decisions based on a score from a standardized test where the psychometric measure of the test does not in essence comprehensively capture the competencies of diverse test-takers is unfair. Making decisions from test scores, however, is efficient and cost effective and therefore attractive to many constituents. On the other hand, tests that do not measure the cultural capital possessed by minority and culturally diverse teachers, such as understanding students' cultural realities and ability to communicate to students and families in their native language are problematic to stakeholders rarely considered, namely families. Diverse families, unfortunately, have had little political clout; however, it is more important than ever before to include these voices when making public policies or risk widening the current achievement gap.

Stage 2. Policy Formulation

Policy formulation (or policy adoption), is the "passage of legislation

designed to remedy some past problem or prevent some future public policy problem" (Lester & Stewart, 2000, p. 6). Policy formulation, therefore, is presumably shaped by various stakeholders, interest groups, and available resources. In order to comply with mandates ensuring teacher competencies, Oregon formulated a policy requiring all candidates to pass a standardized teacher test (Mitchell & Barth, 1999). Each state determines the particular tests that will be used and contracts with a testing company. In Oregon, an assessment of basic skills, the CBEST, administered by National Evaluation Systems (NES) is also required. The second type of test required assesses content knowledge, pedagogy and skills (Praxis tests) and is administered by the Educational Testing Systems (ETS). The passing or cut-off scores are established by each individual state. The two types of tests are thought to offer somewhat of a guarantee that teachers are knowledgeable in their basic skills, subject area and pedagogy.

Stage 3. Policy Implementation

Lester & Stewart (2000) define policy implementation as putting a *law* into effect to solve a problem. "Laws must be translated into specific guidelines so that the federal, state, or local bureaucracy can see to it that the intent of the legislation is achieved at the point where the policy is to be delivered" (Lester & Stewart, 2000, p. 7). In other words, a policy may not be successful if not implemented correctly by having mechanisms in place for compliance. The mechanism for compliance in our case is to set a passing score. Passing scores, however, are problematic because there are no data available to determine the "right" passing score to assure the pressure of competencies a test purports to measure and therefore a candidate's readiness for teaching. After examining the academic and demographic profiles of the prospective teaching pool and the impact of teacher testing, Gitomer and Latham (1999) contend:

> Praxis tests are not designed to predict teacher effectiveness. As program entrance and licensure tests, they measure knowledge considered essential to effective pedagogy, but do not attempt to measure the full breadth of skills that go into being an accomplished teacher. Therefore passing a Praxis test does not guarantee that an individual will become a satisfactory teacher. (p. 13)

In Oregon, then, two policies were implemented—setting a passing score and submission of an alternative assessment portfolio to demonstrate state teacher licensure competencies.

Stage 4. Policy Evaluation

The fourth stage of a policy cycle, policy evaluation, is concerned with ascertaining if the policy brought about anticipated results. In our case, anticipated results of a standardized teacher testing policy include providing a competent teacher workforce that has a positive impact on student achievement. As Crehan, Hess and D'Agostino (2000) state, the purpose of teacher testing is to remove from the teacher pool those with inadequate preparation and, by inference, to improve classroom instruction. While it may seem that implementing a standardized teacher testing policy would result in competent teachers, this rationale, however, is based on a set of questionable assumptions. They are:

> 1. Valid tests can be designed that measure the qualities, skills, and the dispositions needed to be a qualified teacher.
>
> 2. There is an agreement among educators regarding what to test.
>
> 3. The passing score is such that those who pass have a high enough level of mastery of these areas to be ready for practice.
>
> 4. Those that pass the test will be more effective teachers than those that do not.
>
> 5. Hiring teachers who pass certification tests will improve student learning.
>
> 6. Public opinion of teachers and the teaching profession will improve based on the use of tests. (p. 3)

Regarding Oregon's alternative assessment policy, there is little data available to determine if teachers who have demonstrated licensure competencies in this way are having a positive impact on K-12 student achievement. This area will need close monitoring.

Stage 5. Policy Change

After evaluating the effectiveness of policy decisions, policies can be changed. It is preferable that changes are made after a period of a decade or more so that one can begin to appreciate the evolution of policy through time (Sabatier, cited in Lester & Stewarts, 2000). As I stated in the last section, it is important that, in Oregon, we continue to monitor the impact of teachers who have demonstrated competencies through the alternative assessment portfolio on student achievement and determine the need to modify or change policies.

Stage 6. Policy Termination (and Rebirth)

Oregon's current policies are without a doubt more inclusive than

those in most other states. Continuing the current policy, however, of mandating that linguistically diverse licensure candidates fail the standardized teacher test twice before submitting an alternative assessment portfolio will not necessarily effectively address the underrepresentation of diverse teachers. Therefore, various stakeholders must keep one crucial factor in mind. Diversifying the teaching force *will* make a difference for students and families who have traditionally had little representation and voice in public schools. In answer to the question we began with, "What are the barriers that exist to meeting the need for diverse educators?" we have identified age old conflicts between the need for efficiency in times of diminishing resources, lack of political voice by minority stakeholder groups, and the current focus on high stakes standardized tests in all arenas of education. Current policies save state and district resources, are efficient and at least provide an alternative to diverse test takers with failing scores making it appear to be an equitable policy. However, the policies do not go far enough in making the licensure process truly equitable and nondiscriminatory. They must be terminated in their current form and allowed to be reborn into a truly inclusive policy. Ultimately, inclusive policies will benefit society as a whole. While standardized tests have been the focus of much research, there is a significant need now for a body of research that would validate alternatives to standardized teacher tests. The following section will address these issues.

Research:
What Type of Research Will Be Needed
To Validate Alternative Assessments as Viable Options?

Educational research is concerned with developing or testing theories or ideas about how the world operates based on observations and measurements of reality. Or at least how a researchere perceives reality (also known as their ontological assumptions). Currently, however, there are competing paradigms vying for validation based upon researchers' *epistemological* assumptions or, in other words, their philosophy of how one develops knowledge. Epistemology is distinct from methodology which is more concerned with the practical ways that one comes to knowledge. Paradigms can be defined as sets of basic beliefs, conceptual framework, or particular views about the nature of the world. These beliefs are then accepted "on faith" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 107). Each paradigm is based on an epistemological belief as to how research and enquiry should be approached by considering the relationship between the "knower or would-be knower and what can be known" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108).

Research Paradigms

Guba and Lincoln identify four basic paradigms: (1) positivism where the researcher discovers knowledge and truth by observation and experiment in an effort to predict or control events and the belief that there is a single objective reality that is independent of the researcher; findings are linked to the values of the researcher; science is seen as the way to get at truth, and the key approach is the experiment; (2) post-positivism rejects positivism and believes scientific reasoning and common sense reasoning are essentially the same process; the researcher's reality is viewed as subjective and multiple measures are emphasized because all measurement is fallible; (3) critical theory that sees reality as shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender factors and assumes that the researcher and object of research are dialectical in nature; the goal is to inquire as to the nature of oppression, conflict and marginalization and to facilitate collective action against disempowerment; and (4) constructivism views reality as multiple mental constructions dependent on the interactions of individuals or groups; these constructions are alterable; findings are created as the investigation proceeds and aim to provide a more informed construction through consensus; multiple interpretations of reality are possible, in other words, you construct your view of the world based on your perceptions of it.

The Research on Alternatives to Standardized Licensure Exams

The positivist paradigm has dominated social science inquiry and is the one upon which most of educational research is based. This is the paradigm considered by many to be scientific method and the goal is to search for an "accurate understanding of the true score" (Daniel & Onwuegbuzie, 2002, p. 14). The positivist paradigm, however, has been subject to much criticism by researchers who believe that it is impossible to have value-free objectivity, especially in social research. "Social research is always a political act. It constitutes an assertion of interests, and therefore cannot be value-free" (Brigley, 1990).

The purpose of educational research is to solve a problem by asking a question or addressing an issue. To facilitate this, within each paradigm there can be two research methodologies: quantitative and qualitative. With quantitative methods the researcher gathers data with some kind of an instrument, determines variables and then investigates and quantifies the relationships among the variables. With qualitative methods, the researcher gathers information or themes from interviews, observations or conversations. Information gathered is triangulated or a convergence of data is sought. The researcher then uses the information to tell a story that may help to understand the social reality of events and behaviors being studied.

In examining some of the research concerning the viability of using more authentic forms of assessment for licensure candidates, much of it continues to be framed in the positivist paradigm. We are beginning, though, to see more "mixed methods" approaches across the paradigms as can be seen in the following examples.

Denner, Salzman, and Harris (2002) studied the use of Teacher Work Samples (TWSs) as a performance assessment method. They examined the challenges and use of TWSs for accountability related to program and state standards by collecting samples from two student teaching experiences (pre and post) and applied a benchmarking process to them. Groups of trained raters then categorized all 150 samples along a four category developmental continuum. The raters then selected proto-typical samples that resulted in a benchmarked set of 10 each at the elementary and secondary levels. The secondary samples included various content areas. This first part of their analysis was quantitative in nature and looked at numerical data to draw conclusions. The next section, however, had qualitative aspects. The raters were then given a questionnaire that asked about the degree of alignment between the TWS standards, guidelines and scoring rubrics, the content representativeness, the importance of what was measured to actual teaching, and finally the degree to which the TWSs addressed their state standards. The researchers also assessed the overall validity of TWS as assessments of teaching performance and, after looking at the frequency of responses, determined that there was support for their use. Last of all, their final content validity check considered how TWSs related to state standards. Again, after examining the frequency of raters' responses, they concluded that responses supported the use of TWSs as a measure of candidates' abilities to meet state standards. By using a mixed methods approach framed within a post-positivist paradigm, the researchers were able to include the perceptions of the participant experts (which were valuable within the context of the study regarding their opinion) as to the validity of using TWSs to demonstrate licensure competencies.

The Renaissance Partnership for Improving Teacher Quality has also investigated the use of Teacher Work Samples. The major goals of the program were (1) becoming accountable for the impact of teacher education graduates on student learning, (2) linking teacher performance to student learning, and (3) increasing the capacity of teacher candidates to facilitate the learning of all students. Pankratz, the project director stated: "The work sample methodology provides direct evidence of a teacher candidate's effect on student learning in a relatively short time period and clearly connects the elements of standards-based teaching and learning" (as cited in Fredman, 2004, p. 4). He also concluded that teacher

work samples can be used as "a source of evidence to be used in recommending and granting a license to teach" (as cited in Fredman, 2004, p. 4). The project evaluation included both process and product components. Quantitative methods included gathering and analyzing performance data (candidate products, work sample scores and traditional achievement measure), ratings of students' performance, and document analysis. Qualitative data were gathered through observations, surveys and interviews to assess how the program was meeting its major goals. The evaluation specific to TWSs included both quantitative measures of work sample scores, and surveys and interviews of both licensure candidates as well as university faculty to gather information on their effectiveness towards meeting program goals.

Approaches to Research

As can be seen, these studies focused on validating the use of Teacher Work Samples using a mixed methods approach framed within a paradigm other than the positivist one. The complexity of educational research today, however, may lend itself to broadening both the paradigms and the concept of the researcher to include collaborative research teams. Collaborative teams could include both researchers and practitioners and other crucial stakeholders. These teams could continue to use a mixed methods approach framed around post-positivist, critical, or constructivist paradigms and pose such research questions as: "What is the relationship between linguistic minority teacher licensure candidates' Praxis scores and their perceptions of the barriers that prevent them from achieving licensure?" The researcher or team could gather quantitative data (Praxis scores which would be the independent variable) as well as qualitative data (perceived barriers would be the dependent variable). Another mixed methods question could be: "What is the difference in the perceived barriers to achieving teacher licensure between linguistically diverse candidates with low (failing) Praxis scores and those with high (passing) Praxis scores?" Here, the independent variable is the Praxis score and the qualitative element is perceived barriers to achieving teacher licensure. The quantitative aspect would be descriptive in nature and the qualitative aspect could be phenomenological. The study would be sequential in nature in that first Praxis scores would be gathered and ranked, and second, students would be interviewed regarding their perceptions of barriers to obtaining an initial license or they could complete a survey of open-ended questions regarding their perceptions. This qualitative methodology would be phenomenological in that it focuses on minority licensure candidates' interpretations of the world or, in other words, their subjective experiences.

After reviewing the research that is available on alternative approaches to standardized teacher tests, it is notable that one group's voices are missing—those of minority licensure candidates that would place research within a critical theory framework. We clearly need more information regarding their perceptions on the topic, specifically the impact failing standardized exams has on recruitment, retention and attrition of minority licensure candidates. For example, minority licensure candidates in Oregon must fail a standardized teacher test *twice* before they qualify to submit an alternative assessment portfolio. This is obviously an expensive and humiliating proposition yet the literature lacks their stories and perceptions. Having this information could assist policymakers in evaluating the necessity of more inclusive policies to address the minority teacher shortage. After all, if the purpose of educational research is to solve a problem or address an issue, then research results should be used as an impetus for positive changes in the system.

Given the significant issues I have outlined, we should consider if this is perhaps an opportune time for policymakers to enact new and more inclusive policies. To do so, though, requires different leadership than we have had in the past. In the following section, I will examine the kinds of qualities in leaders that might produce inclusive policies to increase our minority teacher workforce.

Organizational Leadership:
What Qualities in Leaders Produce Policies for Equity?

The challenges discussed in previous sections highlight the need for strong leaders whose vision and goals include creating equitable educational systems. This time of disequilibria, therefore, can be an opportunity to reconceptualize the notion of an effective leader to and demand leaders who demonstrate new skills, traits, knowledge and actions. In this section, we will address the question: Are there identifiable qualities in extraordinary leaders—leaders whose own principles require that they respond to the needs of all stakeholders?

Bolman and Deal (2002) examined the issue of extraordinary leadership. Extraordinary leadership, they determined, is not related to any one style, personality, gender or ethnicity. There are, however, identifiable qualities consistent across effective and extraordinary leaders. These are focus, passion, wisdom, courage and integrity. Goldberg (2001) interviewed 43 eminent educational leaders and found five traits common to each; similar to the traits identified by Bolman and Deal. Goldberg concluded that each leader had a "bedrock belief" in a vision or theory that inspired them to do their work. Each had the "courage to swim upstream"

or in other words, the courage to go against the current. To enact change often takes great courage and requires someone who may refuse to bend to political pressure. These leaders also had a social conscience or an "activist streak." They had a seriousness of purpose or a focus on their goals and had the patience to work for many years, not just months or even a few years, to accomplish their vision. The key to extraordinary leadership, however, Goldberg found, was that no leader had precisely the same set of strengths or talents but that each was able to "achieve situational mastery" (2001, p. 761).

Relevant to our topic, we need leaders who have the qualities identified above *and* a vision for an equitable education system. Leadership that leads to equitable policies has been studied by many and is known by such terms as stewardship, critical leadership, moral leadership and transformational leadership to name a few (Gooden, 2002; Greenfield, 1999; Lam, 2002; and Sergiovanni, 1992). Common to these concepts, however, is that they deemphasize the "hero leader" of the past who made the tough decisions singlehandedly and "saved the day." No longer can an effective leader rule alone or with an iron fist. "Outstanding leadership is not just the province of individual icons and heroes. In a complex, fast-paced world, leadership cannot rest on the shoulders of a few. The burden is too great" (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003, p. 696). Today's leaders must provide vision, direction and focus on the "intimate links between the personal and the global, and on those issues of survival, justice, equity and social organization" (Giddens, cited in Bates, 1992, p. 5) in order to make changes for more inclusive policies.

Kussrow and Purland (2001) contend that for a leader to be an effective change agent, one must possess what they term "congruency in leadership." Congruent leaders "demonstrate a congruency between beliefs, core values, demonstrated behavior and truth" (p. 1). These leaders use their beliefs and values as a moral compass for decision-making. Similar to this concept of congruency is "authenticity" in leadership. Shields (2003) writes that the key to effective leadership is authenticity. An "authentic" leader does not merely act, but acts ethically. In reviewing the traits identified by researchers that extraordinary leaders possess, we can summarize by saying that they revolve around three main qualities—"critique, justice, and caring" (Starrat, cited in Shields, 2003, p. 17).

It is not an easy proposition, however, to translate these traits and beliefs into policies. Leaders who are charged with addressing the central concern of this paper, the inappropriate use of high-stakes teacher tests with diverse licensure candidates, have many stakeholder groups to consider. And, not all groups want to challenge the existing structures. As a beginning point, though, Starrat (cited in Shields, 2003) posed the

following four questions that may be helpful to licensure leaders in making decisions.

1. Who benefits by these arrangements?
2. Who defines the way things are structured here?
3. Are we balancing individual and community needs?
4. Are we acting out of a sense of compassion?

We find ourselves at a critical juncture where there is a need for leaders charged with setting policy to use this type of framework in making decisions. Their leadership will hold the key to either the diversification of the teacher workforce or the maintenance of our largely homogenous one. As stated earlier, however, exhibiting the qualities outlined above may not be enough for leaders to facilitate lasting systemic changes. Today's leaders must also understand the complex dynamics of organizational structures, such as state licensure boards relevant to our discussion here. While there are many different frameworks for viewing organizations, Bolman and Deal (1997) have outlined a four "frame" model that may be useful to view critical issues from different perspectives (see Table 1). Each of Bolman and Deal's (1997) four frames is based around a specific assumption. In the following table, I define as well as outline the concept/assumption behind each frame. I then pose a question that a leader making licensure policies may ask if they use the lens of that particular frame. Examining an issue from four perspectives may provide a framework for "responsive leaders" to successfully navigate an organizational system comprised of multiple and diverse stakeholder groups.

With so much at stake, leaders in a position to make policies for educational licenses must be adept at viewing issues from multiple perspectives. The real question will be whether those in licensure board leadership positions today consider the underrepresentation of minority teachers in the workforce a critical problem. They should. Perhaps the following case will serve to illustrate why we must act to broaden current policies in Oregon and change policies in other states. What follows is the tale of a culturally and linguistically diverse teacher who was allowed to demonstrate her "highly qualified" status through an alternative assessment portfolio and who is now helping minority students to succeed academically.

Table 1
The Use of Bolman and Deal's Four Frames for Licensing Boards

Frame	Definition	Assumptions	Questions Licensing Board Leaders May Ask
Structural Frame	This frame examines the formal organization and the social context of work to be done, emphasizes goals, specialized roles, and formal relationships. Rules, policies and procedures are highlighted.	"Naturally designed organization works best" (Rice & Harris, 2003, p. 216)	If we allow alternatives to standardized teacher tests, are we then weakening our standards? If we allow too many voices to be heard in making the final decision, will it negatively impact the ability of the group to get the work done?
Human Resource Frame	Based on ideas from psychology, the organization is viewed as an extended family. Commitment and empowerment are highlighted.	"Organizations need people and people need organizations" (Rice & Harris, 2003, p. 216)	Do all stakeholders feel they have a voice in the decisions made? Are policies being established based on the principles of democratic education or the maintenance of the status quo?

Table 1 (continued)

Frame	Definition	Assumptions	Questions Licensing Board Leaders May Ask
Political Frame	This frame centers around the work of political scientists and sees organizations are arenas, contests, or jungles. Coalitions and interest groups may be formed due to the differences in needs, perspectives and lifestyles among various individuals and groups. Compromise is a key. The political frame "recognizes the importance of human (and group) needs by emphasizing that scarce resources and incompatible preferences cause needs to collide" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 184).	"Conflict is inevitable, even necessary, as coalitions vie for influence among groups with competing goals and interests" (Rice & Harris, 2003, p. 217)	As a leader, am I willing to share my powerbase and create broad networks and coalitions where we can collaboratively make new policies? Have I established personal credibility with all stakeholders? Do I maintain clear values and ethics and make these known?

Table 1 (continued)

Frame	Definition	Assumptions	Questions Licensing Board Leaders May Ask
Symbolic Frame	The symbolic frame draws on social and cultural anthropology and treats organizations as tribes, theaters, or carnivals and "focuses on the meanings and values that undergird organizational life" (Rice & Harris, 2003, p. 217). This frame abandons the assumption of rationality seen in the other three frame and views organizations as cultures, propelled more by rituals, ceremonies, stories, and heroes while deemphasizing rules, policies, and authority.	"The meaning the organizational members ascribe to an event is more important than the event itself, and that shared occasion for 'making meaning' are the glue that holds the organization together" (Rice & Harris, 2003, p. 217).	Are we listening to individuals' stories and highlighting the "heroes" who can make a difference to all of our students? Are we bringing stakeholder groups together to hear the stories in an effort to come to an equitable decision together?

The Story of Juana

Juana (not her real name) is a newly licensed mid level ESL teacher in an Oregon school. Juana had previously been an instructional assistant in the same district for five years prior to participating in a career ladder program targeted at preparing bilingual/bicultural students for initial teacher licensure. She was born in the Mexican state of Jalisco and received her education in Guadalajara including university work preparing her to teach in her country. As is the custom in Mexico, Juana was sent by the federal government to work where she was needed. This happened to be in a small rural school where she taught third grade. The community was isolated and the area was very poor. In return for having Juana placed in their community to teach, the community provided her room and board. She got used to a very different diet since food and supplies were very limited. In order to get to a city, she had to walk for miles by herself to catch a bus for the three-hour trip. It was a long and lonely year but Juana kept telling herself, "Winners never quit!"

The following year, she was placed in an urban setting and was able to complete additional university coursework to add a kindergarten authorization to her teaching license. For the next eight years, this highly qualified teacher taught for the federal government in Guadalajara. After the death of her husband, she immigrated to the United States, worked in a variety of jobs, and began acquiring English and acculturating to her new land. Juana soon began to miss working with children and decided to seek employment at a local school district. Her new position entailed a cut in pay that was difficult for her since she was the sole supporter of her two children. From the beginning she knew she had made the right decision. After five years, she had the opportunity to apply to a new program, the Bilingual Teacher Pathway Program at Portland State University, a career ladder program for bilingual/bicultural instructional assistants employed in one of the school district partners, who were seeking teacher licensure. The BTP Program was developed as a result of a five-year federal grant from the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (now known as the Office of English Language Acquisition of the U.S. Department of Education).

Juana was enthusiastically supported for participation in the program by her district and in 1999 she began her journey towards achieving her dream—to be a teacher in her new country. Although the path was sometimes rocky with juggling parenting, work and school responsibilities, she always remembered that "Winners never quit!" This part-time teacher preparation program provided coursework at non-traditional times enabling her to continue working full-time as an instructional

assistant and provided the path where she could "earn while she learned" (Hawk, 1997).

To be eligible for licensure, Juana needed to take the two professional exams, the CBEST and the MSAT. While she excelled in her coursework as well as her fieldwork, she had difficulty passing both exams. After failing the MSAT twice and the CBEST once, although discouraged, there were alternatives for her. In lieu of a passing CBEST score, she completed a self-paced computerized tutorial. As an alternative to a passing MSAT score, she submitted a portfolio showcasing her achievement of the state teaching standards in both a qualitative and quantitative way rather than a strictly quantitative format. Her portfolio contained transcripts, field work observations, recommendations by her school administrators, and a comprehensive, ten-unit work sample. It was reviewed and approved by TSPC based on a state-designed rubric (a quantitative measure of qualitative work). To the delight of her school district, Juana received her initial teaching license, is now pursuing a master's degree and completing the requirements for her continuing license. She is making a difference in her community because there were policies in place allowing alternatives to standardized testing. She was held to the same standards as all other teacher licensure candidates, but allowed a less discriminatory and more suitable alternative to demonstrate those competencies. Her supervisors report that her ESL students have made more academic gains than students in other classrooms and that she is able to provide crucial home and school links for many Spanish-speaking families. Our region and nation at large need more teachers like her.

Alternative Assessments as One Viable Data Source

Oregon's Alternative Assessment Option

Currently, in Oregon, linguistically diverse (non-native English-speaking teacher licensure candidates) can submit an alternative assessment portfolio after two failed Praxis attempts. The Praxis series of exams were developed in the l990s by the Educational Testing Service (Bradley, 2000). There are three types. The Praxis I measures proficiency in basic reading, math and writing, the Praxis II exams are subject-matter tests of general and subject-specific knowledge about teaching, and the Praxis III is a classroom performance assessment of beginning teachers by a trained observer using standardized criteria (Bradley, 2000). Oregon's alternative assessment portfolio and work sample provides licensure candidates an opportunity to document their ability to plan, deliver, and assess a standards-based instructional sequence, demonstrate depth of knowledge of subject matter appropriate to their

licensure level, analyze and profile student learning that occurred during the instructional sequence, and then to reflect on that learning in order to tailor future educational decisions. Further, candidates must document their ability to modify instruction to meet the needs of the full range of students. Finally, licensure candidates must outline how they would report student progress to other stakeholders (parents, administrators, community). Thus, the alternative assessment portfolio, with the work sample as the centerpiece, appears to be one credible demonstration of the knowledge, skills and dispositions embodied in licensure standards.

Documenting licensure competency in this way provides an equitable avenue to codify licensure standards for all candidates and eliminates the need to memorize countless facts and figures assessed on standardized teacher tests. In other words, alternative forms of assessment, such as the teacher work sample as part of a professional portfolio, may provide a way for minority teacher candidates to demonstrate their ability to meet competencies as outlined by licensing boards. The challenge remains, however, of convincing policymakers to acknowledge that there are different ways to demonstrate excellence and that in a democratic society, all candidates must be given a fair chance to earn their place as a teacher. What, then, is standing in the way of making policies for teacher licensure more inclusive so that all segments of society benefit?

From discussions with colleagues and policymakers, I find that not everyone agrees that alternative assessments should be available to diverse candidates seeking licensure (teacher, administrator, counselor, school psychologist, etc.). The concern has been voiced that while alternative assessments can demonstrate competencies in some of the standards, particularly those related to pedagogy, they do not demonstrate content knowledge. Such critics continue to contend that content knowledge can only be validly assessed through standardized tests.

Where do we go from here? I challenge each of us to ponder the reflections highlighted in this paper and ask ourselves if we support the creation of a diverse teacher workforce whose life experiences will bridge the gap existing in public schools for too many children. If so, then we must loudly proclaim our collective support of policies allowing for alternatives to standardized teacher tests, create models for such alternatives in states beyond Oregon licenses, and continue to create inclusive rather than exclusive policies. Just as we do not expect all students to demonstrate their intellect, creativity, abilities, and knowledge in only one way, we should not expect that all teachers, particularly those with diverse backgrounds, to demonstrate their competencies in one manner. After all, one crucial role of an educator is to be a role model for democracy and justice. Should we not also expect justice and equity for educators in

our licensing practices while continuing insist on high standards? This can be our golden opportunity to increase the varied voices, perspectives and wisdom available to guide young minds. Different does not mean inferior just as within our global village the "other" must not be viewed as less.

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