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A ROLE FOR RESEARCH IN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION ADMISSIONS: A CASE STUDY FROM ONE CANADIAN UNIVERSITY

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This article argues for the importance of broad and on-going research to support initial or pre-service teacher education program admissions. Examples from a large initial teacher education program at one Canadian university illustrate the contributions of research to the evaluation and refinement of admission processes. These examples include anonymous surveys and confidential interviews of current pre-service teachers about their experiences of answering application questions about their social identity, how they decided to apply to and attend the program, and their expectations of teacher education and teaching. Research studies about the perspectives of and agreement among the application raters are also discussed. Finally, how the operational needs of the admission processes shape the research agenda and the emerging research findings in turn shape the admission processes is explored.

We can think of the path to teaching as a series of decisions by aspiring teachers and the institutions that prepare them for teaching. The decision regarding which applicants to admit into an initial or pre-service teacher education program is critically important because it determines who has the possibility of becoming a teacher. However, this is only one of the decisions in the admission process. Applicants themselves must decide whether to apply to an initial teacher education (ITE) program. If accepted, they must decide whether to attend, and if they complete

the program, whether to teach. These decisions are influenced by factors such as the employment opportunities for teachers, the needs of the schools that will employ the teachers, the curricula and instructional staff of the ITE programs, the priorities of the bodies overseeing teacher education, and the goals of ITE programs.

In this article, we argue that an ITE program's decisions about which applicants to admit should be informed by an understanding of the entire path to teaching and of the broader educational context. The admissions process must be responsive to the needs of the applicants, of the ITE program, of the teaching profession, and of the schools. It must also be based on critical examination not only of the decisions constituting the admissions process, but also of the assumptions underpinning those decisions (Brookfield, 1995; Childs, Broad, Gallagher-Mackay, Sher, Escayg, & McGrath, 2010). Such explicit coherence, according to Cochran-Smith (2004), Darling-Hammond & Bransford (2005) and Feiman-Nemser (2003), is essential if a program is to be relevant to wider societal needs.

Research has an important role to play in helping programs critically examine admissions decisions and assumptions. For example, research can help ITE programs assess the usefulness of admission criteria (Caskey, Peterson & Temple, 2001), and help identify systemic barriers to equitable access to the teaching profession (Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli, 2009). Our intention is not to propose a specific agenda of research to support ITE program admissions. Instead, we will illustrate the possible contributions of research using examples from a one-year consecutive (post-Bachelor's degree) ITE program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. We begin by describing how admission decisions are made at other ITE programs and the context of teacher education in Ontario.

Admission Decisions

In a recent review of teacher education programs across Canada, Crocker and Dibbon (2008) found that 11 of 40 ITE programs based their admission decisions on academic criteria alone (admission criteria for an additional 16 programs were not available). Of the 29 programs that reported using other criteria, most required applicants to write one or more essays (Crocker and Dibbon do not specify the number of programs), 11 required work experience, 5 required references, and one required interviews (a second stated that interviews might be required). For Ontario, the Teacher Education Application Services (2010) indicates that 12 of Ontario's 13 publicly-funded faculties of education require essays, three require reference letters; and two require interviews.

As Casey and Childs (in press) describe, research on the predictive value of admission criteria in ITE programs is limited because of the difficulty of obtaining reliable and valid measures of graduates' classroom teaching performance after completing the programs; Casey and Childs provide a review of the available research on ITE program admissions (for example, Caskey, Peterson, & Temple, 2001; Denner, Salzman, & Newsome, 2001; Moran, 2008; Smith & Pratt, 1996; Wang & Fwu, 2007; Wilde, Kreamelmeyer, & Buckner, 2009). Research from other professional programs, such as management, medicine, or law, may also be relevant. In such programs, the use of academic criteria alone has also been questioned (Benbassat & Baumal, 2007; Eva & Reiter, 2004; Fish & Wilson, 2007), in part because of research showing that undergraduate grades do not necessarily predict success in professional programs; these programs have similar difficulties measuring eventual success after graduation, however.

Research investigating how well admission criteria predict eventual teaching performance, however, may not be sufficient for understanding the larger context within which

the admissions decisions are made, to critically investigate assumptions that underlie the decisions, and to test the coherence of the admissions process with the larger ITE program and the needs of the schools. In this article, we provide examples of research intended to provide a broader perspective.

The Context

Certification to teach as an elementary or secondary teacher in Ontario requires both a non-teaching undergraduate degree (Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science) and a teaching degree (Bachelor of Education; or, for internationally educated teachers, degrees that the Ontario College of Teachers judges comparable). Most ITE programs in Ontario are one-year consecutive programs, meaning that the ITE program follows the initial Bachelor's degree. A few programs are five-year concurrent programs that lead simultaneously to both a non-teaching undergraduate degree and a teaching degree. For this case study, we draw our sample from the one-year consecutive ITE program at a large Ontario university, the University of Toronto.

The consecutive ITE program at the University of Toronto typically receives between 4000 and 6000 applications for about 1300 spaces. By the beginning of December, applicants must submit their applications for the academic year that begins the following September. The applications include academic transcripts from their undergraduate degree, evidence of English-language proficiency, and three brief essays in which applicants demonstrate: (a) that they have learned about teaching and learning through reflecting on their experiences with learners, (b) that they know they will have a responsibility to support equity and social justice in their work as a teacher, and (c) that they have some understanding of the effect their social identity would have on how students viewed them. These criteria were developed and chosen by the program's

admissions committee after a thorough examination of the literature on teacher education, the stated mission of the program, and the professional standards for teachers in Ontario (Ontario College of Teachers, 2010). The criteria continue to be refined based on the research we will describe.

While the applicants' academic credentials are being screened by the Registrar's Office, the essays are read and rated by instructors in the program and educators in some of the schools where the preservice teachers do their teaching practica. Raters must attend a training session or complete an online training module; they also receive a handbook describing the reading process. Each applicant's essays are read by two raters who use a rubric to assign a High Pass, Pass, Low Pass or Insufficient Evidence to each essay. Where there is a large disagreement between the raters, or the raters are both not confident about their ratings, the essays are read by a third rater. Applicants who receive at least a Low Pass on all three parts of the profile and meet the academic requirements are considered admissible to the program.

Based on their ratings on the three essays and their academic qualifications, the admissible applicants are grouped into bands. Beginning with the top band, all applicants in a band are offered admission until the admission committee reaches a band containing more applicants than the number of remaining spaces. At that point, the remaining spots are filled from within that band based on: (1) each applicant's combination of essay ratings and academic credentials; (2) the Ontario Ministry of Education's priorities and the needs within school districts; and (3) practical program limitations (e.g., availability of science lab space). In most years, about two-thirds of the applicants who receive offers of admission choose to accept those offers and attend the program. As in other Ontario consecutive ITE programs, almost all the preservice teachers who begin the program complete it.

A Role for Research

We have described the admission processes for the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education's consecutive ITE program in 2010. The program's admission committee has, however, revised the processes several times in the past decade in response to changing goals. Those changes have prompted – and been informed by – research about how well the processes are meeting the goals, as well as research about the broader educational context, including other parts of the path to teaching.

A particular focus of the research has been the impact of the program's admissions processes and decisions on equity both for applicants to the program and for children in Ontario's schools (Childs, Broad, Gallagher-Mackay, Sher, Escayg, & McGrath, 2010). Guinier (2003) notes that legal decisions about higher education admissions processes in the United States emphasize the importance of understanding “the relationship between data, demographics, and reflective practice to inform the way institutions operationalize the concepts of diversity and democracy” (p. 172). While those legal decisions do not apply to programs in Canada, certainly the need for on-going research to support educational leaders as they “assume responsibility for creatively fashioning admission practices that fit a changing reality” (p.181) is similar. Cochran-Smith (2004) also points out that social justice is best served by continuous engagement in the dialectic rather than the expectation of arrival at the best process. Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that the admission committee continues to refine the processes based on emerging research findings and to request more research. The ever-changing educational context will necessitate further changes and research to support those changes. This commitment to on-going research relates to what Cochran-Smith (2004) refers to as “inquiry as stance” in teacher education, in contrast to time-bounded programs of research.

Examples of Research

The following sections include descriptions of some of the ITE program's recent research studies to illustrate the role of research in ITE program admissions.

Who are the applicants and how do they decide what to tell us about themselves?

Since 2007, the consecutive ITE program at OISE has been asking applicants detailed questions about their social identities, in an effort to better understand who is applying to the program and how the applicants represent the population in Southern Ontario. This is particularly important because one of the program's goals is to admit "a diverse group of teacher candidates that reflects the diverse student body in Toronto and Ontario schools" (OISE, 2009, section 4, paragraph 2). The questions, which are part of the online application, ask applicants about their racial identity, dis/abilities, sexual orientation, religion, and parents' education. Answering these questions is voluntary; thus, in 2009, only about half of the applicants answered any of these questions.

To investigate how applicants decided whether and how to answer these questions, Sher (2010) conducted a survey of pre-service teachers in the program, asking them to retrospectively report on their application experience. Through course instructors who were interested in the study, Sher invited about 300 pre-service teachers to participate. She received responses to an anonymous online survey from 37 pre-service teachers, who described a wide range of perspectives about being asked to disclose aspects of their social identities. As Sher reports, some participants worried that not filling out the form might hurt their chance of admission; many wondered who would have access to their responses and some wondered if their responses would be considered in the admission decisions. Participants were also unsure whether identifying

themselves as similar to many other current teachers might hurt their chances of admission. One participant, for example, wrote “I thought I might be negatively affected because my social identity is rather stereotypical ... I am a single white heterosexual middle class female from a suburban area” (p. 24). During the study, Sher clearly communicated why it was important for the program to ask these questions, and how the information would and would not be used; however, in spite of these measures, she observed that many applicants were disinclined to believe such statements.

In 2010, based in part on Sher’s research, the program’s voluntary data collection form was revised; the principal revisions were the addition of a new introduction clarifying how the data would be used, reordering of the questions so that the first question was about applicants’ parents’ education instead of about applicants’ racial identity, and adding response options to some of the questions so that all applicants could more easily find responses that applied to them. The response rate jumped to more than 90%. These data are now being used in the detailed analysis of not only the characteristics of the applicant pool, which have important implications for the program’s recruitment activities, but also whether any part of the admissions process differentially affected subgroups of applicants. For example, a detailed analysis was conducted this year to examine whether some subgroups of applicants were more likely than others to receive high ratings in the essay parts of the application.

How do applicants decide to apply and, if admitted, to attend?

One-third of the applicants who are offered admission to the program choose not to attend. To help us better understand how applicants decide to apply to the program and, if accepted, to attend, Wang and Ferguson (2010) developed and piloted a questionnaire in early

2010. Of the almost 1300 current pre-service teachers who were invited to complete the anonymous online survey, 97 responded. The respondents emphasized the importance of the program's website as a source of information; many also reported talking with former graduates of the program. Wang and Ferguson also asked questions about whether applicants were working or going to school when they applied, and what other options they would have considered had they not received an offer of admission. The data, while preliminary, suggest that many applicants also applied to other ITE programs or considered other graduate or professional training programs. We need to design future research studies to include not only applicants who end up attending the program, but also those who do not.

Do applicants have the information they need to decide whether to attend?

In 2008, the program's Registrar requested research about applicants' expectations about teaching and about teacher education. Before 2005, applicants had been required to have three recent experiences of at least 100 hours each working with children in Ontario schools. This requirement was changed to provide better access to applicants who might not have the time or contacts to allow them to volunteer in schools. However, the Registrar worried that that the program, in its information materials for potential applicants, might still be assuming that all applicants were familiar with Ontario classrooms. In response to this request, Cummings and Moizumi (2010) and Moizumi and Cummings (2009) developed an anonymous online survey and a confidential semi-structured interview, inviting pre-service teachers in the program to retrospectively report on their expectations before applying to and attending the program. The pre-service teachers were also asked to describe how these expectations matched what they

experienced in the teacher education program, and their current understanding of the teaching profession. As Cummings and Moizumi write,

[A] better understanding of applicants' expectations about teaching and about [the] program is necessary in order to support them in their formation of more realistic expectations. An applicant with more realistic expectations may make better-informed choices about whether, in the short-term, they want to attend [the] program and, in the long-term, intend to become teachers. Making better-informed choices is important because beginning and then abandoning a teacher education program has large personal costs for applicants and institutional costs for the program. (pp. 4-5)

A clearer understanding of what applicants expect of the teacher education program is of significant importance because a mismatch between students' expectations and what they experience in the program could ultimately undermine the program's equity goals and initiatives, and possibly influence a student's decision to withdraw or defer from the program. This notion of mismatch existing between students' preconceptions and expectations about the teaching profession and what it actually entails is supported by other research (Basit et al., 2006; Casey & Childs, in press; Chambers & Roper, 2000; Sudzina & Knowles, 1993).

Based on 34 online responses in 2009 and 97 in 2010 and two interviews,^{*} Cummings and Moizumi concluded that, although many pre-service teachers have realistic expectations, some do need more information on which to base their decision to enter the program. One of the pre-service teachers they interviewed, for example, described the dismay she felt when she went to her first teaching placement:

I didn't know exactly what the lifestyle of a teacher is going to be like. The no-sleep idea was not discussed this way in the information night. All that was talked about were all the positive things about teaching. I agree with what they said that teaching was a noble career. Teachers are heroes, and I want to be a hero, but not at the expense of my family. With more information on the realities of the teaching profession, a candidate could better assess if he/she is in a position to be in the program. I don't want future teacher candidates to be in my shoes. (p. 13)

^{*} Wang and Ferguson's questions were piloted with Cummings and Moizumi's survey in early 2010, so the number of responses is the same.

Cummings and Moizumi recommended that applicants “be provided with the clearest and most comprehensive picture of what [the] program entails” (p. 16). Specifically, they suggested that the program go “beyond a description of [the] program qualifications, cost requirements and important dates” to provide “more teacher/student testimonials, Question/Answer sessions, actual school timetables, audio-visual presentations of classrooms and teaching, and budgeting workshops” (p. 16).

Are we asking the right essay questions?

We described the three essay questions earlier. When we ask if they are the “right” questions, we mean, are they optimal for meeting the program’s three stated commitments, which are “admitting candidates with the potential of becoming excellent teachers and educational leaders, admitting a diverse group of teacher candidates that reflects the diverse student body in Toronto and Ontario schools, and admitting teacher candidates that show an openness and commitment to working towards equity in diverse classrooms and schools” (OISE, 2009, section 4, paragraph 2)? The admission committee develops careful rationales for each question, linking the questions explicitly to the commitments. After the essays are rated each year, the committee also conducts a survey of the raters asking for their judgements of the questions based on their knowledge of the pre-service program (most are instructors in the program) and their experience reading responses. For example, in 2010, the committee asked the raters: “How useful do you think each part is for gauging a candidate’s likely success as a beginning teacher?,” “How useful do you think each part is for gauging a candidate’s likely success in the ITE program?,” and “To what extent do you think students can compensate for initial weaknesses in these areas through learning during the program?” The raters are also asked for specific suggestions for revising the

questions and rubrics. Their responses were particularly helpful in identifying where the questions or instructions needed to be clarified for the applicants. Some raters' responses also suggested that they misunderstood the purpose of one or more of the questions, suggesting where clearer explanations should be provided in the training sessions and materials for raters.

How do the essay raters understand the questions and responses?

The first of the essays is described to applicants as “an opportunity for you to show that you have learned about teaching and learning through reflecting on your experiences” (OISE, 2009, section 4, paragraph 4). Applicants are asked to describe three experiences that they believe have prepared them for teaching – as we described earlier, the experiences need not be in schools or in Ontario. The applicant must then describe what he or she learned about teaching and learning from a specific interaction with a learner within one of those experiences.

Acknowledging that it was easy for applicants to copy “insights” from a textbook or website, the admission committee decided to focus on evaluating the applicant's ability to reflect on and learn from their experience, and not simply on the insights they reported.

The difficulties the application raters reported in deciding whether responses demonstrated reflection prompted Thomson (2010) to study how educators understand reflection and recognize it in applicant essays. In addition to reviewing the literature on the meaning of reflection in education and on evaluation of reflection, Thomson conducted in-depth interviews with fifteen former raters. These interviews included asking participants to “think-aloud” while they evaluated three application essays. A thematic analysis of the responses revealed wide variability among the participants in their understanding of what reflection is, when and where it occurs, and the conditions that support it. Participants' definitions of reflection included

retrospective evaluation, decision-making, critical thinking, sense making, on-going inquiry, and making thoughts explicit. Some saw reflection as an informal and on-going process, others as a deliberate and structured process, but almost all saw it as a vehicle for change or improvement. These differences in perspectives, however, were not associated with how the participants rated the application essays. Rather, Thomson reported that “it was differences in their interpretation of what applicants wrote, in their reaction in the face of ambiguous responses, and in their previous knowledge and experience that account for the differences in ratings” (p. 33). Based on this research, Thomson recommended that the training of raters address the range of differences in perspectives and, if possible, that the number of raters per application be increased.

What else affects the essay ratings?

All applicant essays are read by at least two raters. However, because the essays are randomly assigned to raters (with two exceptions: some raters read only essays for applicants to teach in younger or older grades, and all essays are assigned to at least one rater with previous experience of rating essays), it can be difficult to analyse patterns of ratings. To facilitate research on the rating patterns, the admission committee typically has a small number of essays rated by a larger group of raters. In 2008, for example, 30 randomly selected essays by applicants to the Intermediate/Senior (Grades 7-12) program were assigned to nine raters. The raters read and rated the essays as part of the usual process – that is, they were not aware that these ratings were part of a study. After the ratings were completed, these raters were asked for permission to use their ratings for further study and were also asked if they would be willing to be interviewed about their rating processes, including thinking aloud while re-rating essays from three of the applicants. Eight of the nine raters agreed. The results of the analyses, which used the results of

the semi-structured interviews and think-aloud protocols to interpret the dimensions found in a multidimensional scaling (dual scaling; Nishisato, 1994), are described by Childs, Ram, and Xu (2009). Based on their analyses, Childs et al. concluded:

The sources of disagreement ... are beyond those researchers usually look for, and they cannot be easily addressed in the typical ways: by clarifying the questions or the rating rubric. Instead, these results point to fundamental disagreements among raters about their roles and about whether and how they should apply the rubrics. (p. 6)

As a result of this study, subsequent training for raters was revised to more directly address the role of the rater and what raters should do when they disagree with the rubrics.

In 2010, a different design was used to collect data about rating patterns. As Ferguson (2010) describes, eight pairs of applications were randomly selected and were repeatedly reinserted into the reading process, so that each batch of 40 applications contained one of these pairs. Ferguson analyzed these data using a many-facets Rasch measurement model (Bond & Fox, 2007; Linacre, 1993), which estimates how much of each rating is due to qualities of the applicant's response and how much is due to the rater's leniency or severity (because the three questions are intended to measure very different types of understanding, the questions were analyzed separately, so there is no estimate for differences among the questions). The analysis also suggests the extent to which raters vary in ways that are not accounted for by differences in leniency or severity. For example, some raters may be looking for criteria that are not on the rubrics. Ferguson concluded that, on each of the three questions, the raters varied considerably in their leniency/stringency and that some raters seemed to be rating very differently from the majority of raters. As she observed, "These two types of variability have different implications for rater training; variations in leniency/severity might be addressed by the use of additional

exemplars and support, while misfits suggests that raters vary fundamentally in their interpretations of the rubric or even in whether they are using the rubric” (p. 51).

How does ITE program admissions relate to the needs of Ontario’s schools?

OISE’s ITE admissions committee, recognizing the need for greater outreach and retention of a diverse population of teacher candidates, is committed to “...increasing the diversity of [the] teacher education student body...” (OISE, 2008, p. 2) by refining an admission process that supports equity in all its facets. In so doing it is hoped that the program will attract teacher candidates with differing abilities and diverse cultural backgrounds, thereby reflecting the diversity of students they will eventually teach.

In 2008, the program undertook what it referred to as an equity case study (see Childs, Broad, Gallagher-Mackay, Sher, Escayg, & McGrath, 2010). This included a systematic review of program documents from 2003 to the present, including each year’s application forms and admission committee meeting notes, as well as structured interviews with ten past and current members of the admission committee. The study also incorporated reviews of the literatures on equity in education, higher education admission policies and processes (e.g., Bok, 2006; Guinier, 2003; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002), the effect of teachers’ characteristics on students’ learning (e.g., Clewell & Villegas, 1998; Dee, 2004; Villegas & Lucas, 2007; Zumwalt & Craig, 2008), and Ontario-specific discussions about the teachers Ontario schools need (e.g., McMurtry & Curling, 2008; Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2007). This study provided the admission committee a clearer understanding of the rationale and process behind past changes in admissions criteria and procedures and provided a framework from which the committee can develop a clearer articulation of its current decision making process: specifically, one that the

committee refers to as “equity in and through admissions” and which is based on Guinier’s (2003) notion of structural mobility.

Discussion

Our purpose in writing this article is to describe a role for research in supporting ITE program admissions, and to argue for the importance of such research. As we described earlier in this article and illustrated with examples from a large Canadian ITE program, the research that is needed is broad and on-going. Programs need a commitment to conducting research that can respond to operational needs – for example, Sher’s research grew out of the admission committee’s realisation that it was making assumptions about how applicants would experience being asked about their social identities, but had no real basis for these assumptions, and Thomson’s research responded to difficulties encountered by the raters. Programs also need an openness to responding to research findings, such as, by providing additional information to potential applicants based on studies about what applicants expect of teaching and teacher education (Cummings & Moizumi, 2010) or how they decide to apply and attend (Wang & Ferguson, 2010). Sometimes the findings, such as those about the disagreements among raters (Childs, Ram, & Xu, 2009; Ferguson, 2010), are not what a program might have hoped. Therefore, a commitment to research requires a willingness to consider that processes may not be working as intended and to continue to work to improve them. Finally, one of the most important research projects undertaken by this program was a study in which the admission committee took the time to look back at how both the wider context and the admission processes had developed, to review the relevant research literatures, and to develop a plan for going forward (Childs, Broad, Gallagher-Mackay, Sher, Escayg, & McGrath, 2010).

The commitment to conduct on-going research on teacher education admissions needs to be accompanied by the commitment to coordinate the research agenda. For example, relating studies that collect data on the personal characteristics of applicants to the studies on ratings of application essays makes it possible to investigate any discriminatory issues inherent in the application essay questions themselves. Because of the emergent nature of the findings of these studies, an on-going research plan by the institution would provide a framework for the on-going dialogue suggested by Cochran-Smith (2004).

In addition to openness to research and coordination across studies, a research-supported admission process requires a commitment of resources. The program described in this article has been fortunate to receive funding from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education to support graduate students' work on these research projects. Members of the admission committee and the graduate students have also welcomed the opportunity to collaborate in designing research projects to address emerging questions about the admission process. The Registrar's Office has provided data for some of the studies. Even with these resources, however, there are practical difficulties in conducting this research. For example, some of the studies have been limited to the subgroup of applicants who received offers of admission and accepted those offers. Even within that subgroup, the response rates to anonymous surveys and confidential interviews have been low. Consequently, while the studies demonstrate that there is variability in perspectives and experiences, they do not tell us how perspectives and experiences are distributed in the larger group of applicants.

Finally, there is a question of confidentiality when considering publication or presentation of findings from this research. In some of the studies, such as those about raters' beliefs and behaviours, we have sought and obtained approval from the university's ethical review board.

We also received approval for confidential interviews with pre-service students in the study of applicants' expectations and for anonymous online surveys of pre-service students in the study about answering the personal information question. However, some of the other work, such as the anonymous online surveys of students about their expectations and how they make decisions, has been conducted by the admission committee as internal evaluations. In those cases, we have presented papers at conferences about the development of the instruments, but not about the findings. Doing the research as internal evaluations can be easier and faster, and the results can be available more quickly for use by the admission committee. We hope many of these studies, however, will have implications for admission processes in other programs; to have a broader impact, the findings need to be a catalyst for on-going dialogue about admissions, along with the small body of existing literature cited earlier. The dearth of published studies suggests that other programs may face similar pressures to restrict their research on admission processes to internal evaluation. Striking a balance between formal research studies and less formal internal evaluations is a continuing goal of the admission committee.

The ultimate goal, however, is to create an on-going public dialogue that addresses the equity of the ITE program's admissions process at all points of the decision making process. This is essential ensuring the coherence of admissions decisions with the ITE program and the larger educational context. In the process, ITE programs will be modeling the critical inquiry that is required of the teachers for whom the program exists.

Conclusion

In this article, we have argued that research to support ITE admission processes needs to be comprehensive and on-going. We have described why research is necessary to maintain and

refine the quality of the teacher education admissions processes and to make sure that the process is one of on-going critical review of current practice. We believe that an equitable admissions process informed by empirical data collected from a wide range of persons who have a stake in teacher education (including pre-service teachers, admissions personnel, and teacher educators) is important, especially if a key objective of the program is to attract, admit and prepare the teachers our students need.

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