

Suggestions for Internationally Educated Teacher Candidates (IETCs)

Seek support

Katherine – an IETC

So I feel that if you are an internationally trained candidate, it's very important that you have a mentor who can guide you through the whole process, the whole academic process, who has been there, who's talked the talk and walked the walk, and will provide you that one-on-one support which you might not get from a whole classroom and from your colleagues as well because there are a lot of issues that you are dealing with. It's the whole cultural issue and interpersonal issue, and communicating with others. And it's not just language but it's the nuances as well and the humour. Sometimes I go and I asked him, "Oh, we had a conversation today and I didn't really understand why everybody laughed." Or, "What was the nuance behind it?" And he'd explain it to me. So it was really good to have a mentor who could do that for me.

Seek help with writing in English

Tara – an IETC

And I have to admit that OISE had lots of good support for students like me. One of the centres that really helped me, especially with my written English was a centre in OISE called Academic and Cultural Support Centre, where you can go there and seek help for your written English, or even for your spoken English. I never had an occasion when I seek help in spoken English but I sought help in my written English and it was on frequent basis. And it really, really helped me to improve my writing style. I want to make it clear that this is not a simple editing service. This is a service which helps you to improve your English, not just editing your assignments. This centre was really helpful when it came to my cover letter, my essays, my assignments. I think my written English has improved a lot since I started this course in OISE.

Be proactive about improving your English

Maggie - an IETC

I think I need to improve my English and actually I tried to get help. I went to ACSC. The instructors there are very helpful, they helped me with my assignment. Every time when I first finish my first version of my assignment, I went there ask their opinion. They helped me with

my grammar and word choices and helped me express my idea in a clear way and correctly, so they helped me a lot.

Mentors can make a difference

Katherine – an IETC

What has made it easier for me as an internationally trained teacher candidate was that I had a mentor to whom I could turn to for more personal support and academic support and emotional support, as well as the fact that OISE/UT has an academic support program so it's very helpful to know that institution itself has this support structure for teachers like us to whom we could turn to.

Use the available resources

Geoff Lawrence – Coordinator of ACSC

And the biggest suggestion I've heard from other candidates I've worked with and things that I thought myself is really, it's important to use the resources that OISE offers. It offers a lot of resources for internationally educated candidates: writing resources, resources to understand how school culture is. Really asking, it's important to really ask a lot of questions of your teacher educators, of your peers to try and clarify information if you are not sure, if you feel you didn't understand the point, understand the information, the assignments. Really reach out to ask people for help because a lot of people are very willing to support you in the program. I also think it's very important for you to try and share stories, share *your* stories, share *your* experiences with other colleagues and with the teachers in your program because your experiences are rich and they can enhance and enlighten everyone's experience in this program. So that is key.

Tara – an IETC

So please make sure that you use resources because if you don't use resources, it's like you are on your own but when you use this kind of support, you know other teacher candidates, who share the same problem with you. And there are these people who are trying to help and be supportive, so please make sure that you take advantage of this support. And I think I'm really thankful because this support helped me a lot to get through this difficult year.

Have confidence in yourself and be open to sharing your story

Katherine – an IETC

I guess one way of making the prep program more effective would be: I think, one of the speakers said that students can be resources, and *we* can be resources to our fellow-classmates and tell our stories. I've gone through, we've gone through the full immigrant process and yes, we are ESL speakers ourselves, so I think that's one of way of helping out the prep program.

Be open and approachable

Sergio-an IETC

Don't be shy. Be approachable. Approach yourself to other classmates. OISE is a safe environment where you can show what you are truly are and what you can do for students' success and for you to become a better teacher. Take advantage of all the different resources that the school gives you; don't be so lazy. It's a busy year but very enriching.

Maggie – an IETC

One important thing is to be open-minded. So it's a fact that for an internationally educated teacher, English and culture is our barrier, for us. However, if we are willing to change and willing to face that challenge, we can improve. And also we should be life-long learners. It's not only good for us to improve our English, it's also good for us to improve our curriculum knowledge because when you are competent in your teaching subject, you will prove and win that you are a good teacher and you will win.

The Pre-field Experience Program or PREP can help you in various ways

Maggie - an IETC

Because I joined the PREP internship. I did my internship first, not the first practicum. It really helped me to get me ready for the first practicum. Actually, I got a very good evaluation from my associate teacher. That is because I felt very comfortable after the first internship at the PREP program.

PREP can help enhance your confidence

Clyde – an IETC

Because if it wasn't there, maybe I would not be sitting here today. Yesterday I finished my second practicum actually and I was successful in both but what I was looking for is growth in that when I looked at my summative evaluation the first time, and then I looked at the second

one, I wanted to see if I'd have moved from the level threes to fours. And I did, so I was pretty happy with that. So I think I'm pretty much ready to go.

PREP can provide a view of the Ontario school system

Maggie – an IETC

I think that another thing good about PREP is that instead of focusing on teaching, making lesson plan teaching, we had a chance to look at different facets or factors of the school, just like we are not focusing on the piece of paper, we focus on the whole picture. So in the first internship with PREP we had a chance to look at a major way of those teachers in special ed. and the school policy and we interview principals, and we have a lot of things to do. And we also do other things. Yes, that's a very good experience. I think if I did my practicum, I am going to focus on my teaching but I don't know how the school runs in Canada because I didn't grow up here. If I went to high school here, I'd know how the school runs but I'm from China, I don't know how the Canadian school runs here. That gave me the chance to look at the whole picture.

Other suggestions include:

- Try to improve your language skills
- Expose yourself to English and the English-speaking community
- Learn about the Canadian education system
- Visit schools and observe classes
- Be proud of yourself for making it this far!