

## **Suggestions for Teacher Educators and Associate Teachers Who Work with Internationally Educated Teacher Candidates (IETCs)**

### **Be aware of the special needs of IETCs and consider establishing a ‘buddy’ system Maggie – an IETC**

And another thing it's better to give us a partner, a buddy, with a Canadian born teacher candidate we can work regularly on some homework, on some school work. And through doing homework and school work, we can improve our language and learn from each other. And I also find that sometimes I found it hard to follow the group discussion or the class discussion. So I think it's better for the instructors to notice that we have some cultural barrier, sometimes we find it hard to follow the discussion, so it's better for the instructor to stop for a while, summarize or remind us what's going on and give us some main points, then we can follow and we will continue. And also I found it when we handed in assignments, it's only for the marking and I think it's better for us to get some advice before we hand in assignments. We can get some feedback before we hand in assignments and make sure we are on the right track. OK.

### **Help IETCs to become aware of their needs Antoinette Gagné – Academic Advisor for the ACSC**

I think that one of our biggest challenges has been to help our IET group to know that in fact they do need help. So those who come, for example to the ACSC or who come to their teacher educators or to their hosts asking for explicit input and help, they know that that would be useful, they are there already. We find it that's a minority. And those who aren't successful in the program are the students who don't realize that they would benefit from this very directed kind of activity or input. And that's where things become delicate and our sensitivities are at play. Do you just walk up to this candidate and say, “Look, you may not think you need help or explicit input but you do. So we are gonna do it now. It's a very delicate line.”

### **Katherine – an IETC**

I asked some of my classmates what suggestions they would have because this would be our opportunity for teacher candidates to offer suggestions to instructors. Some of their suggestions were if we could have, because it's very hard to modify and accommodate for our special needs and exceptional students, so we were wondering if we could have more chances to really see

samples and practice modifying and accommodating not just the teaching practices but also the curriculum expectations because I think we need more practice with that.

### **Ongoing feedback from teacher educators and/or peers as well as peer tutoring are great sources of support for IETCs**

#### **Maggie – an IETC**

I think I have some suggestions for instructors of OISE. One way is to give formative feedback assignment before the due date because teacher candidates like me, sometimes we have a language barrier and because most of the other teacher candidates are native speakers when they discuss and give a class, lectures they go very quickly. Sometimes I didn't get what exactly was going on in the class. So I think it is better give me more feedback through one-on-one help my English was improved a lot. I think that this way maybe work for most other people like me.

### **Pay attention to IETCs linguistic needs**

And also during the class I found sometimes the instructors and the classmates talk very fast. I think it's better for teacher candidates and instructors to pay more attention about the speed of talking or lecturing because I think it's important for me to listen. If the teacher speaks clearly and loudly, I can understand better. And also speak loudly and clearly not good for ESL learners but also for most other regular students.

### **IETCs can contribute positively because diverse backgrounds enrich the program**

#### **Geoff Lawrence – Coordinator of ACSC**

And for teacher educators, I think it's crucial to really work to try and hear the voices in your classroom. The understanding that we have the luxury, the beauty, these days, of having diverse experiences, diverse richness in the class and to trying exploit that, to use it as an opportunity to increase the intercultural communication and awareness of teacher candidates who are going to be working with diverse students in schools. I think that layer of learning is incredibly rich and incredibly useful in this day and age.

### **Open the lines of communication and provide clear feedback to IETCs**

#### **Antoinette Gagné – Academic Advisor for the ACSC**

What you are all saying in fact is reflected in our IET candidates' interviews, whereby they have expressed how much they've appreciated input that is very clear and explicit. In fact, they are very aware how often when they go into schools either as student-teachers or interns how

everybody is very careful and especially they say that the teachers who would be Canadian-born teachers are careful because they are aware of all kinds of policies and plays that respects diversity. So they will tell me instead of having a straight out conversation saying, “Look, you speak a different variety of English and I am not saying that’s bad but some of the kids are saying that they have difficulty with a few words now and then and getting it. Let’s look at some strategies; let’s figure out how you can be even more effective.” So I’m not saying as your associate teacher, your host, “I want you to change your accent.” I just want to figure out with you some strategies for you to be more comprehensible so that you feel confident, your students are confident and learning can take place.

### **Support IETCs in developing cultural fluency in their new teaching contexts**

#### **Kate Moore - Former Facilitator/Counsellor at Skills for Change (A Partner in the Teach in Ontario initiative)**

One of the things that we do explicitly and implicitly at Teach in Ontario is cultural fluency. And so in terms of addressing classroom management, resumes, mock interviews, things like that we do often compare and contrast, “Ok, what worked in your country of origin? Which of those would be appropriate for here? Which are you never gonna talk about and you’re certainly never going to (laughter).” We’re very explicit about that kind of thing. You know, the interaction, you know, how you must be revered, and having that automatic respect, how it’s quite different here. So making those conversations explicit.

... To give you one example, and I’m not exaggerating. There was one IET from Eastern Europe. She had approached twenty schools to volunteer and had been turned down at twenty schools. She goes, “What’s the problem with that! Here I am. I am willing to volunteer my services. What’s their problem?” You know? And I said, “Remember that that critical frame? Let’s sit down and have a conversation.” The next week she had successfully approached the school and she had a private school job offer based on the interview that we... So just sitting down with the person and saying, “That is totally appropriate from the culture where you’ve come from, this is how it is viewed here.” You know, so being really, having those frank conversations, which as a simple Canadian, doesn’t come naturally. And when I said, ‘cause I’ve already talked to her of beating around the bush like simply Canadians tend to do, and I said, “I am just letting it on the line for you.” She goes, “Thank you!” And I said, “You are being perceived as brusque, offensive...” And she walked away and she was so grateful and it let her

to a very different outcome. So being able to go there which doesn't necessarily come naturally in our society. So incorporating that cultural fluency.

### **Collaboration and peer-review will lead to improvement**

#### **Kate Moore - Former Facilitator/Counsellor at Skills for Change (A Partner in the Teach in Ontario initiative)**

And so reviewing all their cover letters, teaching them about cover letters, resumes, then reviewing each and every one and having them critique one another's before they get their final version, doing mock interviews and we would do what we called public interviews, where certain IETs would volunteer to go through the process with everybody else present. We tell them all the reasons why they want it to do it and typically over half of the group would volunteer to do that.

### **Vary your support strategies to suit the different needs and preferences of IETCs**

#### **Florinda Kotisa - Associate Teacher**

I am thinking when you have this critical friend: a) the critical friend may not always want to say anything; and b) this person may not be ready to receive this kind of critical friendship. I'm wondering if it could be done differently, have a model video, show a different person, not the person involved but have things that can go wrong in the interview, in the resume, in the classroom and have this teacher in OISE doing it before they go into the workplace so that they have some cultural knowledge and that it's something that they can aspire to without being put on the line, without being meant to feel inadequate.

### **Associate teachers as a great immediate source of support and learning for IETCs**

#### **Maggie – an IETC**

I would say that I had a very good experience with my associate teacher in my first practicum; my associate teacher helped me a lot. I remember, she used the routine, every day when she came to the classroom, she'd write the agenda on the board. So when the students came in, they knew what they should do. I found that very useful in classroom management. And also when I taught, when she found some mistakes I made in terms of English and she corrected me afterwards. And also she showed me how to use the photocopier. Although it's the small thing but I learned very quickly and learned how the school runs. But I think the one problem is that I only worked four weeks with the associate teacher, it's pretty short for me. So I think that I still

need more time to learn but the practicum was finished. So I think in the future, it's better to buddy a teacher candidate with the associate teacher, give them more time to work with. It's because for the internationally educated teacher candidates, we need more time to practice, not only about English and also about teaching. So I think it's good to give us longer time to work together, and it's better to start from the beginning of September. Maybe we can go to school one day or one afternoon but regularly go there and have more time.

### **Be understanding and supportive**

#### **Tara – an IETC**

I have to say that it's very important for associate teachers to be supportive and understand how difficult and exhausting it is for ESL teacher candidates to prepare lessons and stand in front of class and present a lesson. So they have to support and try to improve the teacher's style.