

**An Inquiry into the Impact of Admissions Policy that Diversifies  
the Selection of Pre-service Teacher Education Candidates**

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***Introduction***

The world of educational quality in 2006 is infused with conflicting political and economic agendas that constitute evidence of social strain and what Cherry Banks (2006) calls the tension between unity and diversity. That tension is increasingly prevalent among growing multicultural communities where centuries of inadequate educational funding have created class and race based poverty (Cochrane-Smith, 2004; Cochrane-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). This poverty continues to reproduce annual patterns of underachievement or achievement gaps. When these gaps are taken as a whole, we find ourselves faced with what Gloria Ladson-Billings (2006) so aptly refers to as a collective educational debt. This debt is not random or coincidental. It represents a systematic attempt to benefit from cheap or free labor provided by an underclass of largely non-White individuals who are denied their constitutional right to a quality education (Berliner, 2006).

Stories of rats, broken plumbing, and frigid classrooms speak to the unacceptable physical conditions that many North American children and teachers are forced to endure in our nations' schools. Yet, these physical deficits are nothing in comparison to the moral disgrace of staffing these schools with unprepared teachers and failing to provision them with sufficient teaching and learning materials. Worst of all, and despite a rich body of research on school climate, cognitive development, learning theory, and the debilitating effects of marginalization, very little is being done to recruit, train, and support teacher candidates with life experiences and identities that mirror those of the children they are hired to teach.

***Problem Statement***

The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, I aim to raise consciousness, possibly anger, and preferably action over the ways in which our nations' colleges of education and teacher licensing agencies continue to ignore the need for policy that creates human diversity within the teaching force. Second, I would argue that, as a society in support of teacher diversification, we will move closer to finding solutions to the following three dilemmas:

(1) Growing numbers of teachers fail to establish relationships of student, student family, and neighborhood trust. Communication gaps arise because of pronounced differences and tension between the ethno-cultural backgrounds of teachers and the communities in which they work (Cochrane-Smith, 2004; Kezar, 1999).

(2) Pre-service teacher education programs, partly in response to the dominant values and expectations of privileged teacher candidates, often perpetuate hierarchical attitudes and practices. One example is the prevalence of low expectations for indigenous children, children of color, or children who struggle with English, a condition that frames learning as unlikely and inappropriate for pupils from these traditionally marginalized groups (Banks, 2004; Gay, 2004).

(3) There is a teacher supply crisis within many increasingly multiethnic, urban school systems. Shortages are caused by high turnover among teachers who are not familiar with cultures of urban poverty and have not been trained to understand and respond to the needs of the children and families that they encounter (Anyon, 2003; Santiago, 2002).

We need to work within and against our teacher education programs to create safe and supportive spaces for minority candidates, and we need to collect the evidence now that will convince the policy makers who fund teacher education programs of the essential merits of a diversified teaching force.

### ***The Social Learning Context***

Today's school populations include not only the descendents of colonial masters, but also growing numbers of aboriginal, indigenous, refugee, immigrant, and ethnically diverse children, including many who are not fluent in their nations' official language(s). Although Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Constitution of the United States offer all citizens, residents, and legally landed aliens entitlement to a free public school education, this grand privilege is often undermined by processes that honor exclusionary hierarchies based on meritorious combinations of language, class, gender, and ethnicity. These hierarchies sometimes interfere with schools' abilities to function successfully, and to be integrated into and representative of their surrounding communities. John Abbott describes communities as "places in which we can feel secure, because the likelihood is that people will understand and support us ... [and] we can feel comfortable enough simply to be ourselves .... Learning and community are so intertwined as to be inseparable ..." (2004, 3).

Gay recommends policies that provide school learners with "access to a variety of instruction processes that are informed by and responsive to their cultural orientations and learning styles" (2004, 231). How better to infuse instructional processes with cultural orientations that respond to diverse cultural orientations than to diversify the teacher work force? Within a collegial group that embodies greater

diversity, pre-service program candidates would be exposed to cultural circumstances that more closely resemble the day to day interactions within the schools where they eventually intern and teach. Through their classroom internships and extracurricular experiences, they will be exposed to a greater variety of learners' needs, acquire more equitable pedagogical skills, and develop a more equitable multidisciplinary perspective on curricula. Banks contextualizes these skills from a social activist perspective by saying that "Teachers must not only understand how the dominant paradigms and canon help keep victimized groups powerless but also must be committed to social change and action if they are to become agents of liberation and empowerment" (1994, 160).

Among the many challenges confronting marginalized school children are the cultural barriers fueled by racism, homophobia, intolerance toward those who speak "poor English", and ignorance of the debilitating manifestations of poverty. For schools to meet the needs of these learners in ways that model respect and possibility, they must be staffed with teachers and administrators from diverse cultural backgrounds and with positive attitudes towards educators from cultures other than their own (Banks and Banks, 1995). These educators must also demonstrate pedagogical skills that include flexible communication repertoires, a deep understanding of the process of cognitive development, and high competencies in their various instructional subjects or leadership roles (Darling-Hammond, 1993, 2000).

Because schools are foundational institutions in which community values are re/produced and constructed, school-based attitudes that favour discrimination represent a deeper issue that reaches beyond the learning experiences of the current generation of school learners (Brosio, 1998; Cochran-Smith, 2000; Connell, 1996; Diamond, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Ginsburg, 1990; Haberman, 1988; Liston, 1991; Poole, 1993). This problem is perpetuated by a public teacher workforce that, in the majority, has two major deficiencies. First, many teachers support or fail to resist the exclusive entitlement of a few privileged groups, such as whites, males, heterosexuals, Christians, and able members of the middle and upper classes (Altbach, 1994; Lyons, 2004b; Sleeter, 1995a; Solomon, 2001; Wallberg, 2004). Second, they generate social tensions through their tacit and even open support for traditional status inequities within multiethnic populations (Ryan, 1993, 2003, Rashid, 2004; Zeichner, 1991). For example, Slaughter-Defoe (2005) posits that racism is a form of mental disease that disadvantages everyone, racial perpetrators as well as their victims, and she is joined by many educational researchers in advocating the development of teacher networks that reflect the demographic and cultural characteristics of today's student populations (Bascia, 2000b; Bell, 2002; Grant, 1993; hooks, 1994; Irvine, 2003, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Stead, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c; Wiggins, 1999). Until all minorities are included in the teacher workforce, minority school children will continue to learn to fail, and communities will continue to suffer the consequences of an inadequately educated work force (Chou, 2005; OECD, 2004; Stead, 2005b).

The third problem facing today's school children is the critical shortage of credentialed teachers within increasingly multiethnic urban school systems (Anyon, 1995). Darling-Hammond (2000) notes a high positive correlation between student learning and an ongoing relationship with a fully credentialed teacher. It is quite plausible that increasing access to teacher education programs for applicants from

impoverished and urban backgrounds may reduce the incidences of chronic urban teacher shortages, teacher job dissatisfaction, and high teacher turnover (Lyons, Barraza, and Thomas, 2004). Because teacher education programs stand out as such prime locations for demographic reform within culturally diverse societies (Irvine, 2003, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2001), an argument can be made that admissions policies that diversify pre-service student populations are both important and urgent. Diversification of the teacher workforce might very well set in motion a process of satisfying the educational needs of multiethnic students, solving urban teacher shortages, and removing a cornerstone of systemic social dysfunction while strengthening the foundations of a just and equitable society (Marshall, 2004; Solomon, 1997; Stalker, 1998; Thiessen, 2000, Trent, 1990).

Understanding the consequences of admissions policies that attempt to diversify the teacher workforce is improved by (1) foregrounding the circumstantial and political contexts in which teacher education occurs (Lyons, 2004, in press; Marshall, 2004; Montecinos, 1999; Pal, 1997; Tyack, 1991; Zeichner, 1996b), and (2) by exploring the impact of policy implementation practices (Nugent, 1996; Nussbaum, 1997; O'Brian, 1969). These processes vary widely from site to site. In some cases they are also powerful enough to override pro-diversity admissions policies and continue to limit pre-service program access to non-traditional candidates (Conle, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lund, 1998; Sorensen, 2004; Zeichner, 2003). However, some educators, often those who encountered barriers during their own professional training, continue to resist institutional pressure to engage in exclusionary praxis (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Guy-Sheftall, 2005; Irvine, 2001, 2004; Pohan, 1996, Quartz, 2003). Widespread disagreement over the purpose of teacher accreditation further complicates efforts to set equitable entrance qualifications for pre-service programs (Cochran-Smith, 2004), and further confounds the implementation of policies that support admissions of diverse candidates (Levin, 2003).

### ***Evolving Trends in Teacher Education***

The diversification of admissions policies within North American teacher education programs has evolved in response to two major trends: (1) increasing multiculturalism and (2) a problematic distribution of educational resources that denies equitable learning opportunities to many traditionally marginalized school children (Banks and Banks, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 1995; Irvine, 2001, 2003; Ryan, 1999, 2003). Contemporary multiethnic communities, particularly in large urban centers, are a spreading phenomenon with roots in colonial expansion. They have reached critical mass in the half century since the end of World War II (Anyon, 1997; Chou, 2005). The first section of this review will present an historical overview of the changing contexts of teacher education policies during this post-war period. The focus will then narrow to questions of equity within educational systems that serve increasingly multiethnic communities (Cummins, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994), and I will present some examples of policy advocacy with respect to diversity in pre-service programs (Singer, 1996; Smylie and Miretzsky, 2004). Given the loosely coupled relationship between policy intent and the ways in which policy is put into practice, this section of research will consider complications arising from policy implementation (Weick, 1976). Collectively, the

works included in this strategic review will form a sound theoretical basis from which to explore the consequences of admissions policies that purport to equitably diversify pre-service students.

### ***Historical Contexts of Teacher Education***

In order to fully appreciate traditional educational policies' lingering impact on non-traditional learners, it is necessary to review some of their historical principles and values. During the past 50 years, North American teacher education programs have been resistant to change (Lieberman, 2004; Marshall, 2004) despite being subjected to ongoing conceptual reform. Although there is growing awareness that a skilled teaching force is an essential public service (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Cochran-Smith and Zeichner, 2005; Hall and Schultz, 2003), the mandates of teacher education programs are becoming increasingly contested in response to the needs of progressively more diverse school and neighborhood populations.. This may result in programs with overly complex goals and polarizing standards. Tracing the history of educational policy from the late 1940s, teachers' colleges have transitioned from independent church-sponsored institutions serving only white male students, through government certified coeducational colleges of education, and, since the 1980s, and most recently into independent university faculties (Fullan, 1990; Rae, 2005). In addition to the evolving structure and clientele within teacher education programs, during the mid 1960s, questions also arose over the quality of teacher performance and preparation. Ontario Minister of Education Davis commissioned the province's first report on the training of elementary school teachers (Ontario, 1966). Following the 1964 Civil Rights Act in the United States, the Department of Health and Welfare published the Coleman Report, a comprehensive study which raised an alarm over America's "continuing regeneration of inequality in the recruitment and training of future teachers" (Coleman, 1966, 335).

Another wave of concern over policies governing America's educational systems emerged in the mid 1980s. The Holmes Group, based at Michigan State University, released "Tomorrow's Teachers," the first of a trilogy of reports which recommended modernizing teacher qualifications to reflect society's transition from an "industrial" to a "knowledge-based" economy (Holmes, 1986). It was soon followed by "A Nation Prepared," a Carnegie Corporation report that established the need for competitive American educational policy within an increasingly globalizing economy (Carnegie, 1986). The Carnegie review raised questions about the quality of teacher education candidates, the characteristics of schools as workplaces, the need for adequate teacher training, and teachers' ongoing needs for job support and professional development.

By the 1990s, governments and research organizations such as the Ontario Ministry of Education and the American Educational Research Association began to commission projects aimed at improving educational quality. Informed by the works of the Holmes Group and the Carnegie Corporation, Fullan, Connelly, and Watson (1990) published "Teacher Education in Ontario", a broad-reaching and urgent prescription for educational change in response to rising secondary school drop out rates, inadequate teacher training, unguided teacher induction, lack of support for mid-career teachers, conflicting priorities

within faculties of education, inadequate research about teacher education, and the low public status of the teaching profession (Fullan et al. 1990, 2-7). Other educational researchers also began work that would further illuminate the complexity of teaching and teacher training. Feiman-Nemser, working at Michigan State University's National Center for Research on Teacher Education, introduced a typology that was among the first to suggest the composite structure of the teaching process. She wrote, "The preparation of teachers involves the interaction of four elements -- teacher, student, subject matter, and milieu -- within five content areas: academic, practical, technological, personal, and critical/social" (Feiman-Nemser, 1990a, 12).

In response to growing resistance toward standardized testing, and because of the ways that it tends to reinforce traditional white privilege, Liston (2001) expresses support for a teacher workforce that reflects the increasingly varied political, cultural, moral, and sometimes spiritual school landscapes. In response to the work of many pro-equity researchers and educators, attention is now being focused on reducing achievement gaps across gendered and minority teacher education student cohorts. Steps are being taken to eliminate discriminatory language and inappropriate knowledge expectations from teacher education assessment instruments and curriculum (Nettles and Millett, in press). For example, recent revisions to the standardized ACT and SAT 1 tests reflect attempts to eliminate cultural and linguistic biases. Growing concern about the impact of discriminatory language, such as that found within admissions documents, is also prevalent in educational research. In educational research, Xuemeni's Canadian work highlights "the diversity of beliefs in the English Second Language (ESL) context, where ... the rigidity of Western academic culture, the reconstruction of educational experience for ESL students, the complexity of beliefs, and the tendency of cultural assimilation" raise invisible and inequitable barriers (2003, 39).

By the 1990s, policy making and research activity directly addressed the growing shortage of certified teachers, particularly in urban school districts. Hirsch, Koppich, and Knapp (1998), at the University of Washington's Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, raised questions about (1) how to produce quality teachers, and (2) what to do about the systemically inequitable distribution of highly skilled teachers. In this research, they highlighted the strong causal link between impoverished schools and enduring poverty. Darling-Hammond examined how colleges of education were preparing their teacher candidates, and debunked popular myths such as "good teachers are born and not made," good curriculum must be "teacher proof", and "some students are incapable of learning" (Darling-Hammond, 2000b, v). She argued that teachers ought to be taught within a professional framework and shown how to teach in ways that respond to "students' individual intelligences, talents, cultural and linguistic backgrounds ... [and that cause] in-depth learning ... powerful thinking and flexible, proficient performances" (Darling-Hammond, 2000b, vi). Although many states now correlate student teacher performance with aggregate statistics of their students' learning, hooks (1994) condemns this practice for its tendency to reproduce social learning inequities. Quartz (2003), reporting on graduates from UCLA's Center X, recommends basing teacher candidate evaluation on "displayed performance" in actual teaching environments, rather than on standardized assessments.

By the year 2004, conceptual policy developments gave birth to the National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force (NCDTF). As an instance of America's increasing governmental control over public education, this alliance represents six leading national education policy groups: the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), the American Council on Education (ACE), the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE), the Community Teachers Institute (CTI), the National Education Association (NEA), and the initiative for Recruiting New Teachers (RNT) (AACTE, 2004; AASCU, 2004). The mandate of the NCDTF is to (1) include diversity as a critical element within a "highly-qualified" teacher workforce, (2) identify and eliminate obstacles faced by minority teachers in passing college of education entry tests, and (3), develop the kind of programs advocated by Ladson-Billings (1999) that support teachers of color and other minorities, both in the pipeline and in the classroom.

Many of NCDTF's goals for American teacher licensing are also recommended by Canadian researchers. The Rae Report (2005), Ontario's "Postsecondary Review: Higher Expectations for Higher Education," is founded on the following five principles: (1) accessibility, (2) quality, (3) collaboration (including system wide programs), (4) accountability, and (5) sustainability (Rae, 2005, 20-21). Rae's emphasis on accountability extends to faculties of education where he claims that "improved teacher training will result in better understanding of the unique needs of students ..." (2005, 68). Education has always been a contested area, and over time a tension has persisted across North America between democratizing and centralizing educational power. Since the 1980s, major shifts have been visible, including the professionalization of teaching, the introduction of new government control mechanisms, and the redistribution of local power from school board trustees to site-based parent councils (Stead, 1998a, 1998b). Having briefly examined the origins of educational policies that support diversifying admissions within pre-service programs, we now turn to a review of the regulatory structures.

Demands for greater public control over the continents' school systems led to the introduction of increasingly complex legal frameworks for teacher education (Ontario, 1966; Coleman, 1966). The "baby boomers'" sense of entitlement to quality education generated a need for teachers and infrastructure that would span the next two decades (Rae, 2005), and triggered increased government funding across North America in proportion to the growth in school and post-secondary age populations (Fullan, 1990). Given the increasingly hierarchical structure of school systems, and with each rise in public spending, the authority of teachers and school principals yielded to the burgeoning power of local school boards, state and federal government, teachers' unions, and, most recently, parent councils (Bascia, 1996; Carnegie, 1986; Goodson, 1996; Hirsch et al. 1998; Holmes, 1990; Stead, 1997c, 1997e, 1998a).

Across North America, jurisdictional conflicts over teacher education policies continued to engage federal, state and provincial regulatory bodies, colleges of education, school boards, teachers unions, and school-based parent associations or councils (Fullan et al. 1990; Leithwood, 2004; Stead, 1998b). Of particular concern were the sometimes polarizing tensions arising from increasingly rigid and stringent funding policies (Bell, Adelman, and Bonilla-Silva, 2004; Rae, 2005), the rising costs of teacher training programs (Camarrota, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Feagin, 2002;), and the problem of a

predominantly white, middle class, and female teaching force that did not understand the learning characteristics of its student populations (AACTE, 2004; Grant, 1993; Irvine, 2003; Jackson, 2003). Teacher education programs in the United States were generally experiencing more stringent entry requirements and shrinking financial support for their students (Marshall, 2004). During the 80s and 90s in Canada, many provinces, including Ontario, partially offloaded the costs of teacher education by requiring newly qualified teachers to pay market entry and annual licensing fees, as well as rising union dues (McIntyre, 2002). Passing additional financial burdens onto new and experienced teachers increasingly prevents economically marginalized teachers and teacher candidates from working in public education, and rising participatory fees are only one example of the increasingly regulated and expensive market context that teachers confront in their working environments. This review will next explore contested educational policy issues arising from the needs of increasingly multicultural communities.

During the 1990s, regulatory turf wars over what kinds of research should receive funding initially diverted many educational researchers away from three growing and critically important issues: (1) the unmet needs of children from impoverished neighborhoods (Ladson-Billings, 2004), (2) mounting diversity within school aged populations (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Lee, 2004), and (3) the extent to which teachers were becoming less and less representative of their student populations (Lieberman, 2004; UNESCO, 2000). Some progress has been made in these areas despite ongoing disagreement over the role and function of teacher education. Resistance toward deregulation is an example (Portelli, 2004). Conflicting tensions have thrown up barriers within pre-service programs that attenuate efforts to establish and implement pro-equity policies (Cochran-Smith, 2004, 118). For example, reliance on standardized tests constitutes a widespread threat to equity because their results are culturally biased, poor predictors of ongoing teacher success (Portelli, 2001; Solomon, 2000, 2004), and unlikely to produce teacher diversity (Guy-Sheftall, 2005, Rosser, 2005).

Many funding organizations, professional research associations, and teacher education programs now include diversity among their policy goals. Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) recently funded research at postsecondary and research institutions aimed at expanding cultural, ethnic, racial and religious diversity (SSHRC, 2004). America's Spencer Foundation, in its commitment to a more just and prosperous society, now supports projects that "enhance educational opportunities for all people" in an attempt to redress the inequities of "law and government, markets and property rights, practices and patterns of racial and gender inequality, and ... deep inequalities in family circumstances and social environments" (Spencer, 2005). This year, the American Educational Research Association (AERA) launched a doctoral fellowships program for several groups of students who have been historically underrepresented in higher education [e.g., African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives (Eskimo or Aleut), Native Pacific Islanders, Filipino Americans, Mexican Americans, and Puerto Ricans] (AERA, 2005). The Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) is also committed to research "reflective of the socio-cultural diversity of Canada" in all of its internal organizations and external partnerships (CSSE, 2005). CSSE supports research attempts to address increasingly complex



teaching environments, growing demands on teachers arising from mounting urban poverty and the violence that it breeds, the educational needs of increasingly multinational but unsupported immigrant populations, and the accelerating numbers of pupils who lack fluency in their school's principal language of instruction. In step with such broad concern over the educational needs of expanding multiculturalism, admissions policies designed to diversify teacher education candidate cohorts are also becoming more prominent.

Thus North America's increasing trend toward diversification of the teacher workforce promises to change the ways in which teachers are recruited and may have a positive impact on learning opportunities for traditionally marginalized children and adolescents. In terms of my research, the availability of multiple pro-diversity pre-service programs provides a framework within which to examine admissions policy and implementation. The next section will review some of the theories underpinning their development.

### *Contemporary Developments within Pre-service Admissions Policy*

A growing body of literature on diversity is now emerging to address teacher preparation, pre program access, and curriculum design in hopes of making pedagogies, teaching materials, and internship experiences more inclusive of traditionally marginalized individuals. There is also movement within the academy toward the active recruitment, preparation, and sustenance of diverse faculty and teacher candidates within colleges of education (AACTE, 2004; AASCU, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 1990b; Fullan, 1990, 1998; Holmes, 1995; Kosnik et al. 2003; Wenglinsky, 2004). Brosio (1998) was among those advocating regulatory reform to eliminate "anti-reproductive schooling". He called for policy in which school funding would match student need, and in which access to programs of teacher education would proportionally reflect diverse candidate interest (Darling-Hammond, 1993, 1995; Oakes, 1995, 2004). Hirsch, Koppich, and Knapp (1998) clearly articulate the need for a diversified pool of teacher education candidates.

Not only do students in poor schools face a tough climb out of poverty, they often face it with teachers who are the least well prepared academically. Thus, the real issues surrounding teacher supply and demand are not so much about quantity as they are about quality, distribution, and equity (1998, 11).

By the 1990s, and within increasingly multicultural, multiethnic, and impoverished populations, the struggle to equitably advantage all students gained greater prominence, and calls were made for adjustments to admissions policies for teacher education programs (Beckum, 1992; Gomez, 1996; Shaw, 1997). Program structures, including admissions policies, curricular construction, and candidate assessment practices began to reflect a growing interest in the merits of teacher diversity (Beckum, 1992; Darling-

Hammond, 1995). However, a backlash quickly materialized in the warning that increased student teacher diversity might reduce overall program quality (Altbach, 1994; Gerada and Stead, 2005; Sleeter, 1995a, 1995b; Stead, 2005a, 2005b).

Yet despite calls for admissions reform, and notwithstanding the presence of increasingly heterogeneous school populations (Thiessen, 2000; Trent, 1990), many North American educational systems still favor policies, curricula, and pedagogies that advantage applicants with predominantly white Western European backgrounds. Accordingly, most faculties of education reproduce the same classified, racialized, gendered, and lifestyle tensions that are exemplary of society at large (Cochran-Smith, 2004, 2005; Ryan, 1993, 2003, Rashid, 2004; Zeichner, 1991, 2005). James and Cherry Banks (2003) stand prominent among those who advocate the disruption of such ethnically unjust re/productive patterns by staffing schools with teachers whose demographics and life experiences mirror those of the communities in which they teach. Proportional representation is one of several strategies projected to create educational opportunities for all students, including those who are poor, non-White, female, and queer (Banks, 1995; Dickson, 1994; Kezar, 1999; Klein, 1985; Klein, forthcoming; Marshall, 2004; McMurtry, 1991; Ovando, 2004; Pinar, 1998; Sadker and Sadker, 1994).

Visionary justice-oriented educators specifically advocate the creation of a more diverse teaching population (Banks, 2003, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 1995; Oakes, 1995), arguing that multicultural societies require teacher education policies that seeks “to address the learning needs of all children, youth, and adults, [and] with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion” (UNESCO, 1994, 2000). Because many pre-service programs continue to relay exclusionary social values, they reproduce school cultures teeming with exclusionary inequities and tensions (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Marshall, 2004; Solomon, 1997; Stalker, 1998). However, there is a growing trend toward the strategic diversification of teacher candidate cohorts.

Feiman-Nemser places similar emphasis on personal orientation and self-understanding as prerequisites for effective teaching, and as exemplary praxis, she cites the admissions policy at Bank Street College. It encourages applications from those “who demonstrate sensitivity to others, flexibility, self-awareness, and a willingness and capacity to engage in self-reflection” (1990a, 3-6). Feiman-Nemser advocates supporting teachers who “view their work against the backdrop of world events and conditions and regard community involvement and leadership as a professional responsibility” (1990a, 6).

At Teachers College, Columbia University, such conditions of community are central to the mission statement. “The College's commitment to diversity continues to be reflected today in its diverse student body.... 13 percent of Teachers College students are international students, 12 percent are African-American, 11 percent are Asian American, and 7 percent are Latino/a” (Teachers College, 2005). Along the same lines, the NEA (2004) is proposing revisions to the NCLB that clearly spell out diversity as a critical element in developing a “highly-qualified” teacher workforce, in identifying and eliminating the obstacles faced by minority teachers in passing entry tests, and in developing programs that support teachers of color, both in the pipeline and in the classroom. In support of equitable school staffing, the American Association

of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) reports that “some state legislatures have developed ... programs to recruit minority teachers, and some actions to support pension portability” (2004). Some other colleges of education have also developed admissions policies that strategically diversify their teacher candidate cohorts. These include the Bank Street College Graduate School of Education, UCLA’s Center X, the Lynch School of Education at Boston College, the Teacher Education Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Faculty of Education at York University (Toronto, Canada), and OISE/University of Toronto.

Several teacher education faculties now have program missions and/or admissions policy criteria that combine “a progressive social vision with a radical critique of schooling” (Feiman-Nemser, 1990a, 5). For example, the University of British Columbia cites, among its development goals, a commitment to increasing student diversity (UBC, 2005), and Iowa State University is committed to “developing and implementing a program of non discrimination and affirmative action” (ISU, 2005). A broadening sense of responsibility is expressed by York University’s promise to promote “pedagogical practices, curriculum materials and school structures that address issues relating to race, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation and disability” (York, 2005), and the Faculty of Education at McGill University endorses the philosophy that (1) “teachers with diverse backgrounds should be available to the community”, and that (2) “faculty programs be equally open to male and female applicants” (McGill, 2005). Strong zeal with regard to equitable admissions practice is embodied in Carnegie Mellon University’s Statement of Assurance to teacher education candidates:

Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) does not discriminate and ... is required not to discriminate in admissions ... on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap” as required by law, ... or “on the basis of religion, creed, ancestry, belief, age, veteran status, or sexual orientation”. Additionally, “in the judgment of the CMU Relations Commission, the (US) Department of Defense policy of, “Don’t ask, don’t tell, don’t pursue,” excludes openly gay, lesbian and bisexual students from receiving ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) scholarships ... (CMU, 2005).

These issues of educational philosophy, admissions policy structure, and the potential equity of the implementation process, suggest opportunities for the exploration of how pro-diversity admissions policies potentially serve the learning needs of all students. For example, by enabling pre-service student candidates to develop collegial relationships with individuals from diverse inheritances and life experiences, their understanding about the impact of culture and society may be enhanced. They may also have to opportunity to hone their communication skills, enhancing the inclusivity of their language and learning strategies for de-escalating conflict and instances of exclusionary behaviour.

### ***Complications Arising from Policy Implementation***

Of major concern is the impact of institutional biases on the ways in which new policy may be interpreted (Mitchell and Kerchner, 1983; Stalker and Prentice, 1998). When participants hold a variety of different values and perspectives, they may threaten the status quo and inadvertently create barriers to the implementation of a policy which they support (Kosnik, Brown, and Beck, 2003; Wallin, 2001). An ongoing balance among human and financial resources is also essential for the long term implementation of educational change (Fullan, 1998, 2001). Because policy implementation within programs of pre-service varies widely from site to site, many factors are at play (AASCU, 2004; Benedict, 2004; Fieman-Nemser, 1990a, 1990b; Smylie and Miretzky, 2004; Thiessen, 2000). These include how the senior admissions coordinator is positioned within the administration, how many permanent and part-time staff are available to support the process and provide year to year continuity, and what kinds of training accompany policy changes. Within this professional or quasi-professional context of policy implementation, the process of decision-making is of particular importance (Jones, 1998; Kezar, 1999; Sullivan, 2004). Sometimes, untrained clerical staff are responsible for accepting or rejecting applications on the strength of highly nuanced information that might be interpreted quite differently by an admissions officer with more experience, training, or sensitivity to policy changes.

Pre-service policy implementation is also subject to tensions arising from conflicting educational goals among competing levels of government. Given a climate of shrinking per capital educational budgets, the dissonance created by conflicting goals across multiple layers of educational policy forces policy implementers to set priorities that do not meet the needs of all stakeholders (Leithwood, Allison, Drake, Laveault, McElheron-Hopkins, Wideman, and Zederayko, 2004). Educational researchers state that organizational culture, power concentration, and perceived access to funding all determine how educational policies are set, and how much time is allocated for their introduction. Another source of fractured policy implementation, particularly in poorer jurisdictions where students' needs are very great and teachers are often uncertified, is the labor-management relationship. Administration, whether at the state or system level, are often expected to achieve conflicting goals, such as minimizing conflict with labor groups while increasing student learning. Pressures to favorably evaluate teacher performance often result in rewarding teachers for "maintenance of effort rather than appropriateness of service," and in rewarding administrators for adherence to guidelines rather than reflective responses to the changing needs of students and teachers (Mitchell and Kerchner, 1983; Stead, 1997b). In conceptualizing new policy, theoreticians continue to critically analyze forces that enable reform policies to be implemented *as intended*, in addition to those that intentionally or inadvertently redirect the realization process (Lyons, 2004a).

### ***Contextualizing Experiences within the Admissions Process***

Levin (2003) situates education policy within ethno-cultural and institutional power structures. This perspective highlights the complexity of designing and implementing a pre-service admissions

process, and acknowledges the potential for ambiguities within pre-service candidates' experiences. Casey (2005) states that admissions policies do not always harmonize with institutional mission statements nor with stated educational goals. This may well be a direct outcome of the highly contested micro-political, economic, and social dynamics of marginalization (Kosnik, Brown, and Beck, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Sternberg, 2005). Using notions of socially constructed identity to extract meaning from the literature on marginalization (van Maanen, 1988), I have come to the conclusion that teacher candidates may experience social privilege or social disadvantage according to multiple reference sets or characteristics of personal identity. These include class/caste, indigenous status, age (Agecutay, 2005; Albelda and Tilly, 1997; Anyon, 1997; Sarsfield, 2005); ethnicities, English fluency, English accent (Chambers, 2005; Ryan 1999, 2003); body image, skin colour, physical and mental health, dis/abilities (Banks, 2004; Brown, 1998; Collins, 2005; Dei, 2005b; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Mahrouse, 2001; Villegas, 2004); sex, gender, sexual orientation/two spiritedness (Bach, 2004; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, 1986; Connell, 1996; Goldstein, 2005; Herek and Berrill, 1992; McCaskell, 2005; Patai, 1998); birthplace, residence, citizenships (Elliston, 2005; Lewis, 2005); faith, religion, spirituality (Lewis, 2005; Robinson, 2000); and leadership potential (as a function of intellect, life experiences, education, and community work) (Anderson, 1998; Bascia, 1994, 1998, 2000b; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Lee, 2004; Pal, 1997; Portelli, 2001, 2004).

Within each of these reference sets, there exist culturally determined power hierarchies that influence the ways in which individuals construct their own identities, how they might perceive themselves in relation to others, and how others might understand them (Dei, 2002, 2005; Futrell, 2004). For example, young adults from middle and upper class families tend to see themselves as more acceptable as teacher candidates than their counterparts from lower-middle, working class, and unemployed family units (Kosnik et al, 2003). The way in which an individual applicant is ultimately privileged or disadvantaged within society, is a compound and fluid effect of the various hierarchical positions occupied by that individual, and a potential indicator of admissions success. To fully understand the admissions process, it is necessary to consider the ways in which an institution designs and markets its admissions package, how it defines and supports the roles of key admissions personnel, the specific values and attitudes that these individuals bring to bear during the admissions process, and the ways in which applicants' documents are subjected to nuanced interpretations during the multiple stages of the admissions cycle (Anderson, 1998; Lee, 2004).

### ***The Admission Process as an Instance of Privilege***

Within the broader category of educational admissions processes are specific instances that encourage applicants to self-identify as members of minority groups. But how might these policies play out relative to (a) candidate experience and (b) the actual re/distribution and diversification of privilege in terms of admissions offers? To answer this question we could consider the admissions process as a cycle of events that privileges individual applicants in different ways along a spectrum of experiences that ranges from easy to impossible. Bryson (1995) depicts these interactions as stages of dis/empowerment. Each step within the admissions process impacts applicants according to their own self-interpreted and externally-

determined identities, as well as by their ability to provide proof of professional potential. Common among the knowledge, skills, and artefacts necessary for admissions include awareness of one's admissions potential, access to admissions material, a cover letter, a bio-data form, academic transcripts/licenses, letters of reference, standardized test results, a statement of teaching philosophy, descriptions of prior teaching-relevant experiences, proof of English literacy and oracy, a personal interview, and proof of literacy in Information and Computer Technology (ICT) (Bank Street College, 2005; Center X, 2005; Lynch School of Education, 2005; OISE/UT, 2004, 2005; University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2003; York University, 2004; Zeichner, 2005).

Attitudes toward the use of biographic application forms have recently diverged over the moral and legal appropriateness of asking applicants to self-identify as members of a minority group. Many programs with explicitly pro-diversity admissions policies use documents that offer applicants the option of self-identifying according to categories that include gender, body image, ethnic group, nationality, religion, age, and ability. Two fundamental questions arising from this practice are: (1) whether and how it might be to an applicant's advantage to disclose minority group status, and (2) whether and under what circumstances applicants might be able to predetermine such dis/advantages. The requirement to document prior teacher-relevant experience is also becoming increasingly contested, in part because it is inseparable from personal opinion about what constitutes desirable teacher attitudes, teacher knowledge, and teacher skills (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). Traditionally acceptable criteria in these categories have been leadership or instructional experiences with "age appropriate" children (Kosnik, 2003). But what is not apparent, even within many of the guidelines that accompany admissions packages, are the possible ramifications of citing non-traditional teacher-relevant work. What makes these kinds of disclosures potentially damaging is the degree to which they reinforce or threaten both institutional culture and the identities of those who assess applicant profiles (Bell, 2004).

Although infrequently used, the personal interview is by far the least quantifiable and most subjective measure used to evaluate pre-service applicants. However, some of the teacher education programs that include interviews in their application process, such as Bank Street College (2005), count among their graduates an unusually high percentage of long term, highly esteemed career teachers. Is this mere coincidence? Is there a positive correlation between interviewing applicants and graduating uncommonly high numbers of successful teachers, or is the answer a more complex interplay among those responsible for policy implementation? A final consideration here is the *relative weighting* of specific materials within an admissions process is critically important because it reflects the degree of preference given to specific types of information (Zeichner, 1991). For example, standardized test results are often challenged as being invalid indicators of minority student performance (England, 2005; Grant, 2005; King, 2005; William, 2005), so if they are given significant weight during candidate assessment, teacher cohort diversification will not occur. Statements of teaching philosophy and descriptions of prior teaching-relevant experiences are considered to be less marginalizing (Byrnes, Kiger, and Shechtman, 2000; Caskey, Peterson, and Temple, 2001; Smith and Pratt, 1996). Because admissions materials privilege applicant

information in different ways, the decision to *include* or *exclude* specific materials reflects institutional attitudes toward diversity (Bell, 2004). In another example, the exclusive online publication of admissions material precludes applications from potential candidates who are not technologically fluent. Consideration of applicant bio-data forms, teaching philosophy, and prior teaching-relevant experiences also enable the (re)production of assessment methods that expose some applicants to marginalizing practices (Brown, d'Emidio-Caston, and Benard, 2001).

Collectively, these 12 events within the admissions process can be considered instances of “interactional conventions” (Ryan, 2003, 6) within personal, systemic, rational, political, and cultural models that directly impact applicants’ likelihood of acceptance (Foster, 1986). They may also embody meaningless quantification that oversimplifies the complexity of this set of events (Turk, 2005). Other critical dimensions of the admissions process include the sequencing and evaluation of admissions materials and procedures. However, very little information is available about how admissions materials are designed and evaluated. It is also unclear what procedures are in place to evaluate congruence between admissions policy objectives and actual outcomes (Casey, 2005), though this in no way diminishes the very real need to increase teacher diversity.

### ***Replacing the Gatekeepers***

As important as applicants’ identities and the contents of an admissions package, are the personnel who supervise and often engage directly in applicant assessment (Cathro, 1996; Conference Board of Canada, 2003; Spillane, 2004; Friedman, 2005). Their personal values, literacies, and ethno-cultural perspectives complicate the assessment process and sway the outcomes of pro-diversity admissions policies (Smylie, Miretzky, and Konkol, 2004; Stead, 2005c). Sometimes admissions personnel are required to take training courses, particularly at institutions where the annual admissions process depends on volunteer recruitment (Cathro, 1996; Fenwick, 2004). However, little is known about the skills of the course instructors, the quality of the curricula, the number of training hours and the extent to which participation is mandatory, supervised, or compensated (van den Berg, 2005). All of these factors combine in complex ways to determine how individual applicants will be judged (Bransford, Brown, and Cocking, 2000; Furtrell and Heddesheimer, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2001) and to support the urgent case in favour of admission policy that will diversify our teaching force.

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