

## **The Academic and Cultural Support Centre (ACSC) at OISE/UT**

### **Services tailored to the needs of Internationally Educated Teacher Candidates (IETCs)**

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

The Academic and Cultural Support Centre. It's a centre that's open to all students, graduate and undergraduate. And those students may be speakers of English as a first language or they may be English language learners themselves. And in that centre we've developed a range of ways of supporting our candidates who have been educated elsewhere. And when we use the term Internationally Educated Teacher Candidate, we're referring to two different groups. On the one hand, it may be a teacher from a country like India who in fact has taught as a teacher somewhere in India for a number of years, and who arrives in Canada and finds out that because they don't have a degree in education that they in fact must complete a Bachelor's degree in order to be able to teach in our kindergarten through grade 12 schools. But we also have a group that we refer to as internationally educated who basically have spent most of their lives learning in a country other than Canada and part of the group that you'll hear from a little later during a panel are a cross-section of these groups.

### **The ACSC offers a broad range of services for all teacher candidates**

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

One great resource for internationally educated teacher candidates that OISE started over the last couple of years is the Academic Cultural and Support Centre that offers writing and oral proficiency support for internationally educated candidates and we can sort of have one on one appointments with you and give you advice and feedback on your writing. Sort of helping you improve your writing and also your oral communication skills, lesson preparation, resume, cover letter preparation and those sorts of things. So that is an area I'd highly recommend.

### **A support system**

#### **Tara – An IETC**

I was lucky enough to meet Ms. Antoinette Gagné and her team on the orientation day and I decided to take advantage of the support. And I think it was not only that the support helped me in my language skills but it's very important if you know that there is a team working in the university who are going to support you morally if one day you really need help, and I think most of the time, I always thought that if something happens, there is a team that I can go back

and ask them for help; I think morally and psychologically that helped me a lot to know that there is someone there for you in case something happens and you have a problem.

### **Support during the practicum**

#### **Sergio – an IETC**

What I value from that program the most was my first practicum because, how can I say, it was a challenging experience to me. I had, as a colleague of mine would say, a conflict of personalities with my associate teacher and I had a very valuable assistance from my regular instructors.

However, I see that it was the Academic and Support program who made the difference because maybe because they are made by people who were from outside of the (unclear) that would make them realize of things: people who were brought up here would not see us easily.

### **Help with writing in English**

#### **Tara – An IETC**

And I have to admit that OISE have 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 improve your English, not just editing your assignments. And 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.

### **Mentors are important**

#### **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.

### **Help to Improve my English**

#### **Maggie – An IETC**

But 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.

### **Help with assignments**

#### **Maggie – An IETC**

Actually, I really like ACSC; it really helped me a lot with my assignments, and resume, cover letter.

### **Email and telephone appointments**

#### **Tara – An IETC**

They have an e-mail service or a telephone service because I commute from Mississauga, I could simply e-mail them my assignments or have a telephone conversation with them and they would give me feedback.

#### **Maggie – An IETC**

I find the ACSC very helpful in helping teacher candidates like me.

### **The Pre-field Experience Program for Internationally Educated Teacher Candidates (PREP)**

#### **Clyde – An IETC**

The PREP program, I feel privileged to be a part of it.

### **Good preparation for the first practicum**

#### **Maggie – An IETC**

Because I joined the PREP internship. It really helped me, 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 helped me grow as a teacher****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 provided me with a broader 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 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.

**PREP helped to build my confidence****Clyde – An IETC**

I don't think that anything could stop me after that. I don't know. I got this confidence.

## **ACADEMIC and CULTURAL SUPPORT CENTRE (ACSC)**

### **FOR**

OISE/UT Initial Teacher Education & Graduate students

### **WHAT**

Academic Writing Language & cultural communication support CVs & cover letters

### **Where**

In Person consultation: Rm. 8-255 student services

Email consultation: [acsc@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:acsc@oise.utoronto.ca)

Phone consultation: 416-923-6641 x8200