

Assessing the Preparedness of Teachers for Their Role in an Inclusive Classroom: Photo-Voice as a Reflexive Tool

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Abstract : Photo-voice is a participatory method through which participants identify and represent their lived experiences and contexts through the use of photo imagery. Photo-voice is a qualitative research method that explores individuals' lived experiences. This method is known as a creative art form to help researchers listen to the 'voice' of a certain population. A teacher educator at Thompson Rivers University, responsible for preparing new teachers for the demands of the profession in an ever-changing demographic, utilized the Photo-voice method to enable a self-study of emerging teachers' readiness for the inclusive classroom. Coding analysis was applied to 96 Photo-voice portfolios, which were created over two years with the Inclusive Education course work, in a Bachelor of Education program (Elementary). Coding utilized students' written associations to their visual images, anecdotes attached to visual metaphors, and personal narratives that illustrated the professional development process in which they were engaged. Thematic findings include: 1) becoming an inclusive educator is a process; 2) one must be open to identifying and exploring their fear and biases, and 3) an attitudinal shift enables relevant skill acquisition and readiness for working with diverse student needs.

Keywords : teacher education, inclusive education, professional development, Photo-voice

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