

The Role of Teacher Candidates' Beliefs in Their Development of Inclusive Teaching Practices

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Abstract : This study explores the transformation of teacher candidates' beliefs regarding inclusion and inclusive teaching practices during their instructional and practicum experiences in the Canadian context. With the increasing diversity of schools, the study investigates how teacher candidates' beliefs impact their implementation of inclusive teaching practices, which are essential for meeting diverse student needs. The research examines the influence of teacher education programs, transformative learning experiences, and inclusive practicum placements on teacher candidates' beliefs about inclusion. Using a multiple case study approach, the study assesses teacher candidates' initial beliefs, documents changes in these beliefs after coursework on inclusion, and explores the supports and constraints affecting belief development in both university and practicum settings. Preliminary findings suggest that teacher candidates generally hold positive beliefs about inclusion at the outset of their teacher education programs. However, coursework and practicum experiences significantly shape their understanding of diversity, strategies for inclusion, and awareness of broader social issues related to inclusive classrooms. The research underscores the critical role of teacher education programs in shaping teacher candidates' beliefs about inclusion and highlights the value of transformative learning experiences and inclusive practicum placements in enhancing their understanding of equity and inclusion. Continued research is necessary to identify specific elements within courses and practicum experiences that promote positive beliefs about inclusive teaching practices, ultimately contributing to the creation of more equitable classrooms and improved student outcomes.

Keywords : inclusion, beliefs, teacher candidates, inclusive teaching practices

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