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Pre-Service Teacher Dispositions

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PRE-SERVICE TEACHER DISPOSITIONS

being

A Field Study Presented to the Graduate Faculty

of the Fort Hays State University in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of Education Specialist

by

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to discover what other universities are doing to address pre-service teacher dispositions. Many universities have utilized assessment tools and policies directed toward student dispositions which can be very useful for institutions who have not yet begun the process of evaluating disposition traits in their candidates. This analysis can be most beneficial to departments and colleges who are looking for research based practices during their own implementation phases of policy creation geared toward assessment of pre-service teacher dispositions.

The research will be most useful for any educator working with pre-service teachers. This data can be used as one component within educational programs to help candidates become the most effective teachers possible. Further, all educators can benefit from this study by recognizing both positive and negative dispositions in their own instruction with students. This can be a powerful self-reflection strategy to support any teacher's professional development.

The literature research will identify that many institutions are already using student disposition characteristics as a powerful instructional tool when preparing candidates for the profession. Further, the literature suggests two key components that will be of focus within the review and used to bolster the reasoning behind the study. First, this will validate the analysis of what dispositions are and how they are understood, while supporting the need for disposition evaluation. Second, the literature will identify the premise that dispositions are difficult to assess because of the fact that pre-service

teacher dispositions are rather subjective in nature.

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INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies on student dispositions have become increasingly relevant in today's educational community as accountability based accreditation benchmarks are being scrutinized. Before an analysis of the literature review, it is pertinent to incorporate a brief overview of what pre-service teacher dispositions are. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has clearly defined professional dispositions for all teacher candidates in three categories. First, the target characteristics defined by NCATE are included in the following statement:

> Candidates work with students, families, colleagues, and communities in ways that reflect the professional dispositions expected of professional educators as delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards. Candidates demonstrate classroom behaviors that create caring and supportive learning environments and encourage self-directed learning by all students. Candidates recognize when their own professional dispositions may need to be adjusted and are able to develop plans to do so.

The remaining two categories defined by NCATE include acceptable and unacceptable characteristics of professional candidates to lessening degrees of the traits that candidates exemplify. The first section of the literature review will support the fact that dispositions for pre-service teachers are universally defined and accepted, as noted above by NCATE. The literature clearly defines the role of pre-service teacher

dispositions on a broader, more general scope, by supporting the need for disposition evaluation. It is how these traits are assessed and utilized in the evaluation of a teacher's ability to teach effectively which is of primary concern, and addressed in section two of the literature review.

Before analyzing data, it is necessary to look at student dispositions as they are defined in educational context. Predominant pre-service teacher dispositions are grouped in the following categories and based on commonalities in all research:

1. The candidate is respectful of student differences. This includes knowledge of educational strategies which support the differences of all students and bolsters the educational and cultural traditions of all students in a global society.

2. The candidate identifies the need for and exemplifies the actions of professional educators in their desire for professional development. The prevailing trait identified here is the candidate's self-reflecting ability that motivates oneself to learn from his/her mistakes and make the necessary adjustments in ongoing remediation through professional development.

3. The candidate assumes professional education roles in areas such as attire, preparation, organization, punctuality, appropriate language usage, communication skills, and interpersonal relationships.

4. The candidate advocates, models, and teaches safe, legal and ethical uses of digital information and technology. Increased attention has been given to cyber-bullying and inappropriate usage of social media.

5. The candidate understands and exemplifies dispositions toward practice and implementation of education pedagogy. This includes the candidate's ability to teach the content to others.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The amount of literature pertaining to student dispositions is immense. The first section of the literature review is based on the validity for the need of the study. The second section will look at the difficulty educators face as it relates to disposition identification, definition, and evaluation. There is little emphasis however, on what is actually being done by universities in that regard. The study conducted with those universities is most beneficial in that assessment, and can be found in the tables following the study.

Validating the Need for Disposition Assessment

There are many references in state and national standards dedicated to the importance of pre-service teacher dispositions. Wilkerson and Lang (2006) note specifically that, "NCATE requires the measurement of knowledge, skills, and dispositions as part of its accreditation requirements for teacher education programs (Standard 1) and the use of unit assessment systems to aggregate and analyze data with a view toward program improvement (Standard 2)." While the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is fully committed to the pursuit of accrediting institutions following their lead, many states still do not include dispositions as part of their accreditation standards. This is important because it reinforces the premise that institutions need to consider dispositions as part of their pre-service teacher assessment due to the fact that state and national standards specify the need. It also suggests the difficulty many institutions will face because of the fact that not all states are

following the nation's lead in this area. Hillman, Rothermel, and Scarano (2006) reiterate what Wilkerson and Lang (2006) stated by reinforcing the direction that teacher education programs must go in order to meet accrediting standards. Their statement that, teacher dispositions are a "central force in shaping the environment in which schooling takes place" is most appropriate because it is yet another example of the educational community's belief that dispositions do indeed play an integral part in the educational process for our pre-service teachers (Hillman et al., 2006).

In a study conducted by Ignico and Gammon (2009) from Ball State University, prospective teachers were surveyed regarding dispositions as they relate to teacher preparation. The validity for the study was based on the realization and awareness that professional dispositions coexist with preexisting knowledge and skill performance as primary indicators of a candidate's readiness for the profession (Ignico & Gammon, 2009). Once again this reinforces the need to assess pre-service teacher dispositions within teacher preparation programs because even the candidates themselves are indicating that it is a necessary component to their readiness in the field.

Ros-Voseles and Moss (2007) go even further into this discussion of candidate readiness by pointing out the ethical responsibility that educators have in the identification and assessment of such dispositions. They argue, "since effective teachers possess dispositions that foster children's growth and learning, it is clear that teacher education programs have an ethical responsibility to prepare candidates who appear to possess dispositions necessary to support children's learning." This is the one instance in the literature where an "ethical" criteria was indicated as another supporting factor in the

need for assessing student dispositions, yet it is continually reinforced in the literature through different avenues.

This analysis points toward two key components noteworthy of further discussion. First, Ros-Voseles and Moss (2007) indicate that it is effective teachers who first exemplify the positive dispositions which are modeled through their instruction. While effective teachers have a responsibility to model the teaching techniques they want from their students it is even more evident when assessing dispositions because characteristics such as attire, hygiene, diction, mannerisms, and poise are not as easy to assess. This provides a unique dilemma for faculty to contemplate when evaluating the readiness of teacher candidates because ethics, hygiene, mannerisms, and other subjective data points are open to a wide array of interpretations, yet the need for such analysis is again supported.

Second, Ros-Voseles and Moss (2007) indicate that it is the ethical responsibility of teacher educators to prepare candidates who are fully developed and legitimately ready for the profession using both pedagogy and dispositions. Johnson and Reiman (2007) further support this by indicating the need for assessing teacher candidates both quantitatively and qualitatively in order to observe patterns between candidate judgment and action. These are more examples that validate the need to assess pre-service teacher dispositions in the preparation of candidates for successful teaching careers.

The type of assessment, however, contributes to the difficulty discussed in the next section but once again supports the need. Minimum competency exams are not enough according to Goodman, Arbona, and Rameriz (2008). They indicate that

standardized teacher examinations such as the Principles of Teaching (PLT), Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST), and National Teachers Exam (NTE) "rely primarily on assessment of knowledge and as such, are not a particularly valid means of assessing teacher competence." Goodman, Arbona and Rameriz (2008) specify that a more authentic assessment of teacher readiness is needed in order to identify dispositions harmful to the candidate. "If these test results (standardized tests) are not valid with respect to evaluating teacher candidates, they create the potential for individuals to be certified who really do not exhibit competence in authentic settings" (Goodman et al., 2008). Villegas (2007) specifies that we must examine patterns of behaviors and actions in our candidates which would provide the more authentic type of assessment that Goodman et al.'s describe. This discussion of assessment is important because it not only bolsters the fact that the literature supports assessment of per-service teacher dispositions but it also reinforces the need for the study in regard to what other institutions are doing to assess dispositions of candidates outside of the realm of standardized teacher examinations.

However, this points toward another necessary discussion about assessment. Should candidates be observed and evaluated in those patterns of behavior before they are even instructed by our professional educators about the proper behaviors that the teaching professionals know they should possess? Villegas (2007) from Montclair State University says no, that dispositions cannot be assessed at the entry point to the teacher education program, rather they should be assessed over time.

In a longitudinal study performed by Ball state professors, Ignico and Gammon (2009), scores in self-evaluation assessments of candidate dispositions were considerably higher at the beginning of their program of study than they were toward the end of their program as a result of critical self reflection of professional behaviors after they were taught. Dietz (2007) firmly believes that development and maturation optimally occurs over time as learning experiences and proper mentoring take place in the appropriate educational time-frame. This results in candidates being able to learn proper knowledge and skills as the connections between what they believe and what they are taught are fused. Dietz (2007) comments, "over time, building knowledge and understanding and honing skills to interact effectively, candidates can leave programs with a change in disposition." He argues that when teacher educators begin to model the appropriate dispositions for their students "they are beginning the process of transforming teacher education from a collection of courses to a developmental growth process" (Dietz, 2007).

While there is continued controversy as to when assessments should take place within the educational career of the students, it is once again further validation that it is a necessary component for the teacher preparation programs. The fact that these discussions continually surface in the literature indicates that the acquisition of university data is a key component to the understanding of current practices in the educational community.

Difficulty in Disposition Assessment

The second portion of the literature review will examine the "difficulty" in disposition assessment. While research supports a valid argument toward identification of

pre-service teacher dispositions and the need for assessment of those dispositions, what is not clear is how to assess and instruct candidates toward improvement. Darling-Hammond, Chung, and Frelow (2002) point out that a "teacher's sense of preparedness and sense of self-efficacy seem related to their feelings about teaching and their plans to stay in the profession." In their analysis, they state that candidates' sense of ability is directly related to their stress levels on the job. This dramatically impacts the attrition rates from the profession. While a candidate's self-efficacy correlates directly with proper pedagogical experiences through mentor coaching and verbal persuasion, it is evident that if those techniques do not increase the candidate's sense of ability, then the chance of failure on the job is heightened (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). This is concrete data which indicates the difficulty teacher preparation programs have in the analysis and remediation of uncharacteristic dispositional traits because it directly affects the success of the pre-service teacher candidates and their sense of ability.

In the study conducted by Ignico and Gammon (2009) on professional dispositions of teacher candidates, they reiterate the difficulty with disposition assessment by saying, "of great concern and scrutiny are the specifics of 'how,' 'who,' and 'when' of dispositions." Sherman (2006) states, "the dispositions of teachers, which can be related to the moral dimensions of teaching but are not explicitly attached to technique and content knowledge, may not be assessed in compelling ways by national and state standards alone. In many instances, one must read between the lines to detect them. Kindness, fairness, honesty, patience, and empathy, for example, are some of the normative qualities one would hope to see in a prospective teacher." This statement by

Sherman (2006) from the *Teacher Education Quarterly* is highly significant because of the fact that dispositions are not clearly defined in national or state standards, therefore the direction that pre-service teacher preparation programs take toward disposition assessment is uncertain due to the lack of direction and organization at the state level.

Some states, as mentioned previously, do not have any mention of dispositions as a benchmark toward achievement at all, therefore, the difficulty continues for many institutions that desire the appropriate methodology to assess and correct undesirable dispositional traits of pre-service teacher candidates. Dietz (2007) points out that institutional programs designed to identify and correct dispositional traits are legally upheld by the courts, but it is the process of getting to the point of having a legally binding policy which is frustrating for many instructors in the institutional settings. Therefore, while the professional educators can clearly see the validity in assessing dispositions of pre-service teacher candidates, they struggle with knowing exactly how to assess the dispositions and ultimately how to correct undesirable dispositions with a policy that is enforceable and fair.

Sherman (2006) states, "teacher education programs have felt compelled to create a mountain of paperwork which includes checklists, databases, and pages of matrices that document output in terms of standard compliance. Alignment of courses, and even specific course assignments, to standards in institutions across the country has become a commonplace." Many institutions prefer not to even think about the assessment instruments because of the planning involved. This leads to an initial poor attitude toward the evaluation of dispositions and hinders appropriate planning toward those ends

(Lang, & Wilkerson, 2005). The added training, guidance, mentoring and supervision within the professional educator's realm of responsibilities is also causing frustration (Mitchell, 2005). It is clearly not a question of the importance, rather it is a dilemma in regard to taking action toward assessment, procedures, and policy.

Sherman (2006) points out that dispositions are easily questioned and more difficult to defend because of the fact that they are so subjective. While it is clear, as identified previously under the "validity" section of this study, that proper supervision of pre-service teacher candidates is necessary, "university supervisors feel compelled to document particular technical competencies, complete checklists, and match standards to fieldwork components, thus it becomes more difficult for them to pay close attention to the interactions between teacher and candidates and students." This situation leads to the continued difficulty. While university supervisors want to see change and growth in our candidates, it is the process of getting to an effective methodology which counteracts the necessity (Neumann, 2010). The study which follows is an integral component toward beginning the difficult process that many institutions face.

SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

Described within the literate are two components that are worth continued emphasis. First, the **validity** for the study, and secondly the **difficulty** of implementation of assessment and remediation tools once dispositions are identified. There is a plentiful amount of research that indicates a credible understanding of what pre-service teacher dispositions are and how they are defined. The data, both qualitatively and quantitatively gathered from various universities and educational professionals clearly validate this principle. The other factor identified in the research however, was the amount of data from the same educational community which also identifies the issue of what to do with that knowledge once acquired. This research clearly underlines the difficulty with disposition assessment. Several questions emerge. How are the pre-service teacher dispositions identified? When should they be identified? How and when they should be evaluated? Should remediation plans be utilized in order to help correct undesirable dispositions? What measures are given to remove candidates from programs who do not show growth over time? Are the policies supporting such action legally binding? Numerous candidates, who possess undesirable dispositions, ultimately continue through education programs and graduate with teaching licenses. In many instances, a change in university program structuring is needed to bolster a movement toward policy implementation that will address these questions.

The analysis of this literature reveals numerous points of emphasis. First, dispositional traits are just as important to the profession as the content knowledge addressed in program coursework. For example, if a pre-service teacher candidate

continually shows up to class on time and always dresses for the profession, we can utilize this partial data to help determine whether or not the candidate will become a successful teacher. On the other hand, if a candidate speaks to his or her college instructors and peers with inappropriate language and diction, we can once again utilize this disposition data to analyze the future success of the student in the profession. Hence, the literature analyzed within this study points toward the information already embraced by educators.

Secondly, the research indicates that professional educators do want to utilize dispositional data gathered from students to determine the success of pre-service candidates. This is important for the well-being of the students who will be taught by our future teachers. It would not be justifiable or even moral to place a nursing candidate who never shows up to class on time over the care of patients in an emergency room. Professional educators want the same standard of care given to our students. This is bolstered by accrediting boards and universities across the country.

Finally, this literature suggests that the majority of those in charge of educating our pre-service teachers do not really know how to move forward from this point. How and when do we identify dispositions? How and when do we implement remediation plans? How and when do we remove candidates who do not show progress over time? And finally, how do we make our procedures legally binding? The second portion of this study will more clearly uncover what numerous universities are doing to assess pre-service teacher dispositions.

METHODOLOGY

The second part of this field study, as mentioned previously, is a collection of data gathered from various institutions whose teacher preparation programs were ranked among the top in the country by the *US News and World Report* ranking of Best Education Schools in 2011. Further, data was gathered from other institutions across the nation based on information gathered from the National Symposium of Educator Dispositions. Finally, data was collected from key institutions in Kansas. A list of all universities sampled is in Appendix A. While not every institution was willing to participate in this research, the information gathered is a valid sample for the purposes of this study. The issue addressed in this study is what other institutions are doing to assess student dispositions within their teacher education programs. It is crucial to recognize how other institutions are defining dispositions as well as how they are evaluating those dispositions.

The methodology used in this particular study is rather simple. First, the literature review enabled a gathering of some concrete data to support the continued research. What was discovered from the first part of the literature review was that many concerns about pre-service teacher dispositions were validated in regard to assessment. Namely, a recognition that the educational community warrants the need for defining and evaluating pre-service teacher dispositions in teacher education programs. There is a large amount of data to support this analysis. In fact, national standards and state standards have bolstered this issue by including pre-service teacher dispositions in accrediting standards.

There are a couple of social considerations that validate this study as well. First, there are other public entities using dispositions as an evaluative tool when preparing professionals for the workforce. Certainly those in the medical field do just that. For example, programs that prepare candidates for professions in nursing would have a moral responsibility to ensure candidates are prepared for the profession with positive dispositions. Secondly, private organizations also use dispositions when identifying successful candidates for jobs that require close work with the public. It is certainly reasonable for a car dealership to hire salesmen who possess positive dispositions to ensure the success of the company. Therefore, teacher education programs should also graduate the most effective candidates.

While there is a plentiful amount of data and discussion of dispositions, there is little data regarding what is actually being done in the universities. Numerous states are adopting national standards directly related to pre-service teacher dispositions. While many institutions are hesitant to adopt stringent policies geared toward the removal of candidates based on dispositions, it is becoming increasingly relevant to create an awareness that dispositions can and do affect performance of candidates. Therefore, this research includes a look at institutions whose data would be meaningful in regard to pre-service teacher preparation. Top teacher education universities identified in the *US News and World Report* of Best Education Schools are found in Appendix A.

The first step in gathering information from those universities was to find contact information to their respective teacher education departments or colleges. This process involved numerous hours of searching the universities websites. As this process

progressed, phone numbers and email addresses were collected that identified the best

person to provide the data in this study. The next step in this process included making

contact with those individuals. Email was identified as the best method of contact with

those schools in order to have the necessary documentation of the communication. The

specific email used for the initial contact is found in Appendix B.

As emails were returned and data began accumulating, a clear representation of

what those universities were doing began to take shape. The information to follow will

include data from those universities. This qualitative research methodology was based on

four components of Colorado State University's research guidelines. First, this study

followed the principle that included Dynamic Systems. In other words, the data was not

straightforward to include right or wrong answers. Some information may lead to a need

for further investigation or research that takes a different direction, therefore the data and

analysis will be dynamic.

Secondly, the research was guided by Unique Case Orientation. Each piece of

information received was unique to that university. Therefore, the guiding principles and

standards in one university would not be necessarily valued or adhered to in another

university. As a result, the data collected, whether it was large collections of data or

small amounts, is unique to the person and/or institution that provided the data. This is

directly related to the next guiding principle in the research study which was Context

Sensitivity. Context Sensitivity refers to the different variables such as values or beliefs

that the university culture holds. It was necessary to acknowledge the guiding factors

that contributed to an institution's policies and procedures based on the beliefs they hold in regard to the current stage of their program development.

Finally, the last component, based on Colorado State University's research methodology, was Design Flexibility. This allows for continued research in the topic area based on questions or issues that emerge as a result of the initial research and analysis. Each institution provided data unique to their university. On the one hand, this lead to difficulty in the study because variances in the definition and assessment of pre-service teacher dispositions were vast. On the other hand, this provided a broad spectrum of data to include in the qualitative research.

FINAL ANALYSIS

It is through comprehensive analysis of the literature that it becomes fairly easy to identify what dispositions are and how they are defined. What is not as clear, however, is what to do with that information once gathered from pre-service teacher candidates. This is why planning is absolutely critical to the success and credibility of our teacher education programs. The plan proposed hereafter is three-fold. First, the development of disposition assessment tools needs to be carefully and succinctly organized within the framework of teacher education programs and utilized in each teacher preparation course. Technology should be continually enhanced for an ongoing matrix of each candidate's disposition assessment data from each course. Second, remediation plans must be embraced and enforced within the teacher education department to help weak candidates improve over time. This involves assimilation of disposition data to support the need for such action as well as ongoing counseling with the particular candidate. The individual needs of each candidate must be understood and enhanced in order for the remediation plan to be successful. Finally, the plan involves a college and university policy that binds candidates to assessment results, remediation plans, and procedures for removal from the program if necessitated. It is ultimately the responsibility of pre-service teacher educators to support and integrate this plan into their programs for the success of our candidates and well being of all students under their care.

The data revealed in the second part of the study is unique to each institution. What follows are results honed from varying amounts of information provided by individuals who participated. Data was separated by each institution within the initial

assessment. These results can be found in Appendix C. In final analysis, however, comparisons of all universities can be found in Appendix D and discussed within this section. This chart of comparisons is most beneficial for universities or other institutions looking for commonalities in data regarding pre-service teacher dispositions and what particular institutions are doing in that regard. While some institutions deferred in regard to providing assessment criteria, the final comparison will reveal common beliefs in regard to pre-service teacher dispositions definitions, how and when they should be assessed, whether or not remediation plans are used, and key terms which are found in Appendix E.

A total of 40 higher education institutions were utilized in this study. A list of those universities can be found in Appendix A. Out of those institutions, 35 were personally contacted through email. The remaining five institutions were further researched as a result of data collected in the email communications. A total of ten institutions did not respond to the inquiry and only three of the total formally declined participation.

The data separated by institution reveals numerous commonalities in regard to disposition characteristics being assessed by all universities. Some of those common features can be summarized in Table 1 of Miami University's acceptable professional behavior for pre-service teacher dispositions derived from the 2003 Code of Ethics for the Association of American Educators (I. Johnson, personal communication, September 19, 2011). While wording and style differ considerably among universities, the key terms

and disposition characteristics are the same. The key terms, found in Appendix E, identify these similarities.

Aside from these most common terms and features, some unique viewpoints from various universities can be found in Appendix C. Miami University, for example, states that candidates should make every effort to fully inform parents about children and assist families in their educational endeavors. While other institutions may define this as "family and community relations," Miami is the only that specifically mentioned the need to "assist families" in the educational endeavors of the youth (I. Johnson, personal communication, September 19, 2011). Alabama State University points out the need for candidates to be the "voices of educational and social justice" (M. Wasicsko, personal communication, September 21, 2011). While it is evident in nearly all institutions that pre-service teachers will represent the educational community in an effort to work toward educational justice, it is rarely mentioned that "social justice" be included as a companion to educational equality and justice. Potsdam University asks candidates to seek involvement in after-school activities (V. Hayes, personal communication, October 20, 2011). It is understood, however, that most institutions want similar involvement for their candidates when stating the need to foster relationships with students but Potsdam is unique in that they are the only institution to mention "after-school activities" specifically.

Finally, Asbury University makes a noteworthy statement by indicating the need for candidates to "act upon their spiritual vision and call" (V. Lowe, personal communication, September 19, 2011). Most universities refer to this characteristic as the

candidate's motivation toward success within their professional career, but it is once again specific to Asbury and the vision they have within their program.

No matter how each institution defines the pre-service teacher dispositions and characteristics, the goal is one they all share in common. The final component of this analysis, as referenced in Appendix D, is a look at the commonalities between universities. Please note that each institution did not necessarily provide information in all data fields. For example, some institutional data given indicated programs involving some sort of face to face interview of candidates, while other data collected from other universities did not reveal this information. This is not to say, however, that they do not incorporate the same methods but that the information simply was not provided.

Five major components out of the comparison data were explored because they were the most common features identified among all institutions. First was removal of candidates through counseling. Twelve institutions specifically stated that counseling of candidates was one method for correcting undesirable dispositional traits. While a handful of institutions indicated a formal process for removal of candidates through institutional policy, more institutions sought individual counseling with candidates to help correct behaviors which were not complimentary to the dispositional goals of pre-service teachers. What this method indicated was that these institutions believe dispositions can be taught and learned. In fact, the research above also supports this concept.

Second, ten institutions provided data that supported the implementation of a remediation plan for candidates who need further assistance in learning appropriate dispositional traits. Remediation plans offer the candidate the opportunity to see which areas need improvement and how they are to achieve more appropriate behaviors that lead to positive dispositions.

Next was the timeframe in which dispositions are assessed within the educational programs. Twelve institutions indicated that the disposition assessment takes place after the candidate's formal admission to the teacher education program. This is presentable for further discussion because the point at which candidates are assessed is crucial to the early identification of questionable dispositions to be addressed. There are eleven institutions that assess candidate dispositions before the formal admission to the program. Once again this connects to the literature that suggests dispositions can be taught and learned just like educational pedagogy or knowledge.

Finally, it was definitely reinforcing to find that ten of the universities integrated the pre-service teacher disposition criteria within the conceptual framework of the college entity. This verifies that dispositions of candidates are taken seriously and are included as part of the overall educational goals within the program of study. Further, the conceptual framework is based on accrediting standards and therefore subject to data collection and assessment used in analyzing the success of certain programs at the university.

As educators of pre-service teachers move forward, it is going to be important for universities to at least be aware of the role that dispositions play in the education of our

candidates. The research in this study proves that a number of top educational

institutions are already teaching and assessing educator dispositions in teacher education

programs and understand pre-service teacher dispositions to be integral components of

the success our candidates will have in the field. No other research in this study more

clearly reflects that fact than Holly Thronton's (2006) study conducted with urban, at-risk

students and high-quality teachers. She discovered the following:

> They (students) stated that they learned more from the teachers who were
>
> "teaching differently" and that these teachers helped them to understand more
>
> through questioning, acceptance of their questions, and the focus of classroom
>
> dialogue. These teachers who "acted different" "helped them more, talked to
>
> them more, let them work together, trusted them to make decisions," and
>
> "expected them to be smart." They "weren't always watching you and telling you
>
> what to do." The students felt like they learned more from these teachers and did
>
> "better for them." Interesting to us, these teachers who were different, or as the
>
> students said "better," were teaching the same lessons, using the same methods,
>
> the same curriculum, same assessments and were even on the same teaching
>
> teams. (p. 60)

Thornton's (2006) study confirms the importance that dispositions hold in the education

of our youth. Her analysis validates the fact that students are more receptive to educators

who exhibit positive dispositional traits. Thornton calls these traits Responsive

Dispositions that are critical, challenging, facilitative, creative, empowering, and

connected in the teacher's thinking. The disposition characteristics identified within this

study, and found in Appendix C, indeed support Thornton's research, but it is how

institutions move forward with this information which will ultimately determine the

success that their programs have in the preparation we afford our pre-service teacher

candidates.

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Appendix A: List of Universities

Alabama State University	Stanford University
Armstrong Atlantic State University	State University of New York at Potsdam
Asbury University	Teachers College Columbia University
Azusa Pacific University	The College of William and Mary
Baker University	University of California at Berkeley
Brown University	University of California at Los Angeles
Dartmouth College	University of Georgia
Emporia State University	University of Kansas
Georgia Southern University	University of Maryland
Harvard University	University of Michigan
Indiana University	University of Notre Dame
Indiana University at Kokomo	University of Tennessee
Jacksonville State University	University of Texas
Kansas State University	University of Washington
Mansfield University	University of Wisconsin
Miami University	Vanderbilt University
Michigan State University	Washburn University
Montclair State University	Wichita State University
Northern Kentucky University	Wilson College
Princeton University	Yale University

Appendix B: Email Inquiry to Universities

Dear Respected Colleague:

My name is Kevin Splichal and I work at Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas as

Program Specialist and Instructor for the Department of Teacher Education.

I am in the process of working on my Educational Specialist degree and I am conducting

research within various universities across the United States.

My goal is to discover what other universities are doing to identify **dispositions** *of*

teacher candidates. Moreover, it is most important in my research to identify what you

are doing to **remove** *candidates from teacher education programs once dispositions have*

identified the need for such action.

I have selected most universities included in my study based on a US News and World

Report ranking of Best Education Schools. I have also as chosen top universities in

Kansas and surrounding states.

Please let me know if you would be willing to share disposition policies or rubrics you

are utilizing. Attached documents would be most appropriate. Further, the main focus

for my research is to determine what processes are involved in actually REMOVING

candidates from the programs. Therefore, if you have a policy for such purpose, please

share that with me as well.

Respectfully Yours in Education,

Appendix C: Tables of University Disposition Goals and Characteristics

Table 1

Miami University	Goals	Characteristics
	Professional Conduct Toward Students	Candidates deal with students in a fair and just manner, showing preference toward no individual or group, shows respect and value for all accepting individuals for who they are, and showing respect for cultural and family traditions.
	Professional Practice	Candidates follow professional standard in actions, accountability, complies with policies and procedures, expectations of university, interaction with faculty, staff and peers, does not use institutional professional privileges for personal gain or advantage, displays affection/warmth appropriately, punctual to work and class, completes work in a timely fashion, models educated language, dresses professionally, adheres to confidentiality, continues to work toward professional growth.
	Professional Conduct Toward Professional Colleagues	Candidate is equitable toward all professional colleagues, does not willfully make false statements about colleague or school system, respects individual freedom of choice and expression, does not violate any individual's professional integrity.
	Professional Conduct Toward Parents and General Community	Candidate makes every effort to fully inform parents about children and assists families in their educational endeavors, makes every effort to understand and respect values and traditions of diverse cultures and groups, maintains positive and active role in educational processes toward the betterment of all children
Note.	(I. Johnson, personal communication, September 19, 2011)	Miami University's acceptable professional behavior is derived from (2003 Code of Ethics for the Association of American Educators.)

Table 2

Kansas State Univ	Goals	Characteristics
	Disposition 1	The educator demonstrates a belief that all students can learn, has high expectations for all students, and persists in helping all students achieve success.
	Disposition 2	The educator demonstrates a belief in the inherent dignity of all people, respects the customs and beliefs of diverse groups, and provides equitable opportunities for all.
	Disposition 3	The educator takes responsibility to establish an environment of respect and rapport and a culture for learning to enhance social interactions, student motivation and responsibility, and active engagement in learning.
	Disposition 4	The educator is flexible and responsive in seeking out and using a variety of strategies to meet the cognitive, physical, emotional, and social needs of all students.
	Disposition 5	The educator seeks to keep abreast of new ideas and understandings in teaching and learning.
	Disposition 6	The educator demonstrates collaboration and cooperation with students, families, community, and educational personnel to support student learning and contribute to school and district improvement efforts.
	Disposition 7	The educator develops goals and plans to improve professional practice.
	Disposition 8	The educator accepts responsibility as a professional to maintain ethical standards.
Note.	**(G. Shroyer, personal communication, Feb 6, 2012)**	**Student Intern Portfolio Handbook earning the 2011 Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement Award**

Table 3

Alabama State University	Goals	Characteristics
	Disposition 1	Believe that all children can learn at high levels and persist in helping children achieve success
	Disposition 2	Are committed to reflection on teaching practices in the pursuit of excellence
	Disposition 3	Are committed to the use of ongoing assessments to identify students' strengths and weaknesses
	Disposition 4	Take pride in their work and work environment
	Disposition 5	Meet ethical standards of practice
	Disposition 6	Are voices for educational and social justice
	Disposition 7	Value human diversity and help students learn to value one another
	Disposition 8	Keep abreast of new ideas in the field
	Disposition 9	Value the use of educational technology in the teaching/learning process
	Disposition 10	Join and participate in professional and educational organizations.
Note.	**(M. Wasicsko, personal communication, September 21, 2011)**	**Teacher Education Program criteria for admission to candidacy. Symposium on Educator Dispositions.**

Table 4

Indiana University	Goals	Characteristics
	Disposition 1	Meets obligations an deadlines; submits work that reflects high professional standards; possesses effective oral, written, communication, organizational and managerial skills; respects the knowledge, opinions and abilities of other professional, support staff, parents and others; reflects on and takes responsibility for actions and decisions
	Disposition 2	Accepts constructive criticism within the context of current practice and professional standards; displays a positive attitude and emotional maturity; demonstrates effective interpersonal skills
	Disposition 3	Functions effectively as a member of a learning community, including involvement with professional organizations, school-community interest groups and agencies, and mentoring of other professionals
	Disposition 4	Treats all students fairly, ethically, morally and without bias; thinks systematically about practices and learns from experience; draws on research and scholarship to improve their professional practices, and shares their conclusions and insights with the professional community
	Disposition 5	Displays a commitment to professionalism and teaching
	Disposition 6	Displays a commitment to students and their learning
Note.	(M. Wasicsko, personal communication, September 21, 2011)	Division of Education Masters Program. Symposium on Educator Dispositions.

Table 5

Baker University	Goals	Characteristics
	Professional Responsibility and Dependability	The skills that enable candidates to assume responsibility for class assignments, attend regularly, plan, schedule, and meet time lines.
	Disposition for Teaching	Enthusiasm, ability to relate to others, acceptance of individual differences, openness to new ideas, willingness to address personal weakness.
	Initiative	Class participation, showing interest in class, and willingness to go beyond minimum requirements.
	General Emotional Maturity	No chatting during class, taking personal responsibility for own actions and results, inappropriate use of technology.
	Knowledge Base	A strong knowledge base in the general arts and sciences and professional content.
	Written Communication Skills	The ability to write ideas clearly, using good writing conventions, organization, and focus.
	Oral Communication Skills	The ability to clearly articulate oral comments and interact with individuals and groups.
	Problem Solving, Creativity, and Critical Thinking Skills	The ability to think critically and use problem-solving skills and originality.
	Potential for Teaching Success	Overall rating of this student as a candidate for the teaching profession.
Note.	**(K. Wiscombe, personal communication, October 7, 2011)**	**Instructor's Rating of the Prospective Teacher**

Table 6

Jacksonville State University	Goals	Characteristics
	Attendance/Punctuality	Candidate follows required course attendance policy; arrives early and never leaves class.
	Timeliness with Assignment	Assignments are turned in on time.
	Appearance	Candidate dresses in an appropriate manner; is well-groomed.
	Poise	Appears to be confident and consistently composed.
	Attitude	Displays appropriate professional behavior and a positive attitude; acts in a mature manner; accepts constructive criticism.
	Initiative	Participates; is inquisitive; will assume added responsibilities.
	Responsiveness to Feedback	Accepts feedback about performance and will refine practice.
	Rapport	Effective in establishing a rapport with others; exhibits an appropriate level of caring and respect.
Note.	(Notar et al., 2009)	College of Education and Professional Studies

Table 7

Emporia State University	Goals	Characteristics
	Proficiency 1	Professionalism and ethical standards; respect for cultural and individual differences by providing equitable learning opportunities for all students
	Proficiency 2	A willingness to think critically about content, curriculum planning, teaching and learning pedagogy, innovative technology, and assessment; the belief that educating children and adults requires the integration of multiple kinds of knowledge
	Proficiency 3	A desire to analyze concepts, evaluate clinical practices, experiment, and initiate innovative practices as needed; a commitment to life-long learning by participating in professional organizations and by keeping current with research in their field
	Proficiency 4	A commitment to challenge all students to learn and to help every child to succeed; an awareness of the larger social contexts within which learning occurs
	Proficiency 5	A commitment to self-reflection to recognize in all students human physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development; a belief that curriculum planning and teaching practices be meaningful, engaging, and adapted to the needs of diverse learners
	Proficiency 6	A desire to collaborate with colleagues, parents and community members, and other educators to improve student learning
Note.	**(J. Morrow, personal communication, Sept 23, 2011)**	**Advanced Program Disposition Evaluations by Decision Point**

Table 8

Potsdam University	Goals	Characteristics
	Works Well With Others	By encouraging others to share ideas; participating in group/team collaboration; accepting consensus; offering assistance where possible; and making his/her resources available to aid the group's task
	Takes Responsibility for Own Actions	By following through on responsibilities and tasks in a timely manner; accepting and acting on constructive suggestions; following directions; and not blaming others
	Fosters Positive Relationships	By modeling effective interpersonal behaviors and communication; providing positive reinforcement when appropriate; seeking to solve problems; and seeking involvement in after-school activities
	Behaves in a Professional Manner	By exhibiting personal integrity; being punctual; dressing professionally; respecting personal boundaries with regard to sharing or seeking information of a person/intimate nature; and teaching using correct language grammar and avoiding colloquialisms
	Maintains High Level of Competence in His/Her Practice	By engaging in ongoing self-reflection while seeking constructive criticism to improve teaching; working to update skills/knowledge accordingly; consistent preparation through both long and short-term planning
	Willing to take Risks; Show Comfort With Uncertainty	By adapting to changes in the workplace; taking advantage of teachable moment; trying unfamiliar techniques; and encouraging students and peers to take appropriate risk
	Recognizes and Respects His/Her Own Diversity and That of Others	Incorporate alternative points of view; using instructional practices that respectfully reflects the diversity of both the community and beyond; respects diverse opinions and lifestyles; providing participants opportunities to share cultures
Note.	**(V. Hayes, personal communication, Oct 20, 2011)**	**Student Teaching Dispositions Curriculum and Instruction**

Table 9

Azusa Pacific Univ.	Goals	Characteristics
	Professionalism	Including, but not limited to: timeliness, appearance/dress, personal integrity, responsive to review of performance/actions
	Teaching Qualities	Including, but not limited to: effectiveness, initiative, organization, use of language, classroom management, belief that all children can learn
	Relationship with Others	Including, but not limited to: cooperation, confidentiality, fairness, openness, positive rapport with others, sensitive to diversity, able to give and receive feedback
	Potsdam State University of NY	Student Teaching Dispositions Curriculum and Instruction

Note.	**(A. Bradley, personal communication, September 29, 2011)**	**Candidate Disposition Notice**

Table 10

Northern Kentucky Univ.	Goals	Characteristics
	Perceptions about Subject Matter	The importance of content knowledge related to teacher effectiveness
	Perceptions about Self	The teacher feels a oneness with all people. She/He perceives him/herself as deeply and meaningfully related to persons of every description
	Perceptions about other People	The believes about others, particularly students, that a teacher holds are an important influence on these persons' behavior
	Perceptions about the Teaching Task	The teacher sees effective teaching as positive and realistic in the purpose of education and the processes of learning; focused on long-term, positive changes in students' lives and fostering good citizenship
	General Frame of Reference	The means a teacher deems appropriate for achieving a goal given particular situations and individuals for particular teaching situations
Note.	**(M. Wasicsko, personal communication, September 21, 2011)**	**Dispositions Indicating Effectiveness Based on Perceptual Psychology. Symposium on Educator Dispositions.**

Table 11

Asbury University	Goals	Characteristics
	Moral and Ethical Integrity	Sensitivity by interpreting situations and becoming aware of how we affect others; judgment through making decisions about which actions are right and wrong; motivation through prioritizing moral values over personal preferences; character through strength of convictions, persistence and the will to overcome
	Compassion and Respect for Others	Caring behaviors, advocating accessibility, and other –oriented decisions; equitable treatment, acceptance of diversity, and openness to other perspectives; interpersonal behavior that demonstrates the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations, and desires of other people
	Personal and Emotional Wellness and Vitality	Self-knowledge in discerning one's beliefs, desires, fears, and capacities; emotional resilience, perseverance, appropriate expression of emotions, stress management, versatility, and adaptability to demands; understanding of personal worth and commitment to a balanced, healthy lifestyle
	Passion for Teaching	A contagious love of learning; a positive attitude and work ethic; motivation and engagement of students in the learning process
	Spiritual Sensitivity and Purpose	Living the examined life, discerning calling and developing a person vision; acting upon one's spiritual vision and call; guiding the student's search for meaning by exploring existential questions
	Northern Kentucky University	Dispositions Indicating Effectiveness Based on Perceptual Psychology
Note.	(V. Lowe, personal communication, September 19, 2011)	Asbury's Dispositions and Indicators from a Christian Liberal Arts University. Symposium on Educator Dispositions.

Appendix D: Comparison Chart

Characteristic	Number of institutions using the characteristic
Formal policy allowing for removal of candidate	5
Removal of candidate through counseling	12
Remediation plan utilized	10
Evaluation of dispositions after admission to the program	12
Evaluation of dispositions before admission to the program	11
Policy for appeal process	5
Dispositions included in Professional Portfolio	5
Dispositions integrated in a college Conceptual Framework	10
Face to Face interviews utilized	6
Dispositions are not assessed separately from other assessment data used in the teacher education program	2

Appendix E: Key Terms

The following chart lists key terms used in disposition evaluation instruments and rubrics found throughout the research. It is relevant to mention that many of these terms are focused toward the candidate while others are focused upon the students who will be under the care of the candidate.

Accountability	Dignity	Judgment	Sensitivity
Actions	Diversity	Language	Social Justice
Advocacy	Dress	Lifestyle	Standards
Appearance	Empathy	Maturity	Strengths
Attitude	Engaging	Modeling	Student - Centered
Behaviors	Enthusiasm	Motivation	Success
Beliefs	Equitable	Patterns	Technology
Collaboration	Ethical	Perceptions	Timeliness
Commitment	Expertise	Poise	Traditions
Community	Expression	Prepared	Values
Compassion	Fairness	Pride	Vision
Conduct	Growth	Problem - Solving	Worth
Confidence	High Expectations	Punctual	
Confidentiality	Honesty	Rapport	
Consistency	Hygiene	Reasoning	
Cooperation	Ideologies	Reflective	
Culturally Responsive	Improvement	Research	
Decisions	Initiative	Respect	
Demeanor	Integrity	Responsibility	
Dependability	Interpersonal	Self - Evaluation	