DEFINING, OPERATIONALIZING, DEVELOPING, AND ASSESSING

CANDIDATE DISPOSITIONS IN TEACHER EDUCATION

by

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A dissertation

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction

Boise State University

December 2013

BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COLLEGE

DEFENSE COMMITTEE AND FINAL READING APPROVALS

of the dissertation submitted by

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Dissertation Title: Defining, Operationalizing, Developing and Assessing Candidate
Dispositions in Teacher Education.

Date of Final Oral Examination: 18 December, 2013

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my family, without whom I would have nothing; specifically to those family members we have lost who played a major role in raising me alongside my parents while they modeled the value of hard work and continued schooling and education:

Arthur Zenkert, Vivian Zenkert, and Vera Lovette.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express sincere and undying thanks to my dissertation committee members for their help in revising and refining this work. Their perspectives have been invaluable, their persistence in pushing me unwavering, and their refusal to accept anything but my best, well, exhausting. In the end, this dissertation leaves a lot to be desired, but the work seen here is a direct result of their mentorship. To Dr. Keith Thiede, I find it fitting that it was you who gave me my first glimpse of Boise State six years ago, helped me enroll and get a graduate assistantship, and it is you who is here to see me through the end. Your work with me on understanding survey construction and analysis will never be forgotten. Thank you. To Dr. Jonathan Brendefur, one of the busiest men I know, you always made time for me, asked questions that no one else thought of, and, what I thank you most for, you pulled no punches, ever. Thank you for your directness and guidance. To Dr. Jennifer Snow, there may not be room for thanks here—you have been much more than a committee member: a friend, a confidant, my boss, a role model, and someone who kept both Rich and me from going crazy (if he only knew how many questions you fielded so that I did not overwhelm and disappoint him). Most of all, you have been an unwavering support since the day I stepped foot on campus. Thank you. Finally, to my advisor, Dr. Rich Osguthorpe: one of the most brilliant, patient, witty men I have ever met. In every and any interaction with you, I am humbled, and for that I thank you. Words cannot accurately express how much I appreciate your gentle guidance, pushing when necessary,

and patience when you knew I needed it (and even if words could express this accurately, I am sure you would want me to rewrite them at least six times). You seemed to always know which buttons to push to motivate me, and which one of your articles I needed to read for inspiration. Thank you, Rich, I am a better writer, researcher, and person because of you.

I also offer thanks to various Boise State professors, fellow doctoral students, and colleagues who helped discuss and debrief my inquiry. Notable contributors include Phil Kelly (a mentor and friend extraordinaire), Kelley Moneymaker (we finally finished!), Greg Hoetker (the best auditor a cup of lemonade can buy), Carolyn Loffer, Sherry Dismuke, Duane Peck, Brad Coats, Andrea Witters, Shannon McCormick, and Susan Martin. I don't know if any of you realize it, but the brief chats we had from time to time kept me going, motivated me, and reminded me that I had support.

I would like to express an even greater thanks to my family—they have altered their lives, holidays, birthdays, and general schedules for their rogue son, brother, and uncle who moved to Idaho. They have demonstrated unbelievable patience and love and I know they are proud of me for completing something I started (now if I could just get to work on that canoe. . .). Mom, Dad, Amy, Gavin, Anna, George, Tandia, Lyra: If I got to pick my family from everyone out there, I would choose you guys in a heartbeat. Thanks.

To my Fair Lawn, Drew University, and Bank Street family and friends—you have stayed in touch and continued to support me through email, text, phone, and those occasional whirlwind trips through the east coast. Many of you have even come out to visit. Thank you. I love you all.

To my Boise family, of whom many of the above folks mentioned above also belong: some of you were here with me from the beginning (Ashley Dack, Kyle and Katie Tumpane, John Dye, Nick and Jayme Vetz, Kate and Matt Shaine, the Team in Training gang); and others of you have come in to my life along the way and for some reason stuck around and put up with my crazed approach to life while I worked on this dissertation—you offered support whenever and however you could and have also become amazing friends: Tim and Justine O'Neill, Conner Hall, Brenley Box, Carly Pritchard, Shannon Hamrick, and Michelle StanWeins. Thank you for everything.

Finally, to my colleagues, friends, and students at Boise State, in the Meridian and Boise School Districts, and at FLOW Aquatics: Many of you were participants in this study, but all of you have felt the burden of supporting me over the past years. Never have any of you questioned me for my frazzled nature when trying to teach, supervise, or do any other part of my job, and whenever I asked for space or time to work on my dissertation, you all always obliged. Thank you—I look forward to our continued, and hopefully a little less hectic, work together.

To those who I inadvertently left out: My apologies, and my sincerest thank you for your support. Like this dissertation, I am not, nor will I ever be, perfect.

ABSTRACT

This inquiry seeks to identify the beliefs of college students prior to their entry into a teacher education program (pre-program students), teacher educators, practicing P-12 teachers, and practicing P-12 administrators (teacher education professionals) related to the construct "dispositions" in teacher education. Grounded in a social constructivist understanding of teaching and learning, this primarily phenomenological study utilizes the analysis of survey data to uncover and explore multiple perspectives on beliefs about dispositions in teacher education in an effort to identify implications for teacher education research and practice.

Findings suggest that pre-program students and teacher education professionals believe that dispositions are an important part of quality teaching. Although their definitions and understandings about what this construct, dispositions, refers to, participants list a host of dispositions that they believe teachers ought to have. Teacher education professionals also believe that candidate dispositions can and should be explicitly developed and assessed in teacher education, but there is a fair amount of discomfort surrounding assessment.

Implications for teacher education relate to the importance of student beliefs in developing dispositions, the connection between dispositions, knowledge, and skills, the importance of the connection between coursework and fieldwork in the development of dispositions, the development of teacher education professionals' capacity to attend to

dispositions, and an approach to dispositions development that embraces the myriad

dispositions listed by participants in this inquiry.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

"Since the beginning of public education, teachers have been held to a much higher standard than other professions. They have always been considered role models who have a great influence on students. Students pay close attention to teachers' behaviors and many times imitate that behavior; therefore, teachers must be especially mindful of their personal and professional conduct" (Summerville, 2010, p. 347).

John Dewey (1910) addressed the need to attend to dispositions in teacher education in the early part of the twentieth century: "The importance of this attitude or disposition is generally recognized in practical and moral affairs. But it is equally important in intellectual development" (p. 137). In the beginning of the twenty-first century, there were some teacher educators who began revisiting the moral and ethical responsibilities of teachers and teacher candidates (Borko, Lisoton, & Whitcomb, 2007; Freeman, 2007), and some of these responsibilities have been lumped under the term "dispositions." This term is not new (Shiveley & Misco, 2010; Diez, 2007) and it has been bandied about within teacher education by many scholars (see Katz,1985; Minnesota's *Task Force on Teacher Education,* 1986; the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1989; Linda Darling-Hammond and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, 1992; Ennis, 1994). Some more recent

publications seem to bring the conversation about dispositions to the national level (Raths, 2007; Freeman, 2007).

These publications include the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education's (NCATE) accreditation standards (2000, 2002), The Interstate New Teacher Support and Assessment Consortium's (INTASC) accreditation standards (1992), the *Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation's* (CAEP) accreditation standards (2013), the National Research Council's Mathematics Learning Study Committee report *Adding it up* (2001), and subsequent publications by Sockett (2009, 2012), Diez (2008), Murray (2007), Dottin (2009), and others. Discussion and debate ensued throughout the early part of the century as to what the place of dispositions in teacher education is, but there is no doubt, no matter which side of the debate one is on, that dispositions have garnered a lot of attention in teacher education of late (Dottin, 2009).

*Note: In July of 2013, NCATE and the *Teacher Education Accreditation Council* (TEAC) merged to form the *Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation* (CAEP). This research was done prior to the creation of this new council and new standards.

Defining Dispositions in Teacher Education

The attention that Dottin (2009) speaks of includes trying to define the term "dispositions," and this has not been an easy task. "Dispositions are notoriously hard to define and have been the subject of numerous philosophical, theoretical, and practical disagreements in recent years (Carroll, 2012, p. 40). Within this debate are many voices, including Sockett (2009, 2012), who conceives of dispositions as "virtues", Villegas (2007), and Siegel (1999) who both consider dispositions to be "tendencies to act in

certain ways"; Dottin (2009) who states that, "dispositions are not a state of profession, but a state of performance" (p. 85); and Katz (1993) and Katz and Raths (1985) who consider dispositions to be "actions that are frequently expressed and voluntary" (p. 1). Additionally, Schussler (2006) and Schussler, Bercaw and Stooksbury (2008) define dispositions as an "internal filter," and Deakin-Crick (2004) talks about dispositions as "values, beliefs, actions, and experiences."

Considering the multiple ways that dispositions can be and have been defined, Caroll's (2012) framing might help bring them all together when he discusses dispositions as the "link between 'knowing' and 'being able to do'" in teaching (p. 38). This connects closely with Freeman's (2007) assertion that "knowledge + disposition results in performance" and Ritchhart's (2001) ideas about dispositions being the connections between values and beliefs and actions. Finally, Diez (2008) alludes to the importance of what one actually does when she states, about dispositions, "Teachers may possess particular skills or hold particular beliefs but not use them on behalf of student learning" (p. 2). Each of these authors discusses a link or connection between theory and practice.

The review of literature in the second chapter will get more deeply into these ideas about defining dispositions, but it is important to note here that there is more than one understanding of what this term means in teacher education. As further introduction to dispositions in teacher education and the study herein, the remainder of this chapter will discuss my story of how I came to be passionate about this topic, some potential reasons for attending to dispositions in teacher education, and a theoretical grounding for this inquiry.

My Story

Working first as a teacher, then as an administrator, it was evident to me that teachers' dispositions played a role in their teaching. What was not clear was what role it played. When I first started teaching, I worked with a teacher who was drinking alcohol at work, was not considered to be a good teacher, but kept his job for years, until students took it upon themselves to "catch" him in the act and then reported him. I worked with another teacher who put in more hours and was more dedicated to children than anyone I had ever seen—she became a good friend, colleague, and professional confidant, and to this day I don't know how she cares at the level that she does or works as hard as she does.

One story in particular stands out from those first few years of teaching; a story that, in hindsight, shows me how I have always been more focused on dispositions than on knowledge and skills. While teaching at an elementary school, the other fourth grade teacher and I planned together, regularly, and tried to stay at the same general pacing and on the same schedule with our lessons. One day, during a math lesson, a child from her class walked in, holding the *Everyday Mathematics* teacher manual, and said, "My teacher doesn't know how to do this and said she can't teach it. She told me to come over here and ask you to teach me so that I could teach the class." I was flabbergasted for a number of reasons. We had gone over these concepts numerous times. I taught her not only the material, but also how to teach it to the students. She assured me she understood. Maybe this is a commentary on my teaching and collaboration skills in not reaching her, but more so I saw this as a reflection of her.

Although I was disappointed in her for her lack of knowledge and skill, it was the way she handled the situation, prior to and in the moment, which worried me the most. How could she not be prepared? How could she think that asking one of the students to come learn it from me, in the middle of my lesson, and then teach it to her class, was the best answer? When we talked later, she shrugged her shoulders and giggled about it, frustrating me even more. How was this funny? Why didn't she *care* more? As I tried to figure out what to do about these questions and address my discomfort, I realized that I had certain ideas about myself as a teacher, and perhaps needed to ask some question there, too. I started to be hyper cognizant of the praxis of teaching.

<u>My First Years as a Teacher</u>

Over time, I found that the faculty at my school, including me, were bringing a lot of things into school that seemed to be beyond our content knowledge or our skills in terms of planning and delivering lessons. I found that some teachers knew how to talk to parents, and that went a long way. I saw that others knew how to listen and empathize, and that that, too, seemed to really serve children in a way that helped them grow and develop. Some of my first interactions with parents and colleagues are not ones that I am proud of—my stress, for lack of a better term, got the best of me and I said some things I should not have, I didn't listen enough, and I was blind to other perspectives.

As I watched others, I was able to fault them, but it took me a while to see things in myself that needed to change. When I did, I was surprised to see, quite simply, that to be a better teacher (in terms of student growth, collegiality, my own knowledge and skill, parent and student relationships, and my personal sanity and balance), I had to be more

self-aware, extend more trust, practice patience, be empathic, and listen more. Where and when did that course occur in my schooling and how did I miss it?

In response to this realization, I started to work "harder." I put in more hours, exhausting myself to try to prove to myself that I had "what it takes" to be the quality educator that I saw in others and aspired to myself. I would be the *most* empathetic, the *most* trustworthy, the *most* caring. It became a badge of honor to get to work before others, stay later than others, to be parents' and students' "favorite," to have the highest test scores, growth rates. . . even to get the furthest through the official curriculum (Eisner, 1985). I even began to seek out positive relationships with fellow faculty, whether we agreed pedagogically and personally or not—simply to be liked and respected (and telling myself that this was best for kids). I even had to have the "best" bulletin boards. In short, I became obsessed with, in my mind, doing "more" than "just teaching" as I understood it (planning, assessment, management, lesson delivery), but I didn't know how to pull it off, so I wore myself out doing it the only way I knew how: I became tired, jaded, frustrated, and bitter at others because I thought they were not doing their job as well as me. I became bitter at the system for not being more supportive of me, of teachers, and of kids. I was so focused on myself; so wildly, and in hindsight disappointingly, arrogant, and so lost.

Pursuing a Master's Degree

This bitterness, frustration, and drive that I thought was self-awareness and hard work, but really wasn't, led me to realize that I must be doing something wrong. I was not the person or the educator I wanted to be. I realized I had more practice than theory and decided to go back to school. A multi-year search for master's degree programs led

me first to Columbia University's Teachers' College. After admission and before enrollment, spending some time with people there, I got a strange feeling. Something here wasn't right for me. I recognized that the things I was doing (working tirelessly and not taking care of myself) were applauded and encouraged by those around me—yet I knew they were not right for me and I was suspicious that they may not be best for children. I continued to search, and this search led me to Bank Street College of Education.

Once enrolled at Bank Street, I pursued my master's degree in educational leadership. The *Leadership for Educational Change* program had these "things" that I had been thinking about embedded in coursework. I was asked to look at myself through a critical lens and to develop more than just content knowledge and the skills of an administrator, and this emphasis was evident right away. The Bank Street credo, which I connected so deeply with and have adopted as my own, states the following:

What potentialities in human beings—children, teachers, and ourselves—do we want to see develop?

- *A zest for living that comes from taking in the world with all five senses alert.*

- *Lively intellectual curiosities that turn the world into an exciting laboratory and keep one ever a learner.*

- *Flexibility when confronted with change and ability to relinquish patterns that no longer fit the present.*

- *The courage to work, unafraid and efficiently, in a world of new needs, new problems, and new ideas.*

- *Gentleness combined with justice in passing judgment on other human beings.*

- *Sensitivity, not only to the external formal rights of the "other fellow," but to him as another human being seeking a good life through his own standards.*

- *A striving to live democratically, in and out of schools, as the best way to advance our concept of democracy.*

Our credo demands ethical standard as well as scientific attitudes. Our work is based on the faith that human beings can improve the society they have created.

(http://test.bankstreet.edu/discover-bankstreet/bankstreet-credo/)

This hangs in my office and I look at it each day to remind myself of my charge—of why I do what I do and who I want to be as a person and educator. In reflection, I recognize that each statement is about something almost intangible. Each statement is about those things that I recognized in others and wanted for myself. While at Bank Street, I still didn't know what to call them, but I think I used the word "traits" at the time. During that master's program, I learned to practice patience, humility, and flexibility, and I learned to listen more. I also learned to take care of myself so that I could better serve others, and I began to stop trying to be "better" *than* everyone else and started to try and be better *with* everyone else.

As I continued to work as a K-8 administrator, I realized that as much as my journey to that point was about me and my "traits" or "qualities," it was also about those around me, as it initially had been; my fellow administrators and faculty members, and those I might hire or fire. How could I best serve myself, and them? My next step was to look to change my context—I now wanted even more theory and differentiated practice. In an effort to reinvigorate myself in the profession and get a fresh start with my newfound wisdom, I searched the country for a doctoral program. I was looking for a

university, and a town, in a place that seemed different, in terms of population and culture, than the one I had grown accustomed to. I searched for a place and a way to reconceptualize (Pinar, 1975) myself.

<u>Pursuing a Doctoral Degree</u>

Through a series of events, I landed in Boise, Idaho, far from the suburbs of New Jersey where I had grown up and far from New York City and Newark, NJ, where I had gone to school and taught for many years.

As I sought to further explore the "traits" of teachers in my new home of Boise, I became fascinated with the idea of "emotional intelligence" (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1989) and spent most of my time in doctoral coursework pursuing a greater understanding of "emotional intelligence*." I worked with local principals, initiating a small pilot study about the connection between emotional intelligence and leadership. I wrote countless papers on the connection between "quality educators" and high levels of emotional intelligence, and I studied the concept in depth, only to find it lacking to describe what I had been interested in initially.

Then, NCATE and INTASC gave me a name for these intangible qualities, and learning more about them, as I began working with undergraduate teacher candidates, reaffirmed my passion. Simultaneously, I became familiar with Nel Noddings (1984, 1992) work on caring and her ideas about caring *for* instead of caring *about*. Understanding her ideas about the "one caring" and the "one cared for" and how this had to be a mutually beneficial and interactive relationship, helped me understand who I was trying to be as a teacher and what I was looking for in others who teach. I began to ask

myself, "If caring is an important disposition, how can this be taught to others, practiced, and assessed?"

Teacher Education

At the conclusion of my doctoral coursework, when I became a teacher educator, the topic became even more salient, as I have been asked to prepare teacher candidates with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to teach. Connecting the field of teacher education with that of practicing teachers, I wondered what the links are in terms of dispositions.

Initially, working in schools in the late 1990s and early 2000s, reflecting on my own development as well as that of my colleagues, and eventually being involved in hiring and dismissal processes, there was always something beyond knowledge and skills being considered and discussed, but I could never name it. As I went through master's and doctoral coursework, I found myself more and more curious. Finally, as I moved in to teacher education, similar discussions occurred, but these discussions focused on developing and assessing these potentially intangible qualities in teacher candidates. Many conversations revolved around the following questions. Can dispositions be developed? Can dispositions be assessed? Ought dispositions to be developed and assessed? Which dispositions should be developed and assessed? Of course, for each of these questions, the ever-lingering "why?" and "how?" was discussed as well.

These questions led me to focus my attention on teacher candidate dispositions, and, from my constructivist standpoint, I wondered what they believed and understood about this construct. As I though further about it, I realized that the beliefs teacher

educators, who have been charged with helping candidates develop these dispositions, was of equal importance.

Therefore, my purpose here is to ascertain the beliefs of those involved in teacher education about if, how, and why teacher education can and should play a role in helping teacher candidates develop dispositions to teach. As the topic was researched, many areas of consideration emerged that connect teacher candidate dispositions to their future role as practicing teachers. Some reasons for attending to dispositions in teacher education stood out, however, and they are outlined in the next section.

Reasons to Attend to Dispositions in Teacher Education

The personal experiences described above helped fuel a drive to study and better understand dispositions in teacher education. Grounding those experiences in current research and practice is the focus of this inquiry. I want to understand what connections dispositions may have with teacher practice and student success. Norris (2008) asks, "Do we really know from a body of intellectual and empirical data the possession of any body of dispositions is necessarily related to a person's success as a teacher" (p. 2)?

Additionally, Raths (1985) reminds us that we need to have "pretty strong evidence" that dispositions are related to success in the classroom. So, why might a teacher education program seek to develop dispositions in their teacher candidates?

The reasons for attending to dispositions in teacher education that seem to arise the most are: (a) connections to INTASC, NCATE, TEAC, and CAEP (we need to do this because our accrediting bodies have told us to), (b) certain dispositions are right for certain jobs within education (candidates' awareness of their dispositions can help them

find the right grade level, subject area, etc., in which they will be satisfied), (c) teacher

dismissals (teachers are dismissed from their jobs due to certain dispositions or the lack

of certain dispositions), (d) teacher hiring (candidates are often hired or not hired, largely

due to dispositions), (e) the want for a certain kind of person teaching (we want "good"

people teaching), and (f) the potential connection between teacher dispositions and

student success (certain dispositions might lead to greater student success and/or certain

dispositions or the lack of certain dispositions might lead to less success). These ideas

will be explained below.

Connections to INTASC, NCATE, and CAEP

The literature points to many reasons why attending to candidate dispositions may

be important. When reading through the literature on dispositions in teacher education,

much of it connects back to the charge by INTASC, NCATE, and CAEP to better prepare

teachers (Wilkerson & Lang, 2007; Wayda & Lund, 2005; Singh & Stoloff, 2007;

Anderson & Brydges, 2010a; Thompson, 2009a; Almerico, Johnston, Henriott, &

Shapiro, 2011; Serdyukov & Ferguson, 2011; Stewart & Davis, 2005; Young & Wilkins,

2008; Flowers, 2006; Smith & Skarbek, 2013). Or, as Borko, et al. (2007) write:

proponents of attending to dispositions in teacher education,

> Typically stick close to the language of the *Standards*, arguing that the purpose of
>
> including dispositions in accreditation standards is to ensure that people who are
>
> licensed to teach will be committed to fostering growth and learning in all
>
> students. (p. 361)

Certain Dispositions for Certain Types of Jobs

Some scholars have linked dispositions to job satisfaction (Kokkinos, 2007; Teven, 2007; Thornton, Peltier, & Hill, 2005). Wadlington and Wadlington (2011) mention the connection between dispositions and grade level or content area choice.

> . . . dispositions affect various other factors, such as grade level and vocational choice. Elementary teachers are apt to be nurturing and responsible, as well as concrete thinkers who trust their feelings. Those attracted to secondary education tend to be theoretical and investigative, as well as enthusiastic about innovation and change. (p. 324)

All of these authors suggest that attending to teacher candidate dispositions in teacher education will help candidates find and remain in the job that is right for them.

Teacher Dismissals

There is a small body of research emerging linking dispositions to teacher dismissals. In the introduction to her study *An examination of court cases relating to the dismissal of K-12 teachers for immorality (1997-2007),* Summerville (2010) writes, "In recent years, there has been a steady supply of court cases dealing with the dismissal of public school teachers for 'immorality,' 'moral turpitude,' and 'unfitness to teach.'" A study on "Teacher Contract Renewal" (Nixon, Packard, & Dam, 2011) came to similar conclusions, stating that, "principals selected *ethical violations* and *inappropriate conduct* as the most likely reason to initiate a contract non-renewal" (p. 19, emphasis in original). This study did show that instructional skills, content knowledge, and student achievement were important to the principals surveyed, but that these are less quantifiable measures of teacher quality and therefore more difficult to dismiss teachers for. The authors also comment on the connection back to teacher education:

Another conclusion from this study is that pedagogical skills, subject-content knowledge, and dispositions each received some level of weight from principals in teacher contract non-renewals. This tends to affirm the view that quality pre-service teacher development programs are on the right track in requiring teacher development across all three areas. (Nixon, Packard, & Dam, 2011, p. 19)

Hiring of Teachers

Multiple authors discuss dispositions and the importance of dispositional development and assessment in teacher education from the standpoint of the principal looking to hire a candidate. Shiveley and Misco (2010) found that beyond NCATE's charge, they were also hearing from the schools that hired their graduates from Miami University (Ohio) that dispositions were part of their hiring process.

NCATE was not, however, the only fountainhead directing faculty desires to improve upon dispositions within our programs. Rather, the faculty recognized that more and more of the schools that hired our graduates were looking carefully at dispositions during the hiring process. (p. 9)

The authors go on to discuss their responsibility to candidates and to P-12 students in creating a process for developing and assessing dispositions in their program for this reason.

Others discuss what a "quality teacher" is in terms of who principals should look to and are looking to hire. In the December 2010/January 2011 edition of *Educational Leadership,* which is titled *The Effective Educator,* the articles discuss a number of factors that could contribute to quality teaching. Merit pay, the achievement gap, teacher education, teacher assessment, and leadership are all discussed. In one of the closing

pieces, the journal's editor in chief, Scherer (2010), asks, " What makes a great teacher?" of a number of educators, which garnered the following responses: Humility, excitement, meaning-making, reflection, a willingness to grow, well-roundedness, flexibility, and strength (p. 74).

In the same edition of *Educational Leadership*, Goodwin (2010) looks at research and shares that content knowledge and skill, as well as verbal and cognitive ability, matter most to good teaching, but then goes on to discuss what he calls the "intangibles" such as "a belief that all students can learn," "a belief in their own abilities," and "an ability to connect with students" as less quantifiable measures that are integral to good teaching (p. 79). He further states, "At the same time, important intangibles, such as a teacher's dispositions and attitudes, although more difficult to glean from a resume, can still be teased out through interviews and observations of teachers delivering sample lessons" (p. 80).

While Goodwin refers to dispositions as "intangibles", Lund, Wayda, Woodard, and Buck (2007), who focus on physical education teachers, talk about dispositions as part of "employability skills." In doing so, they contend that teacher candidates should know what is awaiting them in the schools, and what they need to be prepared for, and that it is the job of teacher education to prepare them for this. Haberman and Post (1998) talk about similar things for working with "multicultural schools" and although they do not use the word "dispositions," they do list "self knowledge, self-acceptance, empathy, coping, functioning in chaos, self analysis" amongst other "predispositions" that they are looking for in teachers.

<u>A Certain Kind of Person</u>

Osguthorpe (2008) tackles a question that goes a bit deeper than hiring and dismissal, and perhaps gets at the main reason I find myself so connected to teacher dispositions. He asks, "But why do we want teachers of good disposition and moral character?" (p. 288). In my experience working with teacher candidates and with teachers, I often wondered and tried to understand if I actually do want a certain type of person in the classroom and I have decided that I do. But not just because I want certain teachers dismissed or because I want the right teachers hired, necessarily. Instead, I find myself agreeing with Osguthorpe (2008), when he answers his own question by stating that we should want teacher education, "that focuses on preparing teachers of good disposition and moral character simply for the sake of teaching that accords with what is good, right, and virtuous" (p. 297). So, teachers model morality, their teaching habits are informed by their morality, and we should want moral teachers simply for its own sake. This, of itself, according to Osguthorpe, is reason alone for attending to candidate dispositions in teacher education programs.

Osguthorpe's work is grounded in that of Sockett (1993, 2006, 2012), who believes that teachers should be moral for the sake of being moral and being quality teachers. Splitter (2010) also connects back Sockett, stating that teacher education needs, "a major shift in focus from the 'list of outcomes/competencies' approach; it compels us to put front and center the teacher *as person* and to place *being a certain kind of person* at the very heart of what it is that society demands of its educators" (p. 226, emphasis in original). The *Teacher Education as a Moral Community* (TEAMC) group also adheres to the belief, as their name may suggest, that dispositions are important to attend to in

teacher education because teaching is a moral and ethical endeavor—dispositions are important because we want "good" people in our classrooms (Benninga et al., 2008).

Duplass and Cruz (2010), social studies educators, attend to dispositions as part of the mandate from NCATE and their University, the University of South Florida, but the conclusions of their research find them in a different place from where they start. In the closing of their discussion of their research into assessing and tracking the candidates in their program, they state, "We have an ethical duty to the K-12 students with whom our teacher candidates will come in contact" (p. 150). Johnson and Reiman (2007) also discuss the ethical and moral responsibility of teachers in their study, connecting back to Dewey (1910).

Connection to Student Success

Perhaps there is a more tangible reason for attending to teacher dispositions. What if certain dispositions can be connected to student success? If certain teacher dispositions contribute to student learning and other dispositions detract from it, then we might want to know what those dispositions are and how they connect to student success. Richardson and Ongwuegbuzie (2003) remind us that it was Dewey, in the early 1900s, who stated that teachers' dispositions have an effect on student learning. Hallam (2009), in linking teacher dispositions to language learning, states that, "Teacher dispositions, ultimately, are about the teacher's ability to bring out a student's best, no matter what the 'best' may mean on an individual basis" (p. 29).

The *National Network for the Study of Educator Dispositions* (NNSED), directed by Mark Wasicsko, states that dispositions can be measured and that there is a connection between certain dispositions and student success. According to Wasicsko (2004),

effective teacher dispositions can be organized into four measurable "domains": The most effective teachers perceive themselves as effective, they believe that all students can learn, they have a broad frame of reference and see a larger purpose for what they do, and they look at the people element (Hallam, 2009, p. 27). The NNSED (led by Wasicsko) states their materials can help to assess these domains. Furthermore, he points to the work of Combs (1974) with high-inference materials as further evidence that student success can be linked to similar domains.

After a three year study of "dispositions in action" in a school setting, Thornton (2006) found that, "The teachers who made a key difference with these urban middle schoolers were those who exhibited key dispositions that impacted, even determined, how content knowledge and pedagogical skills came to life within the classroom" (p. 67). Da Ros-Voseles and Moss (2007) give an example of how this might play out in an early childhood classroom:

> For example, teacher candidates may show skill in using the inquiry method to teach science, but if they are not eager to use the inquiry method with young children, they may not provide sufficient classroom opportunities for children to engage in science discovery. Thus, in addition to teaching the skills involved in the inquiry method, science education faculty should support teacher candidates' dispositions to question, hypothesize, and analyze. (p. 91)

Villegas (2007) is also concerned about teacher dispositions and their connection to student success, particularly the success of traditionally underrepresented minorities. Using the "self-fulfilling prophecy" argument, she believes that teacher candidates' unexamined bias and beliefs about certain groups, if left unexplored in teacher education

programs, will surface as low-expectations for students in the classroom, a disposition that she feels teachers should not have.

According to Shulte, Edick, Edwards, and Mackiel (2004), there has been much research into the connections between dispositions and student success. Drawing on multiple studies into "effective teaching," they share that certain teacher behaviors (part of their definition of dispositions) have been closely correlated with desirable student performance. Wadlington and Wadlington (2011) also claim that, "teachers' dispositions directly affect their effectiveness as educators" (p. 323), although admittedly, their research is still in its early stages. Taylor and Wasicsko (2000) make similar claims about research into teacher dispositions, stating, "there is a significant body of research indicating that teachers' attitudes, values, and beliefs about students, about teaching, and about themselves, strongly influence the impact they will have on student learning and development" (p. 10). I find myself smiling and nodding when Rita Pierson (2013) says, "Kids don't learn from people they don't like," in her TED talk titled *Every Kid Needs a Champion,* because that sums up my experience in education and the research referenced here. Perhaps it is that simple.

Finally, there is something that is alluded to in much of the literature and often dismissed as un-measurable, but stated explicitly by Hillman, Rothermel, and Scarano (2006): the hidden curriculum. The hidden curriculum, as defined by Eisner (1985) is, "the learning or interaction that occurs that is not officially announced." These authors go on to talk about shaping the environment in a classroom, which Thornton (2006) and Villegas (2007) are also concerned about as directly related to dispositions and student success.

When I consider each of these reasons to attend to dispositions in teacher education, I ask myself the following question: Who do I want teaching *my* children? I want someone who has been vetted through a system that has standards and checks and balances for these standards, someone who is satisfied and wants to be doing what he or she is doing, someone who has been hired and kept their job largely *because* they are a "good" person, and someone who is going to give my children the best chance to learn and develop. This is no different from my want to have a teacher who has sound pedagogical knowledge and skills—I want the best the field has to offer for my children in all three areas. With that in mind, below I outline the theories that underpin these potential reasons for attending to dispositions in teacher education.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This inquiry is grounded in social-constructivist and social-cognitive beliefs about learning. Constructivism assumes that all knowledge and understanding is constructed from the learner's previous knowledge (Driscoll, 2005) and social constructivism holds that this knowledge is best constructed in groups (Driscoll, 2005). Cognitive learning theory, similarly, deals with the processing of new information and connection of it to existing information—this theory focuses more on memory and organization of information within the mind (Driscoll, 2005). The social aspect of social-cognitive theory is based on models and the learner watching others (Driscoll, 2005). Two specific pieces of these theories are enacted here: Vygotsky's (1978), "Zone of Proximal Development" and "Schema Theory" (Bartlett, 1932; Ausubel, 1978; Piaget, 1926).

Schema Theory

Schema theory involves the organization of schema, or representative understandings and organizing structures for ideas (Woolfolk, 2013) into larger schemata, for understanding and memory. They are, in effect, mental models (Driscoll, 2005, p. 130). This inquiry is undergirded by the belief that pre-program students and teacher educators, mentors and administrators either have existing schemata for what dispositions are or no schemata at all for this concept. Furthermore, Driscoll (2005), states that, ". . . people bring to tasks imprecise, partial, and idiosyncratic understandings that evolve with experience" (p. 130). The existing schemata that all four sets of stakeholders possess may or may not be faulty. In a teacher education program, understanding this prior knowledge in order to plan instruction and professional development, and structure student teaching experiences, is important.

Zone of Proximal Development

Much like schema theory, Vygotsky's (1978) ideas about the gap between a learner's "actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving" and the "potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86), which he calls the "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD), relies on prior knowledge. Vygotsky believes learning must come before development (Driscoll, 2005, p. 255), and therefore this idea of a ZPD is integral to this inquiry. Underlying this inquiry is an assumption that all teacher candidates learn and develop within the ZPD. Therefore, understanding what each stakeholder believes about dispositions could help to connect each stakeholder, plan instruction and professional development, and structure student teaching experiences.

Outline

Through this constructivist lens, I will explore the role of teacher dispositions in teacher education. In the remainder of this dissertation, I will build the background for this inquiry, study the phenomenon, dispositions, in teacher education, share the findings from the inquiry, and discuss the implications for teaching and teacher education.

First, in Chapter Two, I will review the literature on dispositions in teacher education, which includes (a) theory about the visibility of dispositions, (b) an in-depth look at how dispositions are operationalized, developed, and assessed in teacher education, and (c) some suggested implications to consider when attending to dispositions in teacher education.

In Chapter Three, I lay out the methodology for this inquiry, including (a) the guiding questions, (b) purpose of inquiry, and (c) method for inquiry. After explaining why teacher beliefs are where I begin, I then establish why I have chosen phenomenological inquiry and give an overview of phenomenological inquiry**.** Following that, I describe the location and time frame for the inquiry, the context for the inquiry, and the participants involved. Next, I describe a pilot study that led to this current inquiry and describe, in detail, my sources for data and methods for data collection and data analysis. Finally, I close Chapter Three with a look at the potential limitations of this study.

In Chapter Four, I share the participants' responses to survey questions, organized by emergent theme. Percentages and tallies of responses are given, as well as direct quotations. Where necessary, tables are utilized to give a snapshot of how participants responded to a given question.

In Chapter Five, I discuss participants' responses further, connecting the data back to the literature, drawing conclusions, and making recommendations for further research. Specifically, I discuss the assumptions that undergird this inquiry in light of the findings of the study. Next, the data is discussed in terms of the following overarching themes: (a) attending to student beliefs, (b) considering areas of agreement about dispositions, and (c) emerging questions about dispositions. Implications are considered as data are connected back to the literature. After that, I make recommendations for further research and suggestions for approaches to attending to candidate dispositions in teacher education programs. Each of these recommendations ties back to the themes discussed above. Following that is my summary and conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher education programs accredited through NCATE (2002, 2006, 2008) and INTASC (1992, 2011) have been charged with helping teacher candidates develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions. This charge has given rise to various approaches to attending to candidate dispositions in teacher education programs and these approaches vary widely from program to program. The question that guided this literature review is: How are the dispositions of teacher candidates defined, operationalized, developed, and assessed in teacher education? In exploring this question, the hope is to better understand how NCATE's, INTASC's, and CAEP's charges are being met and to consider areas of research that could be pursued to help contribute to further understanding of this construct, dispositions, in teacher education.

The first section of this literature review shares the myriad definitions of dispositions in connection to teacher candidates and teacher education. Then, this review outlines the varying ways in which teacher candidate dispositions are operationalized, developed, and assessed in teacher education programs. The final section of this review highlights scholars' concerns about the operationalization, development, and assessment of dispositions in teacher education.

Definitions of Dispositions in Teacher Education

Teacher dispositions have long been discussed in teacher education. "The nature of the beliefs, values, and dispositions of teacher candidates has been a topic of interest

and debate among teacher educators for decades" (Welch, Pitts, Tenini, Kuenlen, & Wood, 2010, p. 180). As stated in the first chapter, John Dewey (1910) was one who addressed the need to attend to disposition in teacher education in the early part of this century: "The importance of this attitude or disposition is generally recognized in practical and moral affairs. But it is equally important in intellectual development" (p. 137). The importance of attending to candidate dispositions in teacher education can be seen in the attention paid to defining this construct.

Over the course of the past century, teacher education has utilized many different definitions for the construct dispositions. In fact, Welch et al. (2010) state, about dispositions, "The term continues to lack a definitive singular meaning" (p. 181). The term dispositions has been used interchangeably with and connected to terms such as values, beliefs, actions, tendencies, interests, temperaments, traits, habits, behaviors, character, and appreciations, amongst other synonyms (Splitter, 2010, p. 210). In 1963, both Gage and Getzels, and Jackson referred to dispositions as "personality traits." Others (Nespar, 1987; Kagan, 1992; Mullin, 2003) point to similar connections amongst these terms. Fenstermacher (1992) connects dispositions with "manner" and other scholars (Sockett, 2006, 2009, 2012; Burant, Chubbuck, & Whipp, 2007; Osguthorpe, 2008) discuss dispositions in terms of "morals and virtues." There are also those who conceptualize dispositions as "behaviors" (Mullin, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Diez, 2006; NCATE, 2006).

To some, defining dispositions in multiple ways is appropriate, but to others defining dispositions in multiple ways may add to a lack of clarity about what this construct is/means. The more attention given to dispositions in teacher education, the

more muddied the definition of dispositions becomes (Borko, et al., 2007; Dottin, 2009; Osguthorpe, 2008). Sockett (2009) claims it is ambiguity that creates dialogue, which is what he believes teacher education programs should value and strive for. As the definitions are discussed further below, this review highlights the "murkiness" (Schussler, 2006) and ambiguity (Sockett, 2006) that these scholars point to in relation to the way they understand candidate dispositions. Dispositions are discussed as both visible and invisible in the literature.

Most scholars write that dispositions are manifest in action, but it is not quite clear whether these scholars believe that the actions are evidence of dispositions or dispositions themselves. Consideration is given to what Sabini and Silver (1982) say about "character" and how it applies to "disposition" as well: "Character belongs to a person, but not like his nose, his car, or even his height. It is shown by behavior, but behavior is evidence of character, not character itself; character endures over time, but is not a thing" (p. 156). For the sake of this literature review, I have identified those who seem to emphasize dispositions as the action or behavior itself (visible) in contrast to those who appear to focus on the actions as evidence of underlying, or internal dispositions (not visible). I recognize the fine line here, but think it an important distinction to be made, especially in a conversation about developing and assessing dispositions. The first section focuses on those scholars who focus on the visible nature of dispositions, and the subsequent section highlights those scholars who focus on the less visible.

Dispositions are Visible

Bunch (2006) lists the common categories that he believes definitions of dispositions can be lumped into. One of these categories is, "intentional trends in action." The section below shares theorists that articulate the *action* piece of this, developing and assessing dispositions in terms of how they are evidenced through visible behavior.

Dispositions Are Demonstrated Through Behavior

NCATE (2008) defines dispositions for teacher education as, "Professional attitudes, values and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues, and communities" (p. 89). The inclusion of the words "demonstrated through" and "behaviors" suggest a visible component to their definition of dispositions. "Trends" and "Habits" are the descriptors that seem to dominate definitions by Dottin (2009); Katz (1993); Villegas (2007); Misco and Shiveley (2007); Raths (1985); Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, and Bransford (2005); and Tishman and Perkins (1992). These authors focus on the summary or pattern of action seen over time and believe that it is these actions and behaviors that define a teacher candidate's disposition. Dottin (2009) states that, "Dispositions, therefore, concern not only what professional educators can do (ability), but also what they are likely to do (actions). . . dispositions are, therefore, not a state of profession, but a state of performance" (p. 85).

Other categories that Bunch (2006) has delineated for definitions of dispositions include "prevailing tendencies or inclinations" and "habits of thinking and acting." Each of these categories points to the repetition of action over time through the use of terms

such as "habits," "actions," and "prevailing tendencies." He also, as stated earlier in this document, discusses the intentionality of dispositions. The next section highlights definitions that specifically point to both the intentional, or voluntary, nature of a disposition that Bunch alludes to and to the fact that the dispositions must be repeated, or witnessed over time.

Dispositions Are Voluntary and Must Be Witnessed Over Time

There are others who agree that dispositions are evident through action or behavior (Wilkerson & Lang, 2007;Villegas, 2007), but they caution that understanding a candidate's disposition(s) is not as simple as witnessing a candidate's action and judging or labeling the candidate's disposition(s) based on that one action. Similarly, Katz (1993) and Katz and Raths (1985) define dispositions as "actions that are frequently expressed and voluntary." They not only point to the idea that dispositions must be expressed multiple times before they can be attributed to a candidate, but also that candidates volunteer to act the way they do. Ritchhart (2001), too, discusses "dynamic patterns of behavior" in certain contexts and believes these overarching patterns to be under the control of those enacting them. Siegel (1999) seems to agree, defining dispositions as, "a tendency, propensity, or inclination to behave or act in certain ways under certain circumstances" (p. 209). Diez (2006) presents both the importance of dispositions being enacted and the potential voluntary nature of dispositions from a slightly different angle. She discusses the idea that candidates may have certain attributes, but still not act on them. According to Diez, ". . . teachers may possess particular skills or hold particular beliefs but still not use them on behalf of student learning" (Benninga, et al., 2008, p. 2).

Villegas (2007) also states that dispositions must be witnessed multiple times in order to be attributed to a candidate. She uses the word "tendencies" to sum up this idea. "Dispositions are tendencies for individuals to act in a particular manner under particular circumstances, based on their beliefs" (p. 373). She cites Richardson (1996), Resnick (1981), and the National Research Council (2000) when discussing dispositions; all of whom, like Diez, bring in the idea of beliefs and how they influence dispositions.

Johnson and Reiman (2007), citing Shulman (1998) and others, discuss dispositions as actions based in underlying judgment. Wilkerson and Lang (2011) discuss dispositions in terms of how one is likely to act based on his/her beliefs. This possible connection between beliefs, judgments, and dispositions is larger than the scope of this literature review. The idea that there may be underlying, less visible forces that play a role in what candidates are seen doing, however, is important to this literature review and this inquiry. The research discussed above seems to suggest that these less visible forces might influence a candidate's disposition. In the next section, however, this literature review explores research that posits that those less visible forces are, in fact, what the term *dispositions* refers to.

Dispositions Are Not Visible

When INTASC began addressing dispositions in 1992, they offered a description of dispositions as something active, but not necessarily visible. In their most recent iteration, they state that, ". . . 'critical dispositions' indicates that habits of professional action and moral commitments that underlie the performances play a key role in how teachers do, in fact, act in practice" (2011, p.6). They also include the terms: "adopts," "appreciates," "believes," "is committed to," "has enthusiasm," "persists," "realizes,"

"recognizes," "responds," "seeks," "is sensitive to," "understands," and "values"

throughout their standards. These terms are not explicitly visible, and the word "underlie"

could be a key indicator that INTASC may not see dispositions as entirely visible.

Some other definitions of dispositions in the literature include "values," "beliefs,"

and "judgment," which are also perhaps less visible. Within those definitions, some

theorists include visible actions or attributes, but point to something else to define

dispositions.

Dispositions are Internal

Schussler, Bercaw, and Stooksberry (2008) define *dispositions* as:

The internal filter that affects the way a teacher is inclined to think and act on the

information and experiences that are part of his/her teaching context. This filter is

shaped by a teacher's prior experience, beliefs, culture, values, and cognitive

abilities. (p. 106)

Different from those definitions shared in the previous section, this definition

focuses on the filter *as* the disposition—something that is not visible, but influences

action. Similarly, Usher, Usher, and Usher (2003) discuss "internal tendencies, beliefs,

and meanings" that lead to "thoughts, feelings, and actions." Wilkerson and Lang (2007)

focus on candidate dispositions as precursors for/to visible action in their definition:

"Attitudes, values, and beliefs that influence the application and use of knowledge and

skills." Deakin-Crick (2004) subscribes to the idea that dispositions include values,

beliefs, actions, and experiences as well. Two of Bunch's (2006) other categories include

"habitual frames of mind," and "values, beliefs and intentions evidenced in patterns."

Each of these definitions of the construct dispositions point to something internal that cannot be seen. Others who seem to be defining dispositions similarly talk of "characteristics," "attitudes," "qualities," and "capabilities" and use these terms synonymously with the term dispositions.

Dispositions are Qualities or Characteristics

Bunch (2006), when listing what he believes to be the common categories that definitions of dispositions can be lumped into, speaks mostly of actions. He too, however, points out that some think dispositions can be characteristics or qualities. Indeed, "attitudes, inclinations, and personal qualities" is one of his categories. Others use the terms "characteristics," "capabilities," and "qualities" to describe disposition as well. Ritchhart (2001), for example, synthesizes his understanding of dispositions: "Dispositions are characteristics that animate, motivate, and direct our abilities toward good and productive thinking and are recognized in the patterns of our frequently exhibited voluntary behavior" (p. 146).

Salomon (1994) also believes candidate dispositions are more than just what is visible, as Tishman and Andrade (1999) state in summing up Salomon's work, "A disposition is a cluster of preferences, attitudes, and intentions, plus a set of capabilities that allow the preferences to become realized in a particular way."

Finally, Sockett (2009) conceives of dispositions as virtues:

Dispositions on this argument are thus seen as the professional virtues, qualities, and habits of mind and behavior held and developed by teachers on the basis of their knowledge, understanding, values, and commitments to students, families,

their colleagues, and communities. Such dispositions—of character, intellect, and

care—will be manifest in practice, will require sophisticated judgment in

application, and will underpin teachers' fundamental commitments to education in

a democratic society, such as the responsibility to set high standards for all

children, a profound concern for each individual child and for a classroom and

school environment of high intellectual and moral quality. (p. 301)

In this definition, Sockett points out the *underpinning* nature of dispositions, but cautions

that in relation to the visible manifestation, dispositions are not entirely causal, "Rather,

dispositions are the property of the agent, manifest only in intentional action, and they

function as predictions about humans actions but are not the causes of them" (p. 292). His

idea that dispositions are virtues, along with the others in this section that define

dispositions in terms of values, beliefs, judgments, characteristics, capabilities, and

qualities, all point to dispositions as something that may not be entirely visible.

Summary

According to the literature reviewed, "dispositions" have been defined, on one

hand, as something that is visible. The more frequently actions are repeated and seen, the

more clearly attributable to a candidate they become. Furthermore, much of the literature

claims that dispositions are under the control of the person displaying them—dispositions

are voluntary.

On the other hand, some scholars point to less visible components of a teacher's

makeup that define a candidate's disposition. Internal qualities such as "virtues,"

"attitudes," and "characteristics" are used to describe these qualities that are not visible,

but may underlie, be related to, or drive visible action.

Sockett's (2008) framework for dispositions, which delineates dispositions of care, character, and intellect, capture most of these conceptions of both the visible and not visible. Sockett is clear that his three categories "frequently overlap" and that they are "indicative, not definitive" (p. 296). I outline his framework below as a working model for organizing and understanding dispositions.

Dispositions Related to Care

In his 1989 work, Sockett discusses dispositions of care in terms of Noddings (1984) and lists the primary dispositions of care as "receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness" (p. 17) and goes on to list other virtues of care as "tolerance, tact, discretion, civility, and compassion" (p. 23).   I further describe a few of these virtues in the remainder of this section to further highlight Sockett's conception of the dispositions related to care.

According to Sockett, relatedness "suggests the ability of both" people in a relationship "to fashion the relationship, to contribute to it, and to have it grow," responsiveness "implies the readiness to commit to a relationship, whatever it brings," and receptivity defines a relationship in which both parties are open to the other, building a context of trust and understanding" (p. 17).

Sockett (2009) describes compassion as the child being more important than the subject, and goes on to say that, "to be compassionate, one requires a sense of vulnerability to one's own misfortune" (p. 299). He specifically describes empathy as an important part of compassion.

Dispositions Related to Intellect

Sockett (1989) discusses the "dispositions of intellect" as those things that are right to do in terms of the, "moral rules derived from the principles of social organization" (p. 14). He states that the primary dispositions of intellect are, "wisdom, consistency (in the application of rules), fairness, and impartiality (from the principal of justice), and open-mindedness in the consideration of rules when the ethics of rules is rooted in justice" (p. 17). He then goes on to include, "truthfulness, accuracy, and impartiality" to the list of virtues that he believes are dispositions of intellect. Additionally, in 2009, Sockett further clarifies that "thoughtfulness" and "clarity" ought to be included here. I attempt to further describe each of these virtues in the remainder of this section to further highlight Sockett's conception of the dispositions related to intellect.

Sockett connects his understanding of open-mindedness to Hare (2007). Hare describes open-mindedness in the following way:

> An open-minded person is prepared to entertain any relevant evidence, to concede that an unwelcome conclusion indeed follows, and to allow that a position presently held cannot be sustained. In brief, open-mindedness is an intellectual virtue that reveals itself in a willingness to form and revise our ideas in the light of a critical review of evidence and argument that strives to meet the elusive ideals of objectivity and impartiality. (p. 9)

Socket also explains his conception of truthfulness and connects to what it might actually look like in classrooms.

Truthfulness can apply to many aspects of teaching, according to Sockett (2009), not the least of which is in regard to content. This would include the ideas of being

accurate in presenting content and being sincere in terms of interpersonal relation and

communication, but also, as Sockett states, "In classrooms, this means children

recognizing their teachers as trustworthy in the knowledge of what they are being taught"

(p. 298).

<u>Dispositions Related to Character</u>

"The fundamental idea behind an ethics of character is that knowledge, through

education and self-knowledge, affords intrinsic rewards to the individual, issuing in the

self-fulfilling conduct that Aristotle called "eudaimonia" (Sockett, 1989, p. 12). This idea

of "eudaimonia" or "human flourishing," in Sockett's understanding, would mean that,

"the central task of teacher education would be to take the initiative in discovering what

values he or she identifies with, then explore ways to understand those values as virtues

related to character (i.e., intellectual courage)" (p. 18). I included "wit" in this category as

well, in the tradition of Aristotle, who includes this as a virtue of character. I further

describe a few of these virtues in the remainder of this section to further highlight

Sockett's conception of the dispositions related to care.

According to Sockett (2009), self-knowledge, describes a person who "constantly

explores how he or she is seen by others and is self-reflective but open to the assistance

of others in determining reasons and motives for his or her actions and beliefs." He also

discusses endeavor and describes it as, "including virtues of the will, such as persistence,

perseverance, and heed" (p. 296).

With Sockett's (2009) conception of dispositions in mind, an understanding of

how teacher candidate dispositions are being operationalized, developed, and assessed in

teacher education can help to further illuminate the picture of how dispositions are attended to in teacher education.

Operationalizing, Developing, and Assessing Dispositions in Teacher Education

Guided by the question, "How do teacher education programs approach the tasks of operationalizing, developing, and assessing teacher candidate dispositions?", databases were searched for information on how teacher education programs attend to candidate dispositions in their programs. Specifically, the literature reviewed included those with processes, instruments, and assignments that could be replicated. Approximately 50 such articles and chapters were found, many of which are highlighted below.

This review builds on the work of four large research studies. This includes surveys of university teacher education programs (Ginsberg & Whaley, 2003; Elllis, Lee & Wiley, 2009), foci on summative assessment instruments (Young & Wilkins, 2008), and "a cross-case analysis of institutional narratives, probing for patterns, insights, and lessons for the field" (Murrel, Diez, Feiman-Nemser, & Schussler, 2010, p. 177).

Those four large-scale studies that were uncovered utilized surveys and case studies to try to gain a better understanding of how dispositions are being operationalized, developed, and assessed in teacher education programs. Drawing on the information from those four studies listed above, as well as the other literature reviewed, the following themes emerged.

Themes for Operationalizing Dispositions

In the literature, there were specific themes that emerged for the process of operationalizing teacher candidate dispositions in teacher education programs. The first

theme shared here relates back to the definition of the construct *dispositions* in teacher education.

Delineating Terminology

Clarity about what the word dispositions means, or as Feiman-Nemser and Schussler (2010) state, "delineating what the educators mean when they use the term disposition" came up often in the literature as something important to the development and assessment of dispositions. Shiveley and Misco (2010) assert that the first thing that teacher education programs must do if they are to attend to dispositions in teacher education is "clearly define and agree upon what is meant by dispositions" (p. 2).

Diez (in Sockett, 2006) states that, "assessing dispositions requires 'making the invisible, visible' through active means" as she discusses the importance of clarity of what "dispositions" means for a teacher education program. Feiman-Nemser and Schussler (2010) also state, based on their research, that ". . .five of the seven cases provide a formal definition of disposition. . ." (p. 178) and go on to discuss the relative importance and commonality of this. Maylone (2002) lists twenty questions that he "believes must be tackled before you or any institutional committees submit any proposals to the dean, the provost, the president of NCATE or anyone else" (p. 18) and defining dispositions is first on his list.

The literature reviewed argues that understanding what is meant by the term *dispositions* is important, but that further clarification is needed when operationalizing candidate dispositions in teacher education programs. A next step, the literature illuminates, is for teacher education programs to state which specific dispositions they will attend to.

Enumerating Specific Dispositions

Listing exactly which dispositions will be focused on in the teacher education program, or "enumerating" came up time and time again in the literature. As suggested by Feiman-Nemser and Schussler's (2010) cross-case analysis of institutional narratives, many programs enumerate which dispositions they focus on (Harrison, McAffee, Smithey & Weiner, 2007; Notar, Riley, & Taylor, 2009; Payne & Summers, 2008; Wasicsko, 2004; Wayda & Lund, 2005). One example of this comes from the University of Cincinnati. They enumerate "caring," "competence," and "commitment" (Laine, et al., 2010) as the dispositions that they want their candidates to develop. Additionally, at the Boettcher Teachers' Program at the University of Denver, they enumerate five "humanizing dispositions":

a. Commitment to being a learner of diversity and its impact on teaching and learning.

b. Relentless belief in the potential for culturally and linguistically diverse youth.

c. Conviction to co-construct knowledge with students and families.

d. Willingness to accept, embrace, and navigate the complexity of teaching and learning in collaboration with others.

e. Persistence in advocating for students and their families

(Salazar, Lowenstein, & Brill, 2010, p. 45-47).

These programs enumerate the dispositions that they explicitly attend to. According to the literature reviewed, the next step in operationalizing candidate dispositions in teacher education programs is to clearly articulate, to candidates, which dispositions they ought to develop.

Articulating Dispositions to Teacher Candidates

Programs report that it is integral to clearly articulate dispositions that have been enumerated to candidates (Anderson & Brydges, 2010; Branyon, 2008; Fallona & Canniff, 2010; Fischetti, et al., 2010; Flowers, 2006; Harrison, McAffee, Smithey, & Weiner, 2006; Johnson, Eves, & Vare, 2010; Katsarou, 2010; Payne & Summers, 2008; Richardson & Onwuegbuzie, 2003). Similarly, Diez (in Sockett, 2006), in her recommendations from her work at Alverno College, states that the dispositions sought be clearly articulated, and the criteria by which they are assessed be "public and explicit."

One example of how this is done comes from the Watson School of Education at The University of North Carolina, Wilmington (UNCW). They state:

> First, we will push for clear articulation of what we expect of our graduates in terms of knowledge, skills, and dispositions, given our framework and new standards. If potential candidates are aware of our dispositional expectations prior to admission, we may create a culture of leadership for diverse learners from the start and rightly dissuade some from even applying." (Fischetti, Imig, Ndoye, & Smith, 2010, p. 159)

They go on to discuss this articulation as a way to informally guide and assess students as they go through the program. UNCW, and other programs involved in the process of operationalizing candidate dispositions, believe that this process must be collaborative, as well.

Involving Stakeholders in the Process of Operationalization

Many teacher education programs involved faculty members, and in some cases other stakeholders, in the process of dialoging about and collaborating on the definition

and enumeration of dispositions (Salazar, et al., 2003; Wayda & Lund, 2005; Villegas, 2007; Thompson, 2009a; Rike & Sharp, 2008; Richardson & Onwuegbezie, 2003; Payne & Summers, 2008; Laine, et al., 2010; Harrison, McAffee, Smithey, & Weiner, 2006). Teacher educators from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UWEC) describe this process in their college:

> The process began with a three-day collaborative leadership seminar in the summer of 2006. The seminar blended students, faculty, and field professionals from all six departments in our College of Education and Human Sciences. . . twenty eight professionals worked for four full days. . . monthly meetings were held in the evenings during the entire academic year to provide feedback opportunities, discuss emerging concerns, and learn from each other's work. (Hollon, Kolis, McIntyre, Stephens, & Battalio, 2010, p. 120)

Through this process, the group found that they had developed consensus across departments on dispositions, where formerly there were gaps in both understanding and agreement.

Shiveley and Misco (2010) also strongly highlight the importance of a purposeful process, including four specific steps (shared elsewhere in this document), which starts before assessment and is iterative. They suggest that the work must include a great deal of communication and that it is "messy, time consuming, and involves a number of challenges" (p. 2), but hope that their steps are helpful to other programs. The literature shares another step in operationalizing dispositions that potentially addresses the "messiness" of the process. Programs reviewed shared that connecting back to their conceptual framework helped them clarify their purposes.

<u>Connecting to Conceptual Framework of Program</u>

A few of the programs reviewed (Salazar, Lowenstein, & Brill, 2010; Hollon, et al., 2010; Johnson, et al., 2010; Rike & Sharp, 2008) explicitly talked about the importance of connecting operationalization of candidate dispositions to the conceptual framework. Ellis, et al. (2009) also found this in their study, and this connection to conceptual framework was implied in almost all of the articles and chapters reviewed.

In the UWEC program, for instance, they reported that although all of their programs agreed on the foundations of their college's conceptual framework, "each program developed its own set of priorities, taking into account the mandates and best practices of their field, organizational parameters such as time constraints within the program, and faculty philosophies" (Hollon, et al., 2010, p. 124). Therefore, an integral step for them was aligning, across programs, and in doing so, they found that, "We now made clearer a fundamental premise of all our programs: dispositions convey the deep purpose of our programs. They make explicit the moral structure of our program and help us more successfully observe and reflect on *behaviors* as indicators of *ethical choices"* (p. 139, emphasis in original).

Similarly, in 2005 at Winthrop University, Johnson, et al. (2010) evaluated their conceptual framework from 1995 and found a disconnect between their framework and " . . . what our candidates were planning for and implementing in their classrooms" (p. 55). They report that this was a key finding for them in clarifying their goals:

In the next four years, we embarked on a study of our candidates' dispositions and their development. We learned that many candidates were graduating without the

> dispositions outlined in our college's mission. This helped us clarify our goals and
>
> develop a model to base our teaching and assessments. (p. 56)

These authors were adamant about the importance of the connection to conceptual

framework and cautioned against skipping such a step in the process of operationalizing

the construct *dispositions* in teacher education programs.

Delineating, enumerating, and articulating dispositions to candidates, and doing

so through collaboration amongst stakeholders and with fidelity to conceptual framework

are the themes that emerged from the literature for operationalizing candidate

dispositions in teacher education programs. Still other themes emerged from the

literature, however, for the *development* and *assessment* of candidate dispositions in

teacher education.

Themes for Developing and Assessing Dispositions

In the literature reviewed, there were specific themes that emerged for the process

of defining and assessing candidate dispositions in teacher education. These themes

include the use of (a) candidate self-assessment, (b) reflective writing, and (c) the use of

indexes to develop and assess dispositions. Other themes highlight the recognition that

dispositions (d) develop over time and the (e) important role of faculty in this, which

includes both their discussions they have and (f) the training that they receive to work

with candidates on their dispositional development and assessment.

<u>Candidate Self-Assessment</u>

Different from what was found by Ellis, et al. (2009), and Young and Wilkins

(2008), a number of the programs used some sort of candidate self-assessment as part of

the process of developing and assessing candidate dispositions (Anderson & Brydges, 2010; Alawiye & Williams, 2010; Branyon, 2008; Carter, Rea, Valesky, Wilkerson, & Lang, 2010; Flowers, 2006; Fallona & Canniff, 2010; Harrison, McAffee, Smithey & Weiner, 2006; Payne & Summers, 2008). One reason for this is the following: "In order to document our candidates' dispositions, we needed a way to document trends in judgments and actions in particular contexts." (Hollon, et al., 2010, p. 56). This group, at Winthrop University, took candidates' self-reported beliefs and compared them to the candidates' actions, through the use of video and through discussion with the candidates.

Another example of how self-assessment and self-report can be used to help candidates develop dispositions is Hare's (2007) open-mindedness protocol. Sockett (2009) suggests that it can be used as a guide for how a dispositions-as-virtues protocol can illuminate a candidate's dispositions. This particular protocol asks candidates to respond to scenarios and discuss what they might do in a given situation. Not unlike this, but sometimes less directed and prompted, many programs use reflective writing to understand how candidates are developing their dispositions in teacher education programs.

<u>Reflective Writing</u>

Taylor and Wasicsko (2000) share some of these suggested methods of using reflective writing in the development and assessment of candidate dispositions. Journaling (Wilson & Cameron, 1996; Kemp, 1994), and subsequent dialogue through the reflective writing of these candidates, is one of these methods. The Boettcher Teachers Program at the University of Denver also values journaling as an important part of the development and assessment of candidate dispositions (Salazar, et al., 2010).

Other teacher education programs, however, look for more quantitative data on how candidate dispositions are being developed in their programs. Indexes can potentially lend themselves to this type of data collection.

<u>Indexes</u>

Some teacher education programs approach the development and assessment of candidate dispositions in teacher education programs through the use of indexes with teacher candidates. These indexes can be filled out by candidates and/or assessors and involve the rating of candidates in a number of ways based on their responses to statements, questions, and/or scenarios. One such index, developed at Eastern Connecticut State University, the *Eastern Teacher Dispositions Index* (ESTDI) (Singh & Stoloff, 2007) is focused on teacher candidate perceptions.

Wilkerson and Lang (2008) point out some other measures such as Schulte, et al.'s (2004) *Teacher Dispositions Index* (TDI), Wasicsko's (2004) *20-minute hiring assessment,* and Holt-Reynolds' (1991) biographical and metaphorical assessments. Furthermore, Wilkerson and Lang (2008) highlight Hopkins' (1998) breakdown of three affective measures used in assessment tools: *Selected Response, Constructed Response, and Observed Performance.*

Wilkerson and Lang (2008) created their own index called *Dispositions Assessments Aligned with Teacher Standards (DAATS),* which has six steps, involving the collection of multiple data points, in an effort to triangulate data. In addition to self-report, report from supervisors, questionnaire data, reflection, and assessment, students under the care of the candidate or teacher are also interviewed in a focus group, being asked questions about candidates' affect (p. 7).

The Clinical Experience Rubric (CER), developed by Claudia Flowers (2006) at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, conceptualizes dispositions, "as being a multidimensional construct with three related factors: (a) professionalism, (b) teaching quality, and (c) relationship with others," and then is used to assess teacher candidates periodically throughout their program.

Taylor and Wasicsko (2000) share some other indexes that have been used in the field, including high-inference clinical observations and assessments (Combs, 1965), and perceptual rating scales (Wasicsko, 1977). Some of these indexes may be used more than once in a program, with changes noted in how candidates respond or are rated each time. This, the importance of how candidates develop over time, was also a prevalent theme within the literature.

Development of Dispositions Over Time

Multiple programs discuss development of dispositions over time, although the way each program goes about helping candidates develop dispositions over time and the assignments and assessments used vary.

At Montclair State University (MSU) in New Jersey, the faculty decided that they cannot assess dispositions at the time of program entry because they do not feel it is fair to "…expect potential candidates, prior to their preparation in the program, to act in ways that someone already adept at teaching students equitably would act" (Villegas, 2007, p. 376). What the teacher education program at MSU *does* do is recognize beliefs as a pre-cursor to dispositions and utilize what they learn about candidate beliefs through the admissions process to plan instruction and to encourage candidates to self-select in or out of the program (p. 376). So, once candidates are in the teacher education program, MSU

uses, "course embedded performance assessments" that include papers, discussions, journals, and logs to assess candidates' dispositional growth. MSU believes dispositions can be developed and assessed, and base their program on this.

Weiner and Cohen (2003), also focusing on growth over time, illuminate what is done at Adelphi University to develop and assess dispositions: "Rather than set one uniform standard, we suggested that assessment focus on whether candidates have changed as a result of these experiences, and not whether they have met some cutoff score" (p. 8). They resist "training" in favor of "drawing out" dispositions in teacher candidates, and discuss the use of portfolios, role-plays, and interviews in their development process.

Critical readings, group discussions, reflective writing, multimedia presentations, interactions with native informants, and routine classroom observation and feedback cycles are all staples of the Boettcher Teachers Program at the University of Denver (Salazar, et al., 2010). They stress the importance of the relationship between professors and candidates that develops over time. This relationship grows and dispositions are developed through explicit projects and coursework designed specifically to attend to candidates' dispositions (p. 30).

Diez (in Sockett, 2006) lists five principles, grounded in the work that she and the faculty at Alverno College have done, for the assessment of dispositions in teacher education. Two of these principles are specifically about the importance that time plays in the development of dispositions:

1. Dispositions can (and should) be assessed both in structured ways and through ongoing observation of the candidate in action.

2. Dispositions should be assessed over time, as part of an ongoing reflection process.

Diez and her colleagues work in concert to do these things, which most of the programs reviewed herein do. Some rely heavily on this collaboration, but do it in a less formal way, through faculty discussions about candidates and their progress.

<u>Faculty Discussions</u>

The University of Southern Maine relies on professional conversations, held in faculty meetings, to formatively assess and develop dispositions. These purposeful conversations about individual students and their progress are ongoing throughout the candidates' time in the program. There are rubrics, rating scales, and other assignments within the program, but faculty do not focus on these for the development and assessment of teacher dispositions (Fallona & Canniff, 2010).

The input of the faculty plays an integral role in dispositional development and assessment at most of the programs reviewed (Villegas, 2007; Katsarou, 2010), not just at the University of Southern Maine. Given that, some programs reviewed specifically highlight the importance of the training of individuals involved in the assessment and development of candidate dispositions.

<u>Training</u>

Henderson State University included training for assessors in their teacher education program and went through a process to ensure inter-rater reliability (Harrison, McAffee, Smithey, & Weiner, 2006). Similarly, Winthrop University engaged in the training of assessors, and used Kohlberg's (1976) *Moral Reasoning Theory* to develop a matrix, which they use to assess written work based on his three stages of moral development (Hollon, et al., 2010).

This purposeful involvement of faculty and other assessors was a theme that overarched the literature on definition, operationalization, development, and assessment of candidate dispositions in teacher education. Although some of the other emergent themes did not span all areas (definition, operationalization, development, and

assessment), taken together, the emergent themes help paint a clearer picture of how dispositions are being attended to in teacher education programs.

Summary

Specifically delineating terminology, enumeration, and articulation are parts of a clear process that stand out in the literature as essential to the operationalization of dispositions in teacher education programs. It is also recommended that stakeholders are involved in this process and that the conceptualization be connected to the conceptual framework of the teacher education program. So, the literature suggests that through the involvement of stakeholders in a process that is connected to the program's conceptual framework, a teacher education program should:

(1) Clearly state what it means by "dispositions"

(2) Clearly list exactly which dispositions will be developed and assessed, and

(3) Purposefully share this list with candidates.

In the literature, scholars and representatives of teacher education programs shared how they were successful with certain approaches to the development and assessment of candidate dispositions in their programs. Self-assessment and the use of indexes represent more quantitative methods of assessment and development of candidate dispositions, whereas faculty discussions, reflective writing, and tracking change over time through a myriad of assignments represent more qualitative approaches. Finally, authors also articulate the importance of training developers and assessors of candidate dispositions in teacher education programs.

With these approaches to the operationalization, development, and assessment of dispositions in mind, this literature review now shifts focus to the issues that scholars,

theorists, and researchers believe need further consideration when defining, operationalizing, developing, and assessing candidate dispositions in teacher education programs.

Considerations About Dispositions in Teacher Education

Scholars ask teacher educators to consider certain issues and be aware of some potential challenges when defining, operationalizing, developing, and assessing teacher candidate dispositions in teacher education programs. These considerations take on different forms and are communicated in different ways. Maylone (2002), for instance, outlines twenty overarching questions that he "believes must be tackled before you or any institutional committees submit any proposals to the dean, the provost, the president of NCATE or anyone else" (p. 18). Others (Damon, 2007; Splitter, 2010; Sockett, 2009; Villegas, 2007), however, focus on one or two specific considerations instead of, like Maylone (2002), being broad in articulation of their concerns.

Some of these considerations are about the very defining of the term *dispositions*. Others are about the relationships between definition, operationalization, development, and assessment of dispositions. Some scholars ask that conformity be taken into consideration, while others question the empirical research that has been done on candidate dispositions in teacher education. Additionally, this section covers the considerations about the timing of and reasons for the assessment of candidate dispositions that are discussed in the literature. Specifically, the following nine considerations are outlined in the next section: (a) the flexibility of the construct, (b) connections between definition and assessment, (c) candidates conforming, (d) candidates' preconceptions, (e) disconnect between theory and practice, (f) complexity of

the construct, (g) dearth of empirical research, (h) timing of and reasons for assessment, and (i) connections between assessment and development.

The Flexibility of the Construct

The flexibility in the definition of the construct dispositions is one concern that is expressed in the literature. For some, this flexibility is a positive thing. Sockett (2009), for example, discusses just how flexible the definition of dispositions may be and what that means for teacher education programs. "The concept of disposition, therefore, has by default become a viable if ambiguous concept that allows institutions flexibility in conceptualizing it as a requirement for accreditation" (p. 293). Additionally, Levine (2007) summarizes her understanding of how others conceptualize dispositions:

> All told, a person's disposition can be just about anything. It is a behavior, characteristic, or personality trait. It can be a value, a habit, a belief, or something that is guided by a belief but not necessarily a belief itself. It is frequently but often not directly observed behavior, or something that influences behavior. It is intentional, and a 'thing' that can be changed. (p. 11)

It is the very flexibility that Sockett speaks of, however, that causes others (Splitter, 2010; FIRE, 2009) to sound the alarm that teacher education programs can indoctrinate candidates in whatever way they choose. Splitter states that defining, identifying, and describing desirable dispositions in teacher education are the keys to "restoring dispositions to a position of prominence in education" (p. 209). Therefore, he cautions that programs must "avoid the extremes of a murky subjectivism, on the one hand, and a crude behaviorism, on the other" when defining, operationalizing, developing, and assessing dispositions (p. 209).

Villegas (2007) also hints at this potential for subjectivism when she recognizes opponents of dispositional assessment and their assertion that first amendment rights and academic freedom can be infringed upon: "Critics charge that the assessment of dispositions pertaining to social justice makes teacher candidates vulnerable to the imposition of their professors' ideological viewpoints" (p. 370).

Both this concern about subjectivism and the earlier reference to a concern about "crude behaviorism" represent two distinct concerns that the literature encourages teacher education programs to consider, despite their combination in the above quote. There are other concerns about subjectivity, although those that follow focus more on subjectivity in *definition* and what it could lead to, as opposed as to the subjectivity of the assessor.

Connections Between Definition and Assessment

Another related concern involves how the defining of the construct dispositions influences the assessment of said dispositions. Damon (2007) cautions against any ambiguity in definition and wonders about the subjectivity that could be involved: "Aspiring teachers may be held accountable for their innermost beliefs and behavioral tendencies" (p. 368). He advises teacher education programs to agree upon a definition for the term dispositions in order to develop and assess them.

Similarly, Borko, et al. (2007) caution that many critics, including Raths (1985), are very concerned with the methodological issues of reliably and validly assessing something that has not been defined. Hess (2006) calls assessment in teacher education programs a "cloak," insinuating that academic institutions have inherent biases that get framed as "professional necessity" when assessing certain dispositions. "Johnson, Johnson, Farenga & Ness (2005) agree, writing that 'nowhere in the literature can one

find a valid measure of a candidate's (or anyone's) dispositions' (p. 193)" (as cited in

Borko, et al., 2007). Benninnga et al. (2008) and Sockett (2009) both agree that teacher

education programs cannot assess something that has not been defined.

These previous concerns focus on what programs and those who attend to the

work of operationalizing, developing, and assessing dispositions within those programs

may or may not do. The literature, however, also points to the actions of candidates as

something to pay closer attention to.

Candidates Conforming

According to some, it is almost impossible to assess something like dispositions

without the observed knowing that they are being observed and therefore acting as they

believe they should or as the observer wants them to (Hendry, 1975; Villegas, 2007;

Levine, 2007). "In the very act of deciding and defining attributes a candidate must

possess, the vision of what *is* a teacher may lead to conformity by the candidate" (Levine,

2007, p. 5, emphasis in original).

Others worry that candidates should not be told what to believe. Splitter (2010)

summarizes what he calls the "critics'" responses to the movement to develop and assess

dispositions in teacher education: "The central recurring objection appears to be that

educators have no right to insist that their students be 'certain kinds of people,' as

determined by the beliefs, values, and attitudes that they hold" (p. 205). Maylone (2002)

brings up a concern not unlike the ones Splitter summarizes when she states, "There is a

danger that our attempts to produce lists of dispositions might be interpreted as attempts

to produce an army of 'correct' individuals. . . " (p. 17). She also wonders if having

teachers that are very similar, dispositionally, could do more harm then good. "It is likely

that allowing our children to encounter—and wrestle with—a variety of teachers, with a variety of dispositions, not to mention a variety of teaching styles, is probably best in the long run" (Maylone, 2002, p. 14).

The concerns listed above have much to do with the construct dispositions itself and how teacher education programs define, operationalize, develop, and assess them. There are also concerns in the literature, however, about the candidates themselves, and what they bring when they enter teacher education programs and how they understand and approach their own dispositional development whilst in the program.

Candidates' Preconceptions

According to the work of Feiman-Nemser and Schussler (2010), who examined seven institutional narratives, candidates have "ingrained views about teaching, learning, and subject matter," which should not be left unexamined. In order to respond to these preconceptions, teacher educators need exposure, reflection, guidance, explicitness, and learning opportunities to "gain knowledge of themselves and others and learn to act on their commitments" (p. 188). This is not a new idea, as it harkens back to Lortie's (1975) work on the "apprenticeship of observation" and Sockett's (2009) discussion of "individual histories."

Preconceptions and individual histories are not the only concerns about candidates' interaction with their own dispositions shared in the literature. The literature also shares that attention must be given to candidates' self-awareness regarding their dispositions once candidates are matriculated in a teacher education program and begin to develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

<u>Disconnect Between Theory and Practice</u>

In the cases studied, although many candidates expressed certain beliefs, acting them out was a different story. Feiman-Nemser and Schussler (2010) state that this is a problem because although "this means helping teacher candidates acquire and learn to implement a beginning repertoire of curricular, instructional, and management strategies" (p. 189), it was difficult to ascertain where the disconnect between espoused theory and practice originated.

Teacher educators at Winthrop University attempted to narrow this gap between theory and practice, as they determined this to be a serious concern of theirs, and Pottinger (2009) studied this at length and found a significant difference between cooperating teachers' perceptions and candidates' perceptions of their own dispositions. Connected closely to this concern about the potential disconnections between theory and practice is the idea that what teachers do is extremely complex.

<u>Complexity of the Construct</u>

The concern, stated by Feiman-Nemser and Schussler (2010), begins with the idea that dispositions are difficult to isolate when observing practice. These authors discuss the connection between dispositions, knowledge, and skills, and the complexity involved there. They state that candidates are also experiencing and responding to so many different things simultaneously, and this particular reality could cause challenges for assessment of candidate dispositions. "Teachers rarely do one thing at one time" (Feiman-Nemser & Schussler, 2010, p. 191), and due to this, it is difficult to isolate candidate dispositions for development and assessment.

Sockett (2009) shares concerns about complexity as well, and focuses on the clarity of the conceptualization of the construct as a precursor to assessment. Sockett states that he insists on a "distinction between professional dispositions and educational purposes" (p. 292) and then, speaking of assessment, states, ". . . assessment scenarios and tools will only be as good as the sophistication of the construct being assessed" (p. 292). Salazar, et al. (2010) share similar concerns about complexity and assessment and spent time revising their program to address this complexity.

Many authors suggest that one way to address this complexity is through empirical research, but they also have some concerns that they offer about empirical research surrounding candidate dispositions in teacher education.

<u>Dearth of Empirical Research</u>

There seems to be a growing wonder in the literature on dispositions in teacher education about the work that has been done, the definitions that are being bandied about, and the connections to empirical research. One example of this wonder is Shiveley and Misco's (2010) reminder that "recent research has called for clearer definitions," citing Damon (2007), Murray (2007), and Schussler, et al. (2008).

Others, however, question if much research has been done at all, or simply claim that it has not been. "There exists only a small collection of research concerning current and future teachers' values and how these relate to their teaching dispositions" (Welch, et al., 2010, p. 179). Johnson and Reiman (2007) articulate something similar, stating, "Scant research even exists regarding the definition and conceptualization of teacher dispositions" (p. 676). Furthermore, comments such as, "the published literature on

measuring dispositions is sparse" (Wilkerson & Lang, 2007, p. 4), seems to also support the concern that there are not strong connections to empirical research.

The above concerns about empirical research seem to come back, repeatedly, to assessment of candidate dispositions in teacher education programs. There are other concerns in the literature specifically about assessment as well, with authors wondering about a few things. These concerns are dominated by the timing of dispositions assessments, reasons for assessment of dispositions, and connections between assessment and development of dispositions.

Timing of and Reasons for Assessment

The literature brings up a myriad of things to be considered regarding the timing of the assessment of candidates' dispositions. Many of these concerns connect timing (when do we assess?) to the reasons for assessment (why do we assess?). Villegas (2007) and Schussler (2006), for example, believe that dispositions should be assessed during the program, in classrooms, with children. Others, however, discuss the assessment of dispositions prior to candidates' enrollment in teacher education programs as potential "gatekeepers" for entry into or exclusion from programs.

Some proponents of assessing dispositions in teacher education programs argue that the inclusion of dispositional standards and assessment is not to screen candidates and keep them out of teacher education programs, but rather to "ensure that people who are licensed to teach will be committed to fostering growth and learning in all students" (Borko, et al., 2007, p. 361). The idea here is that if teacher education programs understand candidates' individual histories (Sockett, 2009) before or at entry into teacher

education programs, experiences can be created that will help candidates grow and develop the dispositions necessary to teach.

There is also a concern that dispositional assessments are being used as "gate keepers" and/or as ways to "remove" candidates from programs. Sockett (2009) warns of the legal concerns that would surround admitting candidates (or not admitting them) to programs based on ideological tests or character judgments (p. 293) (see Damon, 2007). Maylone (2002) focuses on this concern as well, stating that questions such as, "Does 'attending to disposition' mean that we intend to rate students' dispositions, or that we will institute a dispositional 'pass-fail' mechanism?" (p. 19) and, "Can rubrics inadvertently exclude potentially good teachers?" (p. 19), amongst others, need to be asked. Murrell, et al. (2010) further address the "gate-keeping" concern, reminding readers that there is an important difference between viewing dispositions as fixed entities (and therefore screening candidates in or out based on this) and viewing dispositions as something that can change and grow (p. 16).

Assuming that candidates are not screened out of programs and they have an opportunity to develop dispositions within programs, multiple authors discuss considerations about the connection between the assessment and development of candidate dispositions in teacher education programs.

Connection Between Assessment and Development

In Feiman-Nemser and Schussler's (2010) call to action in the closing chapter of *Teaching as a moral practice*, the authors wonder about two things. One, they query what the next step in the process of dispositional development and assessment could be. Secondly, they ask what *actual* development of dispositions in teacher education

programs could/do look like. Feiman-Nemser and Schussler (2010) state, about the seven program reports in their book (and this seems true about the other program reports and studies analyzed herein), "In general, the case writers were clearer about the dispositions they wanted to develop than they were about what and how particular learning opportunities contribute to that development" (p. 198).

Furthermore, according to Feiman-Nemser and Schussler (2010), the case writers talked more about assessment *as* development, whether explicitly or not, and less about *particular learning opportunities* that candidates were given. So, sharing benchmarks for progression as Salazar, Lowenstein, and Brill (2010) and Hollon, et al. (2010) do (Feiman-Nemser & Schussler, 2010) shows what evidence will be looked for when assessing, but not exactly what can be done along the way, in between those benchmarks, to help candidates develop toward these benchmarks (p. 194).

Finally, Feiman-Nemser and Schussler (2010) bring up one more concern about the connection between assessment and development: "An assessment by itself holds little value. Assessments possess value when they measure something meaningful. Assessments for dispositions are meaningful when they are used as tools for development" (p. 199).

Summary

The review of literature on the definition, operationalization, development, and assessment of dispositions in teacher education yielded various definitions and ways of operationalizing this construct. Theorists and scholars define dispositions in myriad ways and both they and practitioners are attempting to develop and assess teacher candidate dispositions in varying ways. Dispositions are defined as both visible and invisible, and

the development and assessment of dispositions in teacher education, according to the literature, ought to stem from whichever definition a teacher education program decides upon.

The literature highlights multiple approaches to the development and assessment of teacher candidate dispositions that are currently being used in teacher education programs. Some programs use self-report indexes that candidates fill out at varying times throughout a teacher education program, responding to statements using a Likert scale. These responses are connected back to certain categories that have been identified by programs as important to the profession of teaching. Based on this self-assessment, programs gauge how well developed candidates' dispositions are in these areas or how much progress they have made in developing their dispositions in these areas.

Other programs use rubrics and indexes. The teacher education programs share the descriptive assessment tools with candidates at various times throughout programs, they may have discussions with candidates about the expectations included therein, and students may be asked to self-assess as well.

Then there are those teacher education programs that use multiple measures (which may include those above) in a portfolio type of assessment that could include observations in classrooms, journaling, coursework, and interviews. The key to these is that they highlight candidate development over time and are based on performance.

Some of these indexes and rubrics may be used as gatekeeping mechanisms, either to keep candidates from being admitted to or to remove them from programs while in progress. Others, however, are being used to help teacher candidates develop dispositions. The tools (indexes, rubrics, lists of expectations) help communicate with

candidates so that they are aware of what they are supposed to do and how they are supposed to do it. This awareness, along with experience in and exposure to new environments, people, theories, and methods, can help candidates develop along a dispositional continuum. Doing so may also highlight the intimate connection between knowledge, skills, and dispositions discussed in the opening paragraph (NCATE, 2002, 2006, 2008; INTASC, 1992, 2011). All of this, however, is implicit instruction—it involves a *hope* that over time, given clear expectations and exposure, candidates will develop certain things. What does the literature say about explicit instruction, however?

Many of the programs highlighted in the literature state that they have classroom discussions about dispositions and that they revisit the rubric or index periodically— having candidates self-assess and/or be assessed by professors. Beyond that, it is tough to find what is being done, explicitly, to help dispositions that are deemed insufficient or even to help candidates further develop those dispositions that are deemed sufficient. What are teacher education programs actually doing to develop dispositions?

Next Steps

Feiman-Nemser and Schussler (2010) articulate what they believe needs to be done more concisely than others in the field. They discuss three "problems" as they see them, and these problems are evident in the majority of the program reports reviewed:

(1) "The problem of preconceptions*"*—what candidates bring to programs, and why these preconceptions should not go unexplored**,**

(2)   **"**the problem of enactment"—the difference between what candidates say and what they do, and

(3)   "the problem of complexity"—which is connected in that it is difficult to

separate dispositions from knowledge and skills when assessing candidates

because they are doing so much at once.

In summarizing their own investigations, Shiveley and Misco (2010) suggest

another problem: determining how definitions of dispositions can be operationalized.

They also state that being purposeful about the types of assessments needed to evaluate

competence and growth is imperative. Additionally, they state that data, about whatever

assessments are being used, must be collected and analyzed, and then used to "revise the

program's focus, teaching, modeling and assessment of dispositions" (p. 11).

It initially seemed, from a social-constructivist (Vygotsky, 1978) viewpoint, as if

the problem of preconceptions was the paramount problem to study, as it focuses on

where candidates start when they enter teacher education. As the literature came together,

however, it seemed as if there might not be clarity about the current methodology being

employed at the micro level, in teacher education classrooms. Shiveley and Misco (2010)

and Feiman-Nemser and Schussler (2010) both point to the place where teaching occurs,

and this is a place that also seems to need more focused study.

Feiman-Nemser and Schussler (2010) state, "if other teacher educators would

share their wisdom, making their methods of using assessments for the purposes of

development more visible, it would not only benefit teacher candidates. . . it could also

serve as a resource to the field" (p. 199). They go on to say that teacher educators are an

"untapped resource," which connects closely with Shiveley and Misco's (2010) stated

problem of "operationalization." The problem *of operationalization* is about pedagogy;

specifically, how we as teacher educators help candidates connect theory and practice.

Through the tackling of "preconceptions" and "operationalization," the further problems of "enactment" and "complexity" may begin to be addressed, and, if not, more information can be provided for addressing them. With that in mind, the problems of preconceptions and operationalization suggest three important research questions:

(1) What prior beliefs related to dispositions do teacher candidates bring with them to teacher education programs?

(2) What beliefs do teacher education professionals have related to dispositions?

(3) What specific, explicit instructional strategies do teacher educators employ to develop and assess candidate dispositions?

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The proposed inquiry attends to two gaps that have been identified in the literature regarding the research on teacher dispositions in teacher education: (a) preconceptions about dispositions, and (b) operationalization of the construct dispositions in teacher education programs. According to the literature reviewed in the previous chapter, teacher educators are an "untapped resource" in terms of specific pedagogical approaches taken in their classrooms and field supervision. There are many groups involved in this operationalization and each brings their beliefs with them to the process.

In the teacher education program studied here, those involved in the operationalization include university faculty responsible for working with teacher candidates during field placements and in the classroom teaching methods courses (referred to herein as "teacher educators"), K-12 teachers who host teacher candidates during student teaching (referred to herein as "mentor teachers"), and principals and assistant principals who coordinate and oversee these student teaching placements through direct connection with teacher educators (referred to herein as "administrators").

In order to address the other gap in the literature and access teacher candidate preconception*s* in this teacher education program, these candidates' beliefs need to be understood prior to their entry into the program (referred to herein as "pre-program students"). Together, the beliefs of all four groups (referred to herein as "teacher

education professionals") could offer a great deal to teacher education. Thus, this inquiry seeks to understand teacher educators', mentor teachers', administrators', and pre-program students' beliefs related to teacher dispositions.

Beliefs

Although covered in more detail in the literature review (Chapter Two), it is important to note why beliefs are being studied here. First, I look at what beliefs are, and how they might differ from knowledge. Next, I briefly explain the role that beliefs might play in teacher candidate learning and development.

Beliefs Defined

Rokeach (1968) defines beliefs as, "any simple proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person says or does, capable of being preceded by the phrase, 'I believe that. . .'" (p. 113). Dewey (1933) described belief as, "something beyond itself by which its value is tested; it makes an assertion about some matter of fact or some principle of law" (p. 6). Pajares (1992) adds to this understanding by differentiating beliefs from knowledge: "Belief is based on evaluation and judgment; knowledge is based on objective fact" (p. 313). Finally, Sanger and Osguthorpe (2011) expand on these definitions: "We take beliefs to include or have links to cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements, implying that they play a complex role in influencing human action, including teaching practice" (p. 571).

Beliefs Connected to Learning

Teacher beliefs have been connected to teacher practice by many. "Beliefs have long been studied as a crucial aspect of teacher knowledge and teacher decision making

in the classroom" (Fairbanks, et al., 2010). Indeed, Pajares (1992), Richardson (1996, 2003), Bransford and Donovan (2005), and Fenstermacher and Richardson (1993) point to possible connections between beliefs and teacher practice. In the *Teacher Beliefs Study* (Nespor, 1985), the author highlights "the fact that teachers' practices are heavily influenced by their experiences in classrooms—more so, indeed, than by their formal training" (p. 8). This "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975), which includes the time teachers spent in classrooms during their K-12 compulsory education, leads to certain beliefs about teaching and learning that influence how teachers teach.

Sanger and Osguthorpe (2011) cite Richardson (1996, 2003) in stating reasons for attending to teacher beliefs in teacher education:

Richardson argues that *addressing preservice teacher beliefs is especially important when psychologically central—or substantive, deeply held views, based upon experience—exist.* Such beliefs, Richardson and Placier (2001) claim, should be 'the focal point of [teacher] change efforts," so that they can be explicitly processed in light of new information presented (p. 913). (p. 572, emphasis in original)

Raths (2007) makes a similar claim about the importance of focusing on changing beliefs in teacher education, stating that teacher education programs focus too heavily on methods and are "ineffective in improving the current practice of teaching" (p. 385). Each of these authors implores teacher educators to focus more heavily on beliefs. Pajares (1992), in closing, states that:

The study of beliefs is critical to education precisely because, as Kegan (1992) concluded, 'the more one reads studies of teacher belief, the more strongly one

suspects that this piebald of personal knowledge lies at the very heart of teaching'

(p. 85). (as cited in Pajares, 1992,p. 329)

It is this notion that beliefs are *critical* in teacher education that leads me to

explore beliefs related to dispositions further in this inquiry.

Guiding Questions

The following questions guided this inquiry:

1) What beliefs do teacher educators, mentor teachers, and administrators have

   related to:

   (a) the development of candidate dispositions?

   (b) the assessment of candidate dispositions?

   (c) the definition of dispositions?

   (d) the operationalizing of dispositions in teacher education?

2) What beliefs do pre-program students bring with them to teacher education

   programs related to:

   (a) the development of candidate dispositions?

   (b) the assessment of candidate dispositions?

   (c) the definition of dispositions?

   (d) the operationalizing of dispositions in teacher education?

Purpose of Inquiry

This qualitative inquiry will explore beliefs about teacher dispositions through a phenomenological lens. Phenomenological inquiry attempts to view a phenomenon from multiple angles (Merriam, 1998). In this case, the phenomenon, teacher dispositions, is viewed through the lenses of those involved in the process of preparing teacher candidates to become teachers. The participants include teacher educators, practicing mentor teachers, and administrators, P-12, and pre-program college students during their first education course, *Foundations of Education.* At this university, this course is taken before students enter a teacher education program and become teacher candidates. The students were about half way through the semester when they were surveyed.

Specifically, the purpose of this inquiry was twofold:

(1) To understand the participants' beliefs about the development and assessment of candidate dispositions in a teacher education program.

(2) To ascertain participants' beliefs about defining and operationalizing dispositions in a teacher education program.

To summarize, in this inquiry, I wanted to capture and explain the beliefs these different teacher education professionals have about teacher dispositions in teacher education and what experiences they have that may help inform the field. By synthesizing the teacher education professionals' data, I hoped to be able to highlight some similarities and differences in the experiences and understandings of each group and by doing so draw some possible implications for teacher education practice.

The literature review highlighted teacher educators as an "untapped resource" (Feiman-Nemser & Schussler, 2010) and this inquiry looked to tap that resource,

expanding the definition of such to include the practicing mentor teachers and administrators who work closely with a university's teacher education program as teacher education professionals. Furthermore, this inquiry attempted to give students entering a teacher education program a voice, as students' voices were not found in the literature review.

This inquiry was grounded in a constructivist approach and phenomenological research methods were employed. This chapter outlines the following details of inquiry design and methods: (a) overview of phenomenological inquiry, (b) context of inquiry, (c) data sources, (d) data analysis, (e) trustworthiness, and (f) limitations of inquiry

Overview of Phenomenological Inquiry

"Phenomenological inquiry begins with silence."

(Psathas, 1973, as cited in Luttrell, 2010)

Phenomenology dates back to Husserl (1913) and was grounded in his belief that "we can only know what we experience" (as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 105). In the organization of the study of such experiences, or of the phenomena, Schutz (1932), Garfinkel (1960), Merleau-Ponty (1962), Whitehead (1958), Giorgi (1971), Zaner (1970), and Moustakas (1990, 1995) were all very influential on what is today's phenomenological theory and approach to research (Patton, 2002: Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Luttrell, 2010). Moustakas (1994) describes phenomenology as a form of research that attempts to understand what experiences mean for individuals who have had said experiences.

Merriam (1998) believes that phenomenology "underpins all of qualitative research" (p. 15), and reminds us that the purpose of phenomenological inquiry is, "trying

to see the object of study—the phenomenon—from several different angles or perspectives" (p. 158). She discusses phenomenology in terms of its focus on experience and essence, which is a focus in most qualitative studies, but she refers back to Patton (2002), Spiegelberg (1965), and Moustakas (1990) and their articulation of methods that are specific to phenomenological inquiry. Patton (2002) adds to this by explaining "phenomenology" as having multiple applications: as a philosophy, a paradigm, a theory, a perspective or orientation, a tradition, and a framework (p. 104). Others, such as Cresswell (1998) and Rossman and Rallis (1998), suggest certain specific methods for undertaking phenomenological inquiry.

After considering the approaches and contributions of those above, this inquiry followed Patton's (2002) approach, which borrows from Moustakas (1994), due to the clarity and detail of the structure suggested. The five steps in this approach to phenomenological inquiry include:

(1) Epoche: This first step is where a researcher gains awareness of his/her own biases. The hope is that during this step the researcher can avoid judgment and keep an open mind by putting assumptions aside. According to Katz (as cited in Patton, 2002), "This suspension of judgment is critical in phenomenological investigation. . ." (p. 485). In the case of this inquiry, I had pre-existing beliefs about what dispositions are, which ones are important, and how they can be attended to in teacher education programs. I began by journaling about this and then kept these documents open on my computer throughout. This expanded to include notations on data spreadsheets and electronic notes between my advisor and me.

(2) Phenomenological Reduction: Grounded deeply in Husserl's (1913) original ideas, during phenomenological reduction, data was "bracketed" or isolated and examined out of context, separated from all influence and taken at face value. The data were then organized into themes (Patton, 2002, p. 485). Coding, or "assigning some sort of shorthand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of data" (Merriam, 1998, p. 164) helped organize this stage. Memoing (Glaser, 1998) occurred as well, recording notes in margins and side columns while I reflected on the data (Glaser, 1992) and then developing these notes into paragraphs in order to make sense of the data.

These memos were taken in multiple places. In this inquiry, memoing was important because of the nature of my existing biases and deep connection to the topic.

(3) Imaginative Variation: Once the data was organized into themes, these themes were examined more closely and from multiple angles. Boeree (2000) describes this process, "When you feel you have a description of the essential characteristics of a category of phenomena, ask yourself, 'What can I change or leave out without losing the phenomenon?;" He goes on to give an example, "If I color the triangle blue, or construct it out of Brazilian rosewood, do I still have a triangle? If I leave out an angle, or curve the sides, do I still have a triangle?" (p. 1). In terms of teacher candidate dispositions, if we take out all verbal interactions, are we still talking about dispositions? If one can't observe an action, are we still talking about that person's

disposition? The process was perhaps the most challenging, as there was such

an extensive amount of varying data in response to certain questions (covered

in more detail later).

(4) Textural Portrayal: In this stage, I described the experiences of the participants

without telling what the experience was. The data was described in the

abstract (Patton, 2002, p. 486). For this inquiry, I described participants'

experiences with dispositions through free writing exercises. I tried to bracket

the stories to explain the essence. When a participant described a situation

wherein a candidate was kicked out of the program, for example, I tried to

leave out the reasons for such and just focus on being kicked out.

(5) Synthesis: Finally, I took the experiences as a whole and looked for the deeper

meanings. Moustakas (1994) states that this is "a way of understanding *how*

the co-researchers as a group experience *what* they experience. This was my

final writing stage and it involved multiple rewrites and reorganizations in an

effort to draw all of the themes together in a way that truly captures the

participants' experiences and beliefs. Audit (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) has

helped to verify the truthfulness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of this writing.

These steps helped to organize the inquiry in such a way that it should lend itself

to understanding the participants' experiences and being able to describe the essence of

those experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

Why Phenomenological Inquiry?

Phenomenological inquiry was chosen for this inquiry in large part because of the ambiguity of the term "dispositions" in teacher education. Luttrell (2010) articulates the applicability of this type of inquiry here:

> Some might attempt to resolve the discrepancy between the views of various users of the concept by calling for a more precise definition of the term—in other words, to create consensus by deciding on 'real' definitions . . . but qualitative researchers attempt to expand rather than confine understanding . . . they seek to study the concept as it is understood in the context of those who use it. It is multiple realities rather than a single reality that concern the qualitative researcher. (p. 37)

Because each of the groups of teacher education professionals who participated here may have very different realities, they could add to a greater understanding of the phenomenon, dispositions, in teacher education. I was not seeking consensus nor was I trying to "prove" what dispositions are or which dispositions are important. Instead, from a constructivist standpoint, I tried to add to the understanding of dispositions so as to better be able to prepare teacher candidates for their important work with students.

Context of Inquiry

Location and Time Frame

This inquiry was undertaken in a teacher education program at a college of education in the Northern Rocky Mountain region where many university faculty members have supervision of elementary and secondary teacher candidates in the teacher

education program as a part of their assigned teaching loads. Data were collected during

the spring of 2013, after gaining approval from the Institutional Review Board.

Teacher Education

There are multiple programs within teacher education at this university. The elementary education program is an intensive, focused undergraduate initial teacher preparation program for K-8 state certification. The secondary education programs (in multiple content areas) include undergraduate initial teacher preparation programs and a graduate certification program, both for state certification in teaching grades 6-12.

The programs emphasize field experiences and the cultivation of reflective practitioners. Mentor teachers and administrators at local schools partner with the university faculty members (teacher educators) and focus on partnerships for professional development at every level. Each teacher educator works with one or more "partner schools" with varying numbers of teacher candidates (some teacher educators have just one candidate, others have upwards of 20 in one or multiple buildings). Teacher educators observe teacher candidates multiple times each month and hold periodic seminars with the candidates and periodic meetings with the mentor teachers. Consistent communication with the administrator(s) is also key to the partnership relationships. The teacher candidates spend a "Professional Year" (PY) in these partner schools: typically three days per week in the first semester for an 'internship' and then full-time 'student teaching' for an entire semester.

Pre-Program Coursework

One of the first courses that all students who aspire to enter the college of education's teacher education program take is titled *Foundations of Education.* The construct *dispositions* is addressed in this course by the faculty member (teacher educator) teaching the course. The description of this course in the catalog reads, "Social,

multicultural, philosophical, and historical perspectives in education; current educational issues; and problems of education. Provides a conceptual framework from which students will learn to reflect upon and question American public education" (http://web1.boisestate.edu/registrar/catalogs/online/programs/coe/cifs/c-ed-cifs.shtml).

The School Districts

Two of the many school districts who partner with the university are the two largest in the state, with 35,188 students in one and 25,247 in the other (http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/statistics/fall_enrollment.htm). With access to such large districts, both of which are within a fifteen-mile range of campus, university faculty (teacher educators) who supervise candidates in the schools are able to develop close relationships with mentor teachers and administrators due in part to their proximity. Some of these mentor teachers and administrators teach courses at the university and others are enrolled in graduate programs at the university.

Participants

Those who participated are members of four distinct groups, each of whom plays a role in teacher education.

(1) Pre-program students enrolled in sections of the *Foundations of Education* course in the middle of the semester in the spring of 2013.

(2) University faculty designated as "teacher educators," which include those supervising candidates in schools and those teaching *Foundations of Education, Educational Psychology, Educational Technology,* and any *Methods* instructors.

(3) Mentor teachers from both participating districts, from both secondary and elementary education, who are currently working with or were working with teacher candidates from this university within the past year.

(4) Administrators from both districts, from both secondary and elementary education, who are currently working with or were working with teacher candidates from this university within the past year.

These four groups were identified purposefully due to their potential for differing perspectives and experiences. The pre-program college students, most assuredly, were chosen because I want to ascertain what they know prior to their entry into the program. The district and university employees were chosen because of the roles they play in defining, operationalizing, developing, and assessing these candidates' dispositions later in the program. Teacher educators, mentor teachers, and administrators will from here on out be referred to as "teacher education professionals" when spoken of as a group. These teacher education professionals are also involved in the hiring and dismissal of teachers and are potential stakeholders in the entrance of "good" teachers into the workforce. Students currently in their professional year (described above as teacher candidates) were excluded from this inquiry because a pilot study indicated that their coursework did address dispositions and therefore they were not necessarily sharing only their experiences and understandings they brought to the program, but perhaps some they had developed during the program.

After considering a number of approaches to participant selection, all cooperating mentor teachers and administrators, all students in all sections of *Foundations of*

Educations in the spring, 2013 semester, and all teacher education faculty (teacher educators) were asked to participate in this inquiry.

Sample Size

The following information was obtained through collaboration with the Office of Teacher Education (OTE):

1) 50 administrators were invited to participate in this inquiry. 20 administrators agreed to participate, 5 declined, and the other 25 did not respond to the request to participate. Of the 20 who agreed to participate, 19 administrators participated by responding to the survey in full.

2) 245 mentor teachers were invited. 93 agreed to be participate and 3 declined. There were no other responses. 85 mentor teachers participated by responding, in full, to the survey.

3) 50 teacher educators were invited to participate, 43 agreed to participate, 0 declined, and of those 43, 40 teacher educators participated in this research by responding in full to the survey.

4) There were 120 students enrolled in all sections of 201, *Foundations of Education* during the spring, 2013 semester. The section breakdown is as follows, in number of students: 25, 30, 33 (my section), and 32. All 120 were invited, 94 agreed to participate, 0 declined, and 79 students participated.

Pilot Study

A pilot study to explore the question "What beliefs do pre-service teachers have about the definition, assessment, and development of candidate dispositions in teacher

education programs?", utilizing a survey (attached as Appendix A), was undertaken in 2010 with candidates in their final year of an elementary teacher education program at an NCATE accredited University in the Northern Rocky Mountain region. This included undergraduate candidates in three different upper division pedagogy courses; one focused on classroom learning environments, one focused on teaching science, and the other on teaching social studies.

Findings seemed to indicate that teacher candidates have varying understandings of what dispositions are but are unsure of if they can and should be developed and assessed in teacher education programs. They seemed to agree that dispositions are an important part of being a teacher and that dispositions can and should be developed, but they were less certain that they can be accurately assessed or should be assessed. This survey has been refined for use in the current inquiry.

Data Sources

Each participant was surveyed (See Appendix B), using *Qualtrics* software, for initial feedback regarding their experiences with and understandings of the construct "dispositions" in teacher education. Each participant was asked for his/her name and was asked to agree to a follow up interview. The survey is a pre-interview protocol. A different survey link was set up for each of the four groups identified above (mentor teachers, administrators, teacher educators, pre-program students) so that each participant could be easily associated with their peers.

Initially, the plan was that once survey data was compiled and analyzed, follow-up, one on one, hour long interviews would be conducted by the principal investigator, in person, at the college of education. The purpose of these interviews was to ask clarifying

questions, verify themes, and delve deeper into answers that were given in the survey.

Reviewing the survey data provided rich, complex responses in which participants shared

lengthy responses and their rationale for such. Because of this, I determined that follow

up interviews were not needed, as there may not be much new information that

participants could give if queried in an interview setting.

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Data Analysis

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Adhering to Patton's (2002) approach to phenomenological inquiry, but also

grounded in the work of Creswell (2003), Glaser and Strauss (1967), and Merriam

(1998), survey data was analyzed in the following manner: *Categorization, Textural

Portrayal*, and *Synthesis*.

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Categorization

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First, survey data was categorized into themes that emerged during the data

analysis process. In line with Merriam (1998), themes reflect the purpose of the inquiry,

are exhaustive, are mutually exclusive, are sensitizing, and are conceptually congruent

(pp. 183-184). During this process, care was taken to adhere to Patton's (2002) first three

steps of Epoche, Reduction, and Imaginative Variation. To do this, I recognized my own

biases in a field journal, was certain to "bracket" the data (Husserl, 1913; Patton, 2002),

and looked at it from multiple angles. Organizational charts (Patton, 2002) were used to

organize and analyze data.

To accomplish each of these criteria set up by Merriam (1998), themes were

repeatedly checked, using Glasser and Strauss's (1967) constant comparative method and

Lincoln and Guba's (1981) guidelines for category creation. With those in mind, each of Merriam's (1998) criteria is described below.

Themes Should Reflect the Purpose of Research

Each theme, as developed, was checked repeatedly to see if it "answers" the research questions posed in this inquiry. The following questions guided this inquiry:

1) What are the beliefs of teacher educators, mentor teachers, and administrators related to:

   a. the development of candidate dispositions?

   b. the assessment of candidate dispositions?

   c. the definition of dispositions?

   d. the operationalizing of dispositions in teacher education?

2) What beliefs do pre-program students bring with them to teacher education programs related to:

   a. the development of candidate dispositions?

   b. the assessment of candidate dispositions?

   c. the definition of dispositions?

   d. the operationalizing of dispositions in teacher education?

Therefore, the emergent themes must help to explain each of these.

Themes Should be Exhaustive and Mutually Exclusive

All data should fit into one of the categorized themes. Where there was a piece of data that was left without a category, themes were reanalyzed. Likewise, when an emergent piece of data could fit into more than one category, or theme, then this theme

was reexamined, as were the others, and refined to separate data exclusively. The literature on teacher dispositions clearly shows some overlap in both these ways, so there are places where the themes do overlap, and that was determined to be acceptable given the nature of this particular phenomenological inquiry.

Themes Should be Sensitizing and Conceptually Congruent

Clarity is the focus here. When a reader sees the name of the theme, the reader should automatically know what they should find there. In other words, "The naming of the category should be as sensitive as possible to what is in the data" (Merriam, 1998, p. 184).

The themes also needed to make sense in a way that has each theme, and any subcategories, at the same conceptual level.

Specific to Question 2, which asked participants to define "dispositions" in their own words, analysis was done in two different ways. Because many of the participants used multiple terms when defining dispositions, the data was analyzed in two different ways:

1) Word Count (how often a given term was used to define "dispositions")

2) Participant Count (how many participants define dispositions a certain way).

Specific to questions 5 and 7, which asked about the positive dispositions that teachers should have and the negative dispositions that they should not have, the following process was followed. Consistent with the literature, these questions garnered answers with the highest level of complexity. First, commonalities were looked for and tallies were made, indicating the frequency with which a specific response was given. For

positive dispositions (question 5), six themes emerged that included the most frequent answers, with another 24 themes that grouped similar responses where at least ten people responded similarly. The negative dispositions (question 7), grouped similarly, and were in most cases the exact opposite of the positive ones listed in question 5.

Next, I compared the data and combined categories based on antonyms found in question 7 to those responses in question 5. Where there was a direct antonym to a category in question 5, those two were conflated. For example, if someone answered "honest" to question five, as a desirable disposition, and someone answered "dishonest" to question 7, as a disposition that is not desirable, then one category was created: Honesty.

Where responses to question 7 did not correlate to those in question 5, those responses were changed to the positive version of the word or phrase for reporting purposes with an assumption that the opposite would be desirable. Even with this consistency between the two sets of data and some seemingly strong themes, there were 30-40 responses to each question that did not fit, and some overlap between the themes. At that point, I looked back at my literature review and to other frameworks to help organize and report this data.

The literature review revealed a number of frameworks for organizing and making sense of the dispositions. Schussler, Stooksberry and Bercaw (2010), for instance, state that, "As a means to foster the development of candidates' awareness of their dispositions" (p. 12), they propose their framework, which delineates three dispositional domains: intellectual, moral, and cultural. I found, with my data set, that the cultural and moral domains from these researchers did not fully capture the responses of

the participants in this study.

I next looked at Sockett's (2008) framework, which includes dispositions of care, character, and intellect. Given the work that Sockett has done in the field and basis of my work in his, I believed that it would be worthwhile to try and utilize his work to organize my data set. After beginning to categorize the data, I found myself having difficulties organizing my data within the dispositions of intellect, and therefore my data did not seem to fit. At this point, I put this aside and I continued to search the literature.

Johnson and Reiman (2007), attempt to classify dispositions based on Kohlberg's stages of moral development, looking at "professional judgment" and "professional action." This research was intriguing in terms of my review of the literature, which uncovered the difference between dispositions as visible (professional action) and dispositions as invisible (professional judgment). When I began the task of attempting to organize the data via this framework, however, I ran into a similar problem as I did in my initial attempts at organization—I simply had very long lists and a number of responses that did not quite fit into either list.

Finally, when trying to create my own framework to organize this data, I found myself creating categories similar to Sockett's (2008) framework for dispositions, which delineates dispositions of care, character, and intellect, and therefore I went back to his framework and attempted to organize my data using this framework once again. This time, the responses that did not fit were put aside, and as that list of "leftovers" grew, some other themes began to develop. Sockett is clear that his three categories "frequently overlap" and that they are "indicative, not definitive" (p. 296), yet there was no logical reason to force responses into these categories. Sockett's categorization also does not

explicitly account for a conception of dispositions that includes pedagogy and professionalism, necessarily, and it was these responses that did not fit neatly into his framework. Therefore, two new categories were created to account for the responses that directly related to pedagogy and professionalism.

Textural Portrayal

This descriptive stage of data analysis helped to link the themes together, schematically, in a way that continued to help interpret the data while also giving me the opportunity to infer and conceptualize (Merriam, 1998, p. 187). This level of analysis attempted to get at *what* was experienced by the participants, or "a description of lived experiences" (Thomas, 2006, p. 241).

Synthesis

Here "a coherent story or narrative about the experience" (Thomas, 2006, p. 241) was told. All of the experiences of the participants were taken as a whole and deeper meanings were searched for. This level of analysis attempted to get at *how* the participants experienced what they experienced. As explained above, this step was contingent upon all the others having gone well and relied largely on the audit (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and researcher notebook (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) discuss *trustworthiness*, in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability, as the criteria by which qualitative research ought to be judged. To contrast, in quantitative research, researchers look for reliability, validity, and objectivity in research studies. In both paradigms, the purpose of

assessing for these things is to judge the quality of the research. I strived to show the

trustworthiness and quality of this inquiry by analyzing my own work for credibility,

transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe credibility as establishing that the results of the

research are believable, but add that to establish credibility, only the perspective of the

participants matter (p. 213). One way to do this is through "member checks" (Lincoln &

Guba, 1985, p. 314) or "stakeholder checks" (Thomas, 2006). By checking back in with

participants, through follow up conversations and through the sharing of manuscript

drafts, and asking them if I have accurately captured their experiences and responses, I

can be assured that this research is credible. This was not done in a formal manner

because of the directness of the responses. Participants either provided lists of specific

dispositions or provided rich description in narrative form. Informally, however, due to

the nature of my work, multiple follow up conversations have been held with participants

from each group. Specific responses and generalities in the data were discussed, with

participants confirming their answers and general beliefs as expressed in the survey

responses.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of this inquiry can be

transferred or applied to other contexts. It is up to others, who read this work, to decide

how they can transfer this information to other contexts. I have ensured this through my

detailed, in-depth, description and openness. My role is to "provide only the thick

description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316).

Dependability

Dependability means that the process undertaken (research methods) and the product presented (data and data interpretation and presentation) corroborate one another. The question asked here is "has the researcher done what he/she said he did?" One way to do this, suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and referenced by Thomas (2006) is to have an auditor authenticate the work by reading through the manuscript and affirming that process and product do, in fact, match up. Dr. Greg Hoetker has been intimately involved in this work, as an auditor, and has poured over participant responses, researcher notebook, and researcher coding. Additionally, Dr. Hoetker did some coding of his own, independent of me, and we compared our coding methods and codes.

Confirmability

Confirmability is about the perspective of the researcher. In this case, due to the nature of phenomenological research and my commitment to *epoche,* confirmability, or the recognition of my perspectives, biases, beliefs and the changing nature of the context, is already a strong focus of mine. The audit mentioned above, however, assured confirmability as well as dependability.

Potential Limitations

There are many potential limitations to this inquiry. The short period of time during which the inquiry was conducted, the small sample size, and the fact that a

convenience sample (Cresswell, 1998) was used stand out to me as things that may limit the trustworthiness of the data. Additionally, there are some elements of phenomenological inquiry that lend themselves to question. Although they are mentioned above, they are worth mentioning again here as potential limitations: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. No matter how thorough one is, the subjective nature of phenomenological inquiry lends itself to question and interpretation in these areas. Therefore, I examined each, specifically, in terms of how it may have limited the trustworthiness of this inquiry.

Time Period

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that researchers embed themselves in the culture they are studying for a lengthy period of time to ensure trustworthiness, but caution against "going native." Although I have worked in multiple schools in these districts for the past four years and built many strong, lasting relationships in some buildings and with some participants, I was not be deeply embedded, nor was I present for any lengthy period of time, for the purpose of this inquiry, which lasted but a few short months.

Going Native

While my relative "nativeness" should not have been an issue, those who I have worked with most closely were some of those who agreed to participate. Surprisingly, it was administrators with whom I had not worked closely who took the most interest in this inquiry, and, in fact, encouraged others to do so. Additionally, many mentor teachers with whom I do have close, working relationships with seemed to be the most

comfortable sending me an email stating that they did not have the time right now to participate in this inquiry.

Member Checks

Member checks were not formally performed. This could have provided more clarity, and will be done in follow up studies, but were not done here.

Convenience Sampling

Weiss (1994) cautions that convenience sampling, or finding whomever is available that can offer insight on a topic, is not the most "scientifically precise" method. In this case, I limited my potential participants to only two of the many districts that work with the university because of their proximity to campus and because they are two within which I am most present. Furthermore, I thought it likely that those who know me, or know of me, would be more likely to participate than those who do not, potentially skewing the data. This familiarity, however, could be helpful because of my relative nativeness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which was discussed above.

Credibility

This inquiry was designed, with follow up interviews and member checks, to be continuously checking for credibility in an iterative fashion. It is still possible, however, that some credibility could be lost due to a lack of participant engagement or researcher/participant communication, as is covered above.

Transferability

I believe that I provided thick description, detail, in-depth description, and

openness necessary to make the findings from this inquiry transferable. See attached letter from auditor (Appendix C) for further clarification.

Dependability and Confirmability

A former graduate of this doctoral program, Dr. Greg Hoetker, agreed to be the auditor for this inquiry. When he was working on his dissertation, I audited his work, and he agreed to do so for me, in kind. He has a deep understanding of the requirements of such a role. His commitment to this process was of utmost importance, for he was responsible for truly understanding the nature of the work. Following my writing, from the epoche stage, through memoing and coding, and specifically focusing in on my overall trustworthiness, this auditor had to sift through piles of data and stay in close contact with me throughout the process, which was not easy to do over the summer months. A letter is attached (Appendix C), certifying his involvement in this process.

In the next chapter, I share the data that was collected during this inquiry and analysis of this data. The auditor and my dissertation chair played a significant role in checking my analysis for credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in an effort to help me establish trustworthiness and quality of this inquiry.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The data was rich in terms of the depth that the participants provided in their answers. In this chapter, I share the participants' responses to each question, organized by emergent theme. Percentages and tallies of responses are given, as well as direct quotations. Where necessary, tables are utilized to provide descriptive detail regarding participants' responses to a given question.

For the remainder of this manuscript, four codes are used to cite participants, and they link to the reports in the appendices for reference. Administrators are coded with an "A" and a number, both in parenthesis, based on when they responded to the survey. So, the eleventh administrator to respond to the survey is coded, "(A11)." Likewise, mentor teachers are coded with an "MT," teacher educators with a "TE," and students with an "S," all followed by a number.

Participant Beliefs About the Definition of Dispositions

Participants were asked to "define the term dispositions in your own words," which yielded 104 different "definitions." Some of the definitions were repeated by multiple participants (see Table 4.1) and many of the responses from participants included more than one term or definition. Therefore, the words/phrases themselves were counted and are outlined below. Keeping with the literature, the responses were categorized into four overarching themes:

(1) Participants define dispositions as something visible.

(2) Participants define dispositions as something internal, or not visible.

(3) Participants define dispositions using a term that they believe to be visible, others believe to be invisible, or there is no clear explanation/determination of visibility.

(4) Participants include both the visible and the invisible in their definition.

In this first section, I outline those participant responses that indicated a belief in something that is visible.

Participants Believe Dispositions Are Visible

Of the 100 different definitions given by participants, 22 of the definitions described dispositions as something visible. These 22 words or phrases were used by participants 184 times. Some of these terms indicating visibility include "handles" (A11), "reacts" (MT3), "acts" (MT32), "responds" (MT72), "behaves" (S2), "answers" (MT28), and "expresses" (S21). Other participants stated things like, "way of carrying one's self" (S64), "presenting one's self" (MT83), "engagement with others" (S7), "interaction with others" (S33), and "communication with others" (TE24). Similar to terms used more often in the literature, words like "habits" (TE22), "tendencies" (TE26), "appearance" (TE32), "actions" (MT28), "mannerisms" (MT37), and "conduct" (TE34) were used. Also the idea of what someone looks like or appears to be was shared through terms such as, "expression of. . . " (MT76), "what one does in certain situations" (S4), "what one does when no one is looking" (S1), "what comes across to or is perceived by others" (A19), "body language" (TE7), and "non-verbals" (S55). The remainder of the responses in this category are included below in Table 4.1. In the following section, I outline the responses that indicated a belief that dispositions are something not visible.

Table 4.1   Dispositions are Visible

Number of Times Participants Used Each Term or Phrase					
	Administrators	*Mentors*	*Educators*	*Students*	**Totals**
Behavioral response including *handles, reacts, acts, responds, behaves, deals with, answers, expresses*	7	27	13	32	79
Engagement, Interaction, relates to, Communication with others	0	10	5	20	35
Tendencies	0	3	7	4	14
Carries/presents themselves, holds themselves, portrays themselves	0	6	1	3	10
Perceived/described/seen by others, comes across to others	0	2	0	7	9
Act over time, consistently, pattern, frequently	0	1	3	2	6
Habits	0	2	1	2	5
Does in certain situations	0	4	0	0	4
Body language, nonverbal	0	1	2	0	3
Conduct	0	1	1	1	3
Manner, Mannerisms	0	3	0	0	3
Personal Appearance	0	1	1	0	2
What you do/how you act when no one is looking	0	1	0	1	2
Enacted theory of learning	0	0	1	0	1
Presence	0	1	0	0	1
Influenced by attitudes and beliefs	0	1	0	0	1
Affective	0	0	1	0	1
Outward	0	1	0	0	1
Something that is demonstrated	0	1	0	0	1
Reveals	0	0	1	0	1
Comes out when time for thought is not available	0	0	1	0	1
What someone is likely to do	0	0	1	0	1
TOTALS	**7**	**66**	**39**	**72**	**184**

Participants Believe Dispositions Are Not Visible

Of the 100 different definitions given by participants, 34 of the definitions

described dispositions as something not visible or audible, and those 34 terms were used

by participants 143 times. Some of these terms, much like what was frequently in the

literature, were indicating visibility include "beliefs" (TE6), "values" (TE28), "feelings"

(A4), "emotions" (TE13), " virtues" (TE30), "stance" (TE40), and "state of being"

(MT52). Other terms included are: "inspiration" (TE19), "cognitive approach" (TE34),

"way of thinking" (MT29), "way of viewing the world" (MT52), "understanding"

(MT58), "philosophy" (A13), and "perspective" (MT61), as well as others (Table 4.2).

In the following section, I outline the responses that indicated a belief that was unclear

about the visibility of dispositions.

Table 4.2   Dispositions Are Not Visible

Number of Times Participants Used Each Term or Phrase				
	Administrators	*Mentors*	*Educators*	*Students*	*Total*
Beliefs/What Is "true" for you	4	6	12	9	31
Something that impacts/drives/influences actions	0	8	11	0	19
Values	1	3	9	5	18
How one thinks, thoughts, cognitive, way of thinking	0	5	3	8	16
Feelings, Emotions	0	4	2	6	12
State of Mind, mindset	0	3	1	3	7
Viewpoints	0	3	1	1	5
Stance	0	0	1	2	3
Pre-conceived notions, assumptions, biases	0	1	2	0	3
Motivation	0	0	2	0	2
Ideas	0	2	0	0	2
ways of categorizing and assessing	0	0	1	1	2
Ethics	0	0	2	0	2
Inspiration	0	0	1	0	1
Virtues	0	0	1	0	1
Understandings	0	1	0	0	1
How we manage our beliefs and values	0	1	0	0	1
Way of perceiving world	0	1	0	0	1

Way of viewing life	0	1	0	0	1
State of being	0	1	0	0	1
Intrinsic	0	1	0	0	1
Knowledge	0	0	1	0	1
Desires	0	1	0	0	1
Frame of reference	0	1	0	0	1
Goals	0	0	1	0	1
Good sense	0	0	1	0	1
Expectations	0	1	0	0	1
What makes a person tick	0	1	0	0	1
How one Interprets	0	0	1	0	1
Sensibilities	0	1	0	0	1
Perspective	0	1	0	0	1
Philosophy	0	0	1	0	1
Interests	0	0	1	0	1
Explain something you do	0	0	1	0	1
TOTALS	**5**	**47**	**56**	**35**	**143**

It Is Not Clear If Participants Believe Dispositions Are Visible

Of the 100 different definitions given by participants, 36 of them (35%) could not be determined to be visible or invisible, and those 36 terms were used by participants 216 times. These terms were not included in either of the above categories because, depending on the participant and the statement, these terms could refer to something visible or invisible. Some of these terms that were not determined to be visible nor invisible included are very common in the literature on dispositions: "Character" (TE16), "attitudes" (S27), "traits" (A18), "ability" (MT43)," "approach" (TE29), "mood" (S11), "characteristics" (MT20), "personality" (MT13), and "attributes" (A16) are amongst them. Others are: "inclination" (TE9), "demeanor" (TE7), "opinion," (S8), "ability" (MT63), "style" (MT45), and "outlook" (TE13). Other terms from this category are shared in Table 4.3 below. In the following section, I outline those responses that indicate a belief that dispositions include both the visible and the not visible.

Table 4.3   It is not Clear if Participants Believe Dispositions are Visible

Number of Times Participants Used Each Term or Phrase					
	Administrators	*Mentors*	*Educators*	*Students*	*Total*
Attitudes	5	31	23	9	68
Personality, traits	2	17	9	7	35
Character	2	8	3	6	19
Temperament	0	7	1	6	14
Natural Inclination, one's nature, genetic, DNA, born with, inherent	0	3	3	7	13
Qualities	0	5	2	2	9
Characteristics	0	2	4	3	9
Mood	0	2	0	6	8
Outlook	0	2	1	4	7
Opinions	0	3	1	3	7
Demeanor	0	4	2	0	6
Connected to Knowledge and/or skills	0	2	3	0	5
Conscious and voluntary, intentional	0	0	2	2	4
Attributes	0	2	1	1	4
Approach	0	3	1	0	4
Ability	0	3	0	0	3
Choices you make, decisions	0	0	1	2	3
Possessed	0	2	0	0	2
Readiness/preparedness	0	0	2	0	2
Belongs to or held by a person	0	0	1	1	2
Roles	0	0	0	2	2
Way of being	0	0	2	0	2
Traits	0	2	0	0	2
Roles	0	0	0	2	2
Who you are	0	1	0	0	1
More than personality	0	1	0	0	1
A side a person will take on an issue	0	0	1	0	1
Don't cause behaviors	0	0	1	0	1
Factors	0	1	0	0	1
Influenced by ideologies	0	0	1	0	1
Outcome of behavior	0	0	1	0	1
Style	0	1	0	0	1
Skills	0	0	1	0	1
Type of person	0	0	1	0	1
Way of coming at something	0	1	0	0	1
"It" Factor, "Magic"	0	1	0	0	1
TOTALS	**9**	**104**	**68**	**63**	**245**

Participants Believe Dispositions Are Both Visible and Not Visible

Of the 100 different definitions given by participants, 12 of them included both the visible and invisible in their definitions and those 12 definitions were used by 33 participants. The word count is included in the above two categories. Some examples of responses that included the visible and not visible are, "How a person believes. . . as seen through actions" (MT23), "how a person acts/thinks" (A13), and "the way a teacher behaves and/or their beliefs and attitudes they display" (A9). In the following section, I outline the remaining responses, which indicate beliefs that do not fit into the above categories. There is no specific table for this section, as these numbers were included in the previous two tables.

Remaining Responses

The remaining participants said, "I don't know," "I have not heard this word before," did not answer, or gave a response that did not fit into the above categories. For example, one administrator stated that he/she has "not heard this word used in education before" (A4). One mentor teacher stated, simply, that he/she had "not heard this word before" (MT57) (six other mentor teachers stated the same thing, but then went on to try and define it anyway, whereas this particular mentor teacher did not). Two teacher educators did not respond to this question. Three students said they do not know how to define dispositions and gave no further comment (seven others said they were not sure but then went on to try and define anyway, so those seven others are included in the above categories). 10 students did not respond to this question (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4   Remaining Responses

Number of Times Participants Used Each Term or Phrase					
	Administrators	*Mentors*	*Educators*	*Students*	**Total**
I have not heard the word in terms of education before or I have heard but can't describe	2	7	0	10	**19**
This is about my class	0	0	0	5	**5**
What is expected/required of you, guidelines, rules	0	0	0	4	**4**
Final settlement	0	0	1	0	**1**
You either have it or you don't	0	1	0	0	**1**
Not clearly definable	0	0	1	0	**1**
Predisposition	0	0	1	0	**1**
Big Picture	0	0	1	0	**1**
TOTALS	**2**	**8**	**4**	**19**	**33**

Participants' Beliefs About Operationalizing Dispositions

Participants were asked four questions in an effort to understand what they believe about the operationalization of dispositions in teacher education. 99% of participants indicated that there are positive dispositions that teachers should have and 96% of participants indicated that there are negative dispositions that teachers should not have. In explaining what these positive and negative dispositions are, participants shared more than 300 positive dispositions and 300 negative dispositions. To help understand and report these data, the responses have been broken into five categories. The first three categories come from Sockett's work—dispositions related to (a) care, (b) intellect, and (c) character—while the last two categories describe dispositions specific to the (d) practice of teaching, and those related to (e) professionalism.

In the sections below, each category is described in detail, and the lists of responses are included in each section in table form. Many participants responded to

these questions with lists of terms, rather than sentences. Where there were sentences, participants are quoted.

<u>Participant Beliefs That Can Be Classified as Dispositions Related to Care</u>

Responses that included the belief that dispositions related to care are important were grouped into four categories: (a) receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness, (b) civility, (c) compassion, and (d) tact. Each of these categories is described in further detail below, along with examples, tables that includes all responses in each category, and quotes from participants.

Receptivity, relatedness, responsiveness. Some participants believe teachers should be, "personable" (S22), "outgoing" (S51), "person centered" (MT44), and "make others feel comfortable" (MT74). Similarly, others want teachers to "put others at ease" (S63), and "bring people together, advocates for other teachers" (S63). One administrator believes teachers should, "like people" (A1), and a teacher educator believes a teacher should, "have appropriate boundaries" (TE32). Other responses include, "Caring for students- humans in general. A teacher MUST have a certain amount of empathy for people in general and students in particular" (MT54), and "Teachers should enjoy and care for children; kind, compassionate, caring" (TE10).

Civility. Some participants believe teachers should be "civil" (TE30), "calm" (MT14), "even-tempered" (MT72), and "not threatening" (S19). Other participants want teachers who "never seem discouraged or frustrated" (S20), "do not hold grudges" (MT18), are "comfortable" (MT55), and are "tolerant" (S76).

Compassion. Some examples of the responses that participants gave indicating a

belief that compassion is important are: "kind" (MT40), "listens" (S37), "sensitive"

(MT78), "genuine concern for others" (MT24), and "empathetic" (S4). One mentor

teacher said, "A teacher needs. . . a strong sense of compassion-a genuine care and

concern for each child and family. ." (MT62).

Tact. Some participants believe that teachers should be "tactful" (MT20),

"constructive" (S17), and "diplomatic" (TE23). These terms related to "tact" showed up

the least of all of the dispositions related to care in participants' responses.

Table 4.4   Dispositions Related to Care

Dispositions Related to Care			
Compassion	**Tact**	**Relatedness/Responsiveness/Receptivity**	**Civility**
Compassionate, kind, caring, warm, understanding, uses kind words, tone, and appropriate language, listens, sensitive, supportive, loving, gentle, empathetic, genuine concern for students and families, not belittling, committed to safety	Tactful, diplomatic, constructive	Personable, outgoing, person centered, makes others feel comfortable, put others at ease, relatable, friendly, welcoming, inviting, gives off a good vibe, courteous, considerate, approachable, accessible, collaborative, teamwork, works well with others, interacts well with others, gets along with others, connects with others, sees themselves as partners, brings people together, advocates for other teachers, likes people, cooperative, understanding beyond self, can see others' strengths, believes the best in others, celebrates others successes, high expectations of others, ability to critique others, has clear boundaries, trust, helpful, tolerable, unity, compromises, grateful, socially attuned, reads non-verbal cues	Civil, calm, even tempered, not threatening, never seems discouraged or frustrated, relaxed, patience, keeps cool even when stressed, slow to anger, self-disciplined, forgiving, does not hold grudges, comfortable, tolerant, respect, respectful

<u>Participant Beliefs That Can Be Classified as Dispositions Related to Intellect</u>

Seven categories were formed to organize and report the responses of participants who believe that dispositions related to intellect are important, such as: (a) open mindedness, (b) consistency, (c) humility, (d) thoughtfulness, (e) fairness, (f) truthfulness, and (g) accuracy/clarity. In the sections below, each category is described in detail, and the lists of responses are included in each section in table form.

Open-mindedness. Words and phrases such as, "non-judgmental" (TE19), "appreciation of/to differences" (TE25), "flexibility" (A3), "accepting of change" (MT52), "adaptable" (S22), "values diversity" (TE3), "believes in equality" (MT22), "realizes everything is not black and white" (TE34), and "realizes that others' values are different from theirs" (MT32) were used to express a belief that open-mindedness is a disposition that a teacher should have. One administrator (A4) responded that, "openness and acceptance of different cultural values and experiences" is a positive disposition that a teacher should have. One mentor teacher (MT67) said, "Positive dispositions would be flexibility in thinking, open-mindedness, ability to negotiate fairness, and an intuitive mind."

Humility. Participants believe that teachers should be, "teachable" (MT82), they should "admit when wrong" (MT55), and they should "receive and react positively to criticism" (A1). Additionally, a teacher should "embrace constructive feedback" (S3) and "apologize" (MT75).

Thoughtfulness. Participants believe teachers should be, "curious" (MT13), "exploratory" (MT64), and that they should, "take an inquiry stance" (TE23). Other participants want teachers who, "believe in asking questions more than giving answers"

(MT28), and are "thoughtful" (TE34). Some used the words "reflective" (TE5), "intuitive" (MT67), and "focused" (S9) to describe the dispositions a teacher should have. A few other responses are: "consciously competent" (MT11), "creative" (S2), "common sense" (S33), and "growth mindset" (TE27).

Fairness. "Fair" (A5), "just" (S17), "equitable" (MT84), and "inclusive" (MT45) were some of the responses given by participants that indicate a belief that teachers should be fair.

Truthfulness. Many participants believe that teachers need to be "honest" (S1), "authentic" (MT47), "real" (MT69), and "genuine" (TE12).

Clarity/Accuracy. I specifically focused on clarity of communication here, including participant responses that included phrases or terms such as, "communicative" (S21), "good communicator" (MT66), "communicates in a positive manner" (A8), "clear communication" (MT42), and "clear about where you stand" (S61), indicating a belief that clarity/accuracy is important.

Consistency. Participants believe that teachers should be "steady" (MT11), consistent (A5), "balanced" (MT72), "collected" (S10), and "centered" (TE23), according to participants. Specifically, one participant believes that teachers should have a "balance of seriousness and flexibility" (MT18).

Table 4.5   Dispositions Related to Intellect

Dispositions Related to Intellect						
Open Mindedness	**Humility**	**Consistency**	**Thoughtfulness**	**Fairness**	**Truthfulness**	**Clarity/Accuracy**
Open minded, non-judgmental, appreciation of/to differences, flexibility, accepting of change, adaptable, values diversity, believes in equality, realizes everything is not black and white, realizes that others' values are different from theirs, accepting of others for who they are, objective, willing to hear all sides, believes everyone should be valued and is important, open to/willing to change, accepts new ideas and beliefs, willing to try new things, open to new trends	Life long learner, teachable, admits when wrong, takes and reacts positively to criticism, able to make changes based on feedback, apologizes	Steady, balanced, collected, centered, balance of seriousness and flexibility, consistent	Curious, exploratory, takes an inquiry stance, believes in asking questions more than giving answers, thoughtful, reflective, intuitive, focused, consciously competent, creative, creative thinker, common sense, growth mindset, can make decisions, forward thinking, able to see the next things that need to be done, able to see big and small picture, is a visionary, values inquiry; is knowledgeable	Fair, just, equitable, inclusive	Honest, authentic, real, genuine	Communicative, good communicator, positive communication, clear communication, clear about where you stand

Participant Beliefs That Can Be Classified as Dispositions Related to Character

The dispositions related to character are: (a) self-knowledge, (b) endeavor, (c) sincerity, (d) wit, (e) integrity, (f) courage, and (g) trustworthiness. In the sections below, each category is described in detail, and the lists of responses indicating a belief that dispositions related to character are important are included in each section in table form.

Self-knowledge. Some participants believe that teachers need to be, "self-aware" (S73) and "honest with self" (S3). Others state that an "ability to evaluate own actions" (A1), "confidence" (A18), and a "positive self-image" (A2) are necessary. Finally, along similar lines, some speak health and stability when they state things such as, "mentally healthy" (TE23), and "emotionally stable" (TE32).

Endeavor. "Persistence" (A4), "iron will" (MT83), "resilient" (MT26), "perseverance" (MT20), "hard work" (MT75), "work ethic" (TE26), and "diligent" (S12) were the responses given by some. "Never gives up" (A5), "industrious" (A3), "assertive" (MT51), and "goes above and beyond" (S2) are some of the responses included by participants that indicate a belief that endeavor is important.

Sincerity. Some participants believe teachers should be "pleasant" (MT82), "cheerful" (MT15), "happy" (S68), or "hopeful" (TE25). Others wanted a teacher who "smiles" (MT8), has a "positive outlook" (MT75), or is "optimistic" (S68). Still others thought that teachers should be, "enthusiastic" (TE32), "passionate" (A3), "energetic" (A19), or "idealistic" (MT20).

Wit. Participants believe that teachers should, "have a sense of humor" (MT54), be "humorous" (S76), and "laugh" (MT8). Others believe that teachers should be "fun" (S24) and "entertaining" (MT38).

Integrity. Some participants believe that teachers should have "dignity" (MT54), "honor" (MT20), "good values" (MT68), and "strong morals" (S16). Others talked about behaviors and attitudes, saying things like, "positive behaviors" (S30), "appropriate behaviors" (S45), and "appropriate interactions" (TE21). Another student who responded said teachers should have the "right attitudes" (S19).

Courage. Some participants believe that teachers ought to be "courageous" (MT75) and have a "willingness to take on tasks and not fear them" (MT30).

Trustworthiness. According to some participants' beliefs, teachers should be, "reliable" (MT40), "dependable" (S54), "accountable" (A8), and "responsible" (T32).

Table 4.6   Disposition Related to Character

Dispositions related to Character						
Endeavor	**Self-Knowledge**	**Sincerity**	**Wit**	**Trustworthiness**	**Courage**	**Integrity**
Persistence, iron will, resilient, perseverance, hard work, tenacious, driven, work ethic, diligent, ability to work in tough spots, never gives up, industrious, assertive, goes above and beyond, motivated, follows through, determined, strong, willing to sacrifice, willingness to serve, has high standards	Self-aware, honest with self, able to evaluate own actions, confidence, positive self-image, mentally healthy, emotionally stable, high expectations of self	Pleasant, cheerful, happy, smiles, positive outlook, optimistic, hopeful, enthusiastic, passionate, energetic, positive attitude, idealistic	Has a sense of humor, humorous, laughs, fun, entertaining	Reliable, dependable, accountable, responsible	Courage, willingness to take on tasks and not fear them	Integrity, dignity, honor, strong values, strong morals, good/right/appropriate behaviors, interactions, attitudes

Participant Beliefs That Can Be Classified as Dispositions Specific to the Practice of
Teaching

This category includes participant responses that are specific to beliefs about

school environments, including students, parents, teachers, pedagogy, the purposes of

schooling, and the role of teachers. Beliefs and attitudes about schooling, learning, and

teaching were included, in addition to the actions that may relate to such beliefs within

schools. Not included here were attitudes, beliefs, and actions that may relate to

schooling, teaching and learning, but could also exist outside of such a realm, in any

professional context, such as being "organized" or "on time." Two subcategories were

created to help further articulate participants' responses: (a) beliefs and attitudes about

schooling, (b) pedagogical actions.

Participants' responses are shared below, broken down by category.

Beliefs and attitudes about schooling. Participants used phrases such as,

"committed to growth for all" (MT44), a "belief that all children can learn" (TE3), "belief

that the parents want the best for their kids" (MT1), and "believes that parents are

partners and have best intentions" (MT23). Others talked about school, education, and its

benefit to society, as is shown in these responses: "commitment to school" (MT72),

"dedicated to evolving educational process" (MT72), "believes that teaching is a civic

duty" (TE4), "believes that schools work" (MT30), "believes that education benefits

society" (MT70), "belief that it is our job to produce proper citizens" (S64), and "believes

that teaching is more than a job" (MT64), as well as others (see Table 4.7).

Pedagogical actions. According to participants' beliefs, teachers should have an

"ability to work with kids" (S62), be "good with kids" (S40) and be "engaging" (S9).

Others believe that teachers should, "lecture" (S46), "make eye contact" (MT46), and want a teacher who "disciplines" (MT40). Some participants believe a teacher should "foster openness to new ideas" (A6) and "focus on expansion of thought, question, and debate" (MT64). Others believe teachers should "give high fives and pats" (MT35), "praise" (MT8), and "allow voices to be heard" (MT75). Finally, some participants said that a teacher should "give timely assignments" (TE32), and "employ engaging strategies" (TE35). (See Table 4.7)

Table 4.7   Dispositions Specific to the Practice of Teaching

Dispositions Specific to the Practice of Teaching	
Beliefs & Attitudes about Schooling	**Pedagogical Actions**
Believes in academic rigor; values academic achievement; values learning; values knowledge; values freedom of ideas; prizes learning; realizes students' self esteem comes from achievement; believes learning is natural and should be exciting, cultivated, and dynamic; committed to growth for all; dignity for all; belief that all children can learn; Belief that the parents want the best for their kids; Believes that parents are partners and have best intentions; commitment to school; dedicated to evolving educational process; believes that teaching is a civic duty; believes that schools work; believes that education benefits society; belief that it is our job to produce proper citizens; believes that teaching is more than a job; Believes that education is key to change; Belief that I can make a difference; believes that I am a valuable influence, belief that I am valued and important; belief that I deserve respect; understands that I am a role model; passionate about or connected to content/subject/grade level; enjoys teaching; likes teaching; desire to improve mankind; desire to pass it on; Belief that those who struggle the most need us the most, knows that teaching is not for everyone	Supports student understanding; supports student success; provides structure and clear steps; presents information effectively; focuses on expansion of thought, question, and debate; praises; allows voices to be heard; gives timely assignments; employs engaging strategies; has classroom management skills; differentiates instruction; provides/presents/creates/maintains fosters a safe and positive learning environment where mistakes can be made, risks can be taken, and learning occur; ability to work with kids; good with kids; engaging; lectures; fosters openness to new ideas; disciplines; makes eye contact; gives high fives and pats; purposefully does not always model positive dispositions; enforces behaviors; has authority, encouraging, motivating, inspirational, influential, guiding

Participant Beliefs That Can Be Classified as Dispositions Related to Professionalism

The responses included here were those that did not quite fit into any other

categories, but were specific to what might be defined as "professionalism" by many. The

beliefs listed here are prominent in the literature and in conversations about teacher

dispositions, but they have been separated from the previous category because they could

be germane to any profession. Participants responded with beliefs that teachers should be:

"punctual/on time" (S23), "manage time well" (MT24), and "adhere to policies" (S45).

Others discussed teachers who had "appropriate dress and presentation" (TE32), who

"follow administrative directives" (A6), and who are "committed" (A16). Similarly,

others said that they believe a teacher should be "dedicated" (TE38), "prepared" (MT15),

and "draw on experience" (MT68). "Purposeful" (MT78) and "engaged" (S7) were two

other dispositions listed. (See Table 4.8)

Table 4.8   Dispositions Related to Professionalism

Dispositions Related to Professionalism
Professional, punctual/on time, manages time well, adheres to policies, appropriate dress and presentation, follows administrative directives, committed, dedicated, can adjust on the fly, prepared, draws on experience, purposeful, effective, engaged, firm, aware, observant, independent worker, organized, problem solver, highly educated, delegates, leadership, clean, maintains dispositions outside of school, multi-tasker, plans.

Participants' Beliefs About Developing Dispositions

Five questions were asked to ascertain what participants believe about the

development of dispositions in teacher education. Responses indicated that the majority

of participants believe that dispositions can be developed (85%) and should be developed

(94%) in a teacher education program. Prompted by questions eight through twelve,

participants went on to describe more about the development of dispositions in teacher education. Themes related to participants' beliefs about approaches to dispositional development in teacher education and themes related to participants' concerns about the dispositional development in teacher education are shared below. First, I share participants' beliefs about ways to develop dispositions in the following sections: (a) the importance of enumeration and articulation, (b) the role of coursework and training, (c) the importance of experience in the field, (c) the importance of modeling, and (d) the importance of reflection by candidates.

Then, participants' concerns about dispositional development are organized in the following fashion: (a) the importance of candidates' desire to develop, (b) some dispositions can develop, but some cannot, (c) dispositions are inherent, (d) dispositions are developed when young, and (e) development goes beyond teacher education.

Beliefs About Approaches to Dispositional Development in Teacher Education

The five themes below represent participants' beliefs about how dispositions could and should be developed in teacher education. Woven throughout each of these themes is the role that "time" plays, which connects back to Weiner and Cohen (2003), Diez (2006), and Villegas (2007). Participants who believe that dispositions can be developed speak consistently about the time it takes to do so (a great deal, so start as early as possible). Responses from administrators such as, "at each step of the way there should be an ongoing conversation" (A12), and "Disposition is an important piece of the teaching craft. Why not start at the beginning of the program and develop the skill over time?" (MT8), are indicative of participants who believe dispositions take time to develop.

Most of these comments about time are part of longer responses connected to the themes below, with participants saying things like, "if we have any chance of having an effect on dispositions, it needs to be a thread throughout the program. Like problem solving, it cannot be a one-shot approach" (MT9) and, one student (S11) says,

I feel that dispositions are altered (hopefully for the better) naturally, throughout the course of the semester. I think that dispositions are affected every day by interaction with textbooks and other assigned readings, classmates, professors, and information found on the Internet. Dispositions can't really be taught, they are more or less decided upon as the person goes through life.

As the themes unfold below, it is clear that participants believe that, no matter what the approach to the development of dispositions, this task will take time.

The importance of enumeration and articulation. Participants in all four groups discussed and indicated a belief in the importance of what the literature referred to as "enumeration" (listing which dispositions are important), and "articulation" (sharing these expectations with candidates). One student said, about the development of dispositions in teacher education, "I think it is possible because in the curriculum, the idea of dispositions can be explained and examples can be given" (S73) and another stated, "teacher candidates can be told what appropriate dispositions are and work towards developing those dispositions" (S24).

Administrators and teacher educators agree, sharing responses such as, "If teacher candidates are made aware of what they are working toward they can try. . . it is a teacher educator's responsibility to put it out there" (TE14), "I do believe that teacher education programs can at least make teacher candidates aware of dispositions in general and what

dispositions are best for the teaching profession" (MT47), and "Bare minimum – teacher candidates should be taught the nuts and bolts of dispositions – what they are, what they mean, and how that translates into being a more effective educator" (MT45).

Some personal narratives by mentor teachers and teacher educators also speak to the importance of clearly enumerating and articulating dispositions to candidates. One tells of the first time she had professors tell her that she had to be more positive, have a presence, be fair, and have a sense of a humor: ". . . It's strange to consider now, but I wasn't conscious of any of these things . . . before I became a teacher. I NEEDED THESE THINGS TO BE SPELLED OUT FOR ME" (MT49, emphasis in original). Another, speaking in terms of her work with candidates, says, " . . not always, but sometimes students just need to be made aware of expectations and they will be more aware of them, and can start to exhibit them" (MT21).

Finally, one administrator is clear that one thing that is necessary in teacher education is, "a set of standard dispositions that educators agree on and then purposeful, intentional, and explicit teaching of those dispositions. This includes teaching skill sets that can ultimately help improve dispositions" (A7).

Beliefs about the role of coursework and training. Participants believe that "training" through coursework and workshops could help candidates develop dispositions. Role-playing, discussions, the reading of academic research and educational literature, and problem solving using "scenarios" for candidates were some suggestions. A few participants brought up specific programs or theorists who they believed would help with the development of dispositions, such as *Love and logic*

(MT40), *Look to learning* (MT5), John Dewey (MT49), the Dufours (A9), and others. Others, such as this participant (TE9), talk about coursework writ large:

> A teacher education program can engage candidates in discussions and activities that focus reflection on attitudes and beliefs, and how those influence instructional choices. In this way, candidates can be encouraged to critically examine and perhaps refine/revise/change attitudes and beliefs.

Many participants simply talk about their belief that coursework is the place to develop dispositions, but do not give details as to how this might be done. "Candidates should have formal training on inter-personal skills, conflict management, and thinking errors" (A3), and "some classes you can work on judgment, reflection, honesty" (A11) exemplify this idea that coursework is the place to develop dispositions. Others talk about the development of dispositions as something that should be standard in coursework. Two mentor teachers state, "High expectations for dispositions should be the norm in program classes, both from the instructors and the participants" (MT20), and "They should and can be embedded in most teacher ed courses, including management and methods" (MT82). Another says, "It should be embedded in coursework, creating that critical, social conscious that provides a critical lens as to how education is viewed via the historical, social, economic and political field and how it is impacting the teaching and learning process" (TE13).

Other participants discuss courses that they are currently enrolled in or have taken in the past such as *Foundations of Education* (S55) and *Educational Psychology* (S56). A student states, "Going through Foundations of Education, I find that the dispositions that are talked about are a major factor to what we see in them. When we talk about being

successful and moral, we come up with two very different results" (S44), and another

student shares, "With encouragement in ED-CIFS 201. . . we are pushed to reflect on

ourselves, interactions, and what we hope to be . . I appreciate what it is doing for me to

become a better person" (S7). And one participant opines, "Maybe incorporate in the

psychology classes. Group sessions or workshops could be offered" (S17).

Some participants do give examples of approaches and strategies that they believe

will be helpful in developing candidate dispositions in coursework: "Discussions through

Socratic seminars will also help students to explore their values and develop them with

the help of experts and cohorts" (TE17), said one participant. Another (S3) also talked

about discussions:

Discussions on what dispositions are and what components are important are

essential. . . Either using a student or teacher's version of exemplary dispositions,

these should be analyzed throughout classes and be part of the grading process.

Resources about dispositions should be incorporated into classroom reading as

well.

Others suggest, "Examples, reading, lecture" (S6) as ways to develop dispositions and

some, such as this student, suggest workshops and practice: "Have workshops or practice

on how to act in a classroom and talk to parents" (S12). One administrator discusses

specific dispositions to work on within coursework, "Some classes you can work on

judgment, reflection, honesty" (A11).

Role-playing, specifically, was believed to be a very important strategy for

developing candidate dispositions within coursework. As one administrator stated,

"Many teachers don't like confrontation with students or parents. Practice these

scenarios" (A6). Another said, "Scenarios.... What do you do when a kid fails? What do you do when a kid says no? How would you handle conflict with a student? How do you handle non-supportive parents? How do you get kids to take pride in their education?" (A10). Mentor teachers had ideas for role-playing within coursework as well. "Mock conferences, practice parent calls and emails" (MT71), " . . . role played situations can also help student to determine what they might do in a certain situation which will help them to determine and reinforce what they believe. . ." (TE17) are examples of this belief that role-playing can help to develop candidate dispositions.

Beliefs about the importance of experience in the field. Participants discuss their belief in the importance of time spent in schools and classrooms and the role this time plays in the development of dispositions in teacher education. Being mentored, observing, and working with students are ideas that come up frequently. Participants stressed that they believe dialoging with teachers is helpful in the development of dispositions and that the earlier candidates get into the field, the better. "I fully believe teacher candidates should be in the classroom sooner" (MT37), said one mentor teacher. Some participants, like this administrator (A4), list a gamut of activities that they believe would help a candidate develop dispositions during fieldwork:

> Early mentoring by a professional in a school - shadowing to participate in some
> of the essential mundane tasks (grading papers, preparing supplies/materials,
> bulletin boards, copying), supervising playgrounds/recesses/cafeterias by actively
> interacting with students - serving as a reading / math facts tutor - mentoring an
> at-risk student in a school, under the supervision of a counselor - requiring

summer/break jobs working/volunteering with students (YMCA, community

centers, daycares).

Another administrator (A15) points out the importance of candidates receiving

feedback while in fieldwork:

Earlier interaction with students, more feedback from schools regarding

dispositions that are noticed while working with students. Honest feedback to

students about where challenges appear. I think as educators we don't want to hurt

feelings or disappoint.

In addition to being in the field early, many participants, like this mentor teacher, discuss

being in the field more often and how that helps with the development of dispositions.

"More time spent with quality mentors in a real educational setting (less university time,

more real world experience). Classes taught in the public schools with real teachers

involved. PDS experience should be a requirement for teacher ed programs" (MT19).

Student responses include comments such as, "real experience in a classroom will

give the candidate practice" (S22), "field experience, service learning, classroom

observations" (S11), and "Teachers should be dealing with more classroom experience.

Learning by DOING" (S48). Some students talk about the importance of learning

directly with and from teachers, as these two responses show: "through visiting and

working at different schools in different areas to understand the obstacles and benefits of

each of them listening to the experiences of other teachers" (S21), and "there are

probably many ways that this could be done. I think that field work and hands on

activities would be helpful, learning from someone who has been teaching for a while

would be a good way to learn" (S46).

Harkening back to the previous section, a number of participants compare development of dispositions in the field to developing disposition in coursework. "Pedagogy is bookwork and many people can fake their way through it. It's the application that really develops teachers" (MT26) said one mentor teacher. Similarly, a teacher educator (TE32) shares:

Courses that focus on content will increase content and pedagogical (in part) knowledge. However, to change ways of acting infused with attitudes, we have to really embed these ideas, ways of talking, action into daily/weekly practice out in the field.

And one mentor teacher (MT27) states:

I think this happens largely during fieldwork such as student teaching or practicum. Working with mentor teachers who can explain how they've grown, and why they think or act the way they do challenges students to form and shape these dispositions in context.

Beliefs about the importance of modeling. Modeling comes up often in response to a number of the questions asked in this survey. This concept of "being the kind of teacher that you want to see the candidate become" and modeling how to "think like a teacher" (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 196-197) cuts across participant groups and questions and was a highly reported belief related to how dispositions can be developed during a teacher education program. Below are examples from the responses that indicate a belief in the importance of modeling.

Participants speak of modeling in general in a teacher education program in responses such as, "Positive teacher dispositions should be expected and modeled in any teacher education program" (MT20), "Just as we try to teach young children appropriate social skills and behavior, we should attempt to explain and model it for college students" (MT16), and "candidates need a model of what positive dispositions are needed" (MT68).

Other participants, however, point to specific people, such as mentor teachers and teacher educators, as those who should be the models. "Curriculum and modeling by faculty should increase the positive dispositions of students" (TE15) said one teacher educator. "I believe that good mentor teachers and staff on and at the college level need to model what are positive dispositions inherent to the profession" (MT51), states a mentor teacher, while another reinforces the belief that candidates need to be in the field early to get this mentoring, "I believe some core disposition values can be nurtured and modeled through the dedication of skilled veterans in the field, working with potential candidates early in a program" (A4).

Many mentor teachers intimate that they recognize that they play a large role in the development of teacher dispositions, some believing they pass on their dispositions directly to candidates. "Those candidates take on the beliefs and attitudes of their cooperating teacher" (MT71), "As a mentor it is my job to explain how a teachers attitude can impact students either positively or negatively. Voice tone, voice volume and certain looks need to be taught and modeled" (MT69), and "I would say 90% of the appropriate behavior will be modeled by the mentor teacher during the last session of teacher training" (MT43) are examples of mentor teachers who believe their role is critical in helping candidates develop dispositions.

Beliefs about the importance of reflection by candidates. Participants discuss reflection, throughout, as a beneficial practice for candidates to engage in order to develop dispositions during a teacher education program. Participants use the word "reflection," as well as other terms, to refer to their belief in the importance of such practice.

Some participants point to the importance of candidates utilizing reflective processes to consider their career choice. "The experiences that a teacher candidate has should develop their dispositions. Self-reflection should tell that person whether or not they have positive or negative dispositions in their career" (MT63), responded one mentor teacher. An administrator stated, "The development of positive dispositions is very important to the candidate program. If started early enough, it also gives the candidates time to reflect on their beliefs and potential career."

Others, although they may not use the term "reflection," clearly discuss reflective practice and self-knowledge in responses such as these:

> If someone has the desire to teach, they should be required to define their own dispositions because that's how you will teach. If you find in yourself a disposition that you do not like, it is your opportunity to work to change that disposition so that you may become a better teacher. (MT69)

> Yes, dispositions should be as important, if not more important, as content knowledge throughout a program. As a teacher, understanding my own natural dispositions is essential to my daily classroom management and relationships with students. I cannot be a good classroom teacher, regardless of my intelligence, if my dispositions are at odds with my goals in the classroom. I think teacher

candidates need to begin to think about their own ideas about dispositions like fairness, compassion, diversity, respect for differences in the teacher education program. These beliefs will form the foundation of what kind of teacher they will be. (MT58)

Another participant attempted to unpack the meaning of some of the terms and processes involved in the development of dispositions. This teacher educator (TE28) ultimately tries to explain why he/she believes that the development of dispositions is about reflection as much as, if not more than, it is about anything else:

I believe the word developed is important and is sometimes misunderstood by those responsible for teacher preparation. In its truest sense to develop means to unfold; to make something visible or known and I believe thus teacher education programs should allow a candidate the opportunity to construct his or her own understanding of where his or her attitudes, values and beliefs exist on a spectrum. Unfortunately, some teacher educators do not see 'disposition education' as a clarification process but rather as a compliance process and thus candidates 'play the political correct game'. Obviously there is a need for some minimal compliance standards but for the most part teacher educators should be more concerned with a candidates willingness to be reflective and engage in the clarification process than his or her embrace of specific dispositions.

Many students identify with the idea of dispositions development as a self-reflective and clarification process.

". . . The program should allow the candidate to question and reflect on his or her own dispositions, not simply tell him or her how and what to value, believe, and

possess in his or her attitude" (S66), said one student. Other student participants discuss self-reflection in connection to the bigger picture of schooling and society, as is indicated here: "our education system will only improve with honest self-reflection- this may be the best way to do that" (S22).

Others talk specifically about "self-examination" and "self-awareness" through responses such as, "Being a teacher isn't just about the degree, we need to examine ourselves and how we relate to others so that we are not sent out into schools ill-prepared to deal with students" (S7), and:

> Like I stated above, students will come into the program with their own dispositions, but these dispositions can be developed throughout the teacher education program. When students are encouraged to reflect on their disposition, and to spend time and contemplate how they feel about situations, their dispositions can develop. (S13)

Concerns About Dispositional Development in Teacher Education

Participants had concerns about certain things related to dispositional development. The data shared here include participants' reasons for believing that dispositions cannot be developed in teacher education as well as reasons for not being certain if dispositions can be developed in teacher education. The data are organized as follows: (a) the importance of candidates' desire to develop, (b) some dispositions can develop, but some cannot, (c) dispositions are inherent, (d) dispositions are developed when young, and (e) development goes beyond teacher education.

Beliefs about the importance of candidates' desire to develop. A belief that participants from all four groups expressed in response to multiple survey questions was that certain candidates could develop dispositions and others could not, and that is largely based on whether or not they want to develop. Participants use terms such as "desire," "willingness," "openness," and "want to" to communicate this belief.

"It depends on the willingness of the candidate, and their true desire" (MT30), states one mentor teacher, and ". . . a disposition can be developed and cultivated if there is something to start with. If an individual has NO desire or willingness to help others then I do not believe there is anything a college program can do to change that" (MT61). A mentor teacher (MT23) talks about the candidate "seeing the need for change" in relation to their life experience when presented with new information:

> . . . I don't want to think that people can't change, but by the time students are in the teacher education program they have more than 20 years of thinking in a particular way. So, if the teacher candidate sees a need for a change and is willing to work at it, then he/she can.

Another term used by participants is "open" to developing dispositions, as in these responses: "The candidate must be open to ideas and genuinely interested in become a strong, effective teacher" (MT24), and "Teacher candidates must be open to the need to fully develop the positive dispositions" (MT44).

Many participants put the responsibility to develop dispositions on the candidate: "I don't think we can change people's basic personalities, but if the candidate recognizes why a certain attitude is important for teaching and wants to work on developing or adapting to that attitude, I think we can nurture that growth" (TE22). Similarly, other

participants talk about a refusal to monitor self or make changes in responses such as this one: "A teacher education program cannot force the development of dispositions in individuals that refuse to monitor themselves, and/or refuse to make changes (in many cases negative dispositions in and of themselves)" (TE25).

Multiple students use the word "willingness" as well, as in these two examples: "In teacher education programs, students can develop their dispositions, but not always. It depends on the student and their willingness to learn" (S70), and,

> Although I do think that people can always be taught something, I also think that people have to want to learn. The valued dispositions that I mentioned can be brought to light to deepen a person's understanding of the concept, but if an individual is unwilling to learn them then nothing will have been taught successfully. (S20)

Similar to "desire" and "willingness" is the phrase "want to," which also comes up often, as in these two quotes: "You can't teach someone to want to do something, and to do it well. You can give them the tools they need to be successful, but without the personal interest and drive behind the tools they cannot be successful" (S57), and:

> I believe this all depends on the individual's personality and want to develop. If a teacher has strong beliefs already I believe that they will be less apt to develop these good dispositions, where as a teacher who is eager to learn new things could learn more from a class teaching dispositions. (S42)

One participant uses the term "capacity" to seemingly describe a similar thing. "Appropriate dispositions can be explained and modeled, but cannot be developed in a

person who doesn't have the capacity to change" (MT16) is one example of a participant who uses other terms to communicate something similar to "willingness."

Belief that some dispositions can develop, but others cannot. Although the majority of participants indicated that they believe dispositions can be developed in a teacher education program, when explaining, many of those same participants "hedged" a bit. The following responses are indicative of those participants who were not certain that all dispositions could be developed. In most cases, participants seem to claim one thing (dispositions can or can't be developed), but then, as they continue with their answer, they qualify, contradict, or say something like, "well, but maybe. . ." and find themselves wondering about the opposite of what they initially reported.

This participant distinguishes between "personality," "attitudes," "choices," and "traits" when discussing dispositional development in teacher education:

> Personality is set, attitudes might change with information, experience, and
> education. I'm not sure that teacher ed can undo really negative traits but it might
> lead a teacher candidate to make choices that better suit their disposition. (A1)

Still others talk about a certain disposition or set of dispositions that are resistant to being developed, and therefore may prevent a candidate from developing their dispositions at all: "I believe that some dispositions can be taught, but developing any that conflict with someone's innate personality and temperament is highly unlikely" (A3), said one administrator.

Mentor teachers talk more about specific dispositions (or as they refer to them, "behaviors" or "character" traits), as opposed to the big picture of development. For

example, one mentor teacher shares, "perhaps to some extent. Values and beliefs can be shaped, but certain behaviors may not be teachable" (MT3). Another says something similar about the innateness of some dispositions. "Yes, but some things are innate. I don't know if empathy can be taught. Improved on? Developed? Nurtured? Maybe" (MT11). Other mentor teachers are certain that good teaching is innate, yet waiver in the midst of that certainty. This quote provides an excellent example of the participants who responded in this way:

> I personally think you cannot make a good teacher. You either have the skill or you don't. It's almost a personality trait. I suppose you could instill some sense of ethics that someone was unaware of, but you can't make someone care about people if they are not an empathic person to begin with. (MT12)

Another mentor teacher is more hopeful that new information can help a candidate develop dispositions, but this may depend on the candidate and the disposition that needs to be developed:

> I think some people might have personalities and beliefs that are already well developed by the time he/she enters a teacher education program. However, I think a candidate can change his/her beliefs and learn to modify his/her verbal interactions based upon new information and by watching others, especially if informed that these dispositions are critical to one's success. Of course there are certain dispositions that may be hard to develop-a genuine sense of friendliness, compassion. . .I am not sure. . . (MT18)

Then, a number of mentor teachers explicitly talk about what candidates bring with them to teacher education and the role that that may play.

I wanted to mark both agree and disagree. Some people have natural tendencies that make it easier to develop these characteristics, and some dispositions come from beliefs which are quite personal and making an impact on that may be difficult. Some dispositions come from habits, and some habits are hard or near impossible to break. (MT30)

Many teacher educators also talk about the specifics of certain dispositions. "Some dispositions can be taught and practiced (i.e. communicating effectively with parents and other staff), but some cannot (i.e. positive attitude, patience, etc.)" (TE7).

Finally, an interesting theme that teacher educators seem to bring up a little bit more than other participant groups is the potential difference between the ability to develop perceived negative dispositions vs. that of perceived positive dispositions, "I believe that most positive dispositions can be developed to some extent, if they don't exist in a candidate already, however there are some negative dispositions that just cannot be extinguished/changed/undeveloped" (TE23).

Other administrators focus on the role of the mentor teacher: "I think some dispositions are "hard-wired" by the time we are adults. That being said, I believe that an effective mentor that models positive dispositions can influence a teacher candidate. (I suppose the opposite could also be true, to a degree)" (A2). This participant (A5) questions whether or not teacher education programs actually address dispositions:

I think some dispositions can be nurtured while others may be able to be explicitly taught. However, in the case of the negative dispositions, it takes a long, hard discussion (multiple usually) with the candidate to help them understand the importance for change and the need for it. Many of the negative dispositions in

and of themselves are the barriers for self-improvement, and most teacher

education programs do not attempt to overcome personality issues.

A number of mentor teachers discuss dispositions as being "natural," such as this one: "I

think some qualities can be developed, but some people do not have the natural

disposition for being a teacher. You can't make people interesting or kind" (MT38), and

others talk about "habits" and "tendencies" that may be set before a candidate gets to

teacher education.

Belief that dispositions are inherent. Some participants do not believe that

dispositions can develop in teacher education programs. Most who believe this think that

dispositions are inherent. "Values and habits are hard to 'teach'. . . work ethic either is a

part of a person or it isn't. I'm not sure you can teach that" (A18), said one administrator.

Another states, "I don't believe you can teach someone to have the dispositions of being a

good teacher. I believe it has to come from within" (A16). Responses such as, "I think

you either have it or you don't" (MT34) "being a teacher is a calling" (MT80), or "I

believe some people are just meant to teach and I don't know that you can learn that"

(MT50), come from mentor teachers. Some participants go in to more detail about

dispositions being inherent, such as this response:

I think that some people are natural teachers; they just seem to "get it." Other

people, despite training and feedback, seem to continually struggle with the same

issues - whether it be in communicating with families, teaching certain concepts,

or classroom management. Classroom management seems to be one of the biggest

areas in which teachers can "do it" naturally or continue to struggle, despite

training. (MT42)

A number of students, mentor teachers, and teacher educators believe that dispositions cannot be developed in teacher education and therefore question why certain people would choose teaching as a career. "I don't see why anyone who did NOT already have these dispositions would even apply to be in a teacher education program. . ." (MT54) said one teacher educator. And another teacher educator said, "I believe they are intrinsic to the person, so I would question why they chose this profession" (TE34).

Belief that dispositions are developed when young. There are those participants who express a belief that dispositions are developed very early in life, or over the course of childhood, before teacher education. One student (S52) says:

> Some dispositions we're born with, some we learn from our parents and others in our lives, so unless you are going to start a program that children are taken away from their parents to become perfect teachers good luck with changing dispositions!

Another states, "I believe dispositions are developed when young. Some values or attitudes may change with age but most children grow up to be an mirror image of their teachings" (S4). And this response is indicative of most participants who responded in such a manner, "To me, dispositions are developed during childhood and young adulthood and basically by family" (TE18).

Belief that the teacher education program is not enough. Similarly, some participants believe that dispositions can be developed, but that teacher education only plays a small role in that development. This participant (S10) uses the word "solely" to describe this idea that teacher education is not the only place where dispositions develop:

A lot of a person's individual dispositions have developed through his/her entire life. You can build upon the dispositions one already has and even develop new ways to react to situations, but I don't know that it can solely be taught in a teacher education program.

Many mentor teachers find the development of dispositions to be bigger than a teacher education program. Responses such as, "It can take a lifetime to change these things" (MT81), and "Sure, my disposition is challenged every day--I have been teaching 16 years" (MT50), are indicative of this belief that teacher education is not the only place that dispositions develop. Other mentor teachers specifically discuss the program as the beginning of the development of dispositions in responses such as, ". . . It takes several years to master the art of teaching so I think the program is just the beginning" (MT4).

Some teacher educators consider both the program and the duration of a career to be important aspects of disposition development. "Not only throughout the program but it is something that should continue on throughout their career" (TE12), and "And throughout their career.... It is our responsibility as educators to assure we are sharing ideas and messages that foster positive disposition development and limiting opportunities for the development of negative dispositions" (TE15), exemplify this belief that disposition development continues after teacher education. Another participant states, discussing the life of a candidate and his/her dispositional development:

This is not a quick process, but one that takes nurturing over time and throughout one's engagement in any learning experience (i.e., ideally this process would begin prior to admittance into teacher ed -- as part of a liberal arts education. . . (TE35)

Students agree with this. "We can always better ourselves and educate ourselves every day. I believe a disposition can be developed throughout and beyond an educational program" (S5), says one student participant. A teacher educator states, seemingly agreeing, "It is the entire university experience, not to mention the life experiences that truly create outstanding teachers" (TE26).

Many responses from mentor teachers specifically speak to the idea of there not being enough time in teacher education. Two examples of this from mentor teachers are:

> I think, theoretically, this sounds like it should be a statement I agree with. However, with all of the classes a teacher candidate takes, I don't see there being time to focus on dispositions. A teacher candidate can refine their disposition, but I think some things can't be taught, or at least not without extensive time being spent on this aspect of the program. (MT13)

> I think all of these attitudes can be conditioned. I don't know if there is enough time in college years, but any teacher who makes it through their first five years of teaching is sure to condition themselves in some positive ways, or they don't survive. (MT84)

These two examples sound similar, although they are through the lens of teacher educators:

> This is an interesting statement. Even though programs can list expected dispositions and hopefully model those same dispositions to students, students come to us with a set of values, beliefs, and attitudes that have developed over decades of time. While we may be able to influence dispositions to a degree, I

believe that influence is minimal; to think that a few semesters or years can 'change' dispositions of some students is unrealistic. (TE8)

I think that these skills can be developed and honed, but a limited number of classes aren't going to do the total job. It is the entire university experience, not to mention the life experiences that create truly outstanding teachers. (TE26)

Students reported things such as, "There will not be one class that changes a person's complete outlook on life and makes them see the world differently. Morals and ethics are built over a lifetime, not just in a couple years" (S14). Another participant, similarly, is not convinced that a teacher education program alone can be the factor that helps dispositions develop: "Dispositions are usually learned over a long period of time, and if someone possesses a chronic bad attitude I believe it takes more than a program to turn that around" (S16).

Other examples of students' beliefs that time, and particularly a great deal of time, are what helps dispositions develop include the responses, "I think dispositions are always developing and changing. They are developed early on and continue to change and grow throughout your teaching career while you experience new things" (S18), "We are always learning and our views are constantly changing as we experience different and new situations and are exposed to others' thoughts and beliefs" (S5), and, finally:

I agree for the most part. A lot of a person's individual dispositions have developed through his/her entire life. You can build upon the dispositions one already has and even develop new ways to react to situations, but I don't know that it can solely be taught in a teacher education program. (S10)

Beliefs About the Assessment of Dispositions

Six questions were asked to ascertain what participants believe about the assessment of dispositions in teacher education. Responses indicated that the majority of participants (87%) believe that dispositions can be assessed in a teacher education program, that 63% believe that the results of these assessments should be used to determine entry into a teacher education program, and 77% believe that results of dispositions assessments should be used to determine eligibility for completion of a teacher education program. More so than anywhere else in the survey, participants answered "I don't know" (MT55) and "I am unsure" (MT56) to questions about dispositions assessments. Some of these responses included, "I wish there was an 'I don't know' button" (MT10), "I am really not certain about this" (MT28), "I do not know enough about disposition to say that it should determine whether or not someone goes into the college of Ed" (S26), and "I am still undecided on this question" (S2).

Prompted by questions thirteen through eighteen, participants went on to describe more about their beliefs about the assessment of dispositions in teacher education. Themes related to participants' beliefs about approaches to dispositional assessment in teacher education and themes related to participants' concerns about the dispositional assessment in teacher education are shared below. First, I share participants' beliefs about ways to assess dispositions in the following sections: (a) teacher education should take a comprehensive approach, (b) assessment should be ongoing, (c) the role of the teacher education program, (d) the importance of observations in the field, (e) the importance of communication with candidates, and (f) the role of candidate reflection. Then, I share participants' concerns about dispositions assessments in these sections: (a) are

assessments valid and objective? (b) should results be used for entrance to teacher education? (c) should results be used for completion of teacher education? (d) should teacher education adhere to a developmental model?

Approaches to Dispositions Assessment

Those participants who believe that candidate dispositions can be assessed in a teacher education program discuss both why dispositions are important to teaching and why they should be assessed in teacher education. Some think dispositions should be assessed in order to counsel candidates out of teaching. "Continual bad attitudes, values and crappy lessons need to be counseled out of the program. There is no room for these teachers in our schools" (MT68), says one mentor teacher. Another, speaking of potential bias, states, "If a teacher candidate believes that an entire demographic of students cannot learn, they should not become an educator" (MT47).

Other mentor teachers and teacher educators speak of professionalism and success: "If we are wanting to place highly qualified teachers in the pre-service program and classrooms, and we know they need specific dispositions to be successful, then we must teach and assess these dispositions" (MT79). Others agree, "People should be screened before they can go forward with student teaching. We need to raise the bar for professional educators. . ." (MT50).

Other participants are a bit more direct about how important they think it is to assess dispositions and why: "I don't want a teacher with poor dispositions contaminating my children or any student" (TE1). Another, by a teacher educator, was, "Whenever possible, stop the train before the train wreck" (TE22). One teacher said, "If we value

quality, then we need to ascertain its presence" (TE2), as a reason for assessing candidate dispositions.

Some participants believe dispositions should be assessed in order to help candidates develop dispositions, like this teacher educator (TE3):

> If candidates are unwavering in negative dispositions despite educational experiences designed to expand their thinking, they should not continue to become teachers. So assessment, in theory, provides an opportunity to identify candidates who need to develop dispositions, makes an improvement plan possible, and also makes an exit plan possible. It can also have a positive outcome.

Although there are multiple reasons offered by participants to assess dispositions, the beliefs participants have about how to approach disposition assessment in teacher education are less varied and fit into the following categories.

Belief that teacher education should take a comprehensive approach. Responses included here are those that indicated a belief that dispositions assessments should just be one part of an evaluation system—that dispositions assessments should not be able to stand alone as judgment of a candidate. "It could be a component of the evaluation" (A8) responded one participant, while another said, "Like any assessment, I believe we should have a variety of measurements on this, and more than one professor making the judgment (as their may be a simple personality conflict), but I definitely think this should be one piece of many. . ." (TE21).

Some speak of taking a comprehensive approach in terms of entrance into a teacher education program. "Entrance into a teacher education program should be a comprehensive evaluation that includes more than just a disposition test" (MT24), said one mentor teacher, and "Assessments as well as observations in a real world setting, together, should be used for entrance into a program. Some may not test well but can it can be seen that they've got a natural talent when around kids" (MT45). Teacher educators mention grade point average, specifically, as another measure of a candidate. "AS WELL as the GPA. I believe teacher candidates should have a GPA of 3.0 or above. We must have high standards for our future generation" (MT51, emphasis in original).

Other participants discuss dispositions as a part of a comprehensive evaluation system in terms of criteria for completion of a teacher education program. As these two students articulate: "Like I said previously, it shouldn't be the only factor, but if you can't pass a disposition assessment, you should not be able to complete a teacher education program" (S68), and "I think that it is important that most of the positive dispositions are developed before a student in the program becomes a teacher, but like before I don't think it should be the main component in determining if the student completed the program" (S39).

Teacher educators said similar things, as this response exemplifies: "Disposition assessments must be a component of a comprehensive assessment of a candidate's viability as a teacher" (TE29).

Belief that assessment should be ongoing. Participants who believe that candidate dispositions should be assessed "early and often" were in line with the responses, above, that point to an ongoing approach to the development of dispositions in

teacher education. "We could assess dispositions early and act in a manner to correct negative dispositions. I see college as the bigger learning stage, we are here to get our achievements and then be placed in the work force accordingly" (S19), stated one participant. Another (TE15) said, "Dispositions are important to learn and teacher candidates should have their dispositions monitored early and often."

Many participants discuss continuous assessment, connected with development and feedback, to give candidates the opportunity to develop. This participant (TE6) offers a specific model for continuous assessment linked to instruction:

> One approach would be to work with each candidate during the first 2 semesters to develop a profile of certain core dispositions so that each candidate and faculty have a reasonable sense of each student's strengths and needs in the area of dispositions. Then plans that target area(s) of need could be developed that would be contain specific plans & activities intended to address those areas of need. At the end of each semester there would be an interview held for the purpose of assessing progress toward the goals and consequences established when goals are not adequately achieved.

Documentation seems to be a key component to assessing dispositions over time, as well, as these two participants state: "Yes, if the candidate is not progressing towards the model it must be documented throughout their time in the program, and not in just one semester" (A17), and "To continually assess the candidates will provide the school and the intern valuable feedback for what they need to work on in order to be successful" (A5).

Some participants are not certain how reliable dispositions assessments are, and therefore recommend repeated assessments, over time, to reveal dispositions:

. . . some students can "play the game" for a one-time evaluation. I believe students demonstrate their "true colors" over time, and often times those dispositions become quite evident - positive or negative. Therefore, disposition-checks need to be ongoing throughout the program. (TE7)

Belief in the role of the teacher education program. Some participants want the teacher education program to handle assessment—they expressed a discomfort with P-12 school-based personnel being responsible for the assessment of candidate dispositions. Participants from all groups accused teacher education programs for not taking enough responsibility for assessment. I report these together, as they both represent a belief that university-based teacher educators are the ones who should be assessing candidates on their dispositions and holding them accountable.

One participant (A13) shares:

I believe that through the variety of educational classes that a teacher candidate takes in a teacher education program, this can be assessed through assignments/projects that are assigned. Whether it is a methods course, educational philosophy course, or a course on how to create assessments - a student's disposition can be assessed through the courses expectations.

Another, an administrator, opines, "It is the responsibility of the teacher education program to produce teacher candidates that are not only trained, but a good fit for a career where they are impacting children daily" (A3). One teacher educator states, "I do not

believe dispositions should be assessed separate from the coursework. ie. I believe a candidate's course grade should reflect not only his/her test scores, attendance etc.. but should reflect his dispositions as well" (TE28).

Mentor teachers and teacher educators, alike, share personal narratives that call into question the follow through by the university based teacher education program. One mentor teacher who also has taught for the teacher education program studied here states:

> On the dispositions assessments at the end of my Ed-CIFS 231 courses, I tried to give specific examples for the students who were negative, who didn't communicate well, who were tardy or absent a lot. . . I don't know that there were consequences for students who didn't meet expectations and I don't know if the 'teeth' are written into the program. (MT20)

A teacher educator (TE17) tells a similar story that was shared multiple times in response to this survey:

> I found myself having to "pull" a student from student teaching six weeks before she was to graduate. It was her inability to connect with her students and coworkers and her dishonesty about her part in these problems. . . this was not something she was going to be able to learn without something. . . that we could not give her in the program. If the dispositions being assessed were more formally adhered to, I believe she would never have gotten so far. In looking at her education program file, there were many "flags" in it that indicated this was a problem, but she continued on anyway. Certain dispositions need to be assessed and there need to be protocols for dealing with them that are straightforward.

Finally, a little more concern from a mentor teacher that the university must take greater responsibility for the assessment of candidate dispositions:

> I have mentored some student teachers in which I asked myself, 'how in the world did they think this was the career for them.' I have even had to tell one they were not aloud [sic] back into my classroom. That should not be a responsibility put on my plate. The university should have been more involved. (MT75)

Belief in the importance of observations in the field. This theme arose from participants who indicated a belief that dispositions could be assessed based on observations of candidates working with students in schools. One student (S51) said, "yes, but I think this should only take place during student teaching experience." More than one participant said something similar to this administrator (A10) about when and where dispositions should be assessed:

> Presentation is everything. How do they present the information? What efforts have they put forth to prep for the daily lesson. How involved in the students' lives are they? Do they care about their kids outside the classroom? Do they show it in the classroom? Do they know information about each kid that helps them connect with them?

Mentor teachers believe that candidates' dispositions should be assessed based on their work in classrooms, as this statement, "A candidates actions, thoughts and behavior will come out through their interaction with staff and students" (MT1), and this response, "The majority of assessment should also be from observation of the teacher candidate in the classroom" (MT31) indicate.

Another mentor teacher (MT11) shares his/her experience assessing students based on teaching lessons:

> I think it is to some extent already. Mentor teachers observe their student teachers and can easily determine if they are going to make it or not. . . I cannot tell until they stand up and teach, but some dispositions that are lacking come through in the observation period.

Belief in the importance of communication with candidates. This theme arose from responses that seemed to shy away from assessment as evaluation that may come with consequences and instead leaned toward a belief in assessment as ongoing dialogue without (as least as reported here) consequences. The important piece to these responses seemed to be that candidates need feedback on their dispositions.

Administrators discuss a belief in feedback, as is evidenced in these two comments: "Again, honest discussion with candidates/students about how their disposition will play out as a teacher" (A6), and "This can be done through personality profiles, anecdotal evidence, and deep, authentic discussions" (A7). They also discuss the importance of honesty when discussing the importance of communicating with candidates about their dispositions, stating things like "feedback from guiding teacher and HONEST feedback to student" (A16), as important.

Many participants insist that this communication must occur early, keeping with most responses about development and assessment of dispositions in teacher education. "Blunt, honest, focused feedback from professors and supervisors. Use of critical conversations EARLY on rather than later" (A5), says one participant about how teacher educators should go about assessing dispositions and communicating said assessment.

Another says, "Careful discussions should proceed between a department advisor,

mentoring teacher and the candidate if there is any cause for concern – especially early in

the program" (MT14).

As is the case with many of the responses to questions about disposition

assessment, participants base their beliefs on experience and this one shares a story to

highlight this: "Some of my most successful attempts to develop dispositions in teacher

candidates have come during personal conversations--whether in a formal interview or at

the classroom door following an observation" (TE30).

Participants believe that these assessments, communicated through personal

conversations, should cause dispositions to develop, as this participant (MT77) states:

> As mentors, supervisors, and coaches are working with a candidate who is going
>
> through a program, it is necessary to hold those professional conversations about
>
> how the candidate is relating to students, peers, parents, and supervisors. As the
>
> candidate has been guided and supported, there should be some growth in change.
>
> (S15)

Belief in the role of candidate self-reflection and self-assessment. A belief that

there is a link between self-reflection and self-assessment became clear as the data were

reviewed. Many participants seem to believe the self-reflection that they value in terms of

dispositional development can lead to self-assessment and that is an effective way to

assess dispositions. Candidates' dispositions can be assessed, "possibly through

evaluating themselves throughout the program, to see if there is any consistency or

changes" (S15), and "Doing self-evaluations, meeting with professors in order to discuss

how they are doing in the class, going above and beyond expectations . . ." (S2), say two participants.

One mentor teacher (MT81) responded, "Teacher candidates need to reflect and self-evaluate where they think they are personally with these characteristics. They need to see failure and make the connection to the attitude that lead to the failure." Referring back to the importance of dialogue, another teacher educator (TE30) states, "These successful conversations always involve a heavy dose of self-assessment of dispositions (on the part of the teacher candidate). . ."

Many participants think self-assessment should only be one part of dispositions assessments. This teacher educator believes self-assessment to be a very important part of dispositions assessment: ". . . My definition of dispositions entails a level of intentionality that can only be developed if assessed. Furthermore, because they belong to the individual, they must entail self-assessment on the part of the teacher candidate" (TE30). Another teacher educator (TE23) states:

> By identifying and defining dispositions, we can provide candidates the important information they need to begin the process of self-evaluating, observing these dispositions in mentor teachers and university instructors, and determining how these dispositions ultimately contribute to student learning.

Finally, some students weigh in with their beliefs about the role of self-reflection and self-assessment in assessing dispositions. Many of them believe that through such a process, they can make decisions about how to act, as this student states: "The more teacher candidates reflect and assess their dispositions, the better they will become at controlling their temperament in a positive way" (S10). Another student (S31) responds:

If given enough opportunities to try their beliefs against the realities of the

schooling system, most people will probably decide for themselves whether they

have the desired dispositions to do good work. From that awareness, pre-service

teachers can see the areas that they need to focus their attention on.

Participants' Concerns and Questions About Dispositional Assessment

In addition to the participants who believe dispositions should be assessed in

teacher education, there were those who were unsure about how this might work and

those who did not think assessment should occur at all or should only occur with some

caveats or for certain reasons. Many of these responses to questions about assessing

candidate dispositions begin with phrases such as, "My feelings are mixed about this"

(MT26), " I'm not sure" (MT66) and, "Maybe, this is a hard question. . ." (MT47).

Are assessments valid, objective, fair? The biggest concern that participants had

was about the validity, objectivity, and fairness of dispositions assessments. Some

question subjectivity through responses like, "I wonder if a student's involvement in class

discussions, small group activities, interactions could be objectively evaluated?" (MT23),

and "This seems too subjective and the possibility of evaluators having different

determinations of candidates' dispositions concerns me" (TE24). Another participant

(MT17) asks, "I would like to think they could be assessed, but I know this is a hard area.

How can you assess such subjective measures?"

Some don't believe it is fair to hold candidates accountable for what their

dispositions ought to be. "I think each individual has the right to their own disposition,"

said one student (S26). "A disposition is a personal aspect and should not be assessed

because it is more opinion and therefore not something that should effect a student's

assessment," said another (S72). Along the same lines, one student compares teacher educators assessing dispositions to that of K-12 teachers labeling students:

> I don't think that is the responsibility of an education program to assess dispositions because I feel that is doing what we are encouraged not to do to young students in a classroom. We are putting people in boxes, and laying down boundaries of who will be a good teacher or not. (S16)

Some participants discuss fairness. One mentor teacher (MT26) responds, "I don't know how an assessment could fairly assess a candidate. It seems a subjective judgment call." A student (S10) states, ". . . if entrance into a teacher education program is based solely on the results of the disposition assessments, some teacher candidates will not have been given a fair chance." Some other examples of responses are, "I just think this leaves too much room for a person being labeled inappropriately" (MT1), "This is tough as I believe it would take many hours of observations to accurately measure this" (MT14), and "If there were ways developed to assess dispositions, then that could be a factor, but I am unsure of how it could be fairly assessed" (MT56).

A number of participants talk about authenticity, validity, and reliability of assessments. One teacher educator (TE11) says, "Dispositions are tough to measure. Getting faculty to agree would be very difficult which would lead to questionable instrument validity and reliability." An administrator (A15) asks, "How do you measure values? I think you can measure behaviors, i.e. displayed empathy by... but I do not think you will be able to realistically measure beliefs, values and attitudes. I would like to see this work, but wonder about authenticity." Finally, one participant (A8) expresses a qualification for their response: "I would agree if educators can determine appropriate

validity and reliability to the disposition assessments. It is therefore a 'qualified' yes. I do have concerns, however, that we don't prematurely end someone's career choice."

Some other concerns, from all four participant groups, highlight the many participants who want to assess dispositions, but are uncomfortable about doing so. Examples of this include, "It would be difficult to accurately measure, but it would be well worth the effort" (A2), "But only if the assessments are reliable, valid, and fair" (MT48), "If you are able come up with an objective, measurable, reliable evaluation process, then by all means, use it" (MT23), and "Because we don't have good measures I wince at the thought but then like I said we have to go down this path so I agree" (TE11).

One student participant (S52) speaks in terms of fairness, subjectivity, and accuracy, although he/she uses the term "discrimination":

> If the education program did this would be discrimination because not everyone has the same disposition and who is to decide what makes a good teacher. Same thing as tracking in school and telling students what they should grow up to act like. This would not put in the factor of one's culture.

Should results be used for entrance to teacher education? An actual question on the survey asked this, but the topic came up in many other responses on the survey as well, leading me to believe that participants were considering assessment for entrance into teacher education as they thought about their beliefs about the definition, operationalization, development, and assessment of dispositions in teacher education.

Some participants do not want the results of dispositions assessments to keep potential candidates out of a teacher education program. Teacher educators discuss

"screening" or assessing before entry into the program. This particular participant wants assessments used to help plan candidates' dispositional development: "Candidates should be screened for inappropriate dispositions and told the results of the screening and given the opportunity to change. Candidates with toxic dispositions should be removed from the program" (TE36). Other participants do not want assessment to be used to bar entry into a teacher education program because, "If you disqualify teachers based on initial assessment you may lose good candidates" (MT8).

There are those, however, who believe that the results of dispositions assessments should keep potential candidates out of teacher education programs for a variety of reasons. Some want to save time and money for all involved. One mentor teacher (MT80) responded: "This would save the student and the school a lot of time and money," and another (MT67) asked, "Why waste their time and ours if they will not be an asset to the profession?" Another participant (A2) stated:

> Filtering those w/ "poor" dispositions would save students, teachers, and administrators from otherwise difficult situations. In some respects, it could also save the teacher candidate, because those w/ poor dispositions often struggle during their internships and rarely get hired as teachers.

Another participant said, "Some people cannot do this. It is sad and wrong to waste time and money on something you are not going to be happy doing, or good at" (MT25).

Others speak of some candidates just not having the right dispositions to teach, such as this response: "If they are not of the right disposition they should be counseled to another field. Just because they want to be an educator does not mean they should be

necessarily" (A3). "Not everyone was meant to be a teacher" (MT78) was a common response amongst mentor teachers. Some teacher educators (TE8) said things such as:

> As stated above, students come to us with dispositions already in place. For the most part, "what you see is what you get" in regards to dispositions. While that statement may seem callous, I believe that certain students are not meant for the teaching profession (due to their dispositions) and should be directed to another field of study.

Another teacher educator, claiming to speak from experience with teacher candidates, says:

> While dispositions can change over time, the number of teacher candidates who progress toward the profession and promptly fail within the first several years serves as a valid anecdotal argument for selective entrance into teacher education. I think that there should be some kind of entrance requirement. If several instructors report the same issues with a student there should be a way to deny them entry. (TE38)

Students added an interesting perspective to this conversation: "I would like to know if I have the attributes to be a successful teacher, if not I would prefer to spend my time elsewhere to benefit myself" (S4), said one student. Another (S52) said, "There are too many bad teachers for it not to be mandatory." Finally one student (S47) opined:

> If someone's disposition does not align with what would be expected of a professional educator, that may serve as an indicator they may want to consider

another career choice, or can show what they need to improve upon to continue into the education program.

Should results be used for completion of teacher education? Similar to the previous section, an actual question on the survey asked this, but the topic came up in many other responses on the survey as well, leading me to believe that participants were considering this as they thought about the definition, operationalization, development, and assessment of dispositions in teacher education. Participants had strong beliefs that the results of dispositions assessments either should, or should not, be used to determine completion of a teacher education program.

There is a sense that some believe candidates should be given a chance to start their career and see if they can handle it. This notion that candidates will find out if they have the proper dispositions once they become teachers was shared by both mentor teachers and students. "Teachers find their 'north stars' by teaching in a system. I don't think teacher candidates have an idea of what their stars are yet because they need to go out and find them first" (S42), and "Who is to say if a teacher candidates disposition is developed enough to graduate. I think it's trial by fire" (S46), are examples of participants who believe that candidates should be given a chance to develop dispositions in the first few years of their career.

Other participants feel exactly the opposite. Some, like this participant (MT34), believe that if a candidate has not met dispositions standards, they should not be recommended as teachers, "Student teachers should be well prepared to meet today's challenges in the classroom. If they don't meet the standards in college, how are they going meet the standard in the real world. Ask yourself, who would you like to teach your

child?" Another participant (TE1) states, "the teacher education program should not recommend any person with dispositions not supportive of all children, academically, ethically, or socially." Finally, one student (S7) states, "If after a program with this sort of development the person still displays questionable areas, then they probably shouldn't be sent off to a classroom to interact with children everyday."

Participants from all four groups discuss the integrity of the teacher education program and the role this plays in holding candidates accountable for the results of dispositions assessments in terms of program completion: One mentor teacher (MT18) opines, "If the supervisor of students can document that a student does not have the dispositions to be a teacher, I think he/she should not be certified. It takes away from the credibility of the universities and from the teaching profession in general." Multiple teacher educators also talk about the integrity of the program. One states, "We need to have some handle on quality control" (TE30). Another (TE19) speaks of some specific constituents to whom teacher education programs have a responsibility:

> Our first obligation is to students. If we certify teachers about whom we have
> significant concerns, we fail in our responsibility to children. Further, as an
> institution, we certify teachers with our brand name, which we want to have
> respected in the education community.

Students, too, talk about the integrity of the program, although not in such an explicit manner. One example is, "Like I said before, some people should not be teachers. It's the program's responsibility to make sure they're not certifying drug addicts and child abusers" (S45). Another states, "The education program needs to be sure that the teachers they are putting out in the world have a proper disposition for teaching" (S63).

Should teacher education adhere to a developmental model? This category stemmed from participants' responses to a number of questions. It emerged from those participants who seem to believe that educators should inherently approach their craft with a belief that their students can develop. Administrators, writ large, did not think candidates should be screened out of admission to a teacher program, largely due to maturity. "No, not to begin . . . . students are too immature" (A12), and "That is dangerous. Without having the opportunity to 'grow' in the program in this area through clear and concise expectations connected to relevant course work and professional activities.... we may miss out on some of the best candidates" (A10), were two of the responses.

Other participants stated that they believe that the teacher education program is the place where dispositions should develop, so they should not be assessed before this opportunity is given:

> There would be very few candidates if everyone was expected to have attained these dispositions before they even have the opportunity to practice them. If the goal is to change teacher disposition, then it should not be required to have one BEFORE entering the program. . . it is something you believe you can teach. (A13, emphasis in original)

Mentor teachers also discuss maturity in responses such as, "People grow and change. I would hate to see someone excluded at age 21 when they themselves aren't fully aware of their own beliefs and values yet" (MT2), and "Attitudes change as students are exposed. Also you are many times talking about 18-23 year old students and they still need that opportunity to find themselves and their passion" (MT49).

Many teacher educators also seem to believe in a developmental model. One participant riddles his/her way through this:

> I believe disposition development\clarification is part of a teacher education program's overall mission and thus dispositions should be considered in an individual's final candidacy. However, I believe course grades should reflect student dispositions. Furthermore, if entrance into a teacher education program is determined at the beginning of a candidate's teacher education coursework then there is a philosophical question as to how can a teacher education program use dispositions as a criteria for entrance if the program's coursework is suppose to assist in the growth of a candidate's dispositions? (TE28)

Another participant clarifies her/his own beliefs by talking through concerns about whether or not candidates have had the opportunity to develop something that they have not been told they need to develop:

> For me, the issue is to what extent candidates have had the chance to reflect on their attitudes and beliefs prior to the checkpoint. If they have only had one course with such a component, it seems unfair to deny them admission, particularly if we set this as a goal throughout the program. That is, we cannot expect them to come in with the attitudes and beliefs we hope to send them out with. (I can see that if I believed that dispositions cannot be developed, then the gate-keeper idea makes sense. This seems to solidify my position that these can be developed and should be a focus across the program). (TE9)

The concerns shared above represent an excellent place to end this chapter and move toward discussion, because these concerns are what cause a lot of the "murkiness," and "ambiguity" related to candidate dispositions in teacher education.

Summary

The data indicate that there are a multitude of positive dispositions that participants believe a teacher should have. Analysis of the data about beliefs related to the definition and operationalization of dispositions show a lack of agreement amongst participants about the visibility of dispositions.

Participants believe that dispositions are an important part of being a teacher and they are largely in agreement that candidate dispositions can and should be developed in teacher education. Participants ideally want dispositions to be assessed, but are uncertain as to how, why, and when this can and should be done.

There are concerns about the timing and potential subjectivity of assessing dispositions in teacher education, and some participants wonder if it is appropriate at all to enumerate specific dispositions. Both fieldwork and course work were lauded as important places within which dispositions could be developed and assessed, with participants defaulting to "learning by doing" in the field slightly more often.

In the following chapter, I further illuminate and discuss these results, focusing on student beliefs, explicit connection to knowledge and skills, coursework and the need to connect it more explicitly to fieldwork, and the development of teacher education professionals' capacity to attend to dispositions.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

In this inquiry, I surveyed 79 college students preparing to enter a teacher

education program (pre-program students) and 144 of the people charged with the task of

educating them (mentor teachers, administrators, and teacher educators), asking them to

share their beliefs about defining, operationalizing, developing, and assessing candidate

dispositions in teacher education (from here on out referred to as "attending to candidate

dispositions"). My hope was to add to the professional discourse about the construct of

dispositions and build on the work of researchers who have studied this construct in

teacher education (Ginsberg & Whaley, 2003; Ellis, et al., 2009; Young & Wilkins, 2008;

Murrel, et al., 2010).

The work of other scholars, too, calls for more attention to how dispositions are

being attended to in teacher education. As mentioned earlier, preconceptions *(*what

candidates bring with them to the field), enactment (the disconnect between espoused

beliefs and practice), complexity (difficulty in disconnecting dispositions from

knowledge and skills), and operationalization (what teacher educators actually do with

candidates) all continue to be "problems" for teacher education programs (Feiman-

Nemser & Schussler, 2010; Shiveley & Misco, 2010). Additionally, and a major

motivation for this inquiry, Osguthorpe (2013) opines that teacher education programs,

writ large, are too narrowly focused in their approach to the development of candidate

dispositions and that there is a lack of consistency amongst programs that are attempting to attend to dispositions. Osguthorpe's (2013) intention is, "to provide a starting point for gaining a professional consensus on a set of guidelines for attending to dispositions in teacher education" (p. 18).

By delving into the beliefs of participants here, I hoped to answer two questions that might add to the discourse on candidate dispositions in teacher education:

1) What are the beliefs of mentor teachers, administrators, and teacher educators related to dispositions?

2) What prior beliefs related to dispositions do teacher candidates bring with them to teacher education programs?

As was evidenced in the previous chapter, participants' responses illuminate a number of insights into these questions. Below, I discuss their responses further, connecting the data back to the literature, drawing some conclusions, and making some recommendations for further research.

First, I connect the assumptions that undergird this inquiry to the findings of the study. These assumptions include (a) a social constructivist approach to learning, (b) beliefs play an important role in learning, (c) dispositions are an essential part of a quality teacher, (d) dispositions are a murky concept, (e) teacher education may need to refine the ways it attends to dispositions, and (f) teacher education could benefit from embracing ambiguity and dialogue.

Next, the data is discussed in terms of the following overarching themes: (a) attending to student beliefs, (b) considering areas of agreement about dispositions, and (c)

emerging questions about dispositions. Implications are considered as data are connected back to the literature.

After that, I clarify some language that has been used throughout this manuscript and then I make recommendations for approaches to attending to candidate dispositions in teacher education programs. Each of these recommendations ties back to the themes discussed above.

Finally, in the summary and conclusion, I share my final thoughts about this inquiry and about attending to candidate dispositions in teacher education. I connect back to my original purpose for pursuing this inquiry and my journey to this point in my own career as a teacher educator. But first, I lay out the assumptions that undergird this inquiry and how they relate to the findings of the survey.

Assumptions

A number of assumptions undergird this inquiry and discussion. First, this study is grounded in social constructivism (Vygotzky, 1978) and in an understanding that pre-existing beliefs play a major role in learning (Rokeach, 1968; Green, 1971). This supports the assumption that students bring a number of beliefs and experiences with them to teacher education and that teacher educators ought to be aware of students' beliefs, their individual histories (Sockett, 2009), and the "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 2002).

There are four other assumptions about candidate dispositions in teacher education that are grounded in the literature reviewed for this inquiry. One assumption is that quality teachers possess a certain level of knowledge, skills, *and* dispositions or that

(a) dispositions are an integral part of being a quality teacher. This is outlined by Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005), when they talk about "good" and "successful" teaching as having an inherently moral quality to it. A second assumption is that (b) dispositions are still not very well understood and there may not be much consensus about how to attend to them in teacher education. Schussler (2006) describes this by stating that dispositions are "indeed a murky concept" (p. 252). A third assumption is that, (c) teacher education needs to refine the ways it attends to dispositions. As articulated above, Feiman-Nemser and Schussler (2010) and Osguthorpe (2013) are prominent voices in this call to understand and improve the ways in which dispositions are attended to in teacher education. Finally, a fourth assumption is that (d) teacher education would benefit from embracing potential ambiguities and dialoging, openly, about the areas within the construct that are murky. Sockett (2008) puts forth that it is ambiguity that creates dialogue and that the dialogue itself will help teacher education make progress.

With these underlying assumptions in mind, the data is broken down in the following section into three overarching categories for consideration: (a) considering student beliefs about dispositions, (b) considering areas of agreement about dispositions, (c) emerging questions about dispositions.

Each of these will connect key data points and literature in an effort to highlight areas for teacher education programs to further consider. Due to the qualitative nature of this inquiry, the ability to generalize is minimal. The findings of this inquiry, however, offer potential implications for teacher education programs to consider as they attempt to attend to candidate dispositions in teacher education.

Discussion

In this section, I talk exclusively about pre-service student responses in terms of the beliefs they bring to teacher education to distinguish the different role that these pre-service students play from the role of other participants. This is important to the study because of its grounding in a social constructivist view of learning and the stated goal of bringing students' voices to the dialogue. In the subsequent two sections, the participant groups are discussed as a whole, summarizing and considering the responses of the entire group. First, student beliefs are considered.

<u>Considering Student Beliefs</u>

As mentioned earlier, there is an assumption that beliefs play an important role in learning, and that for teacher candidates, that learning connects to how they teach in P-12 classrooms. Villegas (2007) says that:

> The beliefs pre-service teachers bring to programs of teacher education—derived from their previous schooling and life experiences—shape what and how candidates learn from their formal preparation, and eventually influence what and how they teach in classrooms. (p. 373)

Given this connection between what students bring with them, how they learn, and what and how they eventually teach, it follows that teacher education might benefit from understanding the beliefs of the students have when they enter a teacher education, as stated here: "Because teachers' beliefs play a significant role in shaping their instructional behaviors, and thus what students learn, it is important to examine their characteristics, their content, and their expression" (Turner, Christensen, and Meyer, 2009, p. 361). Two particular pre-program student beliefs stood out here as beliefs that

may need to be further examined: (a) students believe that teacher education is attending to dispositions and (b) students believe that willingness to develop is paramount.

Students believe that teacher education is attending to dispositions. The majority of pre-program students surveyed in this inquiry seem to believe that important dispositions are being discussed and developed in teacher education. "I think the classes that I take are natural pathways towards analysis of myself and my dispositions" (S18), says one student. Another states, about coursework, "I think through the classes that are taught there are so many different classes with a variety of different lessons and they are there to help develop" (S28). There is evidence here that students believe that dispositions are being attended to in their teacher education program.

Students believe that willingness to develop is paramount. As mentioned, the data illuminate that participants believe candidates can develop dispositions if they are willing to do so—if they want to change, develop, and learn. Few participants list willingness as a necessary disposition to teach, yet, when talking about whether or not dispositions can be developed, many participants say something akin to, "if a candidate is willing" (S71).

Pre-program students, particularly, seemed to believe that their peers would only develop dispositions if they were willing to do so, stating things such as, "The valued dispositions that I mentioned can be brought to light to deepen a person's understanding of the concept, but if an individual is unwilling to learn them then nothing will have been taught successfully" (S20). Therefore, these responses may also suggest that the encouragement of self-reflection and self-assessment could lead to self-awareness and self-selection into or out of a teacher education program.

Of course if a pre-program student's willingness to develop certain dispositions is a precursor to their actual development, then much attention ought to be paid to a pre-program student's willingness prior to and during admission to a teacher education program, as many participants stated.

Considering Areas of Agreement

Osguthorpe (2013) suggests it is important to find general areas of consensus (which he clarifies does not mean "prescription" but instead refers to "general guidelines" (p. 18) amongst those involved in teacher education programs. There are multiple data points herein that indicate that there is consensus amongst participants on many aspects of attending to dispositions in teacher education. Teacher educators, administrators, and mentor teachers suggest that "at the very least" teacher education programs should be making a conscientious and purposeful effort to attend to candidate dispositions—they should be enumerating and articulating, dialoguing . . . being very transparent about the importance of dispositions in teaching. "I do believe that teacher education programs can at least make teacher candidates aware of dispositions in general and what dispositions are best for the teaching profession. . . " (MT47), stated one participant. So, to connect the data points, students expect that dispositions are being attended to and those teaching them think there is a responsibility to do so. This apparent agreement could be a "starting point" (Osguthorpe, 2013) from which teacher education can begin to attend to dispositions in a more meaningful way.

To further fortify such a position, there are a number of other areas, shared below, where the participants in this inquiry appeared to be in agreement. Participants largely agree that (a) dispositions are an essential part of quality teaching, (b) dispositions are

intimately linked to knowledge and skills, (c) dispositions assessment and development should be linked and ongoing, (d) dispositions development takes time, and (e) dispositions assessment is discomforting.

Dispositions are an essential part of quality teaching. It is safe to say that everyone who responded to the survey believes that dispositions are an essential part of teaching. No one stated, "Dispositions are not important. The focus should be on knowledge and skills only," or anything similar to that. Instead, the participants all talked about dispositions as an important part of teaching. Participants state things such as:

> Yes, dispositions should be as important, if not more important, as content knowledge throughout a program. As a teacher, understanding my own natural dispositions is essential to my daily classroom management and relationships with students. I cannot be a good classroom teacher, regardless of my intelligence, if my dispositions are at odds with my goals in the classroom. (MT58).

Participants believe that dispositions are important to teaching and they tell countless stories about how and why dispositions are important. This, too, is important for teacher education—as potentially "murky" as this construct may be in some ways, there is no doubt amongst these participants that it is an essential part of being a teacher. Participants also understand that dispositions do not stand alone and instead are connected to knowledge and skills.

Dispositions are intimately linked to knowledge and skills. When asked a question about dispositions in this survey, participants often discuss knowledge and skills in response, "I think that the more knowledge teacher candidates obtain and the more experience they gain, the more they will be able to grow and change as a person" (S2).

Another participant (MT33) responds to a question about how dispositions can be developed in teacher education discussing curriculum standards and content, not dispositions: "The university course work should provide the understanding of the content and how to align it to the current curriculum standards."

Additionally, many participants believe that the assessment of dispositions should function as one of many assessments involved in a comprehensive approach to candidate assessment. One participant states that dispositions should be assessed "As part of the evaluation, in addition to content knowledge, classroom management etc" (TE12), which links closely to the literature (Osguthorpe, 2013; Diez and Raths, 2007) that states that dispositions should not be treated separately from knowledge and skills:

> The triadic articulation of "knowledge, skills and dispositions" was never intended as an invitation to treat the topics discretely [INTASC as cited in Benninga et al., 2008]. The purpose for including dispositions in the triad was to draw attention to the moral and ethical nature of teaching as essential attributes of professional teaching. (Benninga et al., 2008, p. 3)

Few participants believe dispositions are something discrete that ought to be developed and assessed separately from the other parts of the triad.

There may be an underlying assumption that because dispositions are so intimately linked to knowledge and skills, dispositions are developed tacitly when knowledge and skills are focused on. "The problem with this approach is that if certain behaviors are desired qualities of graduates, then they must be deliberately planned for and assessed" (Lund, Wayda, Woodard, Buck, 2007, p. 39). It is possible that this is not an assumption, but rather something that has not been considered by those in teacher

education programs. Just as this triad is intertwined, so, participants say, should

assessment and development be.

Dispositions assessment and development should be linked and ongoing.

Feiman-Nemser and Schussler (2010) state, "An assessment by itself holds little value.

Assessments possess value when they measure something meaningful. Assessments for

dispositions are meaningful when they are used as tools for development" (p. 199). Much

of the data here suggest that assessment is part of a good developmental model of

learning: ". . . if you implement a program where you're working with teacher candidates

with a plan that includes ongoing progress monitoring while teaching them the skills and

modeling their use. . . " (MT64). Participants discuss both development and assessment

as ongoing work—that it must be so, and that there must be dialogue to support this.

Dispositions must be, "Assessed early and given full support for growth throughout the

candidate's education" (TE31), said one participant. Another (A5) states, "Students can

change as they not only mature but grow emotionally and intellectually in a program. To

continually assess the candidates will provide the school and the intern valuable feedback

for what they need to work on in order to be successful."

The literature review revealed a trend wherein assessment is sometimes framed as

development; in other words, a program might claim that by doing periodic assessments

of candidates' dispositions, the program is in essence developing dispositions, despite the

fact that nothing is explicitly done in between assessments (Murrell et al., 2010). Some

participants, here in this inquiry, have a concern about this too. They believe there need

to be opportunities to develop dispositions if dispositions are going to be assessed: ". . .

explicit opportunities to develop positive dispositions should be made available in lower

division course work and continue to challenge students to grow their dispositions into upper division work and the professional year" (TE10). Largely, though, this participant group desired explicit dispositions development and operationalization to facilitate assessment and further development; in other words, this participant group has knowledge of the assessment-feedback loop (Sadler, 1989) and want to see such a structure applied to the development and assessment of dispositions in teacher education. This participant (TE27) discusses this:

> Sure, teacher candidate dispositions should be assessed throughout a TE program, though I'm not certain they can or should be evaluated. By this I mean that TE programs should provide multiple opportunities for candidates to set goals, receive feedback, practice, and so on. . .

The caution here and consideration for teacher education is that assessment not be used as summative assessment only, but instead, more proactively, as formative assessment. Additionally, most participants indicate that all of this development and assessment take time.

Dispositions development takes time. According to participants, the development of dispositions takes a great deal of time. When speaking of dispositions development and assessment, one participant states:

> I would hope that this wouldn't be a one-time assessment. Professors should continually assess the growth and development of students in the education program to see if there is change over time. If a student is identified as having a negative disposition, he/she should be allowed time to improve and be reassessed to show growth. (MT22)

This process most likely starts early in life and either continues for some time before teacher education, or continues through and beyond teacher education, depending on which participant is asked. The idea that dispositions do not develop overnight; that they cannot develop in one academic course, or through a few short interactions, though, is universally believed by participants. Therefore, according to participants, viewing dispositions as something that can develop in one semester, from a few interviews, or one conversation is a faulty approach.

Instead, participants really do believe that dispositions should be developed and assessed over time, but, even so, there are some things about assessment with which participants are not quite comfortable.

Dispositions assessment is discomforting. Participants are not certain that dispositions assessment can be objective and unbiased, as mentioned in the previous chapter and highlighted in the literature (Splitter, 2010; FIRE, 2009; Villegas, 2007). Underlying this, however, may be some additional personal discomfort and uncertainty.

Participants seem to have angst about developing and assessing dispositions, as the queries posed in response to survey questions here demonstrate:

> Maybe...?? How do you test that? If you did test it, would it be through a series of events and situations? If so, if a student knows s/he is being assessed on this, don't you think they will respond differently than they would in a real life classroom setting? So will the results be accurate? (S8)

It seems as if participants either inherently believe that dispositions can develop, but have seen enough candidates that do not develop that they find themselves

questioning that belief. Other participants want to assess, but do not have faith in the assessments themselves or the backing of the teacher education program. One teacher educator tells a story that highlights all of this:

> Again, I agree that disposition assessments could be used to determine eligibility for completion of a TE program if a candidate shows no willingness or ability to being open to understanding others. That is, if during the program a candidate shows no willingness or ability to being open to understanding others, then I would not feel comfortable with allowing that candidate to finish the program and work with young people. I mean this in fairly extreme cases, though, because I do believe my take on dispositions is something that can be developed. This seems like a slippery slope, though, and I'm not sure if I've thought about it carefully enough. (TE25)

Another participant states:

> I feel I have very good radar for particular dispositions, but I've also been wrong. If we could figure out a way to fairly assess dispositions, I'd be all for it, but I think it can be a slippery slope. I know I could do a better job of saying things like, "The minute you step into my classroom, I'm assessing you for dispositional qualities. I'll be looking for how much you attend to our discussions, how prepared you are, how much you speak up in class and offer support to your classmates, how you manage your time, whether or not you're willing to ask questions and be proactive about your state of affairs...." (TE34)

These participants are uncertain. They want to be more certain about dispositions and are uncomfortable with the realization that they're not. It might be comforting for them to

know that they are not alone on this and that many participants share this discomfort and lack of certainty.

The "murky" nature of dispositions (Schussler, 2006) has been mentioned a number of times as a potential problem for teacher education practice. This discomfort that can be seen in participants' responses, however, may go beyond the murkiness of the construct. Schussler and others highlight something very important—there is a lack of agreement and understanding about both the definition of the term and the dispositions that ought to be desired. I have covered that elsewhere in this inquiry. The level of discomfort exemplified here is internal, though. It is a discomfort related to a lack of internal agreement or understanding, not external agreement with others. This will be discussed and developed further below.

The majority of participants seemed to have discomfort about the assessment and development of dispositions, which is why it was included in this discussion as an area of agreement. There are some other areas, however, where the literature and the data from this inquiry do not connect, and this raises more questions than answers. Those emerging questions are tackled in the next section.

The questions asked in this section are (a) what can be done with the overabundance of dispositions? (b) does it matter that students might conform to the desired dispositions? (c) how does internal conflict about dispositions manifest itself? (d) how can dispositions be developed, except when they can't? (e) how important is a theoretical understanding of dispositions?

These are not questions that participants asked. They are questions that emerged based on the lack of congruence between the data and the literature. Furthermore, this section is not about disagreement amongst participants. Participants in this inquiry do have some conflicting beliefs among them, certainly, but that is not what is being highlighted here. Instead each of those themes is looked at in terms of what is suggested, either in the literature or here in the data. First, I revisit the fact that, when asked what dispositions a teacher should have, participants included an abundance of dispositions.

What can be done with the overabundance of dispositions? Welch et al. (2010) state, about dispositions, "The term continues to lack a definitive singular meaning" (p. 181) and Levine (2007) shares that "All told, a person's disposition can be just about anything." The data collected in this inquiry are consistent with those statements. Participants are split on whether dispositions are visible or not visible and they list a great number of desirable dispositions.

Here I am reminded of the responses that Scherer (2010) received to the question, "What makes a great teacher?" The responses were humility, excitement, meaning-making, reflection, a willingness to grow, well-roundedness, flexibility and strength (p. 74). This a manageable and quite sensible list, but how does one winnow down the list of

all possible dispositions to just these? Shiveley and Misco (2010) recommend an iterative process that, as I shared earlier, according to them is "messy, time consuming, and involves a number of challenges" (p. 2) that could be turned to for winnowing a list such as the one shared here in this document, but I wonder if winnowing ought to be the task of teacher education.

Consider this: It is the first day of a teacher education program and a teacher educator explains the expectations of the program. Amongst those expectations is a requirement that certain dispositions are developed over the course of the program. A student raises his hand and asks what those dispositions are and the teacher educator obliges, rattling off the following, " A teacher must. . . be outgoing, person centered, make others feel comfortable, welcoming, inviting, resilient, have perseverance, work hard, be tenacious, be diligent, be able to work in tough spots, never give up, be industrious, assertive, go above and beyond, be motivated, follow through, be strong, be willing to sacrifice, be willing to serve, have high standards, give off a good vibe, be courteous, considerate, approachable, accessible, collaborative, connect with others, be cooperative, follow administrative directives, be committed, be able to adjust on the fly, be prepared, draw on experience, be purposeful, effective, engaged, firm, aware, observant, be an independent worker, be organized, be a problem solver, be highly educated, delegate, realize everything is not black and white, be thoughtful, reflective, intuitive, focused, consciously competent, creative, use common sense, have a growth mindset, be able to make decisions, be forward thinking, be a visionary, value inquiry, be knowledgeable, realize that others' values are different from theirs, be accepting of others for who they are, be objective, be willing to hear all sides, believe everyone should be

valued and is important, be open to/willing to change, accept new ideas and beliefs, be willing to try new things, be open to new trends. . ."

And the list continues like this for ten more minutes, as I have not even listed half of the desirable dispositions highlighted in the data from this inquiry. What do students do when they hear this? What is the teacher educator's plan for attending to all of these? To some of them? This plethora of desirable dispositions could cause teacher education to either throw their hands up and say, "how can we possibly address all of this in such a short period of time?" or to go the route of choosing specific dispositions and focusing only on them, as the literature, and participants, suggest. There are concerns with either of these approaches.

First there is the potential to throw our hands up and, essentially, let the seemingly limitless number of desirable dispositions paralyze teacher education and any attention to dispositions. If there are too many to attend to, let's avoid attending to any at all, hoping that either they will develop on their own or believing that they cannot be developed anyway. This approach has been problematized already, but it begs the question: Why would an educator knowingly and purposefully not attempt to develop something that they believe is integral to the craft that they are teaching?

Another approach would be to limit the dispositions attended to, and many teacher education programs take this approach, as has been highlighted throughout this inquiry. We can pick a manageable number of dispositions, enumerate and articulate them, and move forward (then only needing to deal with those who are concerned about ideological indoctrination). This has become a concern too, though, as teachers are responsible for so many things and their work is multi-faceted in terms of knowledge,

skills, and dispositions. However, given the enumeration of dispositions listed above by the imaginary teacher educator (and, again, realize that only about half of those that were shared in this inquiry are included), how would it be possible to pick a manageable number that are deemed most important? And what would be the rationale for eliminating some dispositions in favor of others? Given the data reported in this study, such a rationale is difficult to ascertain.

In the first approach, teacher education seems to not know where to begin in attending to dispositions. In the second approach, teacher education seemingly doesn't know where to end. Therefore, one of the primary findings from this inquiry is that teacher education needs to embrace the complexity of the construct dispositions—not simply find out where to begin or end, but endeavor to capture all that we believe is involved in quality teaching.

The concern about the seeming overabundance of desired dispositions expressed here is not about a worry that this overabundance somehow makes the construct unwieldy. Instead, the concern is that an opportunity to enhance the experience of teacher candidates is being missed when teacher education goes in either of the directions mentioned. This concern is related directly to praxis. Before suggesting alternatives, however, I turn to other questions, related to praxis, that have emerged from this inquiry. Next, we look at the idea that students might conform to a set of dispositions. This concern was emphasized in the literature, but only mentioned a few times in the data.

Does it matter that students might conform? The literature (Hendry, 1975; Villegas, 2007; Maylone, 2002; Levine, 2007; Splitter, 2010) cautioned that teacher education must be careful about telling candidates what dispositions are expected

(enumeration and articulation) as doing so may cause students to act a certain way just to pass the coursework and complete the teacher education program, but not truly develop dispositions or change beliefs in any way. "In the very act of deciding and defining attributes a candidate must possess, the vision of what *is* a teacher may lead to conformity by the candidate" says Levine (2007). Only a few participants discussed this, though, through comments such as, "Anyone can tell you what you want to hear, you get to know them over time" (TE31), and ". . . some students can 'play the game' for a one-time evaluation. I believe students demonstrate their 'true colors' over time, and often times those dispositions become quite evident - positive or negative. Therefore, disposition-checks need to be ongoing throughout the program" (TE7).

Those two comments connect back to the literature reviewed, but most participants in this inquiry were not concerned about conformity and students, particularly, seemed to embrace an approach to attending to candidate dispositions in teacher education that allows and encourages them to be honest, not one that gives them an easy way out. One student participant states:

> If someone's disposition does not align with what would be expected of a
> professional educator, that may serve as an indicator they may want to consider
> another career choice, or can show what they need to improve upon to continue
> into the education program. (S47)

Another participant states, "I would like to know if I have the attributes to be a successful teacher, if not I would prefer to spend my time elsewhere to benefit myself" (S4). The key here is that students recognize the importance of dispositions in teacher education; they see how challenging teaching is and they report that they do not want to be ill-

prepared or waste their time going into a career that they should not be in. I contend that teacher education programs should be willing to take the risk that some students may try to conform, especially if, as suggested above, an ongoing system for self-assessment, self-reflection, and self-selection is employed. I also wonder, though, if teacher education programs are willing to take these risks and if not, what the reasons may be that they are not willing. One reason might be because mentor teachers, administrators, and teacher educators are not fully confident in their understanding of dispositions, another might be due to cognitive dissonance, and still another might be because they do not have a firm theoretical understanding of dispositions. All three of these considerations are discussed below. Something else to consider is the discomfort and internal conflict mentioned earlier.

How does internal conflict about dispositions manifest itself? What sometimes appears to be disagreement amongst participants about dispositions may simply be internal conflict. The literature about dispositions does not talk about this possibility, but the data here clearly shows it. This participant, for instance, is not debating the reliability and validity of assessment with someone else in the field, but is instead sharing an internal dialogue, as many participants did:

> If the assessment is valid and reliable and candidates have had opportunities to grow and not done so and remain unsure that all children have potential, such candidates should not complete a certification program. Gosh - I'm writing almost all these answers from the negative - not talking about celebrating great dispositions. I'm not sure what that means. But it stands out to me. Is it because I feel so uncertain about dispositions - I know they are important but I'm not sure

how exactly to fairly measure them? Participants' beliefs about dispositions in teacher education are not fully settled, and therefore they find themselves arguing, taking a stand, and debating. . . (TE3)

Internal strife such as this, though, may be actualized as external disagreement with a colleague or lack of action on the part of a teacher education professional. This could slow down any progress being made toward attending to dispositions in teacher education in a meaningful way.

Harkening back to Sockett (2008) and his assertion that ambiguity creates dialogue, which is what could help the field move forward in attending to dispositions, it is disconcerting that mentor teachers, administrators, and teacher educators seem to be recognizing this internal strife for the first time. Do they feel as if they are not *supposed* to be conflicted and that they are supposed to know the answers? Could that cause them to, maybe even unknowingly, hide or ignore this internal conflict when working with candidates? Earlier, I discussed this as an area where mentor teachers, administrators, and teacher educators could potentially take comfort in their consensus. Here I problematize what is causing such internal conflict and wonder why this internal conflict was not discussed in the literature. Are the participants here expressing something that others feel, but have not expressed?

I make some recommendations below on how further research could help answer this question, but want to further unpack this question before I do so. It is possible that the participants in this research are wrestling with two beliefs that contradict one another and they cannot figure out how to rectify this. Some simultaneously state that dispositions

can develop and that they can't. This cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) could cause great confusion and strife.

   How can dispositions be developed, except when they can't? 85% of participants believe that dispositions can be developed and 94% believe that dispositions should be developed in teacher education, but there is a substantial amount of data about why, when, and how they *cannot* be developed. Further analysis of the qualitative data shows that only approximately 51% of participants fully believe that dispositions can be developed. The 34% differential can most likely be explained by those participants whose responses, as highlighted in the results chapter, say one of two things: (1) Some dispositions can develop, but some cannot, as in: "Some dispositions can be taught and practiced (i.e. communicating effectively with parents and other staff), but some cannot (i.e. positive attitude, patience, etc.)" (TE7), and (2) the potential for development varies from candidate to candidate, as in, "There remains some degree of malleability of these. The specific amount of "malleability" varies from candidate to candidate" (TE2).

   Some of the responses from participants seem to reflect an inherent belief in the educational process and in peoples' ability to learn, or, from another perspective, a challenge to that educational process. Responses that reflect this include, " . . . Dispositions can certainly be improved, otherwise, why do we educate anyone about anything?" (MT51), "That should be the point of the program, figuring out what they are and then developing them," "Every person is capable of learning" (S59), and "I certainly hope so, else why pay your salary" (MT49). But then those same participants move away from this—they say things like, "I believe disposition can be influenced and instructed in

a teacher education program, but dispositions to me are something inherent and therefore cannot be newly developed or taught" (S51).

Initially, this appeared to be a type of *hedging* by candidates, but after further analysis, there appears to be a more complex belief. Participants seem to know what they are "supposed" to believe and know what they want to believe: that education itself, and their jobs as educators, are precluded by a belief that all students can learn and develop. In practice, however, participants have experienced things that contradict that. Coming to terms with that may be challenging for participants. Some participants have seen that one candidate that just cannot seem to overcome certain beliefs and dispositions, such as this one:

> The easiest way for me to explain this is through an example. I found myself having to "pull" a student from student teaching six weeks before she was to graduate. While her teaching skills themselves were highly lacking, I firmly believe that skills can be honed and taught. It was her inability to connect with her students and coworkers and her dishonesty about her part in these problems that made me unwilling to let her continue. This was not something she was going to be able to learn without something (such as therapy and a good look at her own nature) that we could not give her in the program. If the dispositions being assessed were more formally adhered to, I believe she would never have gotten so far. In looking at her education program file, there were many "flags" in it that indicated this was a problem, but she continued on anyway. Certain dispositions need to be assessed and there need to be protocols for dealing with them that are straightforward. (TE17)

This teacher educator believes that dispositions can develop, except in this case. I contend that this expression is one of cognitive dissonance, although I also wonder if some participants may be (unknowingly?) connecting to both Rokeach's (1968) and Green's (1971) theories about how certain beliefs are held more deeply than others and therefore more resistant to change.

Many participants are simultaneously holding contradicting beliefs that they cannot seem to rectify. When this plays out in discussion, often it appears that two participants do not agree about the definition, operationalization, development, and assessment of dispositions in teacher education, when in fact many of them can't find agreement within themselves. The concern here surrounds these participants' work with candidates—does this cognitive dissonance surrounding dispositions inhibit their work with candidates?

In the next section I discuss the possibility that mentor teachers, administrators, and teacher educators simply do not have enough of a theoretical understanding of dispositions. Whether this lack of theoretical base leads to the internal conflict and cognitive dissonance discussed above, contributes to it, or is a separate issue altogether, it is something that should be considered.

How important is a theoretical understanding of dispositions? The data here shows an acknowledgement by participants that, potentially, fieldwork and coursework offer different things to candidates. Here, I pay specific attention to participants' beliefs about fieldwork in order to explain a concern that has emerged from the data about coursework. There are four things to consider here: (a) the belief that the field is the place to develop dispositions, (b) responses that admit to a lack of understanding of

dispositions, (c) responses that indicate a misunderstanding of dispositional theory, and (d) responses about the importance of mentor teachers.

The participants in this inquiry largely champion experience in "the field" as the place/way that dispositions can best be developed. "More time spent with quality mentors in a real educational setting (less university time, more real world experience)" (MT19), is a quote that is indicative of this. It seems that there is a belief here dispositions will be acquired, in the field, *just by being there.* Even if this is an oversimplification, it seems as if many participants default to "more time in the field" without much consideration of the theory that undergirds what is done in the field. Perhaps there is also a belief here that mentor teachers, administrators, and teacher educators either have been taught/trained in dispositional theory and development or that they do not need to be. This belief concerns me.

Some of the participants state that they are not familiar with dispositions and/or respond to the survey with questions and concerns about dispositions, as shared in the three previous sections of this chapter. Others, though, appear to be more confident in their understanding, but perhaps do not realize the nuances of constructs such as dispositions and beliefs. "I suppose you could instill some sense of ethics but you can't make someone care" (MT12), said one participant. This type of quote doesn't acknowledge that caring might be ethical theory itself (Noddings, 1984), depending on one's theoretical orientation—making this either a contradictory statement or a statement disconnected from theory. These types of statements show a potential misunderstanding or misapplication of dispositional theory.

Two participants also discuss careful selection and training of mentor teachers. "First, explicit training for the mentor teachers would be critical. Then, perhaps, the university supervisor or liaison could provide periodic reminders and/or tips to mentor teachers. University professors could also teach these dispositions during the methods classes" (A2), and "Work with a variety of mentors. Screen mentor teachers more rigorously" (MT55) are examples of this. The literature review unearthed a concern that training for and selection of mentor teachers should be an important part of the development of candidate dispositions (Harrison, McAffee, Smithey, & Weiner, 2006; Murrel, et al., 2010), and many participants in this inquiry discuss the important role mentors play, but no other participants discussed selection and training of mentor teachers in this inquiry. It is interesting, to say the least, that these participants do not believe, or even think to mention, that those responsible for helping candidates develop dispositions may need preparation, based in theory, for this work.

According to the data collected, mentor teachers are believed to play an important role in the development and assessment of candidate dispositions. Despite this belief, there is almost no discussion about the quality control of mentor teachers in terms of their ability to foster dispositions development: ". . . I believe that an effective mentor that models positive dispositions can influence a teacher candidate. (I suppose the opposite could also be true, to a degree)" (A2), said one participant. There is a litany of potential assumptions about mentor teachers here, all of which ought to be considered in terms of candidate dispositions in teacher education. These assumptions could also be applied, I believe, to teacher educators at the university level.

It should not be assumed that all teachers, whether they are deemed to be "good" at their craft or not, will be mentor teachers that can foster the development of dispositions in candidates. This is not a part of their preparation, training, or expertise, necessarily. It should not be assumed that because they are teachers, they are "dispositionally sound" in a manner that the teacher education program with which they are associated would want them to be. Nor should it be assumed that if a mentor teacher is "dispositionally sound," simply "having" the right dispositions translates to being able to help candidates develop dispositions (or that, were they not "dispositionally sound" that they could not, in fact, be successful in helping candidates develop "positive" dispositions). It should also not be assumed that mentor teachers or teacher educators know how to develop and assess said dispositions with teacher candidates. I most likely have only scratched the surface of the assumptions inherent in assuming that being mentored, or simply being "in the field" will automatically foster the development of positive dispositions.

These four concerns can be brought together as follows: Participants believe that the field is a place to develop dispositions and that mentorship plays an important role in development, yet there is little evidence that teacher educators, mentor teachers, or administrators have an understanding of dispositional theory.

Throughout this discussion, I have expressed a number of concerns that emerged from this inquiry. Some concerns were related to the beliefs that students bring with them to teacher education and others were connected to the areas where there seems to be consensus amongst participants. In this last section, I shared questions that emerged from

the data. Below, I share some recommendations for further research and suggestions for ways to attend to dispositions in teacher education.

Recommendations

In this section, I make four recommendations for teacher education, stemming from the above discussion. These recommendations follow the four aspects of dispositions researched in this inquiry (defining, operationalizing, developing, and assessing), and they use the term "teacher educators" to encompass mentor teachers, administrators, and professors. In relation to defining dispositions in teacher education programs, *teacher educators should focus on the visible nature of dispositions*. In relation to operationalizing candidate dispositions in teacher education programs, *teacher educators should focus on an integrated approach to dispositions*, and they should also *consider student beliefs as a starting point.* Finally, in relation to developing and assessing dispositions in teacher education programs, teacher educators should *develop their own capacity to attend to candidate dispositions.*

Teacher Educators Should Focus on the Visible Nature of Dispositions

This inquiry further corroborated that teacher educators have many different beliefs about the visibility of dispositions. There are myriad dispositions that participants believe teachers should have, both visible and invisible. There is not much consensus about whether dispositions are the visible actions of a person, or something underlying that contributes to that action. Whether dispositions are one or the other may not need to be definitively decided, but teacher educators do need to be aware of dispositions being defined in both ways and clearly focus on the fact that they cannot develop and assess

what they cannot see. Focusing on the visible will help teacher educators clearly communicate with students exactly what they are looking for.

Teacher Educators Should Focus on an Integrated Approach to Dispositions

There are at least two ways to think about integration here. The first is in terms of the connection between knowledge, skills, and dispositions, which has been discussed throughout. The second way of integrating dispositions is over the duration of a teacher education program, which includes both coursework and fieldwork. The idea here is to avoid gaps in dispositional development and assessment, open lines of communication, and focus on being explicit and united, amongst teacher educators in different roles, in attending to candidate dispositions in teacher education programs.

Dispositions are connected to knowledge and skills and as such must be explicitly developed and assessed over the entirety of a teacher education program alongside knowledge and skills. With each new piece of knowledge and each new skill that students are taught, the corresponding and associated dispositions need be discussed and practiced as well. Dispositions are not a discrete topic and therefore must not be taught as such.

Dispositions can also not be developed and assessed discretely in one area of coursework or by one teacher educator or group of teacher educators. As the data show, there should be multiple checkpoints for students and there needs to be communication amongst teacher educators and with students. This is where teacher educators functioning as a group, including those in the field and those teaching the courses, must come together both conceptually and practically. This starts before students arrive in the program with the defining and operationalizing of dispositions, which should involve all teacher educators. When students do begin a teacher education program, however, there

is more information that needs to be considered, and that is what the students bring with them.

<u>Teacher Educators Should Consider Student Beliefs as a Starting Point</u>

Students believe that teacher educators are teaching the content and pedagogy that they believe are important. Teacher educators, therefore, might want to consider the expectations that students have, based in their beliefs, and attend to them in a more meaningful way. Perhaps being clear about what is involved in being a quality teacher, from a dispositional standpoint, and also opening up more purposeful dialogue would best serve students. This dialogue with candidates could initially center around certain areas of attending to candidate dispositions in teacher education where participants seem to agree.

This dialogue would need to expand, however, to include the things that teacher educators are not so comfortable with or certain about. Even where teacher educators do not have all the answers, a certain transparency about the cognitive dissonance they are experiencing is recommended.

<u>Teacher Educators Should Develop Their Own Capacity to Attend to Candidate Dispositions</u>

Teacher educators play important roles in candidate development. If these teacher educators are experiencing internal conflict or are uncertain about how to go about dispositions assessment and development, however, then they may not be fully prepared to play these roles. Nurturing a greater capacity to develop and assess candidate dispositions in teacher educators could help better prepare teacher educators for this work with students and candidates.

In order to develop such capacity, teacher educators could spend more professional development time engaging in research and practice surrounding dispositional theory, beliefs theory, and adult development theory. Teacher educators who have a better understanding of their beliefs about dispositions, and of the theories related to dispositions and beliefs, might be more willing to explicitly teach, attempt to develop, and assess dispositions in teacher education. The creation of assignments and experiences that address dispositions could stem from this.

All of these recommendations and suggestions, of course, require that teacher education programs consider their current practice and think about what can be done in the future. Teacher education programs will need to ask themselves how early in a program, or in a student's college career, this discussion and assessment of dispositions begin. They will need to ask themselves if they have the resources for developing capacity within teacher educators at all levels. They might also want to ask themselves how transparent they want to be about the way they attend to dispositions and what potential problems such transparency could invite. Hopefully, the data, discussion, recommendations, and suggestions from this inquiry contribute in a way that assists teacher education programs in moving past any reluctance, confusion, or discomfort about attending to dispositions.

Summary and Conclusions

To begin this inquiry, I waxed poetic about my journey through elementary, junior high, and high schools as a teacher and administrator. I shared that at one point, a few years into my career, I found my practice to be largely uninformed by anything but experience in the field, and I felt cognitive dissonance (although I did not recognize what

it was at the time). I felt as if I knew what to do and how to do it, most of the time (knowledge and skills), but I was not always sure why, and this weighed on my conscience, my emotions, and my overall health.

When I began this inquiry, I did not expect my story to come full circle; to find myself looking at educators and realizing that some of them may be unwittingly experiencing exactly what I was, almost ten years ago. Even when I finished my initial data analysis, I did not see the missing link between theory and practice in the participants. I have always advocated for getting candidates into the field early and often and believed that this would help them develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the most efficient manner. As I read that in the data, I found myself cheering on the inside, thinking, "yes, I am right! Everyone agrees with me!" And then I took a step back and realized my potential folly. I fell victim to that mentality as a P-12 teacher and teacher education programs and those involved in teacher candidate preparation may be in similar spot now.

Candidate dispositions are considered to be important to quality teaching and participants in this study believe that dispositions can and should be explicitly taught and assessed, over time, throughout a teacher education program. Teacher education programs have a responsibility to explicitly teach what they believe to be the necessary components of being a teacher, which clearly includes dispositions. Developing and piloting specific assignments, experiences, and activities, linked to knowledge and skills, to give candidates opportunities to develop, practice, and reflect on their dispositions seems to be a logical next step.

Participants are uncomfortable with the assessment of dispositions and what to do with the results of dispositions assessment, but they do believe that self-reflection and assessment should play a role in this process. It seems that enacting program pre-assessment, connected to dispositions development plans for candidates and ongoing formative assessment, is an appropriate next step here.

Dispositions are still a murky concept, although maybe a little less so than once thought, for there is a difference between "murky" and "complex." Murky seems to suggest that the construct is cloudy and difficult to see, whereas complex, as used here, suggests that there are multiple facets to the construct that must be considered, but not that those facets cannot be seen. As illuminated through this data, the many facets of candidate dispositions in teacher education are evident, they just need, as Sockett (2009, 2012) alludes to, to be brought to the forefront of the dialogue and practice in teacher education and in P-12 schools. In other words, the complexity of dispositions should be shared and discussed with candidates—an approach that positions teacher education programs as "all knowing" with regard to dispositions is one that inhibits the movement toward more clarity and success in attending to dispositions in teacher education. Teacher educators are positive that dispositions are important, but are not entirely sure how to handle the multi-faceted nature of the construct. Students should be aware of this complexity and be engaged in the open, honest discussion about the complexity.

There may be a paucity of dispositions and beliefs theory shared and understood within teacher education programs and partner schools—with the focus being placed on practice and experience. It would be beneficial to take a closer look at the potential need for more training and more experience, specifically with theories on beliefs and

dispositions, for all teacher educators This could address teacher educators' cognitive dissonance, their discomfort, and potentially help them be more prepared for explicit development and assessment of dispositions.

Students entering teacher education programs (pre-program students) expect the programs to be teaching them all that they need to know and understand to be quality teachers. They, and other participants in this research, have identified a potential overarching disposition: the desire, willingness, or want to develop, change, learn, and grow. This master disposition should be explored more in further research, and, until more is known, looked for and openly discussed during the assessment and development process within teacher education programs.

The field, alone, cannot just magically create quality teachers. Neither can coursework. Knowledge, skills, and dispositions must be explicitly modeled and dialogued about, reflected on, and assessed, in some manner, in both the field and the college classroom. If dispositions are an important part of quality teaching, then those who are charged with developing and assessing dispositions must be further trained in dispositional theory. Dispositional theory and practice must be linked, and it is the responsibility of teacher education programs to engage in further research to help close this gap.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Used in 2010 Pilot Study

Survey Used in 2010 Pilot Study

1. In the following section, you will be asked to answer questions and respond to

statements about your understanding of the word "dispositions." You may or may not

have heard this word before and you may or may not have heard it used in connection to

education. No matter what your previous experience with the word, please do your best to

answer the questions and respond to the statements below. Thank you.

2. Please define the term dispositions in your own words. If you have never heard this word
before, please indicate so. If you have, do your best to describe/define it.

3. Dispositions are beliefs

4. Dispositions are feelings.

5. Dispositions are behaviors.

6. Thank you for your answers above. For the rest of this survey we will be using a specific
definition for dispositions, which is used by the Boise State College of Education. Embedded in
this definition is the assumption that we are talking about positive dispositions: Dispositions are
professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal
behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues, and communities. The next
section asks you about the possession and development of dispositions in a teacher education
program. Please remember to use the definition given above when responding.

7. Pre-service teachers should develop dispositions.

8. Pre-service teachers should have certain dispositions.

9. Pre-service teachers can develop necessary dispositions.

10. Pre-service teachers ought to develop dispositions.

11. Pre-service teachers' dispositions remain stable throughout a teacher education program.

12. Please list the dispositions that you believe pre-service teachers should have, if any:

13. Thank you for answers in the above section. The next section is about the assessment of dispositions within a teacher education program. You may or may not have had your dispositions assessed in the past, but please take a moment to think about each statement and respond as honestly as possible. Please take your time, as each statement may seem similar. Again, please use the following definition when responding to these statements and remember that embedded in this definition is the assumption that we are talking about positive dispositions:

14. Pre-service teachers' dispositions should be assessed.

15. It is possible to accurately assess pre-service teachers' dispositions.

16. It is important for the dispositions of pre-service teachers to be assessed.

17. Pre-service teachers' dispositions can be accurately assessed.

18. Thank you for your answers in the above section. The next section asks you to share your beliefs about what Teacher Education Programs or individual instructors should do with the results of Dispositions Assessments. You may or may not agree that dispositions should be assessed, so please accept, for the statements below, that the program should assess dispositions. Again, please use the following definition when responding to these statements and remember that embedded in this definition is the assumption that we are talking about positive dispositions: Dispositions are professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues, and communities.

19. Results of dispositions assessments should be used to determine if pre-service teachers may continue in a teacher education program.

20. Results of dispositions assessments should be used to plan instruction.

21. Results of dispositions assessments should be used to help pre-service teachers develop necessary dispositions.

22. Results of dispositions assessments should be used to determine eligibility for completion of a teacher education program.

23. Thank you for your answers to the above section. You have been in classrooms for a substantial part of your life, as a student. During this time, you have had the opportunity to gain insight into practices that motivate you to learn. In this section, you are being asked to think about how you learn, and, based on that, respond to: How you believe you might learn about and develop dispositions. When I present the statements below and ask you to respond, I am simply asking if you believe that change can occur given certain activities. Again, please use the

following definition when responding to these statements and remember that embedded in this definition is the assumption that we are talking about positive dispositions: Dispositions are professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues, and communities. Please rate the following based on how much you agree that each would help you develop dispositions during a teacher education program:

24. Having desirable dispositions articulated to me at the time that course work begins.

25. The presentation of multiple perspectives on issues.

26. Instructors encouraging me to question my beliefs.

27. Being given opportunities to interact with people who are different from me.

28. The modeling of desirable dispositions.

29. Explicit instruction about desirable dispositions.

30. Doing field placements in schools that serve populations that are similar to me.

31. Instructors suggesting that certain dispositions are "correct" or "incorrect."

32. Thank you for your answers to the above section. You have been in classrooms for a substantial part of your life, as a student. During this time, you have had the opportunity to gain insight into practices that motivate you to learn. In this section, you are being asked to think about how you learn, and, based on that, respond to: What type of assessment you believe would best demonstrate your dispositions. When I present the statements below and ask you to respond, I am simply asking if you believe that change can occur given certain activities. Again, please use the following definition when responding to these statements and remember that embedded in this definition is the assumption that we are talking about positive dispositions: Dispositions are professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues, and communities. Please rate the following items based on how much you agree that each would allow instructors to accurately assess dispositions and/or dispositional development.

33. Assignments designed to help me challenge what I believe.

34. Observations of me in a K-12 classroom working with children.

35. A background check through police records and fingerprinting.

36. Assignments designed to allow me to explain my beliefs.

37. Asking me to examine, judge, and discuss case studies of classroom practices.

38. Periodic surveys that ask me to self assess my dispositions.

39. Please explain/discuss other or more specific practices that you think might give instructors insight   into your dispositions and/or dispositional development.

40. Please use this space to explain why you chose certain practices and not choose others.

APPENDIX B

Dispositions Survey, 2013

Dispositions Survey, 2013

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this SURVEY about DISPOSITIONS. Please recognize that your answers to questions here will not have any effect on your grade or standing in any courses or in the teacher education program here at Boise State University. In fact, the reason you are being asked for your name is so that I can follow up with you to get more information and clarify your responses. I will not share your names or specific responses with anyone.

The purpose of this SURVEY is to gather data that will help me better understand what pre-program students (someone who may enter a teacher education program) believe about dispositions. PLEASE do your best to answer truthfully, give as much detail as possible, and do be prepared for follow up conversations.

A few terms will be used throughout this survey that I would like to clarify before you begin:

>TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM: A college program for students who are planning to become teachers.

>TEACHER CANDIDATE: A college student enrolled in a teacher education program.

In the following section, you will be asked to answer a question about your understanding of the word *dispositions.* You may or may not have heard this word before and you may or may not have heard it used in connection to education. No matter what your previous experience with the word, please do your best to answer the question below. Thank you.

Q1 I have read and understand.

     Yes
     No

Q2 Please define the term *dispositions* in your own words. If you have never heard this word before, please indicate so. If you have, do your best to describe/define it.

Q3 Thank you for your answer above. For the next section, please use the following definition, which is used by the Boise State College of Education:

Dispositions are professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues, and communities.

The next section asks you about dispositions. Recognizing that dispositions can be

"negative" or "positive," please respond to the following questions. Please remember to use the definition above when responding. Thank you.

Q4 There are "positive" dispositions that a teacher should have.

> Strongly Agree
> Agree
> Disagree
> Strongly Disagree

Q5 Please explain/list what they are:

Q6 There are "negative" dispositions that a teacher should not have.

> Strongly Agree
> Agree
> Disagree
> Strongly Disagree

Q7 Please explain/list what they ar

Q8 Teacher candidate dispositions can be developed in a teacher education program.

> Strongly Agree
> Agree
> Disagree
> Strongly Disagree

Q9 Please explain your answer:

Q10 Should teacher candidate dispositions be developed throughout a teacher education program?

> Yes
> No

Q11 Please explain your answer

Q12 List and explain some ways you think teacher candidate dispositions could be developed in a teacher education program:

Q13 Should teacher candidate dispositions be assessed throughout a teacher education program?

> Yes
> No

Q14 Please explain your answer

Q15 Results of dispositions assessments should be used to determine entrance into a teacher education program.

> Strongly Agree
> Agree
> Disagree
> Strongly Disagree

Q16 Please explain your answer:

Q17 Results of dispositions assessments should be used to determine eligibility for completion of a teacher education program.

> Strongly Agree
> Agree
> Disagree
> Strongly Disagree

Q18 Please explain your answer:

APPENDIX C

Auditor's Letter

October 12, 2013

Dear Mr. Zenkert:

I have enjoyed meeting with you several times, in person, and in cyberspace, about the ongoing progress regarding your dissertation at Boise State University. In short, your work is impressive; and it is work that I believe can open up new frontiers in how colleges and universities educate tomorrow's teachers with respect to teacher dispositions. After perusing your research questions and resultant interview notes, performing with you a preliminary audit of research themes, pondering your thematic analysis strategies, and then discussing with you those emergent themes and how they relate to future developments in the field of teacher education, I am confident in confirming that your work has the structural integrity required to defend it successfully before your dissertation committee at Boise State University. I am also confident that our several meetings and conversations via email over the past few months satisfy what the best qualitative research demands in regards to confirmability and dependability (Lincoln, Guba, 1985, p. 318).

The suggestions that you note in your conclusion—increasing the amount of training on teacher dispositions for teacher education professionals; integrating self-assessment, self-reflection, and self-selection within the teacher candidate growth process; and, in doing so, answering teacher candidates' communal, continual question of "Why aren't you doing this already?"—each of these suggestions is valid and entirely doable. They are within reason and within reach. The concept of teacher dispositions is ambiguous, cloudy, not easily defined, and—as you note numerous times—not even easily seen. Nevertheless, if teacher education programs truly have the desire to improve the quality of candidates who enter and graduate from their programs before entering our nation's schools, these programs would be well served to consider the ideas from your research study—ideas which, though preliminary, may offer a different entry point into how we can better improve our nation's schools, which is a malady our nation has been dealing with since (at least) the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983.

I wish you the best in this and all future endeavors. I hope my brief letter expresses my unqualified support for the integrity of your study, and my wish for your study to be the first of many which continue to explore new frontiers in the relatively unexplored field of teacher dispositions.

Sincerely,

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