

Can You Teach Intrinsic Values? Creating a Rubric to Support and Assess Professional Dispositions Development

Kathryn Casey¹, Tia Schultz¹ and Ozalle Toms²

¹Department of Special Education, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, United States

²Student Diversity, Engagement and Success, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, United States

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CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Ozalle Toms; tomso@uww.edu

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ABSTRACT

Teacher educators understand the important role of dispositions, defined as beliefs, values, and attitudes educators demonstrate when interacting with others. Without skills in these areas, teacher candidates will likely struggle to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to be effective in the classroom. There is general consensus in the field as to the value of developing these dispositions in teacher candidates. The purpose of the present paper is to describe a process aimed to define and measure professional dispositions aligned to Combs' perceptual dispositions model. The work had three objectives. Firstly, to understand how students and other members of the faculty viewed the importance of professional dispositions. Secondly, to build on the broad definition of professional dispositions by identifying associated competencies. Finally, to create a tool to authentically assess and support teaching dispositions in teacher candidates. The authors identified six competencies to measure and help develop in teacher candidates: Cultural Competence, Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, Self-reflection, and Initiative. This paper provides a methodological approach to defining dispositional competencies, a process and tool to measure these in teacher preparation programs.

Keywords: dispositions; pre-service; candidate; teacher; education; process; developing

INTRODUCTION

Teacher educators work tirelessly to prepare candidates in the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful teachers in today's classrooms. Candidates graduate with content and pedagogical knowledge, behavior management techniques, and log hours practicing these skills in classrooms. However, teacher educators know there are also traits that the most effective educators possess that are not adequately captured by measures of knowledge and skills. The literature commonly refers to these as professional dispositions, and they play an important role in the development of future teachers. The field of teacher preparation has long valued the development of these dispositions in teacher candidates.

Since the National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) first included professional dispositions in the program approval process, there has been an increase in the interest and attention paid to defining and measuring them in teacher preparation programs (Smith, 2013). NCATE (2008) defined professional dispositions as beliefs, values, and attitudes educators demonstrate through their interactions with others. This broad definition has been discussed in literature. Though many professionals have acknowledged the need for a more specific definition than the one set forth by NCATE, there is no consensus on what this definition should be. Much of the literature references NCATE, and then points out the variation in how the literature has tried to create a definition based on these broad standards (Meidl & Baumann, 2015). For example, Edington and Cox (2015) reported using a Teacher Disposition Summary tool to support the development of dispositional skills for pre-service teachers. The tool evaluated the areas of values, commitment, professional ethics, and organization/flexibility. Meanwhile, Pang, Nichols, Terwilliger, and Walsh (2014) created the Teacher Disposition Checklist (TDC) to evaluate the areas of professionalism, communication, respect for diversity, collaboration, self-reflection, recognition of students' individual needs, and responsiveness to feedback.

Despite the disagreement on how to specifically define dispositions, professionals are in general consensus as to the significance of dispositions in teacher preparation programs. One reason is to understand how teacher candidates' professional dispositions may influence their students' learning and their own professional growth. Researchers have found that nature and quality of educa-

tion through which students learn is dependent upon the dispositional skills teachers possess (Notar, Riley, Taylor, Thornburg, & Cargill, 2009; Thornton, 2013), suggesting that an important element to students' learning is the educator's disposition.

In addition, theoretical frameworks available to help guide the development of teacher candidates promote the importance of developing dispositional traits. Tenets of Arthur Combs' perceptual field theory, specifically his discovery that an individual's belief system, rather than knowledge and skills, were the determining factors in effective helpers (e.g., teachers, nurses, and counselors), provides the necessary grounding to facilitate this work (Combs, 1965). Combs contended that all behavior is a function of an individual's beliefs about and experiences in the world (Combs, 1999).

To ensure preparation programs are helping candidates develop the dispositions that will lead to effective teaching, appropriate methods of evaluation are needed. Further, it is important to identify when dispositional skills develop in a teacher preparation program. Most commonly, dispositional skills are defined, discussed, and practiced through field-based experiences in schools. Research has found that teacher candidates feel more competent to teach when their coursework is tied to field experiences (Allen & Wright, 2014; Horn & Campbell, 2015). Kincaid and Keiser (2014) found that intentional observations of teacher candidates by the university supervisor and cooperating teacher is essential in providing support, as related to skills and dispositions critical to the profession that might not be as apparent to a professor in a classroom setting. Having a specific definition can help guide preparation programs to identify associated competencies in order to operationalize and accurately evaluate the specific skills candidates need to develop. It is important to understand how they develop in order to teach and support students in fostering dispositions. Instead of noting whether the dispositions are present or not, teacher educators can target the dispositions and support their growth over time. In addition, teacher educators could notice concerns early in the program and work with students to develop and grow in the area(s) of concern.

The purpose of this paper is to describe a process aimed to define and measure professional dispositions in teacher candidates. With an emphasis on engaging faculty, students, and community stakeholders in this

process, the work had three objectives. Firstly, to understand how students and other faculty viewed the importance of professional dispositions. Secondly, to build on the definition of professional dispositions by identifying associated competencies. Finally, to create a tool to authentically assess and support teaching dispositions for teacher candidates.

PROCESS

Our teacher preparation program is implemented by the College of Education and Professional Studies at a university in a Midwestern state. The University is located in a rural region with a population of roughly 103,000; 95% of which are white, and the median household income is \$55,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017).

In the program, teacher candidates participate in three field placements prior to student teaching. The first field focuses on the inclusive methods, including culturally responsive teaching, classroom routines and management, lesson planning, and teaching. The second field focuses on collaborative teaching methods, specifically on co-teaching models, and lesson planning with emphasis on differentiation and universal design for learning. The third one focuses on addressing significant and challenging behaviors in a classroom. During the field placements, candidates were working in classrooms with support from Cooperating Teachers. This developmental field experience model provides three distinct points of evaluation for knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

The process applied to determine how to evaluate professional dispositions for the program consisted of three phases. The first phase was to understand the value students and faculty placed on dispositions. This included a review of the literature to determine the definition and associated competencies. This was followed by the distribution of a survey to teacher candidates and faculty in the department to identify which of the competencies identified were most important to support. Subsequently, in order to select the dispositions, focus groups were held with cooperating teachers in the region to explore the professional dispositions they identified as most important for teacher candidates. Finally, the authors developed a rubric to assess and support the development of professional dispositions for their teacher candidates.

UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF DISPOSITIONS

Building on Combs' theory that behavior is impacted by how individuals perceive themselves and the purpose of teaching, we sought to identify the dispositional traits valued by candidates and the faculty. We anticipated finding participant responses aligned to Combs' perceptual field theory. More specifically, his perceptual dispositions model that can be applied to teacher effectiveness. This model identified four areas of perceptions that differentiate effective and ineffective teachers: a) perceptions of oneself, b) perceptions of other people, c) perceptions of the purposes of teaching, and d) general frame of reference perceptions (Combs, Soper, Gooding, Benton, Dickman, & Usher, 1969).

In spring 2016, the authors developed a survey used to determine teacher candidate beliefs about professional dispositions. Based on the current grading tools used within the department and informed by the literature and other disposition rubrics, the authors identified key dispositions for the survey. The survey items included a mix of content, pedagogy, and dispositional traits centered on self-reflection and the teachers role in influencing the environment. The first question the candidates were asked was "how important you feel it is to demonstrate the following skills in your field placement?" Candidates were able to rate options that focused on teaching, assessment, goal setting, planning and dispositional skills from extremely important to not at all important. Second, candidates were asked an open-ended question, "what is the most valuable aspect of field experiences?" These responses were reviewed to identify themes. The authors sent a survey to 73 candidates currently enrolled in the three fieldwork courses offered by the department. Sixty-eight candidates completed the survey with a 93% completion rate. Of the candidates who completed the survey, 48% were juniors and 52% were seniors.

During the same period, faculty members in the department were sent a survey to identify strengths and areas for growth related to fieldwork. The survey was sent to the 12 faculty and staff in the department and eight (67%) completed the survey. The three open-ended questions were:

- 1) **What are the objectives of our collective field courses?**
- 2) **What skills do you expect students to gain during fieldwork?**

3) What experiences do you hope students encounter during fieldwork?

Open-ended questions were used to allow faculty the freedom to share their ideas.

DEFINING DISPOSITIONS

To elaborate on specific competencies associated with the identified dispositions, focus groups were held with cooperating teachers. The questions asked were open-ended to gather authentic data on their perceptions. The participants in this study worked within a 50-mile radius of the University. The distance parameter was put in place in order to identify the teachers who hosted candidates from the University in their field placements. Further, the authors took into consideration the travel time to and from the focus group location.

Ten teachers were selected using a two-step process. First, all school districts within a 50-mile radius, who hosted teacher candidates from the University in the past, were identified. This resulted in 12 districts. Second, district administrators were emailed and asked to distribute information to their staff about the opportunity to participate in a focus group to examine professional dispositions in pre-service teacher candidates. The interested teachers emailed one of the three authors to receive more detailed information. Inclusion criteria were: 1) hosted a teacher candidate within the last three years, 2) worked in a school district within a 50-mile radius of the University, and 3) was a licensed teacher. All of the teachers who contacted the authors met the inclusion criteria and were enrolled in the study. Four of the twelve school districts contacted were represented in this group. See Table 1 for participant demographics.

The participants attended one of the two-hour focus group meetings. The first focus group had six attendees, and the second had four attendees. Focus groups were held in the evening after school, and food was provided. The same procedures were followed for each focus group. First, participants were provided with a brief overview of the purpose of the meeting and asked to provide written consent. Second, participants were provided with a brief context for the focus groups by listening to a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation that included the definition of professional dispositions. At the end of the presentation, participants learned the procedures of the focus group and had the opportunity to ask questions.

After the presentation, a modified Nominal Group Technique (NGT; Delbecq, Van de Ven, & Gustafson, 1986) process was conducted (i.e., the first six steps of the NGT). NGT is a structured focus group that combines qualitative and quantitative methods to collect feedback in a timely manner (Johnson & Turner, 2003). This process consists of a set of previously developed questions focusing on defining and identifying professional disposition competencies. There are six-steps recommended by Delbecq et al. (1986): (a) brainstorming and silent generation of ideas by participants, (b) recording and displaying ideas, (c) group discussion, (d) categorization of ideas into themes, (e) preliminary vote to determine high-priority ideas, (f) final group discussion of outcome of vote, and (g) a final vote over ideas using a 1-5 ranking system to provide quantitative data.

Each focus group followed the same procedure. Following the brief presentation, each group was provided with the set of three questions to be discussed in turn. The teachers were asked, (1) What are the professional dispositions necessary to be an effective teacher?, (2) Of those dispositions, which do you feel are most likely to develop over time (i.e., you would not expect a first year teacher to have fully developed due to lack of experience in the field)?, and (3) How would you evaluate teacher candidates on the professional dispositions scale identified in question one?

Each question was presented one at a time. After each question, the participants recorded their individual responses on a google form. Once all responses were collected electronically, they were projected for the group to review. The group then discussed the responses and as a whole identified the top five high priority responses to each question. The participants then ranked the five responses: the priority one response received 5 points, the priority two response received 4 points, the priority three response received 3 points, the priority four response received 2 points, and the priority five response received 1 point. The item that received the most points across both focus groups received the number one rank, the second most points received the number two rank, the third received the number three rank, the fourth received the number four rank, and the fifth number five. All procedures were audio recorded, with participants' permission, and a note-taker was present to record questions and ideas discussed during each focus group session.

SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Value of Dispositions

Candidate survey. The candidates identified six competencies as “extremely” important professional dispositions. These competencies and the percent of candidates who selected “extremely important” were the following: Communication (91%), Collaboration (82%), Critical Thinking (73%), Self-reflection (72%), Initiative (66%), and Cultural Competence (61%). Common themes that emerged from the open-ended question, “what is the most valuable aspect of fieldwork?” included having an opportunity to participate in “real-life experiences,” applying classroom and textbook knowledge in a classroom setting, and learning what teachers do. In addition, candidates’ comments focused on dispositional competencies, such as learning to effectively communicate and collaborate with colleagues and families, being professional, and being able to grow and reflect on their teaching.

Faculty survey. The first question asked the faculty to consider the objectives of the fieldwork experiences for our teacher candidates. Faculty felt the objectives of the department’s field courses were teaching (co-teaching), lesson planning, problem solving and gaining classroom management skills. Responses also focused on bridging the gap between methods and practice. Similarly to students, the faculty also mentioned the importance of students experiencing the role of a teacher. Other responses included professionalism in the school setting and developing dispositional competencies.

The second question asked faculty to identify the skills expected of teacher candidates during fieldwork. The responses to this question focused mainly on dispositional competencies. The responses included punctuality, professional dress, collaborative practices, effective communication skills (oral and written), critical thinking, self-reflection, following policies/procedures, and handling conflict. Competencies mentioned were practice teaching, evaluating and managing behavior, organizing classroom environments and developing cultural awareness and responsiveness.

The third question asked faculty to describe the experiences candidates were expected to have during their fieldwork. Faculty in the department hoped that students would have the opportunity to work with a diverse group of students, work with a variety of professionals,

and have exposure to the day-to-day activities experienced by teachers. These activities included attending Individualized Education Program meetings, parent conferences and faculty meetings. The faculty also expressed hope that students would experience and implement a variety of teaching styles and be paired with cooperating teachers who would release responsibility to them and mentor/coach them as they hone their skills.

Identifying Dispositions

The teacher focus group data were analyzed in order to select dispositions. Tables 2-4 include the ranked items for each of the three research questions. The first column of each table includes the generated items that were ranked by the participants in the two focus groups. The participant responses that were similar in content and nature, but worded differently, were subsumed under one item. Consequently, the points for those items were combined. For example, for question 1, some participants’ identified “being inclusive,” “tolerant,” and “accepting of others” values and beliefs” as important dispositions, which were combined under item 1, “open-minded.” The second column includes the points awarded to each item and its rank in the focus group. The third column includes the overall points for each item and the rank of the top five items generated by both focus groups.

Question responses. Table 2 includes eight items generated for focus group question, 1 across both focus groups. These items reflect the dispositions the participants believed were most important for a beginning teacher to possess. There were some similarities in items between the groups. The overall top rated items are listed as 1-5 in the table. These included, 1) open-mindedness, 2) compassion, 3) knowledge of development and content, 4) flexibility, and 5) communication skills. Of these five items, two were rated in the top five by both focus groups, open-mindedness and flexibility. There were three items ranked in the top five for focus group two, that did not rank in the top five once combined with focus group one. These items were passion, collaboration, and professional dress and related behaviors.

Table 3 includes seven items generated for focus group question 2, across both focus groups. These items were what the participants believed to be the dispositional traits likely to develop over time. There were some similarities in items between the groups. The overall top ranked items are listed 1-5 in the table. These included,

Table 1. **Participant Demographics**

	Cooperating Teachers (n= 10)
Female	10
Mean age (Range)	36.5 (27-50)
Caucasian	10
Median years experience (range)	10 (3-14)
Grade levels taught	PreK – 12
Median number of teacher candidates supervised (range)	5 (2-40)

1) flexibility, 2) professional dress and behavior, 3) leadership, 4) self-confidence, and 5) effective communication. Of these five items, two were rated in the top five by both focus groups, flexibility and professional dress and related behaviors. There were two items that were ranked in the top five by one of the two focus groups, but did not receive an overall rank. Those items were knowledge of development and content and open-mindedness.

Table 4 includes eight items generated for focus group question 3, across both focus groups. These items were what the participants identified as the best ways to evaluate teacher candidates' dispositional skills. The overall top ranked items are listed as 1-5 in the table. These included, 1) observation, 2) video, 3) discussion, 4) feedback, and 5) interviews. Of these five items, two were rated in the top five by both focus groups, observation and video. There were three items that were ranked in the top five by one of the two focus groups, but did not receive an overall rank. Those items were journaling, self-evaluation, and rubric.

THEMES

The final step prior to creating the evaluation tool was to analyze the findings and identify common themes across our participants' responses. The goals of this work were to identify competencies and to determine a process for evaluating dispositions with the assessment tool. Described below are the key

Table 2. **Participant Item Rankings for Focus Group Question 1: What are the professional dispositions you expect a beginning teacher to possess?**

Items	Item Points (Rank)		Total Points (Rank)
	Focus Group 1 n=6	Focus Group 2 n=4	
Open minded	18 (4)	15 (2)	33 (1)
Compassion	23 (1)	-	23 (2)
Knowledge of development/content	21 (2)	-	21 (3)
Flexible	9 (5)	11 (3)	20 (4)
Communication	19 (3)	-	19 (5)
Passion	-	17 (1)	17
Collaboration	-	8 (5)	8
Professional behaviors	-	9 (4)	9

Table 3. **Participant Generated Ideas and Item Rankings for Focus Group Question 2: Of the dispositions identified in question 1, which do you feel are most likely to develop over time?**

Items	Item Points (Rank)		Total Points (Rank)
	Focus Group 1 n=6	Focus Group 2 n=4	
Flexible	19 (2)	17 (1)	36 (1)
Professional behaviors	18 (3)	14 (3)	32 (2)
Leadership	25 (1)	-	25 (3)
Self-confidence	18 (3)	-	18 (4)
Effective communicator	-	16 (2)	16 (5)
Knowledge of development/content	15 (4)	-	-
Open-minded	-	13 (4)	-

Table 4. **Participant-Generated Ideas and Item Rankings for Focus Group Question 3: How would you evaluate fieldwork students on the necessary professional dispositions identified in question one?**

Items	Item Points (Rank)		Total Points (Rank)
	Focus Group 1 n=6	Focus Group 2 n=4	
Observation	24 (1)	14 (3)	38 (1)
Video	13 (5)	16 (1)	29 (2)
Discussion	23 (2)	-	23 (3)
Feedback	16 (3)	-	16 (4)
Interviews	-	15 (2)	15 (5)
Journaling	14 (4)	-	-
Self-evaluation	-	5 (5)	-
Rubric	-	12 (4)	-

themes emerging from our survey and focus group results. These included consistency across participants, identification of professional competencies, and the way in which dispositional constructs were conceptualized.

The authors first looked at similarities among participant responses. The faculty and cooperating teachers consistently identified the value of practicing of what was taught in the college classroom in an authentic context like field experience. Field experiences are components of a teacher preparation program, typically occurring prior to student teaching, in which candidates practice their skills under the supervision of a cooperating teacher and a university supervisor. The findings suggest that field experiences were the place where candidates were most likely to develop proficient professional dispositions.

The value of field experiences in teacher preparation programs have been widely reported in the literature (Darling-Hammond, 2014; Kennedy, Alves, & Rogers, 2015; Welsh & Schaffer, 2017). Evidence suggests that the confidence candidates attain during these experiences is valuable to their growth and development as teachers (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2014; Nougaret, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 2005). Our participants emphasized the importance of field experiences and suggested they occur frequently in order to help them develop dispositional skills over time. Similarly, research suggests that regular assessment of candidates should be embedded in field experiences in order to accurately measure the development of skills and dispositions (Borko, Liston, & Whitcomb, 2007; Conderman & Walker, 2015; Allen & Wright, 2014).

Participants identified similar competencies as important to the development of future teachers. The competencies most commonly reported across groups were communication skills, open-mindedness and cultural competence/responsiveness, problem solving, and critical thinking. While the survey and focus group respondents used different language to describe these, the ideas remained the same. These competencies were captured in the final evaluation tool, described in the next section.

Similar to Combs' dispositions model, the teachers reported the value of how they perceive their role and purpose as a teacher. The cooperating teachers in this study reported the top two traits of an effective teacher to be open-mindedness and compassion. They described these in detail as "being inclusive" and "accepting

of others' values and beliefs." When reviewing survey responses, the majority of teacher candidates reported a similar construct of "cultural competence" as "extremely important" and the faculty respondents identified "cultural awareness and responsiveness" as an important skill for candidates to develop. Perceptions of self by effective teachers includes an ability to connect with students from diverse cultural backgrounds and recognize students' capacity to learn (Combs et al., 1969).

In analyzing responses, we found the profound value teachers placed on self-reflection and recognizing the experiences of students. Teachers reported on the necessity of being open-minded and compassionate on a daily basis. For example, they expressed the value of building relationships and understanding family systems and culture in order to help students be successful in school. One participant stated that she did not fully understand the impact of the home environment on student behavior prior to being a teacher, and she had to learn to be "generous" as regards time and attention and to believe in "equity over equality." Much of the discussion among teachers was focused on how they had to reflect on their own biases and limitations in order to adequately support the different life experiences of their students. These profound moments of self-reflection came from years of experience and trial and error in the classroom. Combs et al. (1969) also found that the most effective teachers possessed a natural ability to connect with students from diverse backgrounds and believed they could help any child learn. Further, some of the practicing teachers also felt open-mindedness and compassion were intrinsic traits. One teacher commented, "It is hard to teach things that are intrinsic. How do you change how someone is wired?" Another shared the sentiment that there was not enough time to "develop" some of these key dispositional traits, and waiting for a candidate to do so may cause harm to students.

While these concepts were not discussed explicitly in candidate or faculty survey data, it is likely that these concepts were considered implicit in the cultural competence domain covered in the teacher preparation program curriculum. What seems particularly interesting to us is how this idea was conceptualized. For practicing teachers, the focus was on the feelings they had as teachers and how those feelings were manifested in their interactions with students, which can be difficult to measure. For faculty and candidates, the focus was on the instructional skills associated with being culturally competent, such as planning lessons that include equitable pedagogy,

critical selection of teaching materials, creating a culturally responsive classroom environment, and incorporating various assessment tools (Lee & Herner-Patnode, 2010). It is therefore reasonable to assume that candidates who are not open-minded or compassionate would struggle to demonstrate these skills.

One unanticipated finding was related to professional appearance, specifically dress. In reviewing the literature, professional appearance was often included as an area evaluated in relation to dispositions (e.g., Conderman & Walker, 2015; Johnston, Almerico, Henriott, & Shapiro, 2011). In addition, faculty and staff are often asked by principals and field experience coordinators to discuss appropriate attire with teacher candidates, suggesting that professional appearance influences judgements of teacher candidates. Both focus groups discussed dress briefly, but in the end described “professional behaviors” as “being prepared,” “thoughtful,” “taking initiative,” and being “self-motivated.” Additionally, teacher candidates and faculty did not include professional appearance in their survey responses. This finding suggests that the professional expectations of candidates and the faculty who participated in this study were related to responsive versus superficial professional behaviors.

RUBRIC DEVELOPMENT

The third goal of this project was to take what was learned from the literature, surveys, and focus groups and create a tool to authentically assess professional dispositions. Based on the findings, the authors identified the criteria for the final assessment. First, all of the participants indicated the importance of observation and self-reflection when evaluating dispositions. Therefore, evaluators had to be able to use the tool in conjunction with observations and in a format that led to self-reflection. Second, multiple evaluators would be using the evaluation tool. The final product needed to produce meaningful information for a variety of stakeholders evaluating dispositions from multiple perspectives. The final step was to create a user-friendly tool that collects data on dispositions throughout a candidate’s program. The objective was that the tool would help candidates develop appropriate professional dispositions throughout their training. Research supports the assessment of candidates’ skills at multiple points during their preparation program to monitor their knowledge and skill development (Brewer, Lindquist, & Altemueller, 2011).

The authors determined that a rubric would be the best method of evaluation (see Figure 1). Six competencies were identified, Cultural Competence, Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, Self-reflection, and Initiative. The rubric was designed to follow each candidate through three field experiences to track their growth in each competency. In addition, the rubric would be used to evaluate teacher candidates across multiple contexts, including field and classroom activities. It includes three levels of performance rated as “beginning,” “emerging,” and “competent.” The expectation was that candidates begin their field experiences with beginning levels of performance and reach the competent level prior to student teaching. The rubric is designed to capture the performance of the field placement at three different points in their training in terms of disposition. Below are the disposition areas included in the rubric.

Cultural Competence

This domain is defined as an individual’s knowledge of practices and level of interest in interacting with people whose culture is different from their own (adapted from AAC&U VALUE Intercultural Competence rubric, 2009). The expectation of candidates at the “beginning level” is focused on identifying and demonstrating awareness of the value of diversity in professional practice. The expectation of candidates at the “emerging” level is focused on implementing culturally competent practices and expressing an interest in learning more. The expectation of candidates at the “competent” level is consistent demonstration of culturally competent practices and participation in diversity activities to inform professional practice.

The support for this domain came from our cooperating teachers’ perspectives in the areas of cultural awareness and responsiveness, open-mindedness, and compassion. Additionally, current and projected demographics reveal that cultural and linguistic diversity in classrooms will increase, and teacher education programs will need to respond in order to prepare candidates to effectively teach students of all backgrounds (Gomez, Strange, Knutson-Miller, & Garcia Nevarez, 2009; Villegas and Lucas, 2002). There is a wealth of research available to support the value of teachers incorporating culturally responsive practices into their teaching (see Bodur, 2012; Lee & Herner-Patnode, 2010).

Critical Thinking

This domain is defined as an individual’s ability to apply the skills of analysis, evaluation, explanation, perspective taking, and synthesis to knowledge gathered from

inquiry, observation, or experience and the ability to apply these skills to guide thought and action (adapted from AAC&U VALUE Critical Thinking rubric, 2009). The expectation of candidates at the “beginning level” is focused on being able to identify methods to solve problems and reflect on the outcomes. The expectation of candidates at the “emerging” level is focused on implementing methods with consideration of another point of view and finding theoretical support for the selected method. The expectation of candidates at the “competent” level is selection of methods after considering multiple points of view and accurate reflection to connect outcomes to implications for future practice.

The support for this domain came from survey and focus group responses, which included both critical thinking and problem solving as an essential disposition. This area was not found to be identified as a separate disposition in the literature reviewed. In turn, other dispositions sometimes included elements of critical thinking. For example, Flowers (2006) included flexibility (adjusting lessons as needed) and classroom management (preventing and addressing challenging behavior) as items in the rubric being evaluated. Though critical thinking was not listed as an item, it is inherent in being flexible and managing a classroom. Similarly, Pang, et al. (2014) included problem solving as part of their self-reflection disposition.

Communication

This domain is defined as the ability to demonstrate thoughtful and effective verbal and nonverbal communication and responsive listening (adapted AAC&U VALUE Oral Communication rubric, 2009). The expectation of candidates at the “beginning level” is acknowledging the need to use professional tone and the ability to share information so others understand their point of view when asked. The expectation of candidates at the “emerging” level is consistently using a professional tone and volunteering information to clearly convey point of view. The expectation of candidates at the “competent” level is the use of professional language and presenting relevant information for others to accurately evaluate a situation.

The support for this domain came from all participant responses. The ability to communicate with colleagues and students was ranked in the top five by practicing teachers and was an expectation of faculty. It is not surprising that this domain ranked high, because communication skills are particularly important in the field of education. Since multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) became the norm in K-12 education, there has

been increased expectations towards educators to collaborate. The expectation is that teachers will work collaboratively to help all students access the curriculum, which will include collecting and interpreting data, planning classroom intervention instruction aligned with Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and making appropriate changes to instructional plans based on data (Leko, Brownell, Sindelar, & Kiely, 2015).

Collaboration

This domain is defined as the ability to work with others to complete tasks in a professional and timely manner. The expectation of candidates at the “beginning level” is working with colleagues and identifying responsibilities of a team. The expectation of candidates at the “emerging” level is working effectively with colleagues, identifying responsibilities of all team members, and capitalizing on the strengths of others to solve problems. The expectation of candidates at the “competent” level is working efficiently with colleagues, identifying equitable workload for team members and addressing and resolving conflict.

The support for this domain derived from all participant responses. Faculty responses focused on collaborative practices, handling work conflict, and attending both parent and faculty meetings. Eighty-two percent of student respondents selected collaboration as extremely important. They also expressed the importance of learning to effectively communicate and collaborate with colleagues and families in their responses. Group two of our focus groups ranked collaboration in their top five. These findings are consistent with literature noting the importance of preparing teacher candidates to apply the skills of collaboration within the educational setting (Cramer, Liston, Nevin, & Thousand, 2010; Santagata & Guarino, 2012). Quality collaboration of educators not only affects teacher performance but student achievement as well (Darling-Hammond, 2015; Goddard, Goddard, & Tschannen-Moran, 2007; Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen, & Grissom, 2015; Walsh, 2012).

Self-reflection

This domain is defined as an individual’s ability and willingness to think about, and if necessary, change, actions, motives, and character to improve instructional and professional practices. The expectation of candidates at the “beginning level” is to identify behaviors and skills that could be improved. The expectation of candidates at the “emerging” level is to have the ability to think about their actions and to evaluate choices to change their beha-

avior or professional practice. The expectation of candidates at the “competent” level is to think and evaluate actions and to demonstrate the skills needed to improve practices.

The support for this domain came from all stakeholders, but most specifically from the teacher candidates. The majority of candidates reported “self-reflection” as extremely important (72%). The cooperating teachers ranked knowledge, flexibility, and compassion, all aspects of self-reflection, in their top five professional behaviors. Reflection is well established as an important component of teacher growth and development. Teachers who engage in reflection as part of the self-evaluation process are more likely to act deliberately and intentionally as opposed to randomly and reactively (Shandomo, 2010). On their Teacher Disposition Checklist (TDC), Pang et. al. (2014) included a domain called self-reflection which included using reflection to problem solve and make changes when necessary.

Initiative

This domain is defined as an individual’s interest in seeking opportunities to assume a leadership position in order to solve a problem or complete a task. While this domain includes some competencies already addressed (e.g., problem solving), this competency is unique in that it emphasizes the teacher candidate’s ability to initiate action towards leadership and professional growth. The expectation of candidates at the “beginning level” is asking clarifying questions and accepting responsibility for actions when confronted. The expectation of candidates at the “emerging” level is consistently asking questions to complete responsibilities and independently accepting responsibility for actions. The expectation of candidates at the “competent” level is seeking feedback on performance, offering solutions and problem solving during difficult situations.

The support for this domain was signaled all stakeholders. Faculty responses included problem solving skills and students being paired with cooperating teachers who would release responsibility to and mentor/coach them as they honed their skills. When asked what the importance of competencies assessed during fieldwork was, 66 % of students rated initiative as extremely important. Moreover, focus groups ranked professional behaviors that included initiative and leadership in their top five. Teacher preparation literature also views problem-solving skills (Temel, 2014), initiative and leadership (Nolan & Palazzolo, 2011; Norton, 2010) as being critical for pre-service teachers.

Limitations

A limitation of this project is the small sample sizes. Only ten teachers took part in the focus groups, and all of them were white. Similarly, only a small number of students and faculty were surveyed. Though these particular groups were targeted due to their familiarity with the program and are representative of the region, the generalizability of the results is limited.

Data on the effectiveness of the rubric developed through the process described in this paper are limited. While this process resulted in an evaluation tool representative of the needs of a single program, the authors recognize the need to validate the identified competencies. Future work will include evaluating the rubric for effectiveness in supporting disposition development among teacher candidates.

IMPLICATIONS

Reviewing the literature revealed a variety of definitions and competencies to draw from when evaluating dispositions. While this provides a general structure to evaluate candidates’ professionalism, there is not a clear direction on how to select competencies, teach, and evaluate them in preparation programs. This article provides a replicable framework for identifying dispositions and creating an evaluation tool that accurately reflects programs’ values.

Because there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to defining and selecting which dispositions to measure, this article suggests a process that may help programs identify their own target dispositions. The process of investigating which competencies were most relevant to students, colleagues, and partners in our community created a more authentic lens in which to view this topic. Including community stakeholders in this process was meaningful and strategic. Their perspectives created a bridge from research to practice, and showed candidates how the components of their coursework filter into classroom practice. As the survey responses indicated, candidates value applied experiences that replicate the kind of work expected of practicing teachers. Therefore, including practicing teachers into the selection of competencies provides credibility and authenticity to the dispositions covered in the college classroom.

Once identified, professional dispositions can be embedded throughout a preparation program in order to

maximize opportunities for multiple points of evaluation (Brewer, Lindquist, & Altemueller, 2011). For example, in the authors' program, the "collaboration" competency is supported in course work and field placements. Candidates enroll in a course specifically addressing collaborative practices, such as co-teaching. Throughout the course, faculty and staff can evaluate candidates' knowledge and practice while working in the college classroom. This experience is then extended in the field when they participate in a collaborative learning experience where they are paired with a peer, and co-teach a unit of instruction. This opportunity allows candidates to develop pedagogical skills and allows faculty supervisors to mentor candidates in how to create, develop, and maintain professional collaborations. The program's practice of providing a foundation in coursework, followed by development and practice in an authentic setting, will result in the ability to measure growth in skills over time.

CONCLUSION

The central goal of this project was to create an authentic tool for evaluating professional dispositions in teacher candidates. While there is a general consensus as to the significance of developing dispositions in teacher candidates, there is considerably less agreement on how to identify and define dispositions. Therefore, it was important for the authors to identify the traits most reflective

of their program's values and the needs of their stakeholders. The work was completed through a process that centered on the beliefs and perceptions of our students, faculty, and cooperating teachers. The authentic approach to evaluation resulted in a rubric reflective of the program's values and needs of the region.

The process revealed the areas on which to focus for the professional development of teacher candidates. The six competencies identified as skills to develop in our teacher candidates, Cultural Competence, Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, Self-reflection, and Initiative, are not unique to teaching. Arguably, these areas are critical to success in most professions. Further work will introduce, teach, and evaluate candidates' skills in these areas. Intentional focus on teaching these dispositions will likely result in teachers maximally prepared to navigate the demands of the teaching profession.

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CULTURAL COMPETENCE (CC): Individual's knowledge of practices and level of interest in interacting with people whose culture is different from their own.	Able to identify CC practices. Demonstrates awareness of the value of interacting with people different from themselves. Investigates diversity activities that could inform his/her professional practice.	Able to implement CC practices in class and/or in the field. Expresses interest in interacting with diverse groups and cultures. Seeks out opportunities to engage in diversity activities to inform his/her professional practice.	Consistent demonstration of CC practices both in class and in the field. Able to communicate effectively with people different from themselves. Participates in meaningful diversity activities to inform his/her professional practice.					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
CRITICAL THINKING: Individual's ability to apply the skills of analysis, evaluation, explanation, perspective-taking, and synthesis to knowledge gathered from inquiry, observation or experience, which guides thought and action.	Able to identify methods to solve problems, to support the use of those methods, and to reflect on the outcome.	Able to implement relevant methods to solve problems selected after consideration of another point of view. Provides theoretical support for the selected methods, and identifies one strength and one limitation of the outcome.	Able to implement independently selected relevant methods to solve problems selected after consideration of multiple views. Provides accurate theoretical support for the selected methods, and connects outcomes to implications for future practice.					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
COMMUNICATION: Demonstrates thoughtful, effective verbal and nonverbal communication and responsive listening	Acknowledges the need to use a professional tone when communicating with others. When requested, shares information in order for others to understand their point of view.	Uses a professional tone (i.e., attitude) when communicating with others. Presents information in order for others to understand their point of view.	Uses a professional tone (i.e., attitude) and language when communicating with others. Presents relevant information in order for others to understand and accurately evaluate a situation.					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
COLLABORATION: Ability to work with others to complete tasks in a professional and timely manner.	Works with colleagues to complete tasks. Identifies personal responsibilities related to tasks, with some insight into role(s) of team-members. Recognizes contributions of other team- members.	Works with colleagues to effectively complete tasks. Identifies responsibilities of all team members. Capitalizes on strengths of others to solve problems.	Works with colleagues to efficiently and effectively complete tasks. Identifies responsibilities of all team members; workload was equitable. Addresses and resolves conflict.					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
SELF-REFLECTION: Ability and willingness to think about, and if necessary, change, an individual's actions, motives, and character.	Able to identify actions that could be improved. Can identify skills needed to improve practice.	Able to think about one's own actions and evaluate choices. Can explain and acknowledge the importance of skills needed to improve practice.	Able to think about one's own actions and evaluate choices made and how they could be improved. Can demonstrate the skills needed to improve practice.					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
INITIATIVE: Individual's interest in seeking opportunities to assume a leadership position in order to solve a problem or complete a task.	Asks clarifying questions when completing his/her responsibilities. When prompted, accepts responsibility during challenging situations.	Consistently asks questions when completing his/her responsibilities. Takes responsibility during challenging situations.	Clearly and consistently asks questions and seeks feedback when completing his/her responsibilities. Offers solutions & demonstrates an ability to problem-solve during challenging situations.					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

<p>BEGINNING:</p> <p>This rating indicates the teacher candidate (TC) can recall basic information about the competency, yet is not observed to demonstrate the skills associated with the competency without guidance (e.g., understands what self-reflection is and that it has value, but is not observed to be self-reflective). Should little growth be observed in the areas rated “Beginning” over the course of two field placements, the TC would be required to meet with the fieldwork coordinators, assigned department advisor, and department chair.</p>
<p>EMERGING:</p> <p>This rating indicates the teacher candidate (TC) is starting to develop skills in the competency as evidenced by demonstration of the skills associated with the competency. Should little growth be observed in the areas rated “Emerging” over the course of two field placements, the TC would be required to meet with the fieldwork coordinators, assigned department advisor, and department chair.</p>
<p>COMPETENT:</p> <p>This rating indicates the teacher candidate (TC) can demonstrate knowledge and skills associated with the competency, and therefore is at the level expected for that competency area. Teacher candidates are expected to reach this benchmark prior to directed teaching. The performance of TC will be evaluated at the end of the 485-field placement and if there are any competency areas not rated “competent,” the TC will be required to meet with fieldwork coordinators, assigned department advisor, and department chair.</p>

Figure 1.

The rubric created based on literature review, survey, and focus group data.

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