Chapter 9

Addressing Professional Dispositions for Teaching P-12 English Language Learners

Soonhyang Kim
Assistant Professor of TESOL/Bilingual Education
Pace University, USA

Yurimi Grigsby
Associate Professor of Teaching, Learning and Diversity
Concordia University Chicago, USA

Tim Miecik, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Director of MATESOL Program
Ohio Dominican University, USA

Introduction

“I think it is important for students who are entering the American school system to speak fluent English before they enter. Again, why should teachers sacrifice precious class time to try and teach these kids English?” (3/2/2013, reflective journal entry, multicultural education course, written by candidate for master’s degree, adolescent education in English)

For several years now, we three authors have served as teacher trainers of both teacher candidates specializing in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) and teacher candidates working with English language learners (ELLs) across academic disciplines and grade levels (teachers of ELLs hereafter); we work at private universities in urban settings in New York, Illinois, and Ohio, respectively. Quite frequently, we have encountered teacher candidates who did not initially realize that they would be teaching ELLs in the P-12 setting and did not intend to modify their instruction to accommodate ELLs in their classrooms. As teacher educators, we were
concerned: At the end of their program, would such teacher candidates view ELLs as everyone’s responsibility, including theirs, and would the program teach them the responsibilities for teaching P-12 ELLs? If so, how could we address these responsibilities during their training?

This article reports our perspectives and experiences as teachers of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) teacher educators, our discussions and engagement with colleagues as well as the existing literature on professional disposition assessments of teacher candidates, and the challenges and solutions we experienced in implementing the assessments in our respective programs. Throughout this process, we have come to support our institution’s accreditation bodies’ (CAEP, formerly NCATE, and TESOL) rationalization for implementing professional disposition assessments as a part of a teacher education program and validate its use to identifying necessary characteristics that the 21st century teacher must have in order to effectively teach diverse learners, including ELLs.

We use the term professional disposition in this paper to indicate not just the teachers’ ability to meet the needs of ELL students, but rather their identification of ELLs as students with particular needs, and their willingness to meet those needs in all teaching settings and content areas. With this paper, we intend to add our thoughts to the discussion of the roles of dispositions and their assessments for teacher candidates and to provide some recommendations based on our own practices in addressing dispositions for teaching all students, especially ELLs. We address why, when, and how to assess professional dispositions for teachers of all grade levels and across the disciplines in P-12 education, after briefly exploring the current literature on professional dispositions.

What Are Professional Dispositions?

There is no one way to view professional dispositions, and different educators and education agencies define and explain these dispositions somewhat differently. Teachers and teacher educators may display a wide range in their definitions of professional dispositions and what they look like, and what and how they need to assess. Teacher educators’ definitions of professional disposition may include concrete
would such teacher candidates qualify, including theirs, and would the
criteria for teaching P-12 ELLs? If so, what are the implications?

The experiences and efforts of teachers and teacher educators,
who have been trained, are now teaching, and have been
assigned to teach students with diverse needs, are not sufficient
in themselves to meet the challenges of teaching ELLs. If so, what
are the implications for teacher education programs?

disposition in this paper to indicate the needs of ELL students, but
this is not enough. We need to assess the needs of all students, and we
need to use these assessments to inform our teaching. This paper is
written in the form of a report, and the authors have provided
evidence to support their claims. The evidence includes studies of
the teaching of ELL students, and the results of these studies are
presented in tables and figures. The authors have also included
quotations from teachers and researchers to support their points.

How do we assess professional dispositions?

The authors argue that there is a need to assess professional
dispositions in teacher education programs. They state that
assessing dispositions is important because it helps to identify
students who are not suited to teaching ELLs. The authors also
suggest that assessing dispositions can help to identify areas
where teacher education programs need to improve.

Observational dispositions and observable behaviors such as communication skills, as well as traits
that are less measurable, but no less influencing, such as personal morals and values. A review of the literature seems just as varied.

Villegas (2007) defined dispositions as “a tendency to act in a
particular manner under particular circumstances (e.g., teaching in
ways that give access to knowledge to all students in a class—including
those who differ from the mainstream norm)” (p. 376). Borko, Liston,
and Whitcomb (2007) state that “dispositions are the tendencies of an
individual to act in a given manner and are predictive of patterns of action” (as cited in Almerico, Johnston, Hewitt, & Shapiro, 2011).

Almerico et al. (2011) included specific criteria such as written
communication, being respectful, responsiveness to feedback, and
ability to read non-verbal cues. Waisesko (2007) laid out three
categories of professional disposition: teacher behaviors, teacher
characteristics, and teacher perceptions. Diez (2007) viewed
dispositions more like moral compasses, which included empathy and a
sense of integrity. Sackett (2006) viewed dispositions as those relating
to character, understanding in an ethics of rules, and caring. Shively
and Misco (2010) categorized them under the headings of “personal
virtues” (e.g., caring, respectful, honest), “educational virtues” (e.g.,
sensitivity for difference, ability for reflection and critical thinking),
and “societal transformation” (e.g., creating equity, commitments to
democratic values) (p. 11).

The ambiguous treatment of teacher education programs in what
they may mean by ‘disposition’ is significant as it means there is no
standard for concepts that lie on a “continuum between belief and
action” (Ruitenber, 2011, p. 42). To further complicate matters,
Ruitenber points out, “While it is obvious that beliefs and actions are
different, the question is how they are related” (p. 44). Critics of
dispositional assessments declare that personal characteristics are
different from one’s observable and measurable behaviors, but Splitter
(2010) argues that “this view is conceptually incoherent because it fails
to distinguish action (which is intentional, purposeful, and—one
hopes—the outcome of one’s professional judgment from mere
behavior. It reflects a deeply conservative mindset that views teachers
as mere technicians” (p. 227).
Utilizing accrediting bodies' definitions of professional dispositions provides institutions with a beginning point and a common vocabulary for a topic that seems, in practice, amorphous, with an evaluative component that has traditionally been obscure. Therefore, it was our goal in writing this paper to identify the ambiguity of the two major accrediting bodies of teacher education, with regard to how professional dispositions were addressed by each one.

**InTASC**

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC), created in 1987, is a consortium of state education agencies and national educational organizations dedicated to the reform of the preparation, licensing, and on-going professional development of teachers. InTASC's main principle is that "an effective teacher must be able to integrate content knowledge with the specific strengths and needs of students to assure that all students learn and perform at high levels" (InTASC, 2011). The recently released InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards: A Resource for State Dialogue (April 2011), a revised version of the 1992 model standards, "outlines what all teachers across all content and grade levels should know and be able to do to be effective in today's learning contexts." InTASC envisions a set of standards that assists teachers in meeting the needs of today's learners. One way of ensuring that this can happen is through the evolution of teachers' discussion on dispositions. InTASC first introduced the term disposition in 1992 by revising the essential principles in 2011 from "knowledge, skills, and attitudes" to "knowledge, disposition, and performance." The latter elements include teachers' moral and professional commitment to students, a commitment to equity and teaching to each learner, and reflecting on their teaching and its consequences for learners (Darling-Hammond, 1999; InTASC, 2011). The growth of competency in professional dispositions is a process that develops throughout the teacher's career.
CAEP (formerly NCATE)

The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), a major accreditation body of P-12 teacher education programs, formerly the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and CAEP/NCATE hereafter, defines professional dispositions as “professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues, and communities” (NCATE Unit Standard 1: Candidate knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, 2008). This is one of the elements that teacher candidates working in school settings are expected to be equipped with, along with strong content, pedagogical knowledge and skills, in order to help all students learn. CAEP/NCATE does not recommend that attitudes be evaluated but does expect institutions to assess teacher dispositions based on observable classroom behaviors. Under these guidelines, teacher education programs should assess whether candidates demonstrates fairness and the belief that all students can learn.

Why Should We Address Professional Dispositions for Teaching P-12 ELLs?

It is important to address professional dispositions for teachers of ELLs because presently in the U.S., it is almost impossible for teachers to avoid working with ELLs regardless of grade levels, certification areas, or preferences. The number of ELLs in the U.S. has been steadily increasing and continues to grow. More than one in five students in U.S. schools come from a home in which the primary language is a language other than English, and approximately half of those students are considered to be limited English proficient or English language learners (NCES, 2010). The U.S. Department of Education predicts that one in four students will be identified as an ELL by 2025 (USDOE, 2006). Some predictions forecast that by 2030, ELLs will account for about 40 percent of the entire school-aged population (Thomas & Collier, 2002). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2013), international migration will be the primary driver of population growth.
in the U.S., projecting a majority-minority resident population by 2041 and increasing the likelihood that children will come from households that speak a language other than English.

ELLs are and will continue to be the fastest growing student subgroup in the U.S. between the 1991/1992 and 2005/2006 school years, the ELL enrollment grew 109% nationally. During the same time period, total school enrollment grew only 14% (NCES, 2012). In 2012, there were approximately 200,000 ELLs enrolled at the K-12 level in New York schools, 13% of the total student population, representing 170 languages and cultures. In 2010, the latest year for which data is available, there were over 180,000 ELLs in Illinois schools, almost 10% of the state’s overall student population and representing 136 languages. As such, the number of ELLs in Illinois public schools increased from 8.8% in 2011 to 9.4% in 2012. The immigrant population in Illinois is “larger, in absolute terms, today than at any point in the state’s history” (Hall & Lubotsky, 2011, p. 1). In Ohio, almost 40,000 limited English proficient (LEP) students/ELLs were enrolled in the state’s P-12 public schools during the 2010-2011 school year, which represents an increase of 38% from five years previously and an increase of 199% from 10 years ago. Ohio’s LEP students represent more than 110 different native or home languages.

This growing trend is not only for states with large urban areas. Other states have experienced recent growth in ELLs, with the fastest-growing ELL enrollment from 1997-1998 to 2007-2008 in South Carolina, Indiana, Nevada, Arkansas, and North Carolina (Batalova & McHugh, 2010). The nation is also seeing increasing numbers of ELLs in Georgia, Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio (Batalova & McHugh, 2010) as a result of immigrants settling in states with employment opportunities in construction, industry, tourism, and agriculture (Singer & Wilson, 2006).

As the enrollment of English language learners continues to climb in the nation’s schools, the classroom will need to respond to the cultural and linguistic needs of ELLs if these students are to achieve academic success. Research has shown a large achievement gap between ELLs and their native English-speaking counterparts, which provides evidence that ELLs have not been given an equal opportunity to learn or demonstrate what they have learned on assessments that are
inequality of education among minority children will come from households with limited English proficiency.

In 2012, ELLs enrolled at the K-12 level in Illinois schools, representing 3.7% of student population and representing 136,000 ELLs in Illinois public schools (NCES, 2012). In Ohio, 16% of ELLs students were new to schools during the 2010-2011 school year, representing 38% from five years previously. Ohio’s LEP students are often children of immigrant families, and large urban areas. The fastest growth in ELLs, with the fastest-growing at 1997-1998 to 2007-2008, was seen in South Carolina, and North Carolina. In contrast, Tennessee, and Ohio were leaders in states with the highest proportion of ELLs, and immigrants settling in states with the highest concentrations of English-speaking counterparts, which is not known whether equal opportunity has been achieved.

Teacher education programs, therefore, must have an intentional purpose to educate their teacher candidates for the needs of the 21st century, which includes a more diverse population of K-12 students than previous generations (InTASC, 2013).

To meet the needs of ELLs, many states across the nation are requiring pre-service teacher candidates to receive ESOL training as part of their coursework for initial licensure. Some states (e.g., Arizona, California, and Florida) require all in-services teachers to add ESOL endorsements, and some other states encourage teachers to get additionally certification in teaching ESOL (e.g., New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts). By July 1, 2014, all Pre-K teachers in Illinois must also be ESOL or bilingual endorsed because of a policy change that qualifies 3-year olds as English language learners. Today’s teachers may find that their future employment opportunities are hindered or enabled by an ESOL endorsement that can be added to their base teaching licenses (Reeves, 2010).

As professional dispositions become a necessary component in teacher education programs, teacher educators will grapple with when and how to address professional dispositions for candidates in teacher education. As more states require pre-service and in-service teachers to be ESOL certified as a result of the increasing numbers of ELLs across the nation, future employers will expect the candidate to be able to work effectively with ELLs in their classroom, regardless of the grade level or content area of the teacher candidate (InTASC, 2011). In order to meet the immediate pressing needs, faculty and administrators in the authors’ institutions have been actively engaging in the discussion of what professional dispositions for teacher candidates means and how to address their dispositions for the teaching profession. In disintering conversations with faculty members at our institutions, we found that many of our colleagues were unable to come to a consensus on what should be included in a disposition assessment, how to assess the attributes that should be included, and whether an assessment could be truly objective and fair to a candidate that they know, with limited interaction and contexts, only as a student in their classes.

Even though the conversations exposed the ambiguity surrounding these issues, our faculty members agreed that dispositional
assessments should be in place, particularly for teacher candidates they knew who did not meet even the basic criteria of attending class and preparing assignments on time. Despite the challenges of when and how to include disposition assessments, teacher educators must include them in their programs. Addressing professional dispositions is required for accreditation as a way to “meet the needs of the next generation learners” (InTASC, 2013; also, see NCATE, 2008, 2012; TESOL, 2010).

Beyond meeting accreditation requirements, however, teacher education programs must prepare pre- and in-service teachers to meet the needs of an ever-diversifying student population in the U.S. The teacher force is largely an unvarying group, and teachers who feel comfortable with one cultural system are likely to be unaware of such systems that differ in socioeconomic status, class, race, and gender (Hinchey, 2006). Teacher candidates will be successful if they have been educated in programs that foster a desire, along with meliorating the skills necessary, to teach students that come from backgrounds that may be different from their own.

Still, dispositional assessments are a critical piece to teacher education because there is a strong correlation between the dispositions of teachers and the quality of their students’ learning (Notar, Riley, Taylor, Thornburg, & Cargill, 2009). Without these dispositions, future teachers will work in a system that has failed to adequately address the needs of ELLs as a result of having low expectations for ELLs, relegating them to classrooms with ill-prepared teachers, and forcing them to take invalid high-stakes standardized assessments that test English proficiency rather than actual content knowledge (Torres, 2012). Effective teaching dispositions are exhibited by teachers “who care about their students’ academic achievements, those who are willing to exert the effort needed to ensure the classroom is a productive learning environment” (Almerico et al., 2011, p. 3).

The effort to positively acknowledge elements of culture and language in the classroom has been recognized in the literature as culturally responsive teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1992; 2006), in which academic achievement is emphasized along with maintenance of the cultural identity and heritage (Gay, 2000; 2002; 2010). Shor (1992) and Bercaw and Stocksberry (2004) characterize this as critical pedagogy,
necessarily for teacher candidates they face the challenge of attending class and activities, professional dispositions, teacher educators must include criteria of attending class and attending class, the professional dispositions is crucial to “meet the needs of the next of students.” See also, see NCATE, 2008, 2012; 2014.

These are the minimum requirements, however, teacher educators and in-service teachers to meet the needs of diverse student population in the U.S. The diverse group and teachers who feel for whom they teach are likely to be unaware of such factors as status, class, race, and gender socialization will be more successful if they have a desire, along with meliorating attitudes, that come from backgrounds that reflect the diversity of students.

These are a critical piece to teacher educators. It is important to correlate between the dispositions toward teaching and students’ learning (Notar, Riley, 2009). Without these dispositions, there is a condition that has failed to adequately meet the needs and expectations for students with ill-prepared teachers, and expectations standardized assessments that are linked to their curriculum content knowledge (Torres, 2002). What are exhibited by teachers “who value the achievements, those who are committed to ensure the classroom is a safe place” (González et al., 2011, p. 3).

Knowledge elements of culture and language are recognized in the literature as important (Billings, 1992; 2006), in which reflects along with maintenance of the language (2000; 2002; 2010). Shor (1992) and characterize this as critical pedagogy, an empowering education in which teacher pedagogy approaches individual growth as a social process that focuses on academic knowledge as well as a critical look at society, power, inequality, and change. Nieto’s (1999, 2012) work on positive acknowledgement of culture and language differences shows how it can contribute to the well-being of students. Several researchers (Cummins, 2011; Cummins, Bismilla, Chow, Cohen, Giampa, Leoni, Sandhu, & Sastri, 2005; Wong-Fillmore, 2000) posit that by welcoming a student’s first language into the classroom, his or her identity is affirmed, which fosters engagement and learning.

Research has suggested that most teachers feel ill-equipped to work with diverse students (Vazquez-Montilla, 2013), and teachers will need to examine their own beliefs and uncover hidden biases and prejudices that could impact their attitude on teaching diverse students. For those with little knowledge of others’ cultural or linguistic systems, critical consciousness plays an important role in unraveling and confronting hidden biases. When teaching students from backgrounds different from their own, teacher candidates across the curriculum in P-12 must be able to empathize with, and relate to, students from other cultures, recognizing similarities and differences in students, and be aware that various countries and cultures may have different teaching and learning practices.

The belief that all students can learn is the essential disposition for teaching diverse students, and it is present in the characteristics of effective teachers. Dispositions must be included in the overall evaluation of a teacher candidate. Although dispositions have been defined in a number of ways, teacher education programs must find ways to operationalize dispositional assessments for many purposes, including accreditation requirements, to improve the quality of teacher training and to prepare the teacher for the diverse classroom he or she will step into. Teachers’ dispositions can either be an asset or a hindrance to their students’ quality of learning depending on how they exhibit acceptance or rejection of certain characteristics in the backgrounds of their students. Moving beyond the why, we come to when and how professional disposition assessments should be addressed.
When Should We Address Professional Dispositions for
Teaching P-12 ELLs?

Achieving high level professional dispositions in a short term is
very difficult, if not impossible. It is important to embed professional
disposition assessments at different stages of the program through
continuous and comprehensive efforts to assess candidates' growth. As
Welch, Pitts, Tenini, Kuenlen, and Wood (2010) found, some teacher
education programs use disposition assessments for prospective
students in order to qualify them for acceptance into their programs.
Others assess teacher candidates throughout the program at various
points (Welch, et. al., 2010), while still others assess them during field
experiences (Villegas, 2007). There is a concern about assessing
dispositions too early, such as during admissions interviews to gain
entry into the teacher education program: "For one thing, judgments
faculty make about applicants to the program are based solely on a
review of materials found in the application packets and information
gleaned from an interview with them, not on observable actions in
classroom settings" (Villegas, 2007, p. 376). Assessing dispositions at
this stage is premature and not in keeping with NCATE's (2010)
mmandate that assessment occur based on criteria that can be observed.
Secondly, it is unreasonable to expect pre-service candidates to have
dispositions at the start of a program that is concerned with cultivating
in the candidates through coursework and experiences. Yet Villegas
believes the admissions review process "can be productively used to
explore applicants' beliefs, which are precursors to their disposition to
teach all students equitably" (p. 376).

It is useful to build out multiple benchmarks for gauging how
candidates grow in their dispositions for teaching diverse students, and
to flag students that show disagreeable and unprofessional behaviors
toward their professors, classmates, or students that they might soon be
working with. Therefore, the question of when to assess professional
dispositions has traditionally depended on when the teacher education
program has deemed it appropriate to conduct them within the
program's structure, for example, during admission interviews,
coursework, practicum experiences or student teaching, or a
combination of all or several of these times. At this time, we
concern about assessing admissions interviews to gain insight. “For one thing, judgments program are based solely on a collection packets and information not on observable actions in 376). Assessing dispositions at keeping with NCATE’s (2010) in criteria that can be observed. pre-service candidates to have at is concerned with cultivating and experiences. Yet Villegas “can be productively used to recourses to their disposition to benchmarks for gauging how teaching diverse students, and and unprofessional behaviors students that they might soon be of when to assess professional on when the teacher education to conduct them within the advising admission interviews, or student teaching, or a these times. At this time, we recommend multiple assessments at various stages from admission to completion (and even beyond) in order to provide benchmarks that chart the growth in teacher candidates, as well as provide institutions and accrediting agencies with observable data that tells us what students are learning and what the process of development looks like within each candidate.

For example, CAEP/NCATE expects institutions to assess professional dispositions based only on behaviors that are observable in educational settings. Teacher educators need multiple opportunities to observe and facilitate the growth of desired dispositions in their candidates, and candidates deserve various opportunities at different stages to demonstrate their development as competent and democratic professionals. Single assessments are unfair and uninformative; therefore, we recommend multiple assessments so that the evaluator can clearly identify evidence of growth or areas needing improvement within the candidate.

We acknowledge that the task of raising teacher candidates’ competence in professional dispositions is challenging within the limited time of their training. Teachers who are committed to continuing their learning will gain more experience by engaging in the very act of teaching and learning. They will be changed by the life experiences, age, and the maturation that happens to them after their coursework at the university ends. Teachers will acquire new roles and additional responsibilities that will facilitate their growth and competence for professional dispositions. The development of pre-service teachers’ professional practice during their teacher training can assist them in continuing to develop their professional dispositions during their teaching career after their initial teacher education. Recognizing that professional dispositions develop over time, and throughout the career, our goal is to not simply assess dispositions, but also provide tools for graduates to use in their ongoing work. Perhaps the most fundamental change in our thinking on dispositional assessments for our students is that the scope of their learning about professional dispositions progresses beyond the point they exit from our programs.

Professional dispositions are most effective as a shared responsibility, with multiple approaches and multiple ways to assess a
disposition conducive to teaching diverse students. Assessing professional dispositions should be part of the coursework of teacher candidates throughout their training, and should be integrated holistically into the entire program. Individual instructors may not see the fulfillment of a candidate’s growth, or failure to grow, in a competency area from semester to semester. Part of what makes holistic assessment so effective is the ability to provide a bird’s eye view of the candidate’s career as a student.

Addressing dispositional assessments at multiple points with multiple measures throughout coursework ensures a reliable method of being able to engage and interact with the teacher candidates. As candidates are presented with challenging and complex issues from the diverse learner’s perspective, the teacher educator can guide them through exercises in critical pedagogy that may offer different viewpoints and new perspectives to consider. For example, an adolescent education student who took a graduate-level multicultural education from one of the authors reflected at the end of the class:

I learned how to be more conscious of ELL students and their needs. Before the course, I had assumed that there were other programs in place to help out with ELL students. I had never put any thought into having them in my classroom and having to work to differentiate to accommodate their needs. This is a great skill and I look forward to putting what I have learned into action. (overall class reflection, multicultural education course, written by candidate for master’s degree in adolescent education student)

This student’s reflection demonstrates his or her change in disposition concerning the education of ELLs, even though he or she was not studying to be an ESL teacher. At the beginning of the course, this students’ consideration of ELL students was different than at the end of the course. As such, a holistic, multi-stage approach for assessing dispositions will capture this growth as it happens in immediate contexts. Furthermore, not only does this student say that he or she had never thought about these issues before, but he or she states a desire to put his or her ideas in action. This speaks to the importance
of adding space for candidates' room to grow in their thinking about their professional dispositions for the future.

How Should We Address Professional Dispositions for Teachers of ELLs?

As professional dispositions become a necessary component in teacher education, teacher educators will grapple with when and how to address those dispositions in their programs. And as more states require pre- and in-service teachers to be TESOL certified as a result of the increasing numbers of ELLs across the nation, future employers will expect candidates to be able to work effectively with ELLs in their classroom, regardless of their grade level or content area (InTASC, 2011). In order to meet the immediate pressing needs, it is important for faculty and administrators to be actively engaged in the discussion of what professional dispositions for teacher candidates means and how to address their dispositions for the teaching profession.

Yet these discussions, which should be held among diverse groups both inside and outside of the university, are crucial to determining a consensus that includes, first, a definition of dispositions and, second, assessments that are “consistent with the values of the faculty and the mission of the institution. For, in the end, it is the faculty who must own, operationalize, model, and assess these dispositions” (Shiveley & Misco, 2010, p.11) because they have direct contacts with candidates in their courses. Professional dispositions should be assessed in every course and be integrated into the entire program as individual instructors may not see candidate growth, or lack thereof, from semester to semester. Professional dispositions are best approached as a shared responsibility, with multiple approaches to teaching, and multiple ways of assessing, dispositions conducive to the education of diverse students. Based on our experience, we offer several strategies and suggestions for incorporating disposition assessments in coursework to serve as cultivators of this type of teaching proficiency.
Model professionalism in their own classrooms

Before they address professionalism in candidates, teacher educators should consider their own dispositions. To what extent do they exhibit professional behavior? More specific questions they might consider include the following: Do they arrive to class on time and prepared? Are their expectations clear? Do they explain assignments clearly and grade them fairly? Like the candidates they are preparing, do they believe that all students are capable of learning? What do they know about their candidates, especially with regard to their cultural and linguistic identity, and how do they use that knowledge in the instruction and assessment of their candidates? One of the key assessments for TESOL program approval is a philosophy of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. Teacher educators who write such a philosophy not only know themselves better but are better prepared to guide candidates through such an assignment.

Define and discuss professional dispositions through class activities

Having modeled professionalism in their classrooms, teacher educators are in a strong position to present the concept. They can facilitate the development of dispositions for teaching diverse learners by creating the conditions and providing the experiences for candidates to develop them. Discussing the syllabus on the first day of class indicates what is expected of candidates (e.g., come to class prepared, turn in assignments on time, etc.). This message can lead to a discussion of what traits and characteristics should be present in a teacher from both the principal’s perspective and the students’ perspective. Having candidates write their own definition of professionalism is another way to begin: it indicates what they know and do not know about the topic. Having primed the pump of discussion, teacher educators can introduce definitions, examples, and explanations of professional dispositions. Candidates are then ready to engage in activities that test their understanding and application of the concept.
Take a case study approach to learning about professional behavior

Case studies, of both professional and unprofessional behavior, are especially appropriate: they generate discussion of behavior and of alternatives to it. Having established the necessary knowledge base, teacher educators can move on to activities through which candidates may experience, and reflect on, professional dispositions in classroom settings. Such activities should be relatively easy to implement: in Ohio, for example, teacher candidates are required to complete 100 hours of field experience before student teaching. One such activity is the critical reflection assignment, through which candidates reflect on behavior that they observe, or experience, while in the field.

Use reflective activities to encourage critical thinking

Critical reflection assignments have been shown to support teachers’ growth as they learn by addressing, reflecting on, and solving problems (Yates & Brindley, 2000). These assignments provide reflective opportunities for critical thinking (e.g., reflection journals and self-assessment rubrics) and provide a space for candidates to place themselves within their own educational context, including examining the beliefs and value systems prevalent in the culture in which they were brought up.

Critical reflection is especially important in teacher education as it provides an opportunity for candidates to scrutinize their own “experience and integrate knowledge with the insights gained for the purposes of self-improvement” (Krishnamurthy, 2007, p.14). Through critical reflection, candidates create new understandings of the world they live in and of the world they came from, and they make the invisible standards and belief systems that surround them part of their conscious knowledge (Krishnamurthy, 2007). Through this sometimes volatile and intense process of examining the self, candidates are less likely to make assumptions that contribute to stereotyped generalizations of ELLs. By reflecting on their actions and interactions with students, teachers can discern the motivations that guide their behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs. Becoming critically aware of the personal motivations that contribute to certain beliefs, attitudes, and
behaviors (e.g., xenophobia and ethnocentrism) facilitates changing these behaviors.

An activity that one of the authors often uses in her class is to have students write weekly reflective journal entries and post them on a course webpage. Questions differ by course, but the goal is to assess candidate learning and derive implications for helping all students, including ELLs, to learn. In a course on multiculturalism and social justice, for example, candidates are required after each class to reflect on the following questions in a journal that only the instructor and they can access:

(a) Describe at least one thing you found interesting, surprising, or unexpected in this week’s class-related activities;

(b) Explain at least one thing you learned about yourself as a classroom teacher or teacher candidate as a result of this week’s class-related activities; and

(c) Identify questions or make suggestions about the course content or structure.

Once candidates submit their reflections, the instructor reviews and responds to them and selects several for discussion. She begins the following class by introducing several reflections either anonymously or named, depending on the topic and/or student permission. She has candidates consider each reflection, first in a small group and then as a whole class, to raise group as well as individual awareness of issues related to professional dispositions in teaching ELLs. If necessary, she has follow-up conversations with individuals in a private setting (in person or on line). In addition to these weekly reflections, the instructor conducts a final assessment. At the end of the semester, she asks candidates to document (a) changes in their thinking about teaching ELLs as a result of taking the class, (b) an action plan for applying what they learned to current or future teaching, and (c) advice they would give similar teacher candidates to ensure that all students, including ELLs, may learn.

As we have suggested, disposition assessments should be incorporated into every teacher education course so that candidates have the opportunity to engage with the assessments they are rated on in ways that promote clarity and facilitate understanding of why the attributes are important for ELLs. Candidates’ evaluators must also
Ethnocentrism) facilitates changing teachers often use in her class is to use journal entries and post them on a ... you found interesting, surprising, or good activities; you learned about yourself as a result of this week’s class. The instructor provides suggestions about the course readings, the instructor reviews several for discussion. She begins the final reflections either anonymously and/or student permission. She has first in a small group and then as a class to discuss awareness of issues in teaching ELLs. If necessary, she individuals in a private setting (in one of these weekly reflections, the changes in their thinking about the class, these future teaching, and advice to ensure that all students, position assessments should be included in the course so that candidates include the assessments they are rated on and facilitate understanding of why their Candidates’ evaluators must also engage with the assessments so that they can reflect on what is important to them, their department, and their university and on the attributes they believe are appropriate for the teacher of diverse students to have. Finally, teachers candidates can find out early in their program if teaching is the right profession for them, and cross-department collaboration between teacher educators can identify students who exhibit characteristics that might prove to be harmful to students in general and ELLs in particular.

Conclusion

As professional dispositions become implemented in teacher education programs, how to operationalize the instruments and protocols for disposition assessments will be important discussions in the research. Instruments must satisfy validity and reliability as well as inter-rater agreement if the assessment is used at multiple stages throughout the candidate’s program. Given there are multiple ways to conceptualize an assessment process, it remains foundational that teacher education programs make clear what candidates are being assessed on, and how, so they will know what is expected of them in order to be successful in their educational endeavors as well as in the field after they graduate. Additionally, assessments should be integrated as part of the coursework in all courses throughout a candidate’s program, and candidates should be assessed at multiple stages throughout their training such as at the beginning of their program, during the middle, during the last class or field experience, and beyond, ideally, through professional development opportunities that serve their immediate and long-term needs. Follow-up support is necessary for successful support of teachers in terms of on-going professional development opportunities. Basic knowledge and skills are acquired during preservice teacher education programs, but research on language learning and the best ways to teach it changes, and what gets added to the fundamental catechisms changes over time. Effective teachers, therefore, must commit to the process of learning for continuous improvement and “engage in a variety of professional development activities to expand their knowledge base, reflect on their practice, and
adapt or change their practice or prepare for new responsibilities” (Murray & Christison, 2011, p. 195; see also NCATE, 2012).

Through on-going communication between school districts and the university and the commitment of school districts to support the novice teacher, the implementation of various assessment tools at different stages and providing experiences through coursework that facilitate change and growth in competence, teacher educators can more easily ensure their students will graduate more knowledgeable about the diverse classroom.

As the country grows in diversity, the teacher workforce must be familiar with multiple ways of knowing that students will continue to bring with them into the classroom. Fostering the belief that all students can learn, and making a commitment to equity and fairness are foundational goals of P-12 education’s major accreditation bodies, such as InTASC and CAEP/NCATE.

**Final Remarks**

While universities and programs are considering the how-to, teacher educators can all be in agreement of the why as the diverse student population requires a different set of skills, knowledge, and abilities than previous generations of more homogenous students. Disposition assessments capture a more holistic view of the teacher candidate who will graduate from our universities and be responsible for a classroom of an average of 30 students of their own. We want them to be prepared for the job; we want them to succeed. If we knowingly graduate students who exhibit unprofessional behaviors as students in our own classes, or turn in papers that reflect a negative outlook toward or that display a disregard for teaching diverse students however well-intentioned, we are failing our professional duties as teacher educators, we are failing our profession by graduating a supposedly qualified candidate who is unable or unwilling to effectively teach all students, and we are failing the culturally and linguistically diverse student in the classroom that we are sending that candidate to teach.
prepare for new responsibilities” (see also NCATE, 2012).

The connection between school districts and teacher education programs of school districts to support the competency of various assessment tools at various stages through coursework that emphasis teacher education in school districts can ensure that graduate more knowledgeable and diverse teachers.

Finally, the teacher workforce must be supported so that students will continue to benefit from the teaching of diverse and able teachers. We must continue to promote the belief that all students can learn and that equity and fairness are the foundation for learning. As major accreditation bodies, such as NCATE and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), work to ensure that teacher candidates are prepared to teach diverse learners.


discussion

Schools are considering the how-to of preparing students for the world as the diverse workforce demands the addition of skills, knowledge, and critical thinking of more homogenous students. A more holistic view of the teacher workforce that includes universities and be responsible for providing students of their own. We want our students to learn and want them to succeed. If we do not exhibit unprofessional behaviors as teachers, we must set the standard for teaching diverse students by fulfilling our professional duties as educators and leaders in our profession by graduating a teacher workforce is unable or unwilling to meet the needs of our students. We have never been more a failure in the culturally and linguistically diverse classroom that we are sending that our teachers must be prepared for these responsibilities.


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