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Between theory and practice: Student teachers' espoused and observed dispositions

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BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE:

STUDENT TEACHERS' ESPOUSED AND OBSERVED DISPOSITIONS

by

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University of Nebraska, 2005

Advisor: Dr. Laura Schulte

Along with knowledge and skills, dispositions form the basis of what a teacher can bring to the critical and creative tasks of education. Dispositions, "the values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behavior,"(NCATE, 2002, p. 53) can be more difficult to teach and assess than knowledge or skills (Edick, Danielson, & Edwards, 2005). As education programs explore ways to raise awareness and growth in dispositions, asking candidates to evaluate themselves is not sufficient. Candidates' own perceptions of their dispositions may be distorted, and only by comparing espoused theories to observed actions (Argyris & Schon, 1996) can a truer picture begin to emerge.

The purpose of this research was to determine to what extent, if any, student teachers' self-perceptions of teaching dispositions were congruent with their

cooperating teachers' perceptions of the dispositions the student teachers actually exhibited while teaching. To compare perceptions of dispositions, 79 teaching pairs of student teachers and cooperating teachers of an urban Midwestern university completed the Teacher Disposition Index (Schulte, Edick, Edwards, & Mackiel, 2004).

Student teachers rated their own espoused dispositions, while their cooperating teachers rated student teacher dispositions after observation. There were significant differences found between student teachers' and cooperating teachers' responses, as student teachers' ratings were more positive than cooperating teachers. Student teachers' dispositions were also rated more positively on the student-centered subscale. Professionalism subscale scores were lower than student-centered, but congruent between groups.

Implications of this research may be helpful in understanding the development of teacher dispositions, and in improving instruction for dispositions during teacher education and field experiences.

DISSERTATION TITLE

Between Theory and Practice:

Student Teachers' Espoused and Observed Dispositions

BY

Kay A. Keiser

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and Mrs. Debi Mackiel, were also inspirational and informative in this effort. Each of them is a credit to the candidates they care for, and together they present a model for other universities to emulate.

To a public cynical about education, I hold up the preservice and experienced teachers who demonstrated professionalism as they participated in this study.

Those participants pointed out that dispositions begin in the family. If that is true, then I am the most privileged of people. My mother and father, Marjorie and Edwin Keiser, exemplify all that is good in teaching and in life. If every teacher had a measure of the love, ethics, and generosity that I have been surrounded by, there would be little need to improve dispositions. My accomplishments are their creation. Also, to my brother Doug, my fellow traveler on this doctoral path, I wish him the joy and pride in his degree that I have in him.

Finally, I dedicate this to my teachers—to those who taught me and to those whom I taught. Masterfully intertwining knowledge, skills, and dispositions, we are all links in the powerful chain that changes the world—one child at a time.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Recent pressures from both within and outside education to enhance student achievement have led to more intense focus on finding, developing, and retaining effective teachers. There is a certain sense to this, because research demonstrates that exposure to a strong teacher makes a dramatic difference in student achievement (e.g., Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997).

If the goal of teacher education is to produce effective teachers, then a closer look at what determines effective teaching is needed (Pajares, 1992). By establishing standards for knowledge, skills, and dispositions, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2002) argues that instruction in teaching techniques and methods is not sufficient; training should encompass practices that will encourage candidates to become caring, ethical, student-centered teachers (Nowak-Fabrykowski & Caldwell, 2002). However, traditional teacher preparation programs have emphasized technical knowledge goals, leaving less time for encouraging candidates to examine feelings, self-esteem

and personal knowledge—in short, their attitudes or dispositions regarding teachers, teaching, and students (Colton & Sparks-Langer, 1993).

Several tools for assessment of teaching dispositions have been developed (Breidenstein, 2002; Giovannelli, 2003; Minor, Omwuegbuzie, Witcher, & James, 2002; Murphy, Delli, & Edwards, 2004; Nottis, Feuerstein, Murray, & Adams, 2000). Aligning their work with Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) (1992) principles, Schulte, Edick, Edwards, and Mackiel (2004) developed the Teacher Dispositions Index (TDI) to assist candidates in raising awareness of their own dispositions through self-reflection. How best to use the TDI to promote candidate growth is still being determined. Currently, the TDI is administered early in a candidate's teacher education coursework. No studies of candidates in the final stage of their training, student teaching, have been undertaken.

Student teaching is an excellent time to assess dispositions, as it is the apprentice level of teacher preparation. Practice in teaching, coming at the end of the program, gives the candidate a "texture of reality"

and a sense of moving to the goal of teaching (Su, 1992). As candidates proceed through their educational program, the length of time in teacher education and amount of field experience are important factors in impacting their beliefs (Minor et al., 2002). Student teaching is therefore often the most influential phase of teacher education (Su, 1992).

This study focused upon whether the dispositions student teachers espoused in reflection were what they actually practiced in the classroom. Where congruence was found, reflection through the TDI becomes a useful measure for candidates and faculty. Where differences exist, the patterns of discrepancies may be helpful in planning and improving instruction about dispositions during teacher education.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent, if any, student teachers' self-perceptions of teaching dispositions were congruent with their cooperating teachers' perceptions of the dispositions the student teachers actually exhibited while teaching.

Background Theoretical Base

Argyris' and Schon's (1996) ideas of theories in action, and the differences between espoused theories and theories-in-use, provided the theoretical underpinning for this study. Theories in action, based on the assumption that people act purposefully on their environment, are the strategies chosen within a situation to produce a desired consequence. Values, which are attributed to the consequence, make that consequence desirable, and underlying assumptions of the world make the action plausible in the situation. Theories in action help organizations and individuals perform complex tasks without developing a separate theory for each task. Because the tasks of teaching are complex, and learning to teach is difficult (Kagan, 1992; McLean, 1999; Pajares, 1992), theories of action are a valuable framework for research.

These theories of action may take the form of espoused theories or theories-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1996). When asked to explain their actions within a situation, people present their espoused theories. Theories-in-use are the actual patterns of actions seen

through observation. The patterns may be explicit or tacit, and the individual may or may not be aware of whether their theories-in-use are congruent with what they espouse.

When trying to understand and explain the beliefs and dispositions of teachers, it is not enough to analyze expressed views. Espoused theories should be examined within a teaching setting and be related to actual practice, or theory-in-use (Kane, Sandretto, & Heath, 2002). Looking more closely at candidates, who are just beginning to create theories-in-use, may provide valuable insight into the creation of teaching theories in action.

Research Questions

To guide the inquiry, the following research questions were posed:

1. Do student teachers espouse positive student-centered teaching dispositions?
2. Do cooperating teachers perceive that student teachers exhibit positive student-centered teaching dispositions?
3. Do student teachers espouse positive professionalism teaching dispositions?

4. Do cooperating teachers perceive that student teachers exhibit positive professionalism teaching dispositions?
5. To what extent, if any, are student teachers' self-perceptions of teaching dispositions congruent with the cooperating teachers' perceptions of the dispositions the student teachers actually exhibit while teaching?
6. To what extent, if any, do the levels of congruency vary between student teachers' self-perceptions of their teaching dispositions and the cooperating teachers' perceptions of the extent to which student teachers exhibit those dispositions as a result of demographic differences (age, gender, or certification level)?

Definition of Terms

Teaching dispositions may be called attitudes, values, perceptions, beliefs, perspectives, or many other terms, which can make this area difficult to research (Pajares, 1992). Called "terminological babel" (Marland, 1987), this confusion may be minimized by focusing on dispositions as a voluntary, frequent pattern of behavior

directed to a broad goal (Katz, 1994). NCATE (2002) defines dispositions as:

> values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator's own professional growth. Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice. (p. 53)

Teacher dispositions may be closer to constellations of concepts than they are to actual teacher traits, and may be organized into student-centered dispositions and professionalism, curriculum-centered dispositions (Schulte et al., 2004).

Congruence in geometry typically means coinciding exactly when one shape is superimposed over another. For this study, the cooperating teachers' perceptions of their student teachers' dispositions were superimposed, or compared, to the dispositions student teacher reported. When there was agreement between the student teachers' espoused dispositions and the observations of

the cooperating teachers, congruence of dispositions was found to occur.

Student teaching is clinical practice, internship, or practicum, in which both the university and the K-12 school assist the candidate in preparation for the roles of teaching (Schaffer, 2003). During this experience, the candidate works extensively within the K-12 setting in close relationship with a cooperating teacher and under the guidance of a fieldwork supervisor from the university.

Cooperating teachers, also described as mentor teachers (Giovannelli, 2003), master teachers, or supervising teachers, are responsible to be a guide, role model, and evaluator of a student teaching candidate (Schaffer, 2003).

Nontraditional student teachers are candidates who did not follow high school with a 4- or 5-year teacher education program. For this research, those who reported their age as 26 or older were considered nontraditional.

Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, it was assumed that the INTASC standards for dispositions (1992) improve

effective teaching, and that beliefs about teaching will influence teaching practice (Minor et al., 2002).

Because confidentiality and anonymity were assured, it was also assumed that participating student teachers gave truthful answers, without concern that either the university or school system would be more or less likely to hire them (Burnard & Morrison, 1992).

Delimitations and Limitations

The study was delimited to all K-12 student teachers and cooperating teachers from the Spring 2005 semester of a Midwestern metropolitan university. Not only was this population available to the researcher, but the instrument was being utilized at that site with other candidates earlier in the program.

One limitation of this study was differences in results stemming from the differing amounts of teaching practice the various candidates had experienced by the point at which the instrument was administered.

Another limitation was differences in interpretations by cooperating teachers. Not only did the cooperating teachers filter dispositions through their own varied experiences, what they observed of student

teachers' behaviors may have arisen from unnatural situations such as emulating the cooperating teacher, lack of rapport with the cooperating teacher, or trying to appear competent so that a job would be offered.

Significance of the Study

A study of the relationship between the dispositions student teachers espouse and those that they practice is important for several reasons. The emphasis today on dispositions demands that those involved in teacher education are able to teach and assess these principles, and that candidates can meet new challenges for learning and reflection. Using assessments like the TDI for candidates to self-report dispositions tells half the story. Only when measuring dispositions through both theory and practice does a clearer picture appear of whether teacher education is supporting and encouraging effective teaching practice (Ducharme & Ducharme, 1996).

Secondly, a better understanding of the dichotomy of espoused and practiced theories that may occur when candidates begin teaching may lead to practices that allow candidates to view this dichotomy not as conflict

that is irreconcilable, but as an opportunity to reflect and grow (Alvermann, 1981).

The results of this study also may be useful in further research on dispositions. Replication at a future date, when candidates have been trained systematically according to NCATE and INTASC principles, may lead to a comparison of successful techniques in teacher education.

Outline of the Study

Chapter 2 is a presentation of literature relevant to this study involving teaching dispositions and candidates. The research design, procedures, and methodology are described in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 reports upon those findings, and Chapter 5 provides an analysis and interpretation of the results.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

To ensure candidates gain positive teaching dispositions as they are being prepared by teacher education programs, it is first necessary to determine what characteristics candidates bring with them as they undertake teacher education and what the desired teacher dispositions of quality teachers are. The main areas of literature reviewed here are: (1) the dispositions of effective teachers, (2) predispositions and beliefs of candidates, and (3) cognitive dissonance in student teaching.

Dispositions of Effective Teachers

If the goal of teacher education is to produce effective teachers who positively impact student achievement, then a closer look at what characterizes effective teaching is needed (Pajares, 1992). "We think we know great teaching when we encounter it, yet we find it impossible to say precisely what has gone into making it great," (Banner & Cannon, 1997, p. 3). As current or former students ourselves, we each have formulated folk theories about the nature of good teaching (Bruner,

1996). While many studies show that instructional and management processes may be the focus of effective teaching, when participants are interviewed or surveyed about what they perceive as effective, they emphasize social or emotional traits more than pedagogical practices (Stronge, 2002).

Traits of Good Teachers

Teacher dispositions may be closer to constellations of concepts than they are to actual traits. However, by examining traits of excellent teaching, a more global view of the encompassing dispositions may emerge.

Historically, the traits of a good teacher have been those of a good role model—a good citizen, parent, and employee. Barr (1958) identified teacher characteristics including cooperativeness, reliability, objectivity, emotional stability and intelligence. Ryans (1960) asked 6,000 teachers to identify, through observation and self-rating, teaching acts that made the difference between success and failure. He developed a list of 25 effective teaching characteristics that clustered into three patterns of successful teachers. These were:

- Pattern X: understanding, friendly, and responsive

- Pattern Y: responsible, businesslike, and systematic
- Pattern Z: stimulating, imaginative, and original.

Currently, lists of teacher traits have been developed as feedback systems to stimulate teacher change. For example, Tuckman (1995) developed 30 bipolar items (assertive/passive, quiet/bubbly) grouped into four dimensions, including creative (imaginative, experimenting, original), dynamic (outgoing, energetic, extroverted), organized (purposeful, resourceful, in control), and warm (sociable, amiable, patient).

Using teaching traits to determine an individual's strengths, goals, and concerns can be quite beneficial for current and prospective teachers, as well as for those who mentor them. Yet, because they are centered upon personality or psychological characteristics, they are limited in their ability to predict or improve classroom performance.

To summarize, using psychological characteristics to define a good teacher represented an attempt to measure teacher behavior objectively. But these characteristics often were too remote from the teacher's day-to-day work in the classroom to

> meaningfully contribute to a definition of a good teacher. Most notably, these definitions excluded the most important and obvious measure of all for determining good teaching: the performance of the students who are being taught. (Borich, 2000, pp. 3-4)

Teacher Effectiveness

Turn on the century researchers asked students what distinguished the teachers from whom they learned the most. They agreed that these teachers made greater demands of the students, possessed more teaching skills, had more knowledge of subject matter, and kept better discipline (Kratz, 1896). In the 1960s, teacher effectiveness was considered relatively unimportant compared to the curriculum, and efforts were made to write 'teacher-proof curricula' and to train teachers in prescribed behavior patterns (Brophy & Good, 1986). Rosenshine (1971) found that student achievement did have noticeable correlation to teacher behaviors including warmth, business-like orientation, enthusiasm, organization, variety in materials and activities, questioning, and focus on academic activities.

From the 1970s through the 1990s, the search for what makes a teacher effective shifted from studying what teachers were to what they did, and the impact teacher behavior had on student achievement. Interest centered upon cognitive rather than affective aspects of teaching (Brophy & Good, 1986). Federal agencies became involved, including the National Institute of Education and the Office of Education. Process-product studies measured effectiveness of instruction by quantity and pacing, student engagement, and active teaching.

Recently, when asked to describe effective and ineffective teachers, 30 beginning candidates, 30 student teachers, and 30 experienced teachers wrote very similar descriptions (Walls, Nardi, von Minden, & Hoffman, 2002). The subjects characterized effective teachers as creating a warm emotional environment, possessing teacher skills, appearing motivated, emphasizing student participation, and seeming accomplished at classroom management. The traits of ineffective teachers were described as the opposite, with the only differences in responses being that experienced teachers stressed management more and motivation less than the inexperienced teachers.

Because there is a lack of agreement on a single definition of effective teaching, teacher competencies—specific items of behavior—were constructed (Wiggens, 1998). When asked to identify and rank competencies that they emphasized, secondary principals selected task orientation, enthusiasm and interest, direct instruction, pacing, and feedback most frequently (Arnn & Mangiere, 1988). These competencies are observable and measurable, and so are able to be used in teacher evaluation.

Standards to measure competency of teacher candidates have also been developed. The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (1992) organized standards of knowledge and performances for teacher candidates that may be observed and measured. Teacher dispositions accompany each of these goals because INTASC proposes that these affective characteristics relate to teacher effectiveness (Stronge, 2002).

With the current emphasis on teaching to national standards, Sergiovanni and Starrett (2002) emphasize those characteristics that stress teachers knowing and

using content successfully. The danger in limiting teacher effectiveness to a set of skills or competencies is that it may ignore the art of teaching. What is not easily measurable may go unnoticed and unappreciated. If the focus is too narrow and only on competencies, the 'human' or artistic side of teaching that is hard to define but important to students' lives may not be valued. Perhaps instead, the essence of an effective teacher should be more completely summarized as one who recognizes complexity, communicates clearly, and serves conscientiously (Stronge, 2002).

> To be a passionate teacher is to be someone in love with a field of knowledge, deeply stirred by issues and ideas that challenge our world, drawn to the dilemmas and potentials of the young people who come into class each day—or captivated by all of these. A passionate teacher is a teacher who breaks out of the isolation of a classroom, who refuses to submit to apathy or cynicism. (Fried, 1995, p. 1)

Predispositions and Beliefs of Teacher Candidates

Dispositions are a tendency to exhibit a pattern of behavior directed to a goal, so then beliefs can be

considered as "predispositions" (Raths, 2001). Candidates in teacher education generally enter the field predisposed to believe that interpersonal aspects of teaching are of more importance than academic aspects, but also that a teacher's role is to dispense knowledge (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Walls et al., 2002). Those learning to teach usually conceptualize the process as acquiring technical and organizational skills (Barritt & Black, 1993). However, how they view themselves as persons and as teachers is critically important to how they interpret what they learn (McLean, 1999).

Pre-teaching Beliefs

Candidates bring a long background of experience with teachers to the arena of teacher education (Britzman, 1986; Brookhart & Freeman, 1992). These experiences include the effects of personal life, previous schooling, and experience with formal knowledge (Murphy et al., 2004; Wenzlaff, 1998).

Candidates' predispositions are often overly simplistic and idealistic (Britzman, 1986; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998). These predispositions may cause candidates to be overly confident and optimistic in that

they feel that they already know how to teach, and only seek strategies to get themselves started (Kagan, 1992; Wideen et al., 1998).

Whitbeck (2000) interviewed 14 candidates taking methods classes and found that three candidate beliefs emerged: (1) teaching was thought of as a calling, (2) candidates identified with teacher role models, and (3) beliefs centered on a self-view of being a teacher. These views led the candidates to think that they were special and that they would avoid the problems of the profession because of their calling.

Murphy et al. (2004) found that beliefs about good teaching are established by the time a student is in second grade, and proposed that candidates are still developing their teaching beliefs. When comparing descriptions of good teaching, elementary teaching candidates indicated five characteristics that second grade students also described. In addition, candidates prioritized five characteristics that experienced teachers expressed. Only one characteristic--caring--was shared by all groups.

Based on childhood, rather than teaching experiences, few candidates reflect progressive or student-centered beliefs, while many more are conservative or traditional (Minor et al., 2002). These foundational beliefs, if not challenged, may be perpetuated by forcing new experiences into old paradigms (Breidenstein, 2002; Pajares, 1992). Book and Freeman (1986) found elementary teaching candidates to be more child-centered, while secondary majors were more focused on subject matter.

Beliefs About Self

To gain an understanding of teaching dispositions, candidates need not only to be aware of what teaching dispositions are, but they also need to have an honest awareness of self. Self-awareness "refers to the gradual and continuous process of noticing and exploring aspects of the self, whether behavioral, psychological or physical, with the intention of developing personal and interpersonal understanding" (Burnard & Morrison, 1992, p. 48). Self-awareness "in itself is an invaluable tool for change, especially if the need to change is in line with the person's goals, sense of mission, or basic

values—including the belief that self-improvement is good" (Goleman, 1998, p. 67).

Changing Beliefs of Candidates

But change will not come easily because beliefs about what a good teacher should be are formed at an early age and stay consistent through teacher preparation (Kagan, 1992; Murphy et al., 2004). Weinstein (1989) asked preservice teachers to describe "a really good teacher" both before and after methods classes, and found that their perceptions had not changed.

While it is difficult to change the beliefs deeply held by others, there is disagreement whether teacher education programs change or merely solidify candidate dispositions. However, candidates involved in a service learning tutoring program showed significant changes in perspectives of identity and personal development (Malone, Jones, & Stallings, 2002).

Student Teaching and Cognitive Dissonance

Student teaching is a unique bridge between the role of student and the role of teacher—a type of "apprenticeship-of-observation" (Lortie, 1975). Often this is the first chance that candidates have to

experience teaching from behind the scenes, cognizant of all the decisions that must be made.

New Roles for Old Beliefs

When the view from student teaching differs from the expectations of teaching that candidates have developed over years of experience from the student's vantage point, cognitive dissonance may occur. The mismatch between the new and unexpected roles of teachers and the uncertainty in old beliefs can lead to disequilibrium (Breidenstein, 2002; Britzman, 1986).

Yet without this tension and challenge to develop beliefs and practices, the effect of teacher education may be "washed out" by the new teaching culture (Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1981). Cognitive dissonance may create an inner struggle that is the force behind reflection about beliefs (Alvermann, 1981).

Some student teachers are not willing to accept that their preexisting beliefs may be flawed, or feel that admitting to doubt reflects badly upon them at a time that they wish others to see them as confident and ready to teach (Breidenstein, 2002; Britzman, 1986).

Page, Rudney, and Marxen (2004) reviewed the portfolios of 34 teaching candidates and decided that those who lacked the disposition of teachability—acting on suggestions of others, reflection, and commitment to learning—had more difficulty in transitioning to the role of teacher.

Conflicting Roles—Teacher or Student?

Even those who possess teaching dispositions find tension in student teaching between the roles of the last year of being a student and the first of being a professional. Through focus groups of elementary and secondary student teachers, as well as questionnaires, Munby, Lock, and Smith (2001) found role conflict to be a common struggle. Candidates would often prefer to be taught as students rather than to become self-directed. Britzman (1986) explains this desire as the candidate's need to reduce the complexity of pedagogical activity to a "methods as ends" model of teaching.

This role conflict may arise from a difference in expectations. Teacher educators view student teaching as an avenue to apply what was learned in university courses, but candidates wish to gain the practical

experience to enable them to be hired (Wideen et al., 1998).

Theory Versus Practice—A Disposition to Act, or Acting on a Disposition

Typical teacher education programs approach problem solving from a theoretical standpoint, with university classes followed by field experience to apply theory by practice. Yet candidates formulate their own models of teaching constructed from prior dispositions and experiences (Wideen et al., 1998). These models create a combination of schema: (1) teaching is science—there is a technical, right way to teach, (2) teaching is art—teaching is changeable and can only be learned through doing it, and (3) teaching is interaction—a constructivist approach to teaching (Gould, 2000).

An ethnography by Rodriquez (1993) studied the conflict between espoused metaphors and the roles and beliefs of classroom experience. While all 6 participants retained the essence of their theoretical beliefs, they readjusted their perspectives to fit the restraints they found within a school context. Working on beliefs early

in teacher education may create the models and filters student teachers use in practice.

Nottis et al. (2000) developed the Teacher Belief Inventory to measure the degree to which candidates selected theoretical or practical approaches from pairs of items. Completed in a seminar setting, candidates' mean theoretical score was higher than the practical score. This may be true because of candidates' internalization of the university program's emphasis on theory, because the theoretical terminology was more familiar to candidates, or because novices tend to generalize and be more solution-oriented.

Teacher Socialization

Student teachers have been the focus of study of socialization because of the transition it provides from formal training to actual teaching. Before student teaching, candidates usually espouse a humanistic view. Classroom experience seems to engender a more custodial or authoritarian viewpoint. One reason for this may be that before student teaching, candidates reflect the philosophy of the teaching program, but once in the

classroom, pre-existing beliefs reemerge (Richardson, 1996).

Britzman (1986) discovered that student teachers soon find teaching to be lonely, but that common cultural myths "valorize the individual and make inconsequential the institutional constraints which frame the teacher's work" (p. 448). These cultural myths state that everything depends upon the teacher, that the teacher is the expert, and that teachers are self-made. However, this image of the teacher as rugged individual is often at odds with what student teachers actually experience—when what they intend to teach and their actual teaching activities contradict one another.

Summary

The dispositions that candidates bring to teacher education are powerful, as is the culture of the school. If, within the uncertainty of student teaching, these combine to "wash out" the years of study and preparation, then new teachers recreate themselves in the patterns of previous teachers, and efforts for improvement are futile. Most difficult to change would be those student teachers who espouse one set of dispositions but practice

another, for they are blind to themselves. On the other hand, student teachers with an awareness of dispositions, culture, and their own beliefs may have the tools to reflect and make informed decisions as they become teachers. Additional study in how to consistently and effectively create this awareness will be needed.

> Teacher educators themselves, although they may have an intuitive understanding of good practice, are hampered in defense of their work by the absence of any coherent theoretical account or even precise language, for describing what they do (Calderhead, 1993, p. 12).

Interrelated inquiries that create links between theory and practice may more effectively interweave research knowledge and practice (Ducharme & Ducharme, 1996). Until adequate research helps to define and measure teaching dispositions, efforts to improve teacher education through dispositions will be imprecise at best—and at worst, disregarded.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this research study was to compare the espoused dispositions of student teachers to perceptions of their practiced dispositions. In this chapter, details and description will be given of the research design, participants, instrumentation, variables, research questions, data analysis, and procedures that were utilized for this study.

Research Design

This study, collecting both descriptive and inferential data, consisted of a cross-sectional survey to examine espoused and observed dispositions of student teachers at the midpoint of student teaching.

A self-administered questionnaire was mailed to 262 possible participants because the anonymity allows participants to be candid, and because a survey is an efficient method to reach a large group of people in a short amount of time in a cross-sectional study (Babbie, 1990; Fink, 2003; Nardi, 2003).

Student teachers' responses to the survey were compared to those from the candidates' cooperating

teachers to see if there were significant differences using a matched-subjects design. This design controls for individual differences, and thus tends to reduce sample variance (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2000).

Participants

The participants included (a) candidates enrolled in student teaching in the College of Education at a Midwestern metropolitan university during the Spring 2005 semester and (b) the cooperating teachers assigned to each of those student teachers. Purposive, nonprobabilistic sampling was used because the group was being selected for a specific purpose (Newman & McNeil, 1998). Surveys were sent to 131 teaching pairs—student teacher and cooperating teacher. Over 70.61% of these individuals returned the survey, including 89 student teachers and 96 cooperating teachers. In 60.30% of the responses, or 79 of the 131 teaching pairs, both members of the pair completed the survey and so were used in comparison to one another.

Student teachers ranged in age from 21 to 55 (M = 28.22, SD = 8.67). For analysis, they were grouped as 54 traditional (25 and under) and 35 nontraditional

(26 and over). The nontraditional students included 10 members of an alternative certification program. Of the 89 student teachers, 75 (84.27%) were female and 14 (15.73%) were male, and 85 (95.51%) were Caucasian and 4 (4.49%) were minority. In the 79 teaching pairs, 49 (62.03%) had elementary certification, with 22 (27.85%) secondary and 8 (10.13%) K-12 certified.

Cooperating teachers' mean age was 42 (SD = 10.77), with a range from 25 to 66 years. They had between 4 and 37 years of experience (M = 15.58, SD = 9.39) and had worked with 1 to 18 student teachers (M = 4.23, SD = 4.05). The 96 cooperating teachers included 80 (83.33%) females and 16 (16.67%) males. Eighty-nine (92.71%) were Caucasian and 7 (7.29%) minorities.

Instrumentation

The Teacher Dispositions Index (TDI) is a quantitative instrument used to measure dispositions set forth by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC, 1992). As developed by Schulte et al., (2004), the TDI measures a student-centered dimension and a professionalism, curriculum-centered dimension in a 45-item survey (see Appendix A).

For each item, student teachers were asked to mark their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, or 5=strongly agree). The student-centered dimension of the TDI consists of items such as, "I believe it is important to involve all students in learning," and "I demonstrate qualities of humor, empathy, and warmth with others." The professionalism dimension includes items such as, "I take initiative to promote ethical and responsible professional practice," and "I listen to colleagues' ideas and suggestions to improve instruction."

The Dispositions of Student Teacher Index, given to cooperating teachers, replicates the TDI item for item, except that it substitutes the stem "my student teacher" for the pronoun "I" and states the disposition in observable terms such as "exhibits" or "shows" in place of less observable terms like "believes" (see Appendix B).

Validity

Schulte et al. (2004) provided content validity of the TDI through a panel of 13 members involved in teacher education. Further validation was sought by administering

the TDI to 105 undergraduate teacher education majors. Construct validity of the TDI was then evaluated with a factor analysis using a principal axis factoring followed by a varimax rotation of the number of factors extracted. The student-centered factor had an eigenvalue of 41.38 and accounted for 64.66% of the total variance. The professionalism factor had an eigenvalue of 2.82 and accounted for 4.40% of the total variance.

Reliability

Cronbach's alpha was computed to see if participants were consistent in their responses on the TDI (Schulte et al., 2004). The student-centered subscale had a reliability estimate of .98, and the professionalism subscale was .97.

Variables

Independent variables

The independent variables for this study were:

1. group (student teacher or cooperating teacher)
2. gender (male or female)
3. age
4. certification level (elementary, secondary, or K-12)

Dependent variables

The dependent variables were the mean scores on the student-centered and professionalism constructs of student teacher dispositions.

Research Questions

The Teacher Disposition Index and Cooperating Teacher Index were used to test the following questions:

1. Do student teachers espouse positive student-centered teaching dispositions?
2. Do cooperating teachers perceive that student teachers exhibit positive student-centered teaching dispositions?
3. Do student teachers espouse positive professionalism teaching dispositions?
4. Do cooperating teachers perceive that student teachers exhibit positive professionalism teaching dispositions?
5. To what extent, if any, are student teachers' self-perceptions of teaching dispositions congruent with the cooperating teachers' perceptions of the dispositions the student teachers actually exhibit while teaching?

6. To what extent, if any, do the levels of congruency vary between student teachers' self-perceptions of their teaching dispositions and the cooperating teachers' perceptions of the extent to which student teachers exhibit those dispositions as a result of student teacher demographic differences (age, gender, or certification level)?

Data Analysis

Descriptive research questions 1 through 4 were tested using descriptive statistical measures. Means and standard deviations were reported for student teachers' espoused dispositions on the student-centered and professionalism subscales. The perceptions of cooperating teachers were measured in a similar manner.

Question 5, which was inferential, was tested using a related-samples *t*-test. A series of analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were performed to test inferential question 6. A .01 level of significance was employed for the inferential tests to help control for Type I errors because multiple statistical tests were conducted.

Procedures

The College of Education Student Teacher Coordinator was contacted before distributing the instrument. Participation was voluntary. The TDI was distributed to all participating student teachers near the midpoint of the semester in the spring of 2005. The Student Teacher Coordinator assisted in providing information to the researcher so that the CTI could be sent to the cooperating teacher of each student teacher.

Student teachers were surveyed regarding their dispositions. The cooperating teachers assessed their student teachers' dispositions based on direct observation of their teaching. At the end of the survey, student teachers were asked to respond to open-ended questions about their growth in dispositions, who influenced whatever growth they perceived, and what they had been told about dispositions. Cooperating teachers were asked to answer open-ended questions about whatever change in dispositions they perceived occurring during student teaching and in what manner, if any, that they attempted to influence student teacher dispositions.

Those not responding received a reminder, followed by a second survey to increase sample size (Creswell, 2003).

Chapter 4

Results

To examine the congruence between student teachers' espoused and observed dispositions, surveys were sent to 131 teaching pairs—student teacher and cooperating teacher. Research questions 1 though 4, which were descriptive, utilized all responses. Questions 1 and 3 included 89 student teachers, and questions 2 and 4 included 96 cooperating teachers. The final research questions were inferential, and excluded any response that did not have a matching teacher-paired survey returned. Questions 5 and 6 included 79 of these complete teacher pairs.

Research Question 1

Do student teachers espouse positive student-centered teaching dispositions?

Student teachers indicated highly positive dispositions on the student-centered dimension of the TDI (M = 4.77, SD = 0.24). The lowest mean score for all 89 student teachers was 4.00, and 13 of them (14.46%) scored themselves at 5.00. Items that scored highest were, "I view teaching as an important profession" (M = 4.94,

SD = 0.23), "I understand that students learn in many different ways" (*M* = 4.92, *SD* = 0.27), and "I believe a teacher must use a variety of instructional strategies to optimize student learning" (*M* = 4.90, *SD* = 0.30). No item had a mean less than 4.55. Table 1 displays the item means and standard deviations for the student teachers on the TDI student-centered subscale.

Research Question 2

Do cooperating teachers perceive that student teachers exhibit positive student-centered teaching dispositions?

Although not to the extent of student teachers, cooperating teachers also perceived that their student teachers demonstrate positive student-centered dispositions (*M* = 4.42, *SD* = 0.34). The lowest mean score was 3.00, and 18 (18.75%) of the cooperating teachers ranked their student teacher at 5.00.

Table 2 displays the item means and standard deviations for the cooperating teachers on the TDI student-centered subscale. When comparing the item means of cooperating teachers to their student teachers, the lowest scoring item for cooperating teachers, "My student

Table 1

Student Teacher Responses to TDI—Student-Centered

Subscale 1—Student-Centered Dispositions	Mean	*SD*
I believe a teacher must use a variety of instructional strategies to optimize student learning.	4.90	0.30
I understand that students learn in many different ways.	4.92	0.27
I demonstrate qualities of humor, empathy, and warmth with others.	4.79	0.41
I am a thoughtful and responsive listener.	4.60	0.49
I assume responsibility when working with others.	4.69	0.47
I believe that all students can learn.	4.84	0.45
I believe the classroom environment a teacher creates greatly affects students' learning and development.	4.83	0.38
I view teaching as an important profession.	4.94	0.23
I understand that teachers' expectations impact student learning.	4.71	0.46
I view teaching as a collaborative effort among teachers.	4.63	0.49
I understand students have certain needs that must be met before learning can take place.	4.67	0.56
I am sensitive to student differences.	4.70	0.49
I communicate caring, concern, and a willingness to become involved with others.	4.71	0.46
I am punctual and reliable in my attendance.	4.78	0.42
I maintain a professional appearance.	4.87	0.34
I believe it is my job to create a learning environment that is conducive to the development of students' self-confidence and competence.	4.82	0.42
I respect the cultures of all students.	4.83	0.41
I honor my commitments.	4.79	0.41
I treat students with dignity and respect at all times.	4.74	0.44
I am willing to receive feedback and assessment of my teaching.	4.79	0.41

(Table 1 Continued)

I am patient when working with students.	4.55	0.58
I am open to adjusting and revising my plans to meet student needs.	4.76	0.43
I communicate in ways that demonstrate respect for the feelings, ideas, and contributions of others.	4.72	0.45
I believe it is important to learn about students and their community.	4.87	0.34
Total	4.77	0.24

Table 2

Cooperating Teachers' Responses to TDI—Student-Centered

Subscale 1—Student-Centered Dispositions	Mean	*SD*
My student teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies to optimize student learning.	4.15	0.85
My student teacher understands that students learn in many different ways.	4.48	0.58
My student teacher expresses qualities of humor, empathy, and warmth with others.	4.47	0.83
My student teacher is a thoughtful and responsive listener.	4.51	0.81
My student teacher assumes responsibility when working with others.	4.56	0.77
My student teacher shows through actions that all students can learn.	4.50	0.67
My student teacher creates a classroom environment that positively affects students' learning and development.	4.44	0.68
My student teacher views teaching as an important profession.	4.37	0.80
My student teacher understands that teachers' expectations impact student learning.	4.72	0.48
My student teacher views teaching as a collaborative effort among teachers.	4.34	0.78
My student teacher understands students have certain needs that must be met before learning can take place.	4.29	0.83
My student teacher is sensitive to student differences.	4.23	0.79
My student teacher communicates caring, concern, and a willingness to become involved with others.	4.49	0.70
My student teacher is punctual and reliable in attendance.	4.45	0.87
My student teacher maintains a professional appearance.	4.67	0.57

(Table 2 Continued)

My student teacher creates a learning environment that is conducive to the development of students' self-confidence and competence.	4.41	0.69
My student teacher respects the cultures of all students.	4.67	0.52
My student teacher honors commitments.	4.60	0.66
My student teacher treats students with dignity and respect at all times.	4.66	0.61
My student teacher is willing to receive feedback and assessment of teaching.	4.57	0.78
My student teacher is patient when working with students.	4.65	0.62
My student teacher is open to adjusting and revising plans to meet student needs.	4.53	0.71
My student teacher communicates in ways that demonstrate respect for the feelings, ideas, and contributions of others.	4.46	0.75
My student teacher learns about students and their community.	4.34	0.75
Total	4.42	0.34

teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies to optimize student learning" (M = 4.15, SD = 0.85) was one of the highest for the student teachers' perceptions. Also, "I am patient when working with students," which was the lowest for student teachers (M = 4.55, SD = 0.58), was very high on the cooperating teachers' list (M = 4.65, SD = 0.62). While both cooperating teachers and student teachers perceived positive student-centered dispositions, the items receiving the highest mean scores did not align. The cooperating teachers' responses were more variable than the student teachers' scores.

Research Question 3

Do student teachers espouse positive professionalism teaching dispositions?

Although student teachers indicated that their professionalism dispositions were positive (M = 4.49, SD = 0.51) they consistently ranked themselves lower on professionalism than student-centered items. Table 3 displays the item means and standard deviations for the student teachers on the TDI professionalism subscale. Items such as, "I engage in research-based teaching

Table 3

Student Teacher Responses to TDI—Professionalism

Subscale 2—Professionalism Dispositions	Mean	*SD*
I am committed to critical reflection for my professional growth.	4.54	0.57
I cooperate with colleagues in planning instruction.	4.58	0.56
I actively seek out professional growth opportunities.	4.34	0.62
I uphold the laws and ethical codes governing the teaching profession.	4.83	0.38
I stimulate students' interests.	4.45	0.50
I value both long term and short term planning.	4.73	0.47
I stay current with the evolving nature of the teaching profession.	4.22	0.60
I select material that is relevant for students.	4.55	0.52
I am successful in facilitating learning for all students.	4.17	0.61
I demonstrate and encourage democratic interaction in the classroom and school.	4.18	0.68
I accurately read the non-verbal communication of students.	4.24	0.58
I engage in discussions about new ideas in the teaching profession.	4.04	0.69
I select material that is interesting for students.	4.43	0.56
I provide appropriate feedback to encourage students in their development.	4.44	0.52
I engage in research-based teaching practices.	4.09	0.69
I create connections to subject matter that are meaningful to students.	4.48	0.55
I listen to colleagues' ideas and suggestions to improve instruction.	4.72	0.48
I take initiative to promote ethical and responsible professional practice.	4.64	0.51
I communicate effectively with students, parents, and colleagues	4.44	0.58

(Table 3 Continued)

I work well with others in implementing a common curriculum.	4.38	0.59
Total	4.49	0.51

practices" (*M* = 4.09, *SD* = 0.69), and "I stay current with the evolving nature of the teaching profession" (*M* = 4.22, *SD* = 0.60) were typically ranked low even though student teachers have been involved in current university practices. Items about ethics scored higher, such as, "I uphold the laws and ethical codes governing the teaching profession" (*M* = 4.83, *SD* = 0.38). Mean scores ranged from 3.80 to 5.00.

Research Question 4

Do cooperating teachers perceive that student teachers exhibit positive professionalism teaching dispositions?

Most, but not all, cooperating teachers assessed their student teacher as having positive professionalism dispositions (*M* = 4.29, *SD* = 0.59). It was only in this category that items received a "1, strongly disagree" marking; yet 12 (12.50%) of cooperating teachers indicated a mean rating of 5.00. Table 4 displays the item means and standard deviations for the cooperating teachers on the TDI professionalism subscale. Cooperating teachers echoed the student teachers high item, "My

Table 4

Cooperating Teachers' Responses to TDI—Professionalism

Subscale 2—Professionalism Dispositions	Mean	*SD*
My student teacher is committed to critical reflection for professional growth.	4.42	0.82
My student teacher cooperates with colleagues in planning instruction.	4.55	0.72
My student teacher actively seeks out professional growth opportunities.	4.07	0.98
My student teacher upholds the laws and ethical codes governing the teaching profession.	4.73	0.47
My student teacher stimulates students' interests.	4.26	0.80
My student teacher practices both long term and short term planning.	4.16	0.96
My student teacher stays current with the evolving nature of the teaching profession.	4.07	0.79
My student teacher selects material that is relevant for students.	4.46	0.61
My student teacher is successful in facilitating learning for all students.	4.19	0.79
My student teacher demonstrates and encourages democratic interaction in the classroom and school.	4.30	0.65
My student teacher accurately reads the non-verbal communication of students.	4.08	0.94
My student teacher engages in discussions about new ideas in the teaching profession.	4.08	0.89
My student teacher selects material that is interesting for students.	4.36	0.74
My student teacher provides appropriate feedback to encourage students in their development.	4.30	0.82
My student teacher engages in research-based teaching practices.	3.95	0.88
My student teacher creates connections to subject matter that are meaningful to students.	4.23	0.84

(Table 4 Continued)

My student teacher listens to colleagues' ideas and suggestions to improve instruction.	4.52	0.74
My student teacher takes initiative to promote ethical and responsible professional practice.	4.40	0.73
My student teacher communicates effectively with students, parents, and colleagues	4.34	0.79
My student teacher works well with others in implementing a common curriculum.	4.36	0.80
Total	4.29	0.59

student teacher upholds the laws and ethical codes governing the teaching profession" (M = 4.73, SD = 0.47) and low items, "My student teacher engages in research-based teaching practices" (M = 3.95, SD = 0.88), and "My student teacher stays current with the evolving nature of the teaching profession" (M = 4.07, SD = 0.79). Additionally, they gave a low response to, "My student teacher accurately reads the non-verbal communication of students" (M = 4.08, SD = 0.94). Cooperating teachers' responses were more variable than student teachers' responses.

Research Question 5

To what extent, if any, are student teachers' self-perceptions of teaching dispositions congruent with the cooperating teachers' perceptions of the dispositions the student teachers actually exhibit while teaching?

In comparing mean scores on the TDI, student teachers (M = 4.62, SD = 0.26) rated themselves significantly higher than their cooperating teachers (M = 4.43, SD = 0.53), $t(78) = 3.176$, $p = .002$. The student teachers (M = 4.78, SD = 0.24) also rated themselves significantly higher than their cooperating

teachers (M = 4.51, SD = 0.51) on the student-centered subscale, $t(78) = 4.62$, $p < .0005$. On the professionalism subscale, the student teachers (M = 4.43, SD = 0.34) did not rate themselves significantly higher than cooperating teachers (M = 4.32, SD = 0.58), $t(78) = 1.483$, $p = .142$.

Research Question 6

To what extent, if any, do the levels of congruency vary between student teachers' self-perceptions of their teaching dispositions and the cooperating teachers' perceptions of the extent to which student teachers exhibit those dispositions as a result of student teacher demographic differences (age, gender, or certification level)?

Age—All Dispositions

There was a significant main effect for congruence, $F(1,77) = 7.382$, $p = .008$. Collapsed across age groups, student teachers (M = 4.62, SD = 0.26) rated themselves significantly higher than their cooperating teachers (M = 4.43, SD = 0.53.) There was no significant main effect for age, $F(1,77) = 1.169$, $p = .283$, nor was there a significant interaction between congruence and age,

$F(1,77) = 1.845$, $p = .178$. Table 5 summarizes the means and standard deviations relevant to this question.

Age—Student-Centered Dispositions. There was a significant main effect for congruence, $F(1,77) = 16.441$, $p < .0005$. Collapsed across age groups, student teachers ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 0.24$) rated themselves significantly higher than their cooperating teachers ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 0.51$). There was no significant main effect for age, $F(1,77) = 0.766$, $p = .384$, nor was there a significant interaction between congruence and age, $F(1,77) = 2.969$, $p = .089$. Table 6 summarizes the means and standard deviations relevant to this question.

Age—Professionalism Dispositions. There was no significant main effect for congruence, $F(1,77) = 1.413$, $p = .238$; no significant main effect for age, $F(1,77) = 1.505$, $p = .224$; and no significant interaction between congruence and age, $F(1,77) = 0.814$, $p = .370$. Table 7 summarizes the means and standard deviations relevant to this question.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations as a Function of Congruence and Age for All Dispositions

Score	Age Group	Mean	*SD*	*n*
Mean of student teachers	Traditional (25 and below)	4.62	0.26	50
	Nontraditional (26 and above)	4.62	0.28	29
	Total	4.62	0.26	79
Mean of cooperating teachers	Traditional (25 and below)	4.37	0.55	50
	Nontraditional (26 and above)	4.53	0.49	29
	Total	4.43	0.53	79
Mean of teaching pairs	Traditional (25 and below)	4.50	0.45	50
	Nontraditional (26 and above)	4.58	0.38	29

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations as a Function of Congruence and Age for Student-Centered Dispositions

Score	Age Group	Mean	*SD*	*n*
Mean of student teachers	Traditional (25 and below)	4.79	0.22	50
	Nontraditional (26 and above)	4.75	0.26	29
	Total	4.78	0.24	79
Mean of cooperating teachers	Traditional (25 and below)	4.45	0.54	50
	Nontraditional (26 and above)	4.61	0.46	29
	Total	4.51	0.51	79
Mean of teaching pairs	Traditional (25 and below)	4.62	0.46	50
	Nontraditional (26 and above)	4.68	0.28	29

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations as a Function of Congruence and Age for Professionalism Dispositions

Score	Age Group	Mean	*SD*	*n*
Mean of student teachers	Traditional (25 and below)	4.42	0.35	50
	Nontraditional (26 and above)	4.46	0.33	29
	Total	4.43	0.34	79
Mean of cooperating teachers	Traditional (25 and below)	4.27	0.58	50
	Nontraditional (26 and above)	4.43	0.55	29
	Total	4.32	0.58	79
Mean of teaching pairs	Traditional (25 and below)	4.34	0.51	50
	Nontraditional (26 and above)	4.45	0.50	29

Gender—All Dispositions

There was a significant main effect for congruence, $F(1,77) = 10.365$, $p = .002$; and there was a significant main effect for gender, $F(1,77) = 8.644$, $p = .004$. There was no significant interaction between congruence and gender, $F(1,77) = 1.949$, $p = .167$. Collapsed across gender, student teachers ($M = 4.62$, $SD = 0.26$) rated themselves significantly higher than cooperating teachers, ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 0.53$). Collapsed across teaching pair, male student teachers ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.43$) were rated significantly lower than female student teachers ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 0.43$). Cooperating teachers for males had much more variability in responses than other groups. Table 8 summarizes the means and standard deviations relevant to this question.

Gender—Student-Centered Dispositions. There was a significant main effect for congruence, $F(1,77) = 118.773$, $p < .0005$, and a significant main effect for gender, $F(1,77) = 8.201$, $p = .005$. There was no significant interaction between congruence and gender, $F(1,77) = 2.342$, $p = .130$. Collapsed across gender, student teachers ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 0.24$) rated themselves

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviations as a Function of Congruence and Gender for All Dispositions

Score	Gender	Mean	*SD*	*n*
Mean of student teachers	Male	4.48	0.26	11
	Female	4.65	0.26	68
	Total	4.62	0.26	79
Mean of cooperating teachers	Male	4.07	0.79	11
	Female	4.48	0.46	68
	Total	4.43	0.53	79
Mean of teaching pairs	Male	4.28	0.43	11
	Female	4.56	0.43	68

higher than cooperating teachers (M = 4.51, SD = 0.51). Collapsed across teaching pair, male student teachers (M = 4.41, SD = 0.47) were rated significantly lower than female student teachers (M = 4.68, SD = 0.42) on student-centered dispositions. Cooperating teachers for males had much more variability in responses than other groups. Table 9 summarizes the means and standard deviations relevant to this question.

Gender—Professionalism Dispositions. There was a significant main effect for gender, $F(1,77) = 7.804$, $p = .007$. Collapsed across teaching pair, male student teachers (M = 4.28, SD = 0.43) were rated significantly lower than female student teachers, (M = 4.42, SD = 0.49). There was no significant main effect for congruence, $F(1,77) = 3.504$, $p = .065$, and no significant interaction between congruence and gender, $F(1,77) = 1.363$, $p = .247$. Cooperating teachers for males had much more variability in responses than other groups. Table 10 summarizes the means and standard deviations relevant to this question.

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations as a Function of Congruence and Gender for Student-Centered Dispositions

Score	Gender	Mean	*SD*	*n*
Mean of student teachers	Male	4.65	0.27	11
	Female	4.80	0.22	68
	Total	4.78	0.24	79
Mean of cooperating teachers	Male	4.17	0.74	11
	Female	4.57	0.45	68
	Total	4.51	0.51	79
Mean of teaching pairs	Male	4.41	0.47	11
	Female	4.68	0.42	68

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations as a Function of Congruence and Gender for Professionalism Dispositions

Score	Gender	Mean	*SD*	*n*
Mean of student teachers	Male	4.26	0.31	11
	Female	4.45	0.34	68
	Total	4.43	0.34	79
Mean of cooperating teachers	Male	3.95	0.88	11
	Female	4.38	0.49	68
	Total	4.32	0.58	79
Mean of teaching pairs	Male	4.28	0.43	11
	Female	4.42	0.49	68

Certification—All Dispositions

There was no significant main effect for congruence, $F(2,76) = 2.599$, $p = .111$; no significant main effect for certification, $F(2,76) = 0.080$, $p = .923$; and no significant interaction between congruence and certification, $F(2,76) = 0.957$, $p = .389$. Table 11 summarizes the means and standard deviations relevant to this question.

Certification—Student-Centered Dispositions. There was a significant main effect for congruence, $F(2,76) = 8.019$, $p = .006$. Collapsed across certification level, student teachers ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 0.24$) rated themselves significantly higher than cooperating teachers ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 0.51$). There was no significant main effect for certification, $F(2,76) = 0.489$, $p = .615$, nor was there a significant interaction between congruence and certification, $F(2,76) = 0.782$, $p = .461$. Table 12 summarizes the means and standard deviations relevant to this question.

Certification—Professionalism Dispositions. There was no significant main effect for congruence,

Table 11

Means and Standard Deviations as a Function of Congruence and Certification for All Dispositions

Score	Certification	Mean	*SD*	*n*
Mean of student teachers	Elementary	4.65	0.24	49
	Secondary	4.57	0.30	22
	K-12	4.54	0.29	8
	Total	4.62	0.26	79
Mean of cooperating teachers	Elementary	4.41	0.51	49
	Secondary	4.43	0.61	22
	K-12	4.55	0.40	8
	Total	4.43	0.53	79
Mean of teaching pairs	Elementary	4.65	0.46	49
	Secondary	4.60	0.46	22
	K-12	4.71	0.46	8

Table 12

Means and Standard Deviations as a Function of Congruence and Certification for Student-Centered Dispositions

Score	Certification	Mean	*SD*	*n*
Mean of student teachers	Elementary	4.81	0.19	49
	Secondary	4.69	0.30	22
	K-12	4.77	0.26	8
	Total	4.78	0.24	79
Mean of cooperating teachers	Elementary	4.49	0.50	49
	Secondary	4.49	0.59	22
	K-12	4.66	0.37	8
	Total	4.51	0.51	79
Mean of teaching pairs	Elementary	4.65	0.46	49
	Secondary	4.60	0.46	22
	K-12	4.71	0.46	8

$F(2,76) = 0.062$, $p = .804$; no significant main effect for certification, $F(2, 76) = 0.081$, $p = .922$; and no significant interaction between congruence and certification, $F(2, 76) = 1.042$, $p = .358$. Table 13 summarizes the means and standard deviations relevant to this question.

Table 13

Means and Standard Deviations as a Function of Congruence and Certification for Professionalism Dispositions

Score	Certification	Mean	*SD*	*n*
Mean of student teachers	Elementary	4.47	0.33	49
	Secondary	4.41	0.34	22
	K-12	4.25	0.37	8
	Total	4.43	0.34	79
Mean of cooperating teachers	Elementary	4.30	0.57	49
	Secondary	4.36	0.64	22
	K-12	4.40	0.45	8
	Total	4.32	0.58	79
Mean of teaching pairs	Elementary	4.39	0.51	49
	Secondary	4.38	0.51	22
	K-12	4.33	0.51	8

Chapter 5

Discussion

Along with knowledge and skills, dispositions form the basis of what a teacher can bring to the critical and creative tasks of education. Dispositions, "the values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behavior" (NCATE, 2002, p. 53), can be more difficult to teach and assess than knowledge or skills (Edick, Danielson, & Edwards, 2005). As education colleges explore ways to raise awareness and growth in positive dispositions, they must do more than ask candidates to evaluate themselves. Candidates' own perceptions of their dispositions may be distorted, and only by comparing espoused theories to observed actions (Argyris & Schon, 1996) can a more accurate picture of dispositions begin to emerge.

The purpose of this research was to assess student teachers' dispositions by comparing those they espouse with those observed by the cooperating teacher supervising their experience. The study was based upon two versions of the Teacher Dispositions Index (TDI)—the first version designed for student teachers' self-

assessment and the second for cooperating teachers to assess dispositions of their student teachers. The TDI consists of 45 items ranked on a 5-point Likert scale, 25 of which describe student-centered dispositions and 20 that describe professionalism dispositions (Schulte et al., 2004).

Open-ended questions at the end of the survey were completed by 79 student teachers and 82 cooperating teachers. Student teachers answered questions about their memories of instruction on dispositions and about influences that shaped current dispositions. Cooperating teachers shared what, if any, changes they noted during student teaching and which dispositions, if any, they attempted to modify in student teachers. Answers ranged from one word to two pages in length. These responses were grouped by teaching pair, by demographic group, and by key words to uncover common themes.

Surveys were sent to 131 teaching pairs, each consisting of a student teacher and a cooperating teacher, from a Midwestern metropolitan university in the spring semester of 2005. One hundred eighty-five (70.61%) of these individuals returned the survey, including 89

student teachers and 96 cooperating teachers. In 79 of the 131 teaching pairs (60.30%), both members of the pair completed the survey. The survey item answers were analyzed by a series of t-tests and ANOVAs to identify significant differences found between student teachers' and cooperating teachers' responses.

Student Teacher Findings

Student Teachers' Espoused Dispositions

Student teachers rated themselves high on all teaching dispositions (M = 4.62, SD = 0.26). None ranked themselves as neutral or negative, and any mark below 4 (agree) was very rare. Student teachers' espoused dispositions generally reflect the idealism and commitment that brought them to the field of education (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Weinstein, 1989; Wideen et al., 1998).

When asked who was most influential in helping them form their dispositions, over one third of student teachers (28 of 79) indicated parents and their own early experiences. High school teachers and college professors were named by 24 student teachers. "I would say that my family has been the primary influence. After them come

the incredible teachers that I've had whose instruction I will carry with me for the rest of my life, regardless of what profession I'm in," explained one student teacher. Another said, "Past experiences with teachers and professors of my own and classes on student development and learning styles," were most helpful.

The influences of the student teaching experience were cited by 21 student teachers. Often the emphasis was on "teaching experience," or practicing in a classroom, rather than being focused upon individual influence by the cooperating teacher. As one student teacher explained, "Until you get out there and 'jump in,' you're only going to have a very brief idea of what's coming." This is not to say, however, that cooperating teachers' contributions were ignored. "Positive role models, including my cooperative teacher and professors, have been very influential. However, the [K-12] students themselves have been the greatest influences on my teaching dispositions." In general, student teachers were very grateful to their mentors.

Influences that student teachers reported as important in forming their dispositions were multiple and

varied. The range of influences identified implies that the brevity of the student teaching experience, isolation from other beginners, and the absence of a technical subculture may in fact limit this experience as a socializing force (Lortie, 1975).

About one eighth (11 of 79) of the student teachers responding gave credit only to themselves and their own experiences—reflecting what Britzman (1986) calls the "cultural myth" of a self-made teacher. "These dispositions are dispositions I have always held in my heart," said one, "No one had to teach or influence me." Student teachers who believe educators should be rugged individuals also tend to focus upon technical skills (Yost, 1997). Goodlad (1990) warns that those who seek only to pick up bits of technical know-how are doomed to be bag ladies and bag men as teachers, always seeking more attractive pieces to stash away rather than becoming reflective practitioners, using theory to inquire into practice.

Student-centered dispositions. Student-centered dispositions (M = 4.77, SD = 0.24), including values and attitudes such as fairness and caring, were important to

every student teacher surveyed, regardless of demographic group. The lowest mean for any student teacher was 4.00. While there is a possibility that at least some of the student teachers responded with socially preferred answers (Leary, 1995), the awareness of what constitutes positive dispositions speaks well for both the student teachers and for their training program.

Items such as, "I believe that all students can learn" (M = 4.84, SD = 0.45) and "I believe a teacher must use a variety of instructional strategies to optimize student learning" (M = 4.90, SD = 0.30) may be considered cornerstones of educational training (Yost, 1997). Student teachers usually reflect the philosophies they learned in their university classes (Kagan, 1992), and those in this study showed similar inclinations. Whether they will retain and follow these idealistic dispositions as they continue to teach will probably be influenced by the culture in which they teach (Zeichner, Tabachnick, & Densmore, 1987).

Professionalism dispositions. Student teachers consistently ranked themselves positively, but less confidently, in professionalism dispositions

(M = 4.42, SD = 0.34) than in student-centered dispositions (M = 4.77, SD = 0.24). Items such as, "I engage in research-based teaching practices" (M = 4.09, SD = 0.69) and "I actively seek out professional growth opportunities" (M = 4.34, SD = 0.62) were comparatively low in score to any of the student-centered items.

Student teachers commented little on professionalism markings. One noted, "I don't have time for it now, but when I am a teacher, I will." Others may not have discussed professionalism because of a view that the stresses of student teaching were a natural difficulty (Schaffer, 2003); a disinclination to disclose what is seen as a shortcoming (Breidenstein, 2002), or even a lack of self-awareness by the individuals (Burnard & Morrison, 1992).

Unlike the student-centered items, which focused on beliefs, the professionalism, curricular-centered items centered upon values and attitudes such as ethics and professional growth. Professionalism items asked the student teachers to evaluate themselves on realizing expectations, or what Lacey (1977) called "internalized adjustment," changing behavior or values. Those who do

not adjust their behavior handle conflict between expectations and actions by redefining the situation to lessen cognitive dissonance, or maintaining reservations and waiting for resolution. With the brevity of student teaching, this adjustment or waiting may give student teachers less confidence in commenting upon professionalism dispositions.

Student Teachers' Observed Dispositions

Based on cooperating teachers' observation, the range of their responses (M = 4.40, SD = 0.54) was greater than the range of student teacher responses (M = 4.62, SD = 0.26). From strongly positive, "My student teacher has such great dispositions—she has improved my teaching dispositions," to a more negative view, "Because my student teacher finds it so difficult to convey a sense of partnership, I hesitate to recommend her," cooperating teachers did not see the overall dispositions of student teachers as positively as their self-views. This less positive response may have been expected, as veteran teachers often express disapproval of new teachers. They see the novices as more lenient, while many student teachers view experienced teachers as

overly strict (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). But as in the adage, "People may hear what you say, but they believe what you do," cooperating teachers' interpretations resulted in some higher as well as lower scores on the observed dispositions of individual student teachers.

Student-centered dispositions. Cooperating teachers rated the student teachers as positive, although the cooperating teachers did not perceive the same high levels of commitment and intensity that the student teachers saw in themselves (M = 4.49, SD = 0.51). The lowest mean score was 3.00, and 18 (18.75%) of the cooperating teachers ranked their student teacher at 5.00.

While the cooperating teachers perceived the same student-centered dispositions in the student teachers as they saw in themselves, they did not see them in the same priority order. Student teachers, for example, rated the notion that a teacher must use a variety of instructional strategies to optimize student learning as their second-highest item (M = 4.90, SD = 0.30). The cooperating teachers, while still positive in their perceptions, saw

that student teachers less frequently demonstrate this belief, in fact, rating it as the lowest of observable dispositions (M = 4.15, SD = 0.85). Sometimes it worked the other way: cooperating teachers saw their student teachers as more patient in working with their students.

Professionalism dispositions. The range of answers from cooperating teachers was broader than expected, but still positive (M = 4.40, SD = 0.54). It was only in this category that items received a "1, strongly disagree" marking; yet 12 (12.50%) of cooperating teachers indicated a mean rating of 5.00.

Student teachers may profess to have strong values or beliefs but have not yet always shown them in classroom behaviors. Generally, cooperating teachers did not report negative perceptions as much as neutral ones, and commented that they had not seen enough evidence to answer certainly. For example, one cooperating teacher circled a score of 3 (neutral) for the item, "My student teacher accurately reads the non-verbal communication of students," and wrote "developing" beside it, later explaining that while positive, the student teacher did

not have enough experience or skills to demonstrate this disposition in actual teaching.

Most cooperating teachers (74 of 84) stated that they put some effort into changing any dispositions their student teachers displayed that were not positive. Those who indicated that they did not work on dispositions usually were satisfied with what they saw in their student teacher. Those that were not satisfied worked on punctuality, professionalism with parents and personal life, or adjusting teaching to reach all students. They attempted to promote improvement in these areas through dialog, written feedback, examples, modeling, and stories to "encourage the great traits and to hopefully strengthen positive traits."

On the other hand, 6 cooperating teachers did not agree that they would try to improve the dispositions of student teachers. As one cooperating teacher noted, "I simply present the student teacher with proven methods of instruction and management. I can't change personal dispositions." While most people are open to teaching skills to others, for many, using a position of power to change another's beliefs is wrong (Raths, 2001).

Cooperating teachers with this opinion limit their mentoring opportunity, and their student teachers rarely referred to them as role models.

Congruence of Espoused and Observed Dispositions

Cooperating teachers and student teachers agreed that dispositions were positive--just not to the same extent--so congruence was measured by the degree to which dispositions were positive. Research Question 5 asked, "To what extent, if any, are student teachers' self-perceptions of teaching dispositions congruent with the cooperating teachers' perceptions of the dispositions the student teachers actually exhibit while teaching?" Student teachers' scores on the TDI were significantly higher than cooperating teachers' scores. This difference was due to student teachers ranking themselves significantly higher on the student-centered subscale than their cooperating teachers, although the professionalism disposition subscales were congruent.

Those who prepare beginning teachers would like to produce a group of candidates who espouse highly positive teaching dispositions and act on those theories when working with students. Although it first appeared that

this was achieved when assessing the congruent means for the professionalism subscale, with closer examination differences began to emerge. Student teachers consistently ranked themselves at about a 4 (agree) on professionalism items. But in the group of cooperating teachers, the range of scores was much greater. Nearly all items had a slightly lower mean score, but some items were actually rated higher by the cooperating teachers than by the student teachers. The most noticeable examples were, "I am successful in facilitating learning for all students" (student teachers' mean was 4.17, *SD* = 0.61; cooperating teachers' mean was 4.19, *SD* = 0.79), and "I demonstrate and encourage democratic interaction in the classroom and school" (student teachers' mean was 4.18, *SD* = 0.68; cooperating teachers' mean was 4.30, *SD* = 0.65).

After comparing congruence by item as well as mean scores, it may be more accurate to say that candidates espouse positive dispositions, but vary in their ability to effectively display them in practice at this time.

Demographics and Dispositions

To assess if disposition responses varied by demographic group, Research Question 6 asked, "To what extent, if any, do the levels of congruency vary between student teachers' self-perceptions of their teaching dispositions and the cooperating teachers' perceptions of the extent to which student teachers exhibit those dispositions as a result of demographic differences (age, gender, or certification level)?" Student teachers gave such uniformly positive answers that differences between members of various demographic groups were uncommon, but interesting.

The large number of Caucasian student teachers made it impossible to accurately assess any variation by ethnicity. This might have been interesting to consider, especially as the groups of students they will be teaching are becoming ever more diverse, with non-white students becoming the majority in public schools across the nation between the years 2010 and 2020 (Bernstein, 2004).

Age. The age of the student teachers had no discernable effect on their dispositions as reported by

either the student teachers or their cooperating teachers. Student teachers' written comments showed more dissimilarity. When asked who influenced their dispositions, a typical response from a 23-year-old student teacher was, "Family, teachers, and values have helped me form my teaching dispositions." Older, nontraditional student teachers were more likely to answer, "life experiences" or "my own children." Perhaps there were no statistically significant differences among student teachers in different age groups because their place in the teacher career cycle exerted a stronger influence than their place in the life cycle (Fessler & Christensen, 1992).

Gender. In this study, gender was a statistically significant factor as male student teachers were rated significantly lower than female student teachers. In spite of this difference, male student teachers' scores (M = 4.48, SD = 0.26) were only slightly below the mean for female student teachers (M = 4.65, SD = 0.26). The wider range came from the perceptions of the cooperating teachers (male, M = 4.07, SD = 0.79; female, M = 4.48,

SD = 0.46). With only 11 males in the sample, two of the cooperating teachers scored their student teachers noticeably lower than the rest of the group. One said, "He does not interact with staff or peers; does not motivate students; cannot handle control of [the] class," and the other remarked that, "He has difficulty finding ways to explain concepts to the kids—a person who slips through without the depth they need." These replies had an impact on the results, but the sample was too small to place any real trust in them.

Other studies have indicated that male student teachers are more confident than females about their ability to teach (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992). Witcher, Onwuegbuzie, and Minor (2001) found that preservice women rated teaching attributes associated with subject knowledge and behavior management lower than men did, and that both males and females ranked the attribute of student centeredness first. The dissimilarity of results in this study and previous research may be because only dispositions were being assessed in this study and other research included knowledge and skills.

Certification level. In comparing levels of certification, earlier research showed that there were dispositional differences between elementary and secondary teachers. Typically, secondary teachers espoused more professional dispositions and elementary teachers advocated student-centered dispositions like warmth, compassion, and patience (Book & Freeman, 1986). This was not the case among these student teachers. The mean scores for elementary (M = 4.65, SD = 0.24), secondary (M = 4.57, SD = 0.30), and K-12 (M = 4.54, SD = 0.29) levels were uniformly positive. Even when reviewing individual items and comments, no consistent differences could be discerned by level.

Written responses of cooperating teachers also had little distinction by certification level. The only difference found was that secondary and K-12 cooperating teachers remarked that student teachers "needed earlier classroom experience" more frequently than elementary cooperating teachers did. Any effect of certification level seemed to be washed out by the uniformly high scores reported by student teachers.

Summary

While those who enter a new organization typically experience the disillusionment of unrealistic expectations and of unmet expectations (Louis, 1980; Rodriguez, 1993), the idealistic, near-perfect self-perceptions that student teachers profess make disillusionment in the first year of teaching almost a certainty. Neither coursework nor field experience alters student teachers' optimism or their belief that good teaching is anchored in affective traits (Kagan, 1992). Both student teachers and cooperating teachers in this study commented about this idealism. One cooperating teacher wrote, "Student teachers think they know it all or should know it all, so when areas [where improvement is needed] are pointed out to them they are upset and intimidated." For many novice teachers, the significant difference between what they espouse as student teachers and what their cooperating teachers observe in them foreshadows a difficult entry into teaching.

Implications for Practice and Procedures

Teacher Education and Student Teachers

Implications of this research may be helpful in understanding the development of teacher dispositions, and in improving instruction for dispositions during teacher education and field experiences.

Understanding dispositions. A reflective disposition toward teaching has been shown to have a positive relationship to instructional behavior, classroom organization, and teacher expectations (Giovannelli, 2003). When asked to recall their training about dispositions occurred during university experiences, student teachers reflected very differently upon amounts and intensity of work. Even those who had the same certification were very different in response. For example, one elementary student teacher said, "Most of my university coursework dealt with dispositions in some way. Several times we were required to reflect on our own dispositions," while another said, "Not that I can remember." There was not a discernable pattern in these responses by age of student teacher, areas certified, or mean score on the TDI.

The greatest variations among student teachers were how broadly or narrowly then defined "dispositions" and whether they placed greater value on affective elements or on specific teaching strategies. Examples of the student teachers' views include:

- In almost every class that I took, dispositions were talked about. It was a common thing and I believe that is why I put so much value on them.
- I recall that long term and short term planning are equally essential, patience is vital, punctuality and reliability are key, and evolving styles is encouraged.
- In two of my courses we were given a list of teacher dispositions and were required to write a paper on how we met twelve of the dispositions during our practicums.
- I feel as if lesson-planning techniques are all that I've carried with me and used while student teaching.
- I recall some discussion about the positive demeanor and so forth, but I don't feel it was focused on too much at all. What I've been experiencing, however,

is that our education can only prepare us and train us for so much.

- These were briefly discussed in the first series of classes.
- These things are a part of every education class I have taken. A significant amount of focus in class was given to dispositions.
- I remember talking about them in classes, but I never realized how important these dispositions are in the profession until I started student teaching.

Despite the wide variety of memories student teachers related about dispositions in teacher education, they all evaluated themselves as possessing all positive dispositions. It seems unlikely that all these novices actually have and exhibit all positive dispositions—but it is not unlikely that they wish to be seen as having them. During field experience, teachers are "constructing themselves" from their past and present experiences. Rather than judging themselves as they are now, they envisage the ideal of myself-as-teacher (McLean, 1999). Any idea that does not fit with this image may be seen as a barrier and be rejected (Wideen et al., 1998).

Student teachers expect that the problems other teachers have will not be problems for them. In surveying preservice teachers, Weinstein (1989) found that over 80% of them predicted that their teaching performance would be above average in the future. This "unrealistic optimism" was echoed in the TDI responses. Such convictions will help novice teachers have the necessary confidence to face the reality of classroom teaching, but if student teachers cannot imagine that they might have to handle problems when teaching, then reality shock will soon follow.

Actually, student teachers seemed to have some awareness that they are not yet what they envision themselves to be as teachers. Student teachers are careful to self-present themselves positively and can have difficulty determining whether they are reflecting their personal characteristics or those of whom they are trying to please (Leary, 1995). So rather than disagree with any of the items, they added comments that began with, "Next year…" or "When I have my own class…." Others included justification for their current dispositions because of stress or overload in student teaching.

Suggestions for improving student teachers' understanding of dispositions include beginning early in teacher education (Minor et al., 2002), creating a teacher portfolio (Wenzlaff, 1998), pairing student teachers with cooperating teachers with like dispositions (Barone, Berliner, Blanchard, Cassanova, & McGowen,1996), and creating cognitive dissonance by assigning student teachers to cooperating teachers who do not hold the same ideals as the university training program (Alvermann, 1981). However, student teachers participating in this study were taught about dispositions in early courses and completed portfolios. While some associated themselves closely with cooperating teachers, others felt little in common. Progress may be coming in teacher education, but bridging theory and practice is no easy task.

Dispositions, skills, and knowledge. The most significant difference in this research was in the student-centered dispositions, which student teachers espoused highly, and which cooperating teachers observed to be positive, but to a lesser degree. It is not sufficient to teach these foundational beliefs, values, and attitudes in isolation (Wenzlaff, 1998).

Participating student teachers, for the most part, remembered first learning of dispositions during their early classes in teacher education. From the comments of these student teachers, a sense of compartmentalization surfaced. Foundational classes taught about philosophy and dispositions. Methods classes taught the tools of teaching. There were some exceptions to this, especially in early childhood, language arts, and special education methods. In these fields, professors were named for assigning and discussing dispositional reflection about methods and field experiences. Generally, this compartmentalization led to a concept of either/or for theory and practice, and in beginning to work in a classroom, theory faded as practice equaled survival. For student teachers to mark themselves least high on research-based practices and discussing new ideas in education calls for a need to make theory real and necessary in field experience.

Essentially, it may be more important to focus on how to assist candidates in actualizing their positive dispositions—how to intertwine them with the knowledge and skills that candidates want to achieve, so that

dispositions have a practical as well as philosophical side in teacher preparation. Professional teachers have not only the ability to articulate their philosophy, but the talent to operationalize what they believe (Barone et al., 1996; Ryle, 1949). Novices need to distinguish between "knowing what" and "knowing how" and to learn to blend action with research (Pfeffer & Sutton, 1999). Cooperating teachers who can facilitate the integration of new experiences with prior beliefs may be most successful in advancing student teachers' growth (Kagan, 1992).

Communication With K-12 Teachers

With the important role that cooperating teachers may play in the transition from theory to practice, better communication between the university and the school personnel would seem to benefit not only the novice teacher but the school that hires them. Thus it would be in the best interest of the schools to provide supervisory training for cooperating teachers, and to select teachers with positive dispositions to become cooperating teachers. One student teacher pointed this

out, saying, "How do you know if the cooperating teachers have good dispositions? And what if they don't?"

Differing yardsticks. When making a judgment about the dispositions of the student teacher, the cooperating teacher first had to determine what to measure those dispositions against. Many compared their current student teacher to past student teachers, saying, "I try to be accepting of the uniqueness of each student teacher." Others compared the student teacher to experienced teachers like themselves. "There needs to be a change in the process of student teaching. During this time my students end up becoming guinea pigs for them to practice their techniques."

When cooperating teachers judged student teachers against inexperienced teachers, scores were toward the top of the range, and weaknesses were described as "improving" or "developing." Lower scores were more likely returned from cooperating teachers who used experienced teachers' characteristics as a measure. If interactions with cooperating teachers follow this same pattern, then some student teachers are experiencing feedback which is overgenerous rather than constructive,

while others are expected to perform beyond the level of a novice.

Supervisory experience. Participating cooperating teachers volunteer to supervise their student teachers, and no training or supervisory experience is required in these school districts. Thirteen of the cooperating teachers had 5 or fewer years of teaching experience, and 34 of the 96 were supervising their first student teacher. Some saw the relationship with the student teacher as a partnership rather than a mentoring role. One of these said, "We are just constantly working *together* to improve both of our teaching ways." In contrast, other cooperating teachers without prior experience saw the activity of a cooperating teacher as an assessment role, to "evaluate them by discussion and writing up their lessons through observation reports and giving suggestions on what I'd like to see more of."

Without guidelines, or discussion between cooperating teachers, it is possible that conflicting messages can be given to student teachers about what is expected of them and how they are evaluated. These contradictions were evident when comparing several

cooperating teachers' ratings on the TDI with the comments they wrote. For example, one assessed that her student teacher was a 5 (strongly agree) on "My student teacher values both long and short term planning." The comment from this cooperating teacher was, "Disposition most to work on: being prepared to teach the lesson and not walking in and 'winging' it." Without guidance in mentoring, assessment, supervision, and the expectations of student teaching, cooperating teachers may not be communicating effectively to their student teacher about what they observe.

Cooperating teachers also may reinforce the idea of the 'self-made' teacher. "I am amazed at what a 'natural' she is," wrote one, "especially in recognizing each student's worth." While a great compliment, supporting the idea that people are "born teachers" may limit the possibility of growth in dispositions through awareness. This may leave the student teacher with no idea of how teaching style develops, and hide the complex culture of relationships within school by exaggerating teacher autonomy (Britzman, 1986).

Skills or dispositions? The purpose of student teaching has traditionally been to observe and practice the skills of effective teaching. Most student teachers believe that they already have the "right stuff" to be a teacher, and only need the tips and tricks to be successful (Britzman, 1986). If cooperating teachers believe this, even when they are asked to evaluate dispositions, they may describe skills instead. The most common answer to what dispositions that they try to improve in their student teachers was "classroom management." The second was "planning." While dispositions influence the ability to manage a class and to plan well, these cooperating teachers seemed to emphasize skills--as separate from the values, beliefs, and attitudes that lie beneath these skills.

Summary. John Cotton Dana, noted librarian, said, "Who dares to teach must never cease to learn." For many of the cooperating teachers in this study, their first work with teaching dispositions was the TDI survey. It is not that they were unfamiliar with the items, but in the changing terminology of education, they had not encountered dispositions as defined by their student

teachers. Within the apprentice relationship, it only takes a comment from an experienced teacher that, "We don't do that here," to wipe out the years of teacher education (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). Candidates want to do what is done in the K-12 setting so that they get hired and teach successfully. Therefore, if reflection on dispositions is to survive the transition from university to classroom, K-12 teachers must be knowledgeable and supportive in this effort.

Without training, leading someone to be a reflective educator is difficult. Gore and Zeichner (1991) found that just assigning reflection without background discussion resulted only in low, technical rationality. For the university to try motivating the student teacher working in a teaching pair without giving support to the mentoring teacher seems at best a missed opportunity.

Going farther into the future, the next generation of teachers is sitting in K-12 classrooms today. If, as student teachers reported, many dispositions are initially formed in childhood and K-12 experience, what K-12 teachers are doing now to influence dispositions is shaping education 5 years and more from now.

Accountability, high stakes tests, teacher morale—what are the priorities of today doing to education dispositions of tomorrow? Practicing teachers need to recollect what called them to teaching in the first place, and not let survival tactics replace teaching with the best of dispositions.

TDI and Congruence

The TDI is especially well suited to measure congruence between espoused and observed dispositions because it separates student-centered from professionalism dispositions. Typically, professionalism dispositions are not ranked as high as student-centered dispositions (Schulte et al., 2004). This was true for both student teachers and cooperating teachers in this study. Student teachers' scores for professionalism were always the same or lower than their student-centered scores. But while student teachers uniformly ranked themselves lower on professionalism, cooperating teachers' scores for professionalism were derived from a much wider variance of scores.

Perhaps the professionalism scores for both groups are lower not only because these dispositions are

perceived as undeveloped, but also because these items represent dispositions in action. Verbs for professionalism dispositions are: cooperate, uphold, select, demonstrate, engage, create, listen, initiate, work, communicate, provide, stay, stimulate, facilitate, reflect, and read.

In contrast, the verbs for student-centered items are focused more on attitudes and beliefs. These include: believe, understand, view, maintain, respect, and honor. These items focus upon personal qualities like humor, responsibility, respect, warmth, and patience.

Viewed through this lens, student teachers' extremely high student-centered scores might have been a natural result of their beliefs about their dispositions, along with their ideals and potential. On professionalism items, they evaluated themselves as not able to demonstrate dispositions as well as they would like. Cooperating teachers saw that student teachers showed a variety of abilities to put dispositions into action, so their professionalism score was congruent with the student teachers'. However, the only way cooperating teachers could judge beliefs of their student teacher was

through observation, so the student-centered subscale was significantly below the student teachers' self-evaluation. This interpretation of the TDI is speculative, but raises the possibility that this survey could be utilized to appraise congruence between teachers' espoused dispositions and dispositions in action.

Implications for Further Research

Research is being done on many aspects of dispositional development during candidacy (Edick et al., 2005; Edwards & Edick, in press; Kane et al., 2002). Continuing to monitor how professors of foundations and methods courses, supervisors, administrators, cooperating teachers, and the candidates themselves utilize the idea of teaching dispositions may assist not only teacher education accreditation efforts but also teacher growth itself.

Longitudinal and Qualitative Studies

Ending dispositional research at the stage of student teaching would be like leaving the last chapter off a mystery story. What will happen to these student teachers' dispositions as they face the rigors and

responsibilities of the classroom? Only by studying former candidates after they have become teachers can a university see if teacher education translates into teacher practice. By following these candidates, insight could be gained into the extent and direction of evolution in understanding dispositions. Returning to reflect with these participants after a year, or even 5 years, could also provide some information about possible connections between teacher dispositions and teacher retention.

Longitudinal studies at the university level have been instituted to assess the changes in the teacher education program (Edick et al, 2005; Edwards & Edick, in press). As practices and procedures are put in place to align with INTASC principles, the TDI could be given to successive groups of student teachers to track progress.

Much of the insight into why participants scored the TDI as they did came from the narrative that accompanied most surveys. Qualitative studies may provide a better understanding of the beliefs behind dispositions, as well as the sophistication and emphasis teachers place on dispositions. The length and detail of comments

volunteered for this study indicated that participants appreciated an opportunity to reflect—and vent—about their dispositions and the dispositions of others.

Dispositions Across Education

Many aspects of dispositions could use further study. Dispositions of the cooperating and mentor teachers, of support staff, and of administrators all enrich and define landscapes that novice teachers enter. How dispositions differ throughout the teacher life cycle, and what, if anything, causes changes in dispositions would both be worthy of inspection.

Finally, study of how teacher dispositions influence the school climate, as well as student dispositions and achievement, may ultimately be the most critical for success. For example, exploring how teachers use dispositions such as "habits of mind" (Costa & Kallick, 2000) to engage students in learning could stem from teacher awareness of the importance of their own dispositions. When theory is embedded into practice, which leads to more action research, school improvement can become reality.

Conclusions

The attention that NCATE and INTASC principles have placed upon dispositions will hopefully move educators toward excellence. By teaching candidates not only what dispositions are, but also how they are actualized, new teachers may have a better understanding of how to become the experts they wish to be.

Yet examining change at the level of the individual may not be enough.

> These new approaches to facilitating the development of the persons who are enrolled in preservice programs are not easily integrated on a small scale within existing models of teacher education. They call for more than changes in an individual teacher educator's personal professional practice. They require substantial shifts in collective thinking, in program organization, and in the relationships between the university and the professional field (McLean, 1999, p. 84).

This kind of development may not mean that scores on the TDI will go up over time. As appreciation of dispositions rises, so too should expectations. It may be

that espoused dispositions may even decrease if candidates have a better chance to practice and to be reflective on their practices. It is the scores of observed dispositions that need to rise—through better supervision procedures for cooperating teachers, and through candidates becoming capable of demonstrating their dispositions at each stage of their education. A successful teacher education program is one that prepares its candidates not only for competency, but also for transition (Berson & Breault, 2000). So in examining student-centered and professionalism dispositions, theory and practice, what is espoused and what is observed, the goal may not be congruence, but improvement. In education, we do not need what is equal—we need what is excellent.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument

Teacher Dispositions Index

University of Nebraska Omaha

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

IRB # 097-05-EX

March 15, 2005

Dear Student Teacher:

The College of Education at UNO is currently working on improving the analysis of teacher dispositions throughout teacher preparation. As my doctoral dissertation, I am requesting that student teachers and their cooperating teachers fill out a survey about student teacher dispositions. This information may help the university in preparing teachers for classroom experience. Your cooperating teacher is receiving a similar survey to complete. The responses of student teachers will be compared with the group of cooperating teachers to see where they align.

The Teachers Dispositions Index is attached, and it will be most helpful for you to complete all three pages completely. **Your responses will be held in complete confidence; only aggregate data will be reported.** I will be the only one with access to this data as the only researcher for this project. For statistical purposes, your survey is coded, but even that code will be removed once you return your survey. If you and your cooperating teacher wish to discuss these surveys, that would acceptable if you choose to share information after surveys are submitted, but not before.

Instructions: Please circle one number for each statement in items 1 to 45. There is space to respond to questions 46 to 48, and you may continue on the back if you need more space. The final section asks for demographic information. The survey should take about 15 minutes. You may mail your survey back to me in the included envelope this week.

Thank you so much for your contribution to this research!

Sincerely,

Kay A. Keiser

Kay A. Keiser
Doctoral Student
9830 Laurel
Omaha, NE 68134
402-554-1510 ex. 1012
kay.keiser@ops.org

IRB APPROVED
VALID UNTIL 3-7-08

6001 Dodge Street / Omaha, NE 68182-0162
402-554-2721 / FAX: 402-554-2722

TEACHER DISPOSITIONS INDEX

Please mark your level of agreement with each of the statements listed below.

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

1.	I believe a teacher must use a variety of instruction strategies to optimize student learning.	1 2 3 4 5
2.	I understand that students learn in many different ways.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	I demonstrate qualities of humor, empathy, and warmth with others.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	I am a thoughtful and responsive listener.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	I assume responsibility when working with others.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	I am committed to critical reflection for my profession growth.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	I believe that all students can learn.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	I cooperate with colleagues in planning instruction.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	I actively seek out professional growth opportunities.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	I uphold the laws and ethical codes governing the teaching profession.	1 2 3 4 5
11.	I stimulate students' interests.	1 2 3 4 5
12.	I believe it is important to involve all students in learning.	1 2 3 4 5
13.	I value both long term and short term planning.	1 2 3 4 5
14.	I stay current with the evolving nature of the teaching profession.	1 2 3 4 5
15.	I select material that is relevant for students.	1 2 3 4 5
16.	I believe the classroom environment a teacher creates greatly affects students' learning and development.	1 2 3 4 5
17.	I am successful in facilitating learning for all students.	1 2 3 4 5
18.	I demonstrate and encourage democratic interaction in the classroom and school.	1 2 3 4 5
19.	I accurately read the non-verbal communication of students.	1 2 3 4 5
20.	I engage in discussions about new ideas in the teaching profession.	1 2 3 4 5

Please mark your level of agreement with each of the statements listed below.

1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly Agree

21.	I view teaching as an important profession.	1 2 3 4 5
22.	I select material that is interesting to students	1 2 3 4 5
23.	I provide appropriate feedback to encourage students in their development.	1 2 3 4 5
24.	I understand that teachers' expectations impact student learning.	1 2 3 4 5
25.	I view teaching as a collaborative effort among educators.	1 2 3 4 5
26,	I engage in research-based teaching practices.	1 2 3 4 5
27.	I create connections to subject matter that are meaningful to students.	1 2 3 4 5
28.	I understand students have certain needs that must be met before learning can take place.	1 2 3 4 5
29.	I am sensitive to student differences.	1 2 3 4 5
30.	I communicate caring, concern, and a willingness to become involved with others.	1 2 3 4 5
31.	I listen to colleagues' ideas and suggestions to improve instruction.	1 2 3 4 5
32.	I take initiative to promote ethical and responsible professional practice.	1 2 3 4 5
33.	I am punctual and reliable in my attendance.	1 2 3 4 5
34.	I maintain a professional appearance.	1 2 3 4 5
35.	I believe it is my job to create a learning environment that is conducive to the development of students' self-confidence and competence.	1 2 3 4 5
36.	I respect the cultures of all students.	1 2 3 4 5
37.	I communicate effectively with students, parents, and colleagues.	1 2 3 4 5
38.	I honor my commitments.	1 2 3 4 5
39.	I treat students with dignity and respect at all times.	1 2 3 4 5
40.	I work well with others in implementing a common curriculum.	1 2 3 4 5
41.	I am willing to receive feedback and assessment of my teaching.	1 2 3 4 5

Please mark your level of agreement with each of the statements listed below.

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

42. I am patient when working with students. 1 2 3 4 5

43. I am open to adjusting and revising my plans to meet student needs. 1 2 3 4 5

44. I communicate in ways that demonstrate respect for the feelings, ideas, and contributions of others. 1 2 3 4 5

45. I believe it is important to learn about students and their community. 1 2 3 4 5

46. During your university experiences, have you had any formal training, discussions, or readings about these dispositions? If so, please describe what you recall.

47. What influences have helped you form your teaching dispositions?

48. Please add any information that would be helpful in this study.

Demographic Information: Please respond to the following items.

Gender: ☐Male ☐Female

Age: _____

Ethnicity: ☐African American ☐Asian American ☐Caucasian ☐Hispanic ☐Native American ☐Pacific Islander ☐Other

Certification: (select only one) ☐Elementary ☐Middle ☐Secondary ☐K-12
Major area of teaching or specialization (i.e. math)_____

This is my second semester of student teaching. ☐Yes ☐No

I am a Teacher Academy Project (TAP) alternative certification participant. ☐Yes ☐No

Thank you for completing the Teacher Disposition Index!

APPENDIX B

Survey Instrument

Cooperating Teacher Index

Dispositions of Student Teachers

University of Nebraska Omaha

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

IRB # 097-05-EX

March 15, 2005

Dear Cooperating Teacher:

The College of Education at UNO is currently working on improving the analysis of teacher dispositions throughout teacher preparation. As my doctoral dissertation, I am requesting that student teachers and their cooperating teachers fill out a survey about student teacher dispositions. This information may help the university in preparing teachers for classroom experience. Your student teacher is receiving a similar survey to complete. The responses of student teachers will be compared with the group of cooperating teachers to see where they align.

The Cooperating Teachers Index is attached, and it will be most helpful for you to complete all three pages completely. **Your responses will be held in complete confidence; only aggregate data will be reported.** I will be the only one with access to this data as the only researcher for this project. For statistical purposes, your survey is coded, but even that code will be removed once you return your survey. If you and your student teacher wish to discuss these surveys, that would acceptable if you choose to share information after surveys are submitted, but not before.

Instructions: Please circle one number for each statement in items 1 to 45. There is space to respond to questions 46 to 48, and you may continue on the back if you need more space. The final section asks for demographic information. The survey should take about 15 minutes. You may mail your survey back to me in the included envelope this week.

Thank you so much for your contribution to this research!

Sincerely,

Kay A. Keiser

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VALID UNTIL 3·7·08

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402-554-2721 / FAX: 402-554-2722

DISPOSITIONS OF STUDENT TEACHER INDEX

Please mark your level of agreement with each of the statements listed below.

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

My student teacher

1.	uses a variety of instruction strategies to optimize student learning.	1 2 3 4 5
2.	understands that students learn in many different ways.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	expresses qualities of humor, empathy, and warmth with others.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	is a thoughtful and responsive listener.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	assumes responsibility when working with others.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	is committed to critical reflection for profession growth.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	shows through actions the belief that all students can learn.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	cooperates with colleagues in planning instruction.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	actively seeks out professional growth opportunities.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	upholds the laws and ethical codes governing the teaching profession.	1 2 3 4 5
11.	stimulates students' interests.	1 2 3 4 5
12.	acts on the belief that it is important to involve all students in learning.	1 2 3 4 5
13.	practices both long term and short term planning.	1 2 3 4 5
14.	stays current with the evolving nature of the teaching profession.	1 2 3 4 5
15.	selects material that is relevant for students.	1 2 3 4 5
16.	creates a classroom environment that positively affects student learning and development.	1 2 3 4 5
17.	is successful in facilitating learning for all students.	1 2 3 4 5
18.	demonstrates and encourages democratic interaction in the classroom and school.	1 2 3 4 5
19.	accurately reads the non-verbal communication of students.	1 2 3 4 5
20.	engages in discussions about new ideas in the teaching profession.	1 2 3 4 5

Please mark your level of agreement with each of the statements listed below.

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

My student teacher

21.	views teaching as an important profession.	1 2 3 4 5
22.	selects material that is interesting to students	1 2 3 4 5
23.	provides appropriate feedback to encourage students in their development.	1 2 3 4 5
24.	shows understanding that teachers' expectations impact student learning.	1 2 3 4 5
25.	views teaching as a collaborative effort among educators.	1 2 3 4 5
26,	engages in research-based teaching practices.	1 2 3 4 5
27.	creates connections to subject matter that are meaningful to students.	1 2 3 4 5
28.	understands that students have certain needs that must be met before learning can take place.	1 2 3 4 5
29.	is sensitive to student differences.	1 2 3 4 5
30.	communicates caring, concern, and a willingness to become involved with others.	1 2 3 4 5
31.	listens to colleagues' ideas and suggestions to improve instruction.	1 2 3 4 5
32.	takes initiative to promote ethical and responsible professional practice.	1 2 3 4 5
33.	is punctual and reliable in attendance.	1 2 3 4 5
34.	maintains a professional appearance.	1 2 3 4 5
35.	creates a learning environment that is conducive to the development of students' self-confidence and competence.	1 2 3 4 5
36.	respects the cultures of all students.	1 2 3 4 5
37.	communicates effectively with students, parents, and colleagues.	1 2 3 4 5
38.	honors commitments.	1 2 3 4 5
39.	treats students with dignity and respect at all times.	1 2 3 4 5
40.	works well with others in implementing a common curriculum.	1 2 3 4 5
41.	is willing to receive feedback and assessment of teaching.	1 2 3 4 5

Please mark your level of agreement with each of the statements listed below.

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

My student teacher:

42. is patient when working with students. 1 2 3 4 5

43. is open to adjusting and revising plans to meet student needs. 1 2 3 4 5

44. communicates in ways that demonstrate respect for the feelings, ideas, and contributions of others. 1 2 3 4 5

45. learns about students and their community. 1 2 3 4 5

46. During the semester, do you notice growth in any of these dispositions? If so, which areas show most significant growth?

47. As a cooperating teacher, do you attempt to change student teacher dispositions? If so, which ones are your focus, and how do you work for desired change?

48. Please add any other information that would be helpful in this study.

Demographic Information: Please respond to the following items.

Gender: ☐Male ☐Female

Age: _____

Ethnicity: ☐African American ☐Asian American ☐Caucasian ☐Hispanic ☐Native American ☐Pacific Islander ☐Other

Certification: (select only one) ☐Elementary ☐Middle ☐Secondary ☐K-12
Major area of teaching or specialization (i.e. math)_____

Number of years I have been teaching. _____

Number of student teachers, including the current one, with whom I have worked. _____

Thank you for completing the Dispositions of Student Teacher Index!

APPENDIX C

Institutional Review Board Approval

University of Nebraska Medical Center

NEBRASKA'S HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA)

March 14, 2005

Kay Keiser
9830 Laurel Avenue
Omaha NE 68134

IRB#: 097-05-EX

TITLE OF PROTOCOL: Between Theory and Practice: Student Teachers' Espoused and Observed Dispositions

Dear Ms. Keiser:

The IRB has reviewed your Exemption Form for *Exempt Educational, Behavioral, and Social Science Research* on the above-titled research project. According to the information provided, this project is exempt under 45 CFR 46:101b, category 2. You are therefore authorized to begin the research.

It is understood this project will be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines. It is also understood that the IRB will be immediately notified of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your research project.

Please be advised that the IRB has a maximum protocol **approval period of three years** from the original date of approval and release. If this study continues beyond the three year approval period, the project must be resubmitted in order to maintain an active approval status.

Sincerely,

Ernest Prentice, PhD / GDK

Ernest D. Prentice, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, IRB

EDP/gdk