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Exploring Professional Dispositions with Preservice Teachers

Assignment Description

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Email Dr. David Wolff at dwolff@pittstate.edu to share how you used this resource in your classroom or connect to initiate further discussion on the development of future resources!

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Introduction

This assignment was created to use in English/Language Arts methods courses that introduced preservice teachers to the theories, content, instruction, and organization of an elementary school language arts program for primary and intermediate grades.

Preservice teachers explore various types of assessments and learn how to use assessment data to plan instruction for students in the areas of concepts of print, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Keywords

professional dispositions, memorable educator, preservice teacher, children's literature, interactive read aloud,

Abstract

The dispositions needed to be an educator is vast. Some dispositions come naturally to teacher candidates and others are nurtured by teacher education programs. According to the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2008), professional dispositions expected of teacher candidates include “the ideal of fairness and the belief that all students can learn (p. 22). This assignment provides teacher candidates an opportunity to explore, analyze, and discuss various professional dispositions needed by educators using six examples of children's literature, all of which by the author, Patricia Polacco.

Exploring Professional Dispositions with Preservice Teachers

Preservice teachers begin to learn about professional dispositions through keen observation through their K-12 experience. Through a phenomenon referred to as the ‘apprenticeship of observation,’ preservice teachers learn aspects of the teaching profession as a result of thirteen years of being a student observing teachers demonstrate their craft (Borg, 2004).

Through a series of lessons, preservice teachers will use the apprenticeship of observation to explore six educators for noteworthy professional dispositions that distinguishes them from other educators.

The six educators that are explored are from Patricia Polacco’s books including:

- Mr. Lincoln from *Mr. Lincoln’s Way*
- Miss Chew from *The Art of Miss Chew*
- Mr. Falker from *Thank you, Mr. Falker*
- Mr. Wayne from *Mr. Wayne’s Masterpiece*
- Miss Keller from *An A from Miss Keller*
- Mrs. Peterson from *Junkyard Wonders*

Day ①:

Reflect on the following prompts:

- Who is one memorable educator (e.g., teacher, coach, administrator) that emulates kindness, compassion, and honesty? What did this educator do, say, or believe that connect with you? Sketch what this educator did that makes you remember their kindness, compassions, and honesty?
- What could preservice teachers learn from your memorable educator?

Read: *Mr. Lincoln’s Way* by Patricia Polacco.

During the read aloud, have students consider ways Mr. Lincoln demonstrates fairness, caring, and honesty. Have students jot down significant statements that support their thoughts.

After the read aloud, have students complete the graphic organizer located in Appendix A individually.

Group 3 or 4 students together and have students discuss what they wrote in the graphic organizer.

Group discussion:

- What did you learn about being a professional educator from Mr. Lincoln?
- How does Mr. Lincoln’s dispositions compare to your memorable educator?

In the small group, create a word cloud based on the attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and actions demonstrated by Mr. Lincoln that exemplify an effective educator.

Remind students that in their word cloud, greater distinction is given to words that appear more frequent or have more significance.

Day 2:

Introduce the concept of a warm demander.

Hammond (2017) describes the job of a warm demander to bring students into their Zone of Proximal Development while the student is in the state of relaxed alertness so that the appropriate challenge will stimulate the ideal conditions for learning to occur.

Hammond (2017) uses the terms Personal Warmth and Active Demandingness to describe the essential attributes of a Warm Demander. To conceptualize Hammond's description, a mathematical equation was created in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1

Hammond (2017, p. 99) illustrates the traits of a Warm Demander by placing Personal Warmth and Active Demandingness on an x -axis and y -axis creating four quadrants of four types of teachers found in Appendix B.

Allow students to read the traits of the four types of teachers.

Ask students:

- Which teaching preferences are you more inclined to be?
- Why do you think this?

Read: *An A from Miss Keller* by Patricia Polacco.

During read aloud, ask students to jot down significant statements that shows how Miss Keller is a Warm Demander.

Group 3 or 4 students together and have students discuss what they wrote as examples of Miss Keller as a Warm Demander.

In groups, ask students to compare Mr. Lincoln and Miss Keller based on the attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and actions demonstrated that exemplify each as an effective teacher.

Identify similarities and differences between their approaches to professionalism.

Day ③:

To explore four additional educators, divide the class into 4 groups. These groups will serve as Expert Groups in a cooperative learning strategy called Jigsaw.

Student in the Expert groups will become ‘experts’ about their assigned a book highlighting a memorable educator. At a later time, each expert group will be divided into a Home group where each ‘expert’ will share and teach others about their memorable educator. Appendix C illustrates Experts and Home groups.

Assign each Expert group one book, including:

- *Thank you, Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polacco
- *Mr. Wayne’s Masterpiece* by Patricia Polacco
- *Junkyard Wonders* by Patricia Polacco
- *The Art of Miss Chew* by Patricia Polacco

After the read aloud, have students complete the graphic organizer located in Appendix A as a group.

After the Expert group discussion, form your Home groups; combination of one individual from each Expert group.

Prompt individuals in the Home groups to share about the memorable educator from their book: Mr. Falker, Mr. Wayne, Mrs. Peterson, and Miss Chew.

Prompt the group to consider the attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and actions of all six educators. Have Home groups list the professional dispositions they believe an effective preservice teacher should possess before student teaching; write ideas so they are observable behaviors.

Have students turn the list of professional dispositions to the instructor.

As the instructor, summarize the list into a workable document that preservice teachers could use as a self-reflection document during their field experiences and student teaching.

Appendix A

Reflecting on Professional Dispositions in Teaching

Mr. Lincoln's Way by Patricia Polacco



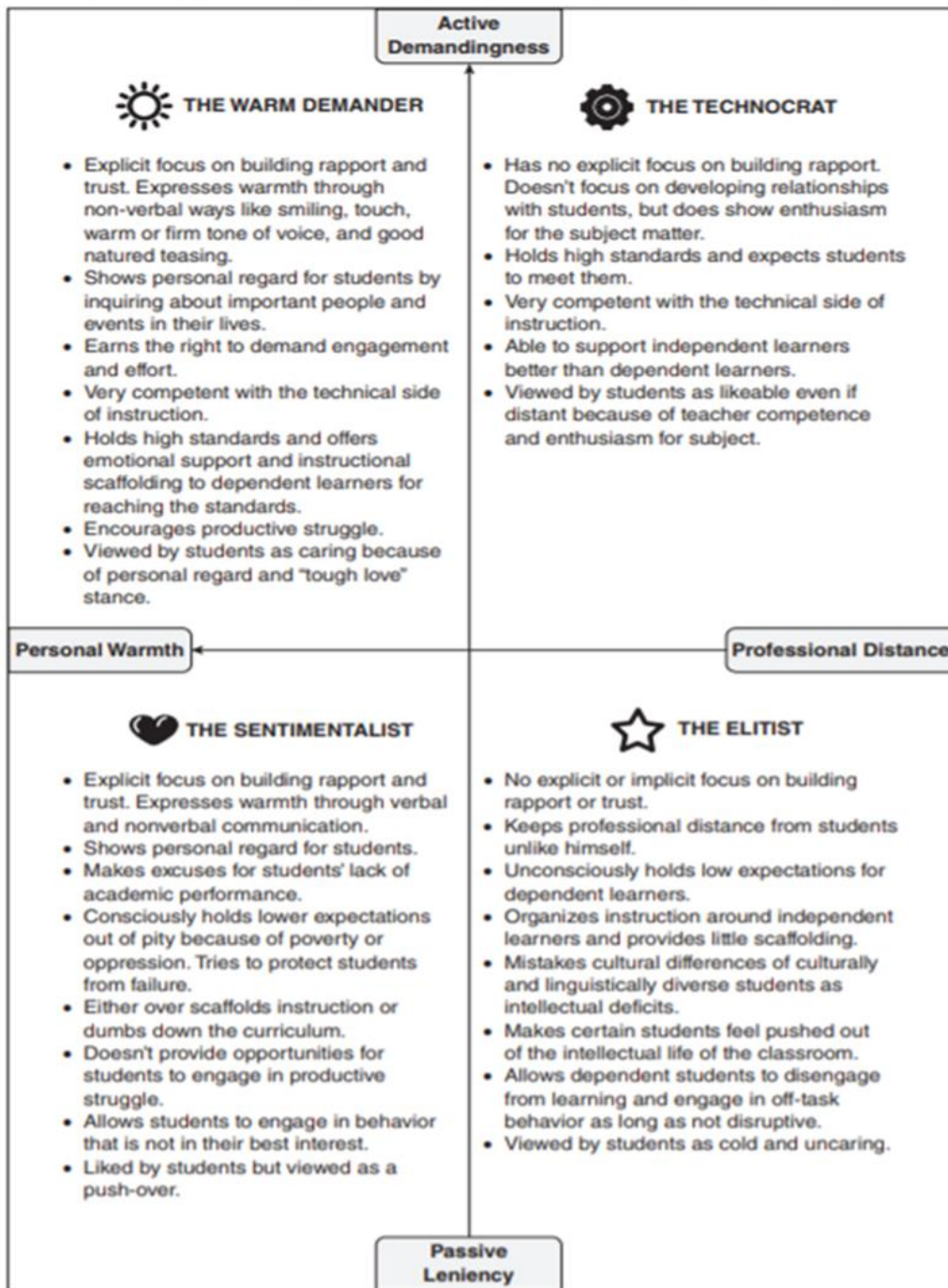
During the read aloud: Based on evidence from the story, how did Mr. Lincoln...

...engage parents/guardians as partners in the child's education?	...develop professional relationships with colleagues?
...enhance the culture of the school?	...demonstrate a commitment for his professional growth?
...advocate for his students?	...model self-reflection regarding his professional practice?
...respond to feedback from colleagues or supervisors?	...display high standards of ethical conduct?
...demonstrate a commitment to ensure all students are honored at the school?	...demonstrate professional decision-making?

Based on Danielson, C. (2007). *Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching* (2nd ed.). ASCD.

Appendix B

Warm Demander Chart






Note. from Hammond, Z. (2015). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students.* Corwin Press.




Appendix C

Examples of Jigsaw Groups

Expert Groups

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	8
Panda 	Amber	Morgan	Jessica	Hannah	Taya	Marsha	Ellie	Courtney	Riley
Crab 	Emily	Madeline	Alyssa	Christie	Jaymie	Haleigh	Emilee	Raylee	Kolton
Gator 	Kaylee	Gunner	Alysa	Ravyn	Karly	Annie	Kaitlin	Isabelle	Emme

Home Groups

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	8
Panda 	Amber	Morgan	Jessica	Hannah	Taya	Marsha	Ellie	Courtney	Riley
Crab 	Emily	Madeline	Alyssa	Christie	Jaymie	Haleigh	Emilee	Raylee	Kolton
Gator 	Kaylee	Gunner	Alysa	Ravyn	Karly	Annie	Kaitlin	Isabelle	Emme

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