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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the issue of student teacher dispositions, explaining that some colleges feel that it is important for student teachers to possess certain dispositions. The paper notes that a positive teacher disposition is necessary but not sufficient, proposing that colleges establish dispositions committees to broadly assess individual preservice teachers' dispositions. The paper explains that using strict checklists of desired disposition traits is not an appropriate method of screening candidates, and it can be very difficult to define terms on that checklist. It suggests that school students may be shortchanged if they only are taught by dispositionally acceptable teachers, explaining that attempting to produce lists of dispositions might be interpreted as attempts to produce a cadre of "correct" individuals (which contradicts the claim that diversity is respected and embraced). The paper notes that the task of evaluating dispositions is complex and fraught with pitfalls. It presents a list of 21 key pre-service teacher dispositional questions that must be tackled before any proposals can be submitted (e.g., the definition of disposition, whether student teacher disposition should be addressed at all, and level of dispositional tolerance). (SM)

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# Identifying Desirable Pre-Service Teacher Dispositions: An Intractable Problem?

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The Annual Meeting of
the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education

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To begin, let's clear up a little vocabulary issue. The term "disposition" is typically used two ways: people possess collections of "dispositions", but the sum of those dispositions can be referred to as one's "disposition". It is not a crucial distinction, so I will proceed using both terms.

Now, let's attempt to define "disposition" in the classic fashion by turning to Mr. Webster. "Disposition" is "a prevailing tendency, inclination or mood." On second thought, that may be too general for our purposes. Here's a more specific definition, also from the dictionary: "A combination of emotional and intellectual characteristics". I think I can work with that, unless it would be better to go with another dictionary definition that stresses morality, such as "The general nature and character of an individual." But in a recent article in Education, Terri Wenzlaff (1998) listed teacher *characteristics*, *attitudes*, *conceptions of self*, and intellectual and interpersonal *dispositions* as distinct things. In an article in Teacher Education and Special Education, Adelle Renzaglia, Margaret Hutchins and Suzanne Lee (1997) reported on their study of "the beliefs, attitudes and dispositions" of pre-service educators, suggesting that they, too, saw these things as distinct. Can we agree then on a definition of "disposition" before proceeding? I fear that if I try to offer you a single definition, we may all soon find ourselves in what I call "the Mission Statement Pit". Have you ever been there? With good will and great intentions, your institution endeavors to come up with a mission statement that everyone can love, and instead takes three months to develop a few lukewarm sentences, so bland and/or generic as to be meaningless, a triumph of activity over results.

Consider these actual mission statements from several Michigan schools and districts:

"ABC County Schools are dedicated to
improving the quality of life in ABC County."

"DEF Public Schools, in partnership with our community,
teaches and challenges all students
to become life-long learners and productive citizens"

From GHI School: "It is our mission to provide all students
with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills
that they need to succeed."

From JKL School: "Dedicated to a teaching partnership
that benefits all students as they learn and grow
toward becoming responsible citizens."

"The mission of the MNO Junior High School is to
achieve educational excellence."

God bless all of the hard-working and well-intentioned people who constructed these mission statements, but allow me to pose a few questions:

1. Regarding the ABC Schools' statement: When they mention "quality of life", are they referring to the physical, the emotional, or the mental? What about the spiritual? Or would that bring religion in? Are the folks in the ABC Schools responsible for road repair and police services? If what they mean is "the areas of life upon which we have an impact", what are those areas, and how are the schools going to make that impact?

2. DEF Schools: The mission statement seems to imply that simply *challenging* students to become lifelong learners is enough. Shouldn't the kids be learning some content *now*? And what's this about "productive citizens"? Is job readiness the schools' main task?

...and so on. That's "the Mission Statement Pit", and it may be that there is a similar hole awaiting those of us who even attempt to define "disposition". So, having tossed out several overlapping definitions, I choose to simply move on without the issue being resolved.

You may be tackling the issue of desirable pre-service teacher dispositions for various reasons: You and your colleagues may simply have decided that equipping your students with pedagogical skills and competencies isn't enough, and you are convinced that possession of certain dispositions is indispensable, and that you need to somehow check on that. Most of us can think of a teacher in our experience who, for all his or her pedagogical adroitness, was simply not someone whom we would want teaching children, for dispositional reasons.

You may *need* to be tackling the issue, courtesy of the North Central Association (NCA) or the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), or perhaps a state-level accrediting agency. NCATE, for instance, demands that school of education performance standards "focus on learning outcomes. They require units to use evidence to demonstrate that teacher candidates are gaining the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to have a positive impact on P-12 learning" (NCATE 2002). NCATE, by the way, appropriately passes the buck to colleges when it explains its "dispositional target" or goal for teacher candidates this way:

> Candidates (are able to) work with students, families, and communities in ways that reflect the

> dispositions expected of professional educators as delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards... (NCATE 2002)

Let's note that NCATE, at least, does not prescribe dispositions, and there is no NCATE requirement that schools of education develop any dispositional "pass/fail" mechanism. NCATE simply expects units (schools of education) to "systematically assess the development of appropriate professional dispositions of candidates".

By way of this talk, I'd like to offer some comments which are intended to assist you and perhaps challenge you if you and your colleagues are tackling the issue of desirable pre-service teacher dispositions. I will subsequently refer to pre-service teacher dispositions as simply *teacher* dispositions, under the assumption that there are few if any dispositions which we would desire in an in-service teacher but not in a pre-service teacher. (Or is that a bad assumption? My own institution's draft list of desirable pre-service teacher dispositions includes "emotional maturity"; are we really expecting that at age 23?)

I'll make clear my approach from the start: I stated that I have some comments for your consideration, when what I really have for you are questions, questions, and more questions. I'll be acting as the devil's advocate as we consider about a dozen (what I consider to be) provocative and challenging questions which, as far as I can tell, are not usually asked in the course of the dispositions debate. I'd like to go on record as saying that I don't even really agree with much of what I will seem to be offering as advice, but then, that is the definition of devil's advocacy, isn't it? Moreover, I am not offering a comprehensive overview of the topic; rather, my intention is to help you to sharpen your thinking, and to assist you in

defining the issues.

I'll state my premise up front as well: As members of colleges of education, we cannot approach the topic of desirable teacher dispositions with our minds focused on lists as our end product. No list will ever be adequate, and I'll be tentatively proposing that we do something different than working to get a list right. I'll ask you to put several words and phrases on mental sticky notes for a few minutes ("synergy", "the whole is greater than the sum of the parts", and "I know it when I see it".)

Now, as we wrestle with this thorny problem, the production of such lists along the way is likely to be helpful to our task, but only in the way that a perusal of E. D. Hirsch's List of 5000 Things Every American Should Know is a useful exercise as one begins to develop curriculum. Heaven forbid we should agree on THE list of 5000 Things Every American Should Know, but shame on us for not perusing it.

Here are some questions which seem to me basic as we consider the issue of teacher disposition. Question number one: Is disposition our business? Rephrased, why are we (schools of education) attending to teacher dispositions at all (besides the fact that we may be under an accreditation gun)? Are we simply insisting that teachers' personal lives be this-and-such before we certify or hire them? Are we attempting to return to the days when teachers could be fired for "unwholesome activities on the weekend"? Although I suspect it is apocryphal, you may have seen the well-circulated list of Ohio teacher "Rules and Duties" from 1872, from which I share several:

4. Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.

6. Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.

8. Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention, integrity and honesty.

Those guidelines were considered reasonable and in the best interests of students in 1872. Are we so arrogant as to think that our list of "positive teacher dispositions" for 2002 would somehow be less idiosyncratic, less offensive, more universal, and more true than the 1872 version? I don't know the answer to that obviously highly rhetorical question, but I *am* willing to offer some possible answers to the question of "Why attend to teacher dispositions?":

A. Because we believe that possession of positive dispositions helps to insure that teachers are better able to deliver instructional services to children.

B. Because we want our teachers to be behavioral role models.

C. Both.

If it's B, (because we want our teachers to be behavioral role models), the obvious follow-up question is, "Whose definition of *role model*?" Should we stick to pedagogy training and leave the evaluation of teacher candidate dispositions to district hiring personnel? Is it possible that they are better judges of desirable dispositions than we are?

Here's another basic question: Can quality instructional services be delivered to students by teachers with undesirable dispositions? That is, is "delivery of services" necessarily tied to disposition? Returning to a question which I have already hinted at, is it conceivable that there exists a teacher who is expert at delivering services but who possesses what most of us would call undesirable personal characteristics? If so, on what basis would we object to the certification of such an individual? If "delivery of services" means that the students are achieving academically, can we complain about disposition, as long as the teacher is doing nothing illegal or counter to the letter of local or state policy? Why do we sometimes take the stand that "'legal' and 'within policy guidelines' are enough", yet at other times demand that character and morality be a part of the debate? I submit that if we do disapprove of a hypothetical good-pedagogy/bad-disposition teacher, then we are providing a de facto answer to the question of why we as schools of education are concerned about teacher disposition at all: We are saying that we indeed want our teachers to be behavioral role models.

Along those lines: when we as schools of education examine dispositions, are we talking about those dispositions which we believe it is desirable for *teachers* to possess, or, are we talking about dispositions that we feel define model *citizens*? If one, and not the other, what's the difference? Are we willing to identify dispositions that we claim are essential (or at least important) for teachers, but not necessarily for model citizenry?

Can we even articulate all of the desirable and undesirable characteristics that make up a teacher (or any person), or, are there such things as unique, undefinable and unpredictable positive and negative dispositional synergies?

My own belief is that a positive teacher disposition is necessary but not

sufficient. You may or may not agree with that, but I am guessing that you do not buy the corollary, which is that good disposition is enough. We all know of in-service teachers who are wonderful people, warm and caring, but who cannot teach effectively, and may never do so. I learned a difficult lesson when I was an elementary school principal: I hired a young man based on his enthusiasm, his strong sense of child advocacy, and his general charm. He couldn't teach, and his students paid for it, and so did I, mostly by way of vehement (and appropriate) complaints from his students' parents. Now, when I ask my college students to write about why they want to become teachers, I sternly warn them not to offer that "Ever since I was little, I've known that I wanted to be a teacher", or, "I love children." It's not that these are bad things; it's that they are hardly sufficient.

It's obvious that we can't allow the good disposition/bad pedagogy teacher, but the more difficult question remains: Can we allow the bad disposition/good pedagogy teacher?

Here is an idea: would it make more sense attempt to list "disqualifying dispositions"? I feel that there might be something to it, but, again, we run into the problem of definitions, even for disqualifying dispositions.

I'll propose something that I consider better. Let's say that we decide it is our job to "pass/fail" our teacher candidates on the disposition issue (or, alternatively, to provide a summative rating of their disposition). Might we be smarter to allow a group of evaluators, including faculty and cooperating teachers, to broadly assess individual pre-service teachers' dispositions, with only the most general of guidelines, letting consensus and (hopefully) wisdom emerge from such a group? That is, does the "I can't define it, but I know it when I see it" approach have some legitimacy? I currently favor such an approach. In my experience, groups of well-meaning

people tend to come up with one of two kinds of decisions: safe ones or brilliant ones. I'm betting that such a "dispositions committee" would tend to come up with brilliant decisions.

Or, consider this: If we can come up with a *pretty good* list of dispositions, (knowing that we would disagree concerning definitions, priorities, etc.), could we use it as a guide, but build in a "checklist override" mechanism? Under that system, any, say, two members of a committee of five could override any perfunctory, numeric results, similar to excusing potential jurors "without cause", as they say in the courtroom. Or, while we're talking about fractions, how about simply letting the aforementioned disposition committee vote on each teacher candidate:; acceptable overall teacher disposition vs unacceptable overall teacher disposition, with four out of five needed to give thumbs up?

Why might one of those approaches be preferable to use of a strict checklist? For one thing, the definitions of many listed dispositions might be subject to passionate, irreconcilable debate, a la mission statements. Let's look at just one frequently listed disposition: "Respect for cultural diversity"...what does "respect" mean in this context? If I personally abhor one of your personal characteristics, but sincerely work not to let it show, is the "not letting it show" "respecting diversity"? If "no", (that is, if we say that "not letting it show" is not good enough) do we indeed mean to proscribe correct thinking? Staying with this theme: Are there any extremes of diversity which are OK for me (as a teacher) not to respect? Do I need to respect al-Qaeda? It does no good here to roll one's eyes and to state "Oh, come on, you know what we mean!" It is nonsense to talk of "disagreeing with their tactics, but recognizing their concerns"...I am asking straight-out if you can check off the "Respects cultural diversity" box for me if I simply do not respect al-Qaeda, in any way, shape or form.

"Cultural diversity"...does that term cover Nazism? Must I offer any level of respect to the American National Socialism Appreciation Society? Protesting "Of course not!" is insufficient. I am not arguing that our definition of cultural diversity needs to include tolerance for neo-Nazis. I am providing a reminder that one good way to make clear exactly what it is that we mean is by ferociously wrestling with definitions, ranges, and limits. I do not say that our task is impossible, but I hope you will appreciate my use of the term intractable in this paper's title.

For what it's worth, NCATE does offer some definitions for our consideration, but few of the terms represent dispositions; we are given definitions for "candidates", "curriculum", and "full-time faculty" ; "diversity", but not "respect for diversity". The difficult work remains ours.

If terms are so loaded, can we successfully use them on lists of desirable dispositions? I submit that, even if we define all terms on our lists, it is likely that we will have to use other loaded terms within our definitions, and we are not ahead at all. And let me be clear: this little discussion centered around the term "respect for diversity" does not represent a conservative complaint on my part...I am left of center on most issues. I am simply trying to pose some questions which I believe need to be wrestled with.

Let's consider an even more innocuous term: "responsible". What's your definition? How do we measure responsibility? Can you imagine a workable, objective way to check on pre-service teacher responsibility? While certain exhibited behaviors would surely allow us to label a teacher as irresponsible (throwing away students' papers because he/she didn't have time to grade them; leaving the classroom unsupervised for extended periods, etc.), could we ever agree on a model for responsibility? What if a teacher candidate was highly responsible in my class, but irresponsible in

yours? Would that disqualify the candidate, or would we need to discuss our own teaching styles and our levels of rapport with students? Do we even want to go there?

Related to the problem of definitions of terms on our lists is the issue of rubrics. The very thing that's good about rubrics is the thing that's bad about them: If we create them, we are obligated to use them, and not stray. We have all had the experience of using what we thought was a grand rubric for, say, student essays. You read one which simply should not have gotten a good grade based upon the rubric, but there was something about the essay that compelled you to disregard the rubric and to make that essay an exception, not subject to the rubric's suddenly harsh and limiting demands. For that particular paper, the rubric seemed to stifle the student's creativity and her written voice. Is it possible that evaluative dispositional rubrics could create the same unfortunate situation, wherein a potentially good teacher--albeit, perhaps, a quirky one--is banned from membership in our circle?

Try this: think of your best-ever teacher, any grade level, and if you can, think of her characteristics. Was her "best-ness" that she had all the dispositional boxes checked? Perhaps. But is it possible that an unpredictable synergistic combination of characteristics somehow "worked"? Can her parts, if you'll forgive me, add up to something other than the whole, or to less? Furthermore, is it possible that she "worked" for you, and not necessarily other students? What are we to make of her, of the teacher whose dispositions were totally and exactly what you needed in order to learn, but whose same dispositions turned off others? I don't necessarily want to throw another monkey wrench into the works, but can the definition of "desirable dispositions" be contextual?

An illustration that comes to mind is that of the outgoing, engaging,

casual, eccentric, perhaps even raucous teacher, loved by some students (and some colleagues and some parents and probably no administrators); loathed by others. Are there simply some teacher dispositions which make learning happen for some youngsters but not for others? Isn't that the normal state of affairs...some teachers click with some kids, and some don't? If so, what does this truth do to our attempts at constructing meaningful lists of dispositions that go beyond generic and bland? Forget teachers for a moment; aren't real people--good real people--generally missing several traits usually described as desirable? Isn't that sometimes part of their charm? To be sure, a tyrannical teacher is not charming by any measure, but here's my point: I believe it possible that the normative is that the best teachers are the product of the synergy of essentially unpredictable factors, much more than they are simply the sum of their checklisted parts.

Let's imagine that you and I are colleagues at the same school of education, and that we both have the same particular pre-service teacher--let's call him George--in our respective classes. Is it possible that I can see George as thoroughly involved, probing, great at devil's advocacy, thoughtful, global in perspective, whereas George strikes you as dominating, generally contrary and negative? This happens to me with some frequency, and when that individual is the focus of chats with my colleagues, I often wonder if we are talking about the same student. In this regard, how capable are we (individually) of separating our own bias, whims, prejudices, and our own physiological and emotional needs when composing a list of dispositions? We may say that we plan to be objective, but how do we *know* that we'll be objective? I think we fool ourselves if we claim that laying aside our subjectivity is an easy task.

Alone those same lines: how qualified are we, as teacher education faculty members, to check on disposition? Are we ever guilty of possessing

an imperious, ivory tower, do-as-I-say-not-as-I-do attitude, having unreasonable expectations for those over whom we have such power? And if we haven't ever been there (the PK-12 classroom), how do we know what an appropriate disposition is? If we haven't been there *recently*, how do we know? And do our occasional (or even frequent) visits to PK-12 classrooms qualify us ? Does a PK-12 classroom visit give us the same perspective as PK-12 teaching?

Now, I'm going to be about as provocative as I will be at any time in this entire paper. I am about to play the devil's advocate so that an important issue is at least discussed by those of you who are composing lists of desirable teacher dispositions. Is it possible that we in any way shortchange kids by providing them with only "dispositionally OK'd" teachers? Might it be in students' long-range interests to encounter some teachers who have some of the preferred dispositions missing? What in the world am I saying? That if kids have some mildly "dispositionally-challenged" teachers, that that's a good thing? No, but I'm not far from that. I submit that it is likely that allowing our children to encounter--and wrestle with--a variety of teachers, with a variety of dispositions, not to mention a variety of teaching styles, is probably best in the long run.

Here is an imperfect analogy (aren't they all?), but one I will use anyway. When I was a school principal, there was a substantial minority of parents who never wanted anything that was conceivably bad, or distressing, or even inconvenient to happen to their kids. Their children's roads were not only to be free of rocks, but of pebbles too. Their children were not ever to learn by way of struggle, there were to be no challenges, nothing to face. Now, I recognize that analogy breaks down; we do not purposely give kids bad teachers...that's preposterous, of course. But, is it perhaps reasonable to let kids experience all sorts of teachers, including some whose

dispositions some children, and perhaps their parents, and perhaps we in teacher education, don't necessarily completely approve of? In the end, doesn't personal perception--even sober, sincere, informed personal perception--trump the rubric every time?

Here's another thought regarding rubrics: If we do resort to using them, and we have delineated and specified desirable dispositions, do we go with 8 out of 10 (or whatever) as "passing"? If so, are we saying that all 10 are of equal weight? You can answer that easily by handing any colleague a list of 10 commonly listed dispositions, and then asking him or her to rank them. I can guarantee that most colleagues will rank them, and that if you present the task to ten colleagues, you will get ten very different lists. You will likely get several colleagues who claim that they could not live with any dispositions at the top of the list other than the ones they chose. If the only way to get them all to agree to a rubric is to so water down the terms as to leave them meaningless, then why would we bother making the list at all? That is, if we are desirous of a list we would die for, why would I bother signing off on a list that, at best, I can just live with?

A little experiment, if you will: please jot down which two of the following possible teacher dispositions you consider to be the most essential, and which two you consider to be the least essential (knowing that "least essential" may not mean "undesirable"). All of these were taken from existing or proposed lists of desirable in- or pre-service teacher characteristics.

Patience

Acceptance

Collaboration

Initiative

Appreciation of Diversity

Student focus

Reflectiveness

Emotional maturity

Team spirit

Warmth

An informal survey of ten colleagues produced the following results:

Number of times each disposition garnered
a "top two" or a "bottom two" vote:

| | Top two | Bottom two |
|---|---|---|
| Patience | 2 | 2 |
| Acceptance | 2 | 3 |
| Collaboration | 1 | 2 |
| Initiative | 2 | 2 |
| Appreciation of diversity | 5 | 4 |
| Student focus | 2 | 0 |
| Reflectiveness | 2 | 1 |
| Emotional maturity | 2 | 4 |
| Team spirit | 1 | 1 |
| Warmth | 1 | 1 |

While zero votes for putting "Student focus" at the bottom of the list may represent a ray of hope, what are we to make of the split vote for "Appreciation of diversity"? When I asked one colleague to complete the survey, she in effect politely declined to rank-order the terms at all, (in spite of directions which said "If you were made to rank-order this list..."), stating that "...I can't seem to pick anything as the bottom because any of these when taken to extremes (no warmth, for example) would cause significant problems." This illustrates the difficulty of list-making.

To finish this thought, think of your own children: while there are surely some son and daughter dispositions that are inherently non-preferable (consistent surliness, cruelty, irresponsibility), and there are surely some which are generally preferable (politeness, kindness, responsibility), do we love our own children because they have scored at such-and-such a level on the "desirable child disposition" scale? Of course not. Taking it further, do we appreciate our own children because of how many checks there are on the "checklist of desirable childhood characteristics"? Again, no. Don't we even sometimes claim to *love* their peculiarities, their individuality, their uniqueness, even their quirkiness and eccentricities? And I am not even going to *discuss* this issue as it relates to spouses and partners! Now, certainly children are not "hired"; they don't have to audition for childhood (any more than we have to audition for adulthood), and we don't fire them when they don't make the grade (at least good parents don't). My point, however, is this: There exists a danger that our attempts to produce lists of dispositions might be interrupted as attempts to produce an army of "correct" individuals, in complete contradiction to our claim that we not only respect, but embrace diversity. We must see to it that our proper emphasis on diversity is not perverted into its opposite: a demand for conformity.

I perceive an important parallel here with the issue of faculty academic freedom. Historically, "faculty academic freedom" within higher education has allowed for an extremely wide range of faculty dispositions, (the occasional attempts of higher education administration to reign in or dismiss the most eccentric or "troublesome" of our colleagues not withstanding), and we are generally proud of that tolerance. What would it look like if we accepted the same range of behavior in PK-12 teachers? We argue--passionately--that the variety of styles, attitudes, beliefs and so on that are seen in schools of education are not just to be tolerated, but that such variety is good for our students.

I'm not proposing that we ignore the issue of teacher dispositions; I'm arguing that the task of evaluating dispositions is much more difficult and fraught with pitfalls than most of us have assumed. My version of good news is this: if college faculties and powers-that-be and cooperating teachers (and parents?) have considered the issues which I have raised, and have purposefully responded to them, wrestling with and answering a tough list of questions, then it's likely that the product (a system for evaluating pre-service teacher dispositions) will be a good one. I repeat that I am supportive of a committee system, and I am especially intrigued with the concept of allowing that committee, after discussion, to simply dispositionally approve or disapprove a candidate.

I have developed a list of what I consider to be the key pre-service teacher dispositional questions that must be tackled before you or any institutional committees submit any proposals to the dean, the provost, the president NCATE, or anyone else. I do not claim that the list is comprehensive, but using it will likely generate other important questions:

1. What is our definition of "disposition"?

2. Does "attending to pre-service disposition" mean that we intend to rate students' dispositions, or that we will institute a dispositional "pass-fail" mechanism?

3. Should we be attending to pre-service teacher disposition at all? (Are we attempting to proscribe "incorrect thinking?")

4. Why are we qualified to check on teacher disposition?

5. Are we trying to define good teaching dispositions, good citizen dispositions, both, or neither?

6. Should we make a list?

7. If we make a list, will it be considered definitive or advisory? (That is, if we need to make a list, what should we do with it?)

8. What should our "level of dispositional tolerance" be? (If we look for "respect for diversity" in teacher candidates, how respectful of their dispositional diversity are we prepared to be?)

9. If we produce a list, will we "range" each disposition? (ie: "Low emotional maturity-to-high emotional maturity")? Is so, what level defines "passing"?

10. Will we use rubrics? How and where? Are we prepared to live with the "double-edged sword-ness" of rubrics? (Can rubrics inadvertently exclude

potential good teachers?)

11. Are appropriate or desirable pre-service teacher dispositions the same as appropriate or desirable in-service teacher dispositions? If not, how do they differ?

12. Where do we stand on the "I-know-it-when-I-see-it" approach?

13. Does synergy always trump a checklist?

14. How will we ensure our individual objectivity as we develop a "dispositional checkup" program? (That is, how do we know we are not simply demanding in others that which we personally prefer?)

15. Can quality instructional services be delivered to students by teachers with undesirable dispositions? Why or why not?

16. Are there such things as unique, undefinable and unpredictable positive and negative dispositional synergies, and if so, what do we make of that?

17. Would it make sense to list "disqualifying dispositions" and leave it at that?

18. Would a "checklist override" system work? (Use a checklist, with members of a committee empowered to override numeric results.)

19. Should we consider simply letting a committee vote on each teacher candidate: thumbs up or thumbs down, majority wins??

20. Do we in any way shortchange PK-12 students by providing them with only "dispositionally OK'd" teachers?

21. Do we feel there is any teacher disposition parallel with higher education faculty academic freedom?

I have already stated that this talk is not comprehensive. What haven't I considered? I believe that we need to look at at least two other issues in relation to dispositions:

1. Timing: *When* in students' college careers should we check on disposition, and *how often*? Do we look at improvement, or simply at the students' disposition at checkout time? Is it fair to hit a teacher candidate with the bad news one month from graduation? Probably not, but that's another debate.
2. Influence. Do we influence our students' dispositions as they make their ways through our programs? *Should* we be influencing their dispositions? If we are influencing, what are the points of greatest impact? (There's a dissertation waiting to happen!) For what it's worth, a study by Yost (1997) found that we *can* and *do* influence teacher candidate dispositions.

A final comment on the term "diversity": I urge everyone to pay special attention to the word and to defining "respect for diversity". If you can come away from a honest discussion of those terms with colleagues, you are in excellent shape.

To close, let me answer the question posed by this talk's title: Is the identification of desirable pre-service teacher dispositions an intractable

problem? I think the production of a definitive list is intractable, but that's the *wrong* problem. Other, more holistic approaches may give us what we want.

...there's more to us
than surgeons can remove...

So much more than
we ever knew.

So much more
were we born to do.

Should you draw back
the curtain,

This, I am certain:

You'll be impressed with you.

Alan Jay Lerner

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